

NUCLEAR POWER AND UNITED STATES FOREIGN RELATIONS

21 May 1956

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GENERAL HOLLIS: Our speaker this morning is Dr. Henry A. Kissinger of the Council of Foreign Relations. You have read his biography and know his background. He has a real subject to speak to you on this morning: "Nuclear Power and United States Foreign Relations."

Those of you who have read the New York Times this morning will appreciate how hard it is to keep up to date on a subject like this. I was just talking to Dr. Kissinger. He hasn't had a chance to see the New York Times this morning so you will probably get his own views.

It is a great pleasure and honor to introduce Dr. Kissinger to this class.

DR. KISSINGER: A few weeks ago I appeared on a television program, the subject of which was fairly similar to this one. I wasn't off the air for 30 seconds when several irate officers called up to inquire: "Who are you to talk about military strategy?" For this reason, talking to an audience like this, I am going to be very cautious and I am going to emphasize the nonmilitary aspects of the problem.

I was told that I should emphasize the problems of our alliances and our relations with other powers in the thermonuclear period. It seems to me that one can't really discuss that unless one puts it into the context of a twofold revolution.

On the one hand, there is a revolution in the use of force. The unparalleled development of weapons, the growth of thermonuclear capabilities on both sides has created a certain incompatibility between the power of the weapons and the objectives for which they are to be used. There is moreover another element of instability: the traditional structure of international affairs based on a multiplicity of states has disintegrated so that only two major powers are capable of engaging in a major war--at least within the next decade or so. Such a world has an inherent element of instability because you cannot substitute finesse of diplomatic maneuver for a loss of position. Any weakening of one power is not only a relative but an absolute strengthening of the other power. It therefore becomes very risky to make concessions or to permit the expansion of the other side.

In addition to the revolution on the power side, we have a revolution in the expectations and in the ideologies and in the political structures. Never has it been so easy to disseminate ideas; never have so many people changed their expectations so rapidly and been able to communicate that fact to each other. Never have so many new nations emerged in such a short period of time. And all of that is complicated by the fact that there exists a revolutionary bloc of powers, the Soviet Bloc, whose primary purpose is not to see to it that this situation settles down, but, on the contrary, is eager to exploit all dissatisfactions. This bloc refuses to accept either the framework or the legitimacy of the present international system, and has set itself the very easy task of promising all things to all men until it has disintegrated the existing framework, and after that it will be too late to do something about it.

It is against this background that I would like to talk. First, let me speak about the role of force. It is quite clear that if I were to speak about the military problem, I could devote the whole period to it, and you will forgive me if I seem a little dogmatic and perhaps you can show me where I am wrong in the question period. You will understand that if one talks about modern weapons, one has to do so with a certain humility, but our humility, if I may be quite honest, has also been our curse. It is quite true that the power of the new weapons is enormous and that the risks they pose are tremendous, yet one cannot conduct foreign policy only on the basis of an assessment of risks alone. Power is not only a danger but also an opportunity. If there is one side which is conscious only of its risks while the other side, for whatever reasons, perhaps because of a revolutionary ideology or because it lacks imagination, becomes conscious of its opportunities and shifts all the risks to us, our diplomacy will be paralyzed no matter how strong we are.

It seems to me that in many respects we have drawn too easy conclusions from the change in technology, conclusions which have been summed up in the proposition that there is no alternative to peace, that there now exists a nuclear stalemate, that it is no longer possible to use force, and that all that is left for us is diplomacy.

Now, this may be true. But if it is true, we ought to become clear about the consequences. Any student of history will know that the separation between force and diplomacy is a peculiarly American notion brought about by the legalistic bias of our society, a notion by which we assume that reasonable people sitting around the conference table can settle disputes just because they are reasonable.

I would suggest that if you study history you will find something different. You will find that the ultimate sanction in diplomacy was the possibility of using force, that, to be sure, very often the sanction was not made explicit, but it was not made explicit because it was so well understood that it did not have to be made explicit.

Throughout the 19th Century which now looms so large in the columns of several commentators and to the diplomacy of which we are urged to return, I am sure you will find that the final settlement depended, at least to a considerable extent, on the assessment of the statesmen around the conference table of what would happen if the conference broke down. The fact that you could initiate negotiations when it suited your purpose and break them off with impunity, that you could use negotiations for psychological strategy, this I would submit is a peculiar invention of the 20th Century and was not within the traditional context of diplomacy.

Now it is quite true that the power of the present weapons is enormous. And it is quite true that the destructiveness of these weapons makes any thought of all-out war repulsive. And it may even be true that in certain categories and for certain purposes there exists a nuclear stalemate. But I would submit this to you, that if a stalemate exists--and I would judge that for a few years even in an all-out sense this is problematic--but if there is a stalemate, it is a conceptual stalemate as much as it is a physical stalemate. It is a conceptual stalemate because we have thought entirely in World War II terms, because we have thought entirely in all-out war terms, and because we have rushed into embracing a way out of our dilemmas, such as the phrase "nuclear stalemate" well before it was true.

If there exists a stalemate, it must exist for both sides, and if it exists, the real trick will be which side can shift the risk of an all-out war to the other; which side can face the other with contingencies from which it can extricate itself only by a thermonuclear war.

I would suggest to you that if you observe Soviet maneuvers over the last ten years that this is precisely what the Soviets have done to us. They have confronted us with the contingency in Korea which we couldn't defeat except by all-out war and we were reluctant to fight an all-out war. They did the same thing in Indochina, and in a sense they did the same in Egypt.

Now, you may say that the Soviets, too, are afraid of war, that the Soviets have announced this repeatedly. If you look carefully at what it is that the Soviets have announced they have usually addressed these appeals of their fear of war to foreigners so their purpose may have been to increase the inhibitions of others; also it makes all the difference in the world, as I indicated before, which side may be forced to start the all-out war.

So I would confine my remarks on the military side to this: The nuclear weapons have returned us to a situation which is not at all strange in the history of warfare. We have been misled by our experiences in two World Wars where we could defeat an enemy by assembling a superior productive power, and where we could achieve a crushing superiority on the battlefield because of our superior technology and superior industrial potential.

If you look at the history of warfare--and you gentlemen will know this much better than I--the more usual case has been a relative equality in technology and the more usual victor has not only been the one that could out-produce his opponent but the one who could develop concepts and combinations which enabled him to apply his power with more subtlety, more tactfully, in better combinations, with better concepts.

The German armies that swept over France in 1940 had fewer tanks than the French armies and the tanks were probably not very superior to those of the French, but they used them with better concepts in better combinations, and with a better sense of purpose. So the problem for us of the nuclear period, I would repeat, is a conceptual one: How we can use these weapons without bringing on the collapse of civilization; how we can develop a theory of war which will strengthen our diplomacy instead of paralyzing it.

General Hollis spoke about the weapons tests in the Pacific. I have the uncomfortable feeling that if one analyzes the deterrents of weapons tests, that the deterrents on us of our own weapons tests is sometimes greater than it is on the Soviet Union because we have not yet come up with any ideas of how we can apply our power and how we can apply our power in a way that shifts the risk of expanding the war to the other side, that would make the Kremlin evaluate the dangers of the obliteration of Moscow instead of our seeing everything in terms of the obliteration of New York.

Now I have sketched the military aspects rather dogmatically and very briefly and perhaps we can spell it out in the question period. Let me turn to the diplomatic aspects and to the revolution that has occurred there.

Here again the key to it seems to be in the fact that we are dealing with a revolutionary situation by the method of traditional diplomacy, that we are opposing an enemy who is determined to overthrow the existing system, who has a theory of doing, and who can act with subtlety and with a toughness that is conferred by absolute certainty. We may be in the strange situation that a group of powers is going to make a wrong theory come out right just because they have a theory and just because they know what they want. This is true despite some of the conciliatory statements of the Twentieth Party Congress.

I have recently gone through the tedious process of reading all the speeches of the Twentieth Party Congress. I am not a Russian expert, but I have been amazed, after reading them, how these speeches could be interpreted as conciliatory speeches. They could be interpreted only on the basis of a rather gross ignorance of Marxist terminology.

When the Soviets speak of war and peace, they mean something else than when we speak of peace. A Soviet military authority once said, "If war is a continuation of politics only by other means, so also is peace a continuation of the struggle only by other means." If the Soviets have used the world peace at all, I would suggest that they have used it only in this sense.

Nor have they renounced revolution. Peaceful coexistence was advanced as the best offensive tactic. It was advanced as the best means of subverting the existing order. Krushchev said in this speech-- and this was not very much quoted--that Leninism teaches us that the ruling class will not surrender their power voluntarily, and the greater or lesser degree of intensity which the struggle may assume, the use or nonuse of violence in the transition to socialism, depends on the resistance of the exploiter, on whether the exploiting class resorts to violence rather than the proletariat.

I think no one has summed this up better than Stalin when he said that communists do not in the least idealize violence. They would be very pleased to drop violent methods if the ruling class gave way voluntarily. The Soviets have renounced violence only where they think they can come to power without violence, and they have renounced revolution only where they think overt revolution may be unnecessary.

It is interesting that the two examples that Krushchev gave of how the communist party may come to power peacefully were the example of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. I draw very little comfort from this speech.

In a revolutionary situation the pattern of international relations is changed entirely. Diplomacy, in what for purposes of this talk I shall call a legitimate order, an order in which all the major powers agree on the basic outlines of the settlement, in such an order, diplomacy has three functions.

It may attempt to persuade by advancing a plausible cause for settlement. It has to formulate agreements and disagreements in such a manner that no possible escape is open. It attempts to perpetuate by providing a forum where diplomats can meet.

I would suggest to you that in the present situation all these functions have changed their meaning. In traditional diplomacy a program that is advanced is negotiable. In a revolutionary order a position that is advanced is a program which becomes a platform on which you are going to contend. In a legitimate order what you propose has primarily a substantive significance. To put it simply, one usually means what one says and attempts to negotiate on that basis. In a revolutionary order, the proposals have a primarily symbolic significance. They become symbols which attempt to attach the uncommitted to one of the contending powers. In other words, in a legitimate order the diplomats meeting around the conference table are talking to each other; in a revolutionary order, they are talking to the rest of the world.

One of the difficulties of our foreign policy is the fact that we have not realized this. This is caused again in part by our legalistic biases. Thus our positions in international conferences have usually been worked out with infinite detail; there has been great concern for this step by step approach of traditional diplomacy. But the disadvantage of this is that, while Mr. Dulles and Mr. Acheson before him have talked to Mr. Molotov, Molotov was speaking to the rest of the world, to the uncommitted, to the Germans, to the Japanese, to whomever the Soviets attempted to influence, so that it has almost been like a duel in the dark, and our frustration has grown with every conference, primarily because we did not understand what they were up to.

They did not think that they were impressing us with these constant repetitions, but while we have spoken like a pedantic professor

sure of his righteousness, the Soviets, through constant repetition, have captured the symbols which move humanity. The power which had added 150 million people to its orbit by force and another 400 by invasion has emerged as the advocate of the peace offensive. The state which has developed a slave labor system as an integral part of its economy has become in large areas of the world the champion of human dignity. I would suggest that this indicates a rather substantial failure on our part.

So, turning to our alliances now, they have to be viewed against the background of a dual crisis, a crisis of power in which we have not developed a strategic concept even we can live with, much less our allies, and a crisis of psychology which has in turn two facets; the illusion constantly fomented by the Soviets of unlimited choice, which tells the foreign nations that they can have the best of both worlds; that they can join NATO and the Warsaw Pact; that they can take aid from both sides; that they can be friendly to the Soviets and blackmail us and still get economic aid. And the other facet has been our illusion that nations make decisions on the basis of popularity; that one can run an international system in the manner one runs a New England town meeting; that people will be swayed by the persuasiveness of legal argument or by whether they like this or that statesman, or, for that matter, this or that nation. I will have something more to say about that a little further on.

If we look at our alliance systems in a historical context and ask ourselves what the purposes of alliances have been in the past, I would suggest for purposes of argument that there have been three general purposes that alliances have had. The first is that they should leave no doubt about the alinement of forces, that the aggressor or the other camp should know precisely what forces it would have to meet if it engaged in war and in this manner deter him from this threat. The second purpose has been to provide an additional obligation to that already provided by the national interest.

If the national interest were unambiguous and if all nations knew precisely what it is, an alliance wouldn't be necessary because then everyone would know on which side the nations are going to line up. But the reason in the past nations have been very concerned in signing other nations up for alliance is so when conditions for war and peace would be made there would be one additional reason for going to war.

This has very serious limitations because the fact of a moral or legal obligation in an alliance which is embodied in the existing alliance will not outlive a bad strategic concept and a dubious political situation.

The experience of the French system of alliances in the inter-war period is instructive. The French strategy was an entirely defensive one. The French policy was an entirely offensive one. The French system of alliances made sense only if on the outbreak of war in East-ern Europe the French would invade the Rhineland and try to put some pressure on the Germans because otherwise the Germans would escape the risks of a two-front war and defeat their enemy in detail. This is precisely what did happen. Moreover, the French were suffering from the illusion that treaty instruments are themselves a defense and the resolutions behind them, so that whenever they suffered a defeat in foreign policy they rushed into drawing up a few more political instruments and added to their illusion that they had now increased their security because, while they had lost a position of strength, they had gained an ally. I forbear historical analogy.

The third reason for an alliance might be to provide a legitimacy for foreign intervention, that if one has to fight in a foreign country, one makes it legal and politically acceptable.

Now if we examine our present system of alliances, I would suggest that one of the reasons for the crisis is that very few of these conditions apply to them. Many of the allies are not adding to our effective strength; with others, we do not share a common purpose. So what has been going on in many of these alliances is almost a game in which the leaders have signed documents on both sides which they knew were meaningless and then tried to stall the implementation by formulae of allied unity, knowing very well that there was neither domestic support nor strategic sense behind many of the instruments that were signed. They were pleasing our people who were putting pressure on them by signing and pleasing their domestic situation which was arguing for an independent policy by stalling the implementation.

One of the reasons has been, as I indicated before, that there has not existed a strategic concept that made any sense to our allies. Our military discussion of alliances has usually been in terms of the advantages that overseas bases afford us, and overseas bases do afford us a dispersed platform for attacking the Soviet Union and will make it much more difficult for the Soviet Union to score a knockout blow.

On the other hand, our ability to defeat the Soviet Union is of small consolation to powers which are in the process of being overrun and whose primary concern is to avoid another foreign occupation. And

even in the areas where we have attempted to assure territorial integrity, we have been increasingly caught on the horns of another dilemma.

In NATO, which we are presumably attempting to defend on the ground, we are pursuing a modified nuclear strategy, and I think our military establishment in a few years can pursue only a nuclear strategy. Our allies, so far as they are doing anything, are building on the basis of a concept which we know will in a few years be not only obsolete but an actual positive danger if it is applied in the field. They are asked to build weapons which we know have no meaning any more.

So that even in the area where we are trying to build a defense on the ground, two strategies are developing side by side that are mutually inconsistent. We are asking the Germans to build a defensive force and to build weapons which cannot have any possible meaning in a five-year period. Moreover, this situation has been complicated by our notion of collective security which we have drawn from the '30's. The assumption that we make is that, unless all allies resist any aggression anywhere together, no effective resistance is possible at all. We base this on the assumption that, if Hitler had been opposed by a united opposition and all the powers, he would have desisted.

Now there are two things to be said about this: He would have been deterred only to the extent that he believed that these powers were really willing to act. Pious declarations of no matter how many powers would not have deterred Hitler. Secondly, the reason it was important to get a collective effort in the '30's was because no power was capable of resisting Hitler alone--none of the powers of Europe--but our doctrine of collective security has led to the paradoxical result that it has paralyzed the one power which is capable of resisting alone.

To ask the French government which is having difficulty acting in Algeria to make itself responsible for our decision in Quemoy and Matsu is a prescription for sterility. If we ask for the prior agreement of all our allies before we engage in any action, we are confining ourselves to the lowest common denominator and we are permitting the policy of the alliance to be shaped by the weakest component.

Another reason for the difficulty has been the fact that we have not been able to demonstrate any political advantage to the allies of remaining in the alliance. Adenauer staked his whole policy of Western unity on achieving German unification through the West and yet at the precise

moment that he had finally pushed rearmament through a reluctant parliament there occurred the Summit conference that raised the prospect that a direct deal between us and the Soviets was at least conceivable. At this precise moment there came a relaxation of tensions which made it very clear that the only thing that might induce the Soviets to leave Eastern Germany, the fear of Western pressures, was renounced. As a result, not only is the question of German rearmament now, if not legally, at least psychologically, up in the air but Adenauer's domestic position is an extremely shaky one.

Now if we are to speak of remedies, we can say this, that the facts of the new technology actually suggest a strategy which might make some sense to our allies in two ways, in a positive and in a negative way.

In the positive sense, we now share with them the interest of attempting to avoid an all-out war. We now share with them the interest that, if there is to be a war, we should attempt to localize it and to win it by measures short of city bombing. We therefore at least have the theoretical ability to attempt to come up with a strategy which runs parallel to their interests.

This is the carrot. I would say the stick in this, and this has to be made clear: Many of the nations in the world are attempting to avoid their dilemmas by neutrality, which is a way of saying that, if they are not strong enough to protect themselves, they will want to do it through a legal device by denying other people the right to attack them.

History is full of examples of the unworkability of this and they have to understand the following: that if we are pushed out of Eurasia and confined to the Western Hemisphere, we will have no choice except to fight an all-out war; that under those circumstances they would bring on what they fear most.

As a basic postulate behind our alliance policy, I would say this: To be sure, there has to be a moral consensus and one has to attempt to get a sense of common purpose, but in terms of pure American interest, we cannot afford to let Eurasia fall under the domination of a single power. With respect to Eurasia, we have the position of Britain to the European continent because the resources of Eurasia, to which Africa would soon be added, are incomparably greater than the resources of the Western Hemisphere and the pressures that would be put on us by a Eurasian Bloc in terms of base structure, in terms of resources,

in terms of influences in South America would be so great that we would be forced into an effort that might threaten the American way of life and at least would force us to fight under most disadvantageous circumstances unless we wanted to surrender. Maybe this is an unpopular thing to say, but I would argue that no amount of platitudes about sovereignty or popularity can change this fact.

Secondly, there are possibilities in other groupings not related to the military groupings which could work to our advantage. I perhaps will leave some of this to the question period because I do want to say a word about the uncommitted, particularly with respect to the last point about the grouping of Eurasia.

The notion that has become prevalent is that if we can just get a greater economic aid program, we can get economic stability into these areas, all will be well. I find it a peculiarly Marxist notion and also a notion which seems to me to misunderstand what is going on.

When we had the Marshall Plan for Europe, there existed a stable political structure and an unstable economic situation, and if you could just shore up the economic situation, there was great hope that the political structure would stand up. In the uncommitted areas of the world, there is going on both a political and a social revolution, and the history of revolutions teaches this: A revolution usually is a coming together of all resentment, where individuals and nations agree about things they do not like but are not at all in agreement about what it is they do want. Most revolutions that I am familiar with have been captured by a small group of dedicated men, not because this group was physically strong, but because it was the only group that had a sense of purpose and knew where it was heading.

I would therefore suggest to you that the inroads which the Soviets have made in the uncommitted areas are not necessarily because they have identified themselves with the purposes of these areas, which is in part true, but it is also true that they have made inroads because they represent a sense of purpose, because they seem tough, and they seem to know what it is that they want, in short because they have offered a political legitimacy and not just an economic one.

In this uncommitted area there is a crisis of power. The political leadership has gotten into office because of its leadership of the independent struggle and in a struggle which was conducted against nations with a bad conscience weakened by European wars. While the leaders have suffered a great deal, it is fair to say that they achieved results

totally out of proportion to their investment. Nations which had held colonial dominion for hundreds of years disappeared without a shot being fired. Naturally, they overestimated what can be achieved by moral proclamations.

This tendency is reinforced by the fact that in the two-power struggle that is going on the rewards for irresponsibility are great. The temptation to avoid the solution of the domestic problems where the penalties are immediate, as Nehru learned when he tried to redistrict or abolish the linguistic states, is overwhelming, and in my judgment we would be making a great mistake if we took every criticism at face value and every complaint as if it represented a draft against which others can draw. One of our unpopular tasks may be to teach other powers that there are certain inevitable consequences for certain actions.

Let us look at the Soviet diplomacy of the last year. Where the Soviets could not get their way through popularity, they attempted to create a fact of life to which other nations had to adjust. There is now great pressure in Germany for direct negotiations with the Soviets, not because the Germans like the Soviets, but because the Germans know if they want unity they have to go to the Soviets.

Soviet leaders went up and down India attacking Pakistan. Nevertheless Pakistan leaders are now in Communist China in open trade negotiations with the Soviets. Nations do not make their decisions, if they are sophisticated, on the basis of whom they like. It's their duty to make their decisions on the basis of a calculus of risks. No one will die for us because they like us if we cannot give them some other guarantee.

Many of the things that I have said I have only sketched, and I would like to make one concluding remark, that there really isn't any gimmick that will get us out of this impasse. We have been trying for too long to do these things without getting our hands dirty. There are great difficulties in dealing with the diplomatic and military crises, difficulties imposed by our own preconceptions and in part imposed by our governmental mechanism where one sometimes has the feeling that the internal problems of our mechanism are more complicated than the problems with which it is designed to deal. So there is an extraordinary rigidity and it is so difficult that we cling to policy at all costs since at the other side of it is chaos and endless interdepartmental meetings.

So part of the Soviet success I have tended to ascribe, in a perhaps poor analogy, to the analogy of the fact that they are playing a girl's football team and no matter how much they fumble behind the lines they are not going to get tackled. When they recover the ball and run with it, it looks like a razzle-dazzle play.

Many of our difficulties--and we could expand on this--have not been caused by our worst qualities but by our best qualities, by our legalism, by our empiricism, by our disbelief in the possibility that this country could collapse, and, above all, by our notion that peace is the absence of war, and that we could live in the world without tensions. But, as a result, we have permitted a nation which has never hidden its hostile intent--one has to give the Soviets credit for their integrity in this respect--to build a thermonuclear capability which is capable of destroying us or hurting us very badly. And this is because we are confronted by a power which is not interested in peace but in victory, and perhaps the really tragic element in our situation is that, in order even to have peace, we, too, have to aim for victory.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION: When one finds that these alliance understandings and facts are against the national interest, how does one get out of them?

DR. KISSINGER: Well, I didn't mean to imply that the alliances are against the national interest. I would merely say this, that an alliance makes sense only if there is a community of interest, and one shouldn't define this community as including all possible interests for either of the partners. Each ally ought to be free in the area of primary interest to himself to act independently. One of the reasons we have been in difficulty with our alliances is because we have defined them in a clearly restrictive way.

There is no inherent law that says, and certainly there is nothing in NATO that says, that NATO has to have a veto over, say, our action in Korea. To be sure, NATO has to be concerned about the fact that a war in Korea might become a general war. I would, however, make a cynical comment about it: It is one thing for the NATO powers to assist us or not assist us in a limited war, and we don't really need their assistance in most limited wars, certainly not in Far Eastern wars; it is quite another thing for the NATO powers not to assist us in an all-out war, because in an all-out war it is not a choice between war and the freedom of Korea, but between war and their own survival.

They know very well that no matter how they criticize us, if we are defeated in an all-out war, their freedom is at an end, and no matter how we get into an all-out war, there are many nations that will have to support us in it whether they like it or not.

This is not my preferred way of getting into it, but it is at least a way of deciding what the true situation is. In many areas, particularly in the Far East, if we insist that all our NATO allies have to support us before we act, or indeed our SEATO allies, what we are really doing is finding an excuse for not acting, because we know that the French, or the Germans for that matter, cannot support us for domestic reasons in the Far East.

I have one other notion there, which is this: The leadership of these nations is usually ahead of its public opinion, which is the reverse situation in some other countries I could name. But the leadership understands very often what the problems are but doesn't have either the courage or the domestic possibility to do something. I think it is very healthy for them to be given a chance to protest against our actions because it would solidify them domestically, it would make them very popular, it would show that they are independent. It wouldn't change anything particularly, and I wouldn't be so sensitive every time a foreign leader criticizes us. It may sometimes be to our advantage. To force them to go along with our every step is just to paralyze us.

QUESTION: In this approach to foreign affairs in dealing with other nations, I have arrived at the conclusion that the approach to a regional organization has much to offer, especially in undeveloped areas of the world where we do not carry with us the cloke of imperialism or any one-man control is running rampant. We might deal through a community arrangement where we give our assistance to it and stay a little more away from the inside and working direct.

DR. KISSINGER: I completely agree with you, and if I had had time, I would have made that very point myself. There are two things: First of all, in most of these uncommitted areas a military alliance really doesn't add anything to our strength and therefore it is a bad idea to keep getting nations to sign documents which they know don't mean anything and which we then defend at home as a contribution to defense. It gives them a feeling of our irresponsibility since they don't understand the domestic requirement of getting treaties through the Senate.

So in many of these areas many other groupings might be to our advantage. There are certain economic groupings that would be possible. What is to our interest is to get groupings of powers independent of the Soviet world along the Soviet periphery, and very often a non-military grouping would be more effective than a military grouping. So in substance I would agree with you.

QUESTION: I have been listening through this discussion for some reference to the United Nations and how this might modify or fit in with the general thesis that you have been presenting.

DR. KISSINGER: Well, I would resist the notion, which you didn't advance but which is often advanced, that the United Nations is an organization independent of its members, as if there were some inherent magic in the United Nations as such.

I listened to proposals that were made by a group of professors about disarmament and their proposal was to give it to the United Nations. Whom would you give it to in the United Nations? And where would these bombs be stored? And who would make the decisions? Every problem that you are facing in the relations of the nations with each other comes to expression naturally in the United Nations. The fact that the Soviets veto things in the United Nations doesn't prove that they are unreasonable. They are behaving absolutely reasonably. As a matter of fact, I should hope that when the Soviet Bloc gets the majority--as is reasonable if some of these deals that have gone on continue very much longer; in some instances they already have the majority--we will have to veto things. I hope we will veto them.

Now the United Nations can fit into it within these limits as one other device by which you could mobilize world opinion. One has to be sure, however, of what one is doing. To get a one-vote majority in the United Nations is not the same as getting a one-vote majority in the House of Representatives in 1940 for the draft, which, after the one-vote majority was established, no one really opposed, at least they didn't do very much to oppose.

Sometimes to try to get a majority which is very slight is politically disadvantageous. We can use the United Nations, I think, in some of the atomic proposals, the bank for fissionable materials, for example.

Last year, I spoke to a South American delegate who said that, damn it, he would just like to know what it is we want him to vote for,

but we tell him he can vote for whatever he thinks is reasonable. I asked him how he voted for the proposal on Algeria and he said he didn't know what we wanted him to vote for so he voted for what he thought was right.

QUESTION: What is your estimate of the stand that is being taken in NATO now to expand its purpose beyond those we originally set out to do, that is protection of the alliances and a SAC bases system, or is it a step in the right direction?

DR. KISSINGER: It is clear that NATO is facing a crisis, but the mistake we often make, it seems to me, is to take the expression of the crisis as the cause of it. When the Europeans spoke of giving it a different focus, to be sure they were mentioning economic devices but when the economic devices were put up to them, they really didn't have any proposals to make there either. The reason was they were talking about economics because they felt uneasy. They knew the military thing wasn't working well so they came up with this.

I think it's rather dangerous to transform a military alliance into an economic alliance because the whole command structure, the whole concept behind it has to be given up and one has always to weigh what one gives up in order to get something. This is not to say there is not a real problem in our relations with the European powers, but first of all we have to give them a military strategy that makes sense. Otherwise, no amount of economic aid programs are going to do us any good.

Secondly, the best thing we could have done for the Germans was not an economic aid program but to come up with some imaginative idea on German unification. No one can suppose that the French problem in Algeria is going to be altered by an economic aid program either. They would still have most of their troops in Algeria. So I would answer you this way: I would just as soon not expand the functions of NATO too much, but I would supplement a general diplomacy in a number of directions in which an economic grouping of NATO would fit, but as an independent project.

QUESTION: You may have answered this question. If you did, I apologize for my question, but as a matter of policy, what are your thoughts on furnishing economic aid directly as we do now or furnishing it in a lump sum to the United Nations and letting them disburse it to whatever recipients they feel should have it?

DR. KISSINGER: Again, my view would be that the major part of our economic aid should be disbursed by us but in a slightly different form than we have disbursed it up to now and with a greater awareness of the fact that the payoff of this thing is not going to be directly economic but political. I have been struck by the fact that the Soviets have been getting benefits from the promise of aid while we haven't been getting very many benefits from the actuality of aid. This indicates a crisis of political legitimacy, that we don't have a political framework within which this thing fits.

Secondly, we have to face the facts of life in another sense. If the economic aid does what we say it will do, it will have a politically unsettling effect. If this really creates a new middle class and if this middle class behaves the way middle classes have historically behaved, let us say, in the Middle East, it must have in the first round a politically unsettling consequence. If we give economic aid, say, to Saudi Arabia, two things could happen: either the present ruler would pocket it, in which case the social inequality will increase and tensions will multiply, or a middle class will be created with the consequence I have sketched.

This is no argument against aid but it does indicate that to give aid without having a political purpose may make things infinitely more difficult for us. We have been talking about aid, but the Soviets have sent wild-eyed emissaries around. The Soviets haven't spent a lot of money, but the Soviets have supplied leadership. The Soviets have indigenous advocates in every country and no matter how many billions we pour into this, it is not going to be any good. If we give it to the United Nations, the Soviets are going to finesse it so that nobody will ever know who gave what and for what purpose.

So I would say perhaps we might give a token contribution through the United Nations just to call the Soviet bluff, but the main thing we have to do is to make a program which projects this into purpose. I don't think it is primarily a budgetary question. Most of the things which have gone wrong over the past three or four years have gone wrong within the present budget ceilings and that wouldn't have been changed if we had a few billion dollars more to spend.

COLONEL WALSH: Could you expand, Dr. Kissinger, on your ideas on an international strategy and a military strategy which you feel does make sense? You referred to the German land force, for instance, which you think would be an outworn idea in five years, etc. What are your ideas about what we should do?

DR. KISSINGER: I didn't mean to imply that the German land force as such is going to be an outworn idea in five years. My basic argument is that the nuclear period poses a real conceptual problem, which is how to use power in whatever you define as the combat zone or the battlefield of the struggle in a way that shifts the risks of jumping to the next magnitude to the other side. This seems to be the trick in this. Now, having said that, it's nice, if you can do it.

It seems to me there have been occurring two concurrent revolutions. The first has been a revolution of the air doctrine, which is that up to the end of World War II and through the period of our atomic monopoly, we could conceive of an air strategy in which we were hitting production centers and we were fighting a war of attrition. This kind of war now seems to impose such terrible risks for us that, even if we can win it, from what I know about policymakers, we will never take the decision actually to undertake it except if we are faced with a direct attack on us. If the Soviets confront us with the kinds of problems that we are likely to be confronting, we are not going to get a SAC strike because of the fear of what the Soviets can do to us. I would also feel that it would be desirable to achieve our objective with something less horrible than megaton bombs on the United States. So in this sense, in terms of air strategy, ever since we let the Soviets break our atomic monopoly and develop a strategic striking power--which was almost a victory in war for the Soviets; nations have gone to war for much less than that; but we were thinking of physical extensions. We didn't realize what was happening to the air space above us. But this is gone now. We can't do much about this any more.

The second revolution is a revolution, it seems to me, in land warfare, that the Soviet strategic concept based on World War II experiences had envisioned a massive employment of manpower, the mass use of artillery, a high order of leadership at a very high level, but, from what everyone hears from the formerly captured German generals, a low order of leadership on the low levels. It seems to me that, in terms of our peculiar national abilities, we could maximize them through a strategy which forces maximum dispersion, a maximum initiative on the lowest level, a strategy which doesn't permit the employment of mass manpower. I don't pretend to have the answer to what such a strategy would be like, except that obviously it has to include nuclear weapons, high mobility, and things like this.

To be sure, the Soviets can match that, too, and in a sense what worries me more than anything else is that the Soviet manpower cuts

indicate to me that this is exactly what they are doing. Still, if we have certain national characteristics and if the Western general has national characteristics, it is this backlog of technically trained manpower, of initiative on the lower levels of our military establishment and so forth.

This is what I would like to see for the American strategy. It is not written in the cards that every limited war must end with a draw. I do not see why the Soviets should not accept a local transformation rather than risk the destruction of Moscow. I personally am convinced that this is the course, but, of course, it is always conjecture, I don't think they would have gone to all-out war for Korea if we had defeated them there. What would they have had to gain by it? The same would be true of any number of situations.

It seems to me this kind of strategy might make a measure of sense, but for the Germans and for the Europeans in general, we ask them to train, in effect, World War II armies against an enemy who clearly is developing a nuclear capability and can just wipe them out. To develop tactics which are completely obsolete and which one series of kiloton bombs is certain to wipe out simply doesn't make any military sense, and it's petty in a sense that we are asking them to fight a strategy that we are no longer willing to fight in their own territory.

I don't know whether this is a very responsive answer but this is the outline of what I have in mind.

COLONEL WALSH: One of the things you said was that we allowed the Soviet Union to develop a nuclear capability. What are your ideas about how we could have prevented it?

DR. KISSINGER: We have the notion--well, we have been spoiled by our experience in two World Wars. We think the only victories that are worth winning are victories that obliterate the other side, occupy it, reform it, reeducate it, which has some good consequences because an American occupation is a good way for these countries to restore themselves, not only because of the aid we give them, but because it gets the bureaucracy foreign backing to do impossible things. We'll let that go.

So I would really plead, as an initial reply to your question, for a more subtle approach. If we can get serious local transformations, sometimes we could roll back the orbit. We had two choices with respect

to Soviet nuclear capability, which we knew they were going to get sooner or later, even without espionage. We could either create such a base structure around them, such a complexity of states, that even if they had it, given new technical developments, they would be impotent.

For instance, if China now were friendly to us and we could have it as a base for missiles and air forces, if they had been rolled back out of Eastern Europe, their nuclear bombs wouldn't do them very much good because they would have five minutes to a half hour warning; we would have a radar net which would have been a lot more potent. For any number of other reasons, they would have been strategically in rather bad shape.

Let me not talk about China which I know less about, but I have the sense that the Russians never in their wildest dreams thought we would permit them to sit in the middle of Europe. Nations fought wars for half this territory. The interesting thing is, after all, they pulled out of Azerbaijan when we went to the Security Council, but we never took Poland or Hungary to the Security Council. I believe, if we had faced them with this, above all let them know that if they didn't it might lead to war, the satellite orbit would not now exist. We couldn't have demobilized our army then of course. I think they were using Azerbaijan as something they might trade against Poland, or something like that. They were sitting and hoping and were just waiting to see how far we would go, and, to their great surprise, got away with it. This is my judgment. I may be wrong.

Now, the second proposition is this: If there ever was a strategic transformation it was when the Soviets developed a nuclear bomb and a strategic air force. This was worth more to them than all the territory that they conquered. But we, thinking entirely in World War II terms and in terms of territory, and also being obsessed with technology, thought that, if we now have developed the hydrogen bomb, we had our advantage back, which wasn't true at all. Even if the Soviets didn't have the hydrogen bomb, even if they had merely developed their nuclear bomb to what is now possible, they would have brought off a strategic revolution. I mean some of you who are in the atomic problem know that atomic bombs can now be built to fairly respectable size and can do most of the things, maybe less elegantly, that the hydrogen bomb can do. But this was the strategic revolution and we ducked it, and we knew for years it was coming.

How could we have done it? We could have gone so far as to give the ultimatum on this issue of inspection. Even Lord Russell, who is now saying that no war is possible any more, even he in 1947 advocated giving them an ultimatum.

On this point of our obsession with technology, when we get a tough political and strategic problem, we always try to build something bigger, but it doesn't answer the question at all because the strategic revolution was the development of the Soviet atomic bomb. There's another strategic revolution coming now when the Soviets develop the missile. This won't be changed by the fact that we also have the missile. To be sure, we had to have the missile, but the revolution is nevertheless there, and they have an added form of blackmail. They will have the whole periphery under the gun now. The mere fact that we, too, have missiles doesn't change that too fundamentally because we can do a lot of the things to them now with planes that we will be able to do to them with missiles while the reverse is not true.

QUESTION: One previous speaker this year berated the State Department for not coming up with new studies and new approaches to this whole international problem. One idea he had was, he wondered why we didn't attempt to recognize the U.S. Soviet Ukraine and some of these countries that have seats in the United Nations. We don't have any diplomatic liaison with them except through the Soviet Union. I was wondering if you would comment on that sort of approach and any other ideas we might take up?

DR. KISSINGER: I rather like this idea, I must say. But as a basic proposition, I think this is true: This is no necessary criticism of the State Department. I don't think we have been able to play variations on the same theme to bewilder the other side with the rapidity of our maneuvers as the Soviets have been able to do to us, and there are two reasons for this: One is that our leadership as a whole is not trained to think in integrated terms. We don't think in combination of political, military, and psychological factors. The Soviet leaders have thought about nothing else for 20 years. When our top people take office, they very often have to be briefed about the location of the geographic areas that they are responsible for, much less about any subtle psychological factors that might have something to do with it. Now when you deal with dedicated revolutionaries on this basis, it just won't work.

empiricists
 Another thing, it is the process of policy formulation where we are ~~imperialists~~. We forget there is a lead time in policy as much as there is lead time in weapons systems. We talk about policy as if it were universally true, as if you could apply it at any time as long as you can get it through governmental mechanisms. The process of getting it through governmental mechanisms is so cumbersome that by the time the thing emerges, it is a series of platitudes, at least the things that I

have been permitted to see. Maybe there are some that I haven't seen yet. So almost any NSC paper has to be renegotiated when it comes to applying it.

On the other hand, the process of getting it is so arduous that the people who do get it through suffer from the illusion that they really have policy. Time and again, I've told somebody, "This is what ought to be," and he pulled out a document and said, "We've got it right here. It's policy." Take the open sky proposal, when a number of the people who pushed that through came back from Geneva, they called me and they were very proud of themselves--and I think it was a rather good idea--and I told them that, unless they were on their toes, within six months no one would know any more who proposed what, at which point, and for what purpose because the Soviets would finesse it in any number of ways. And this is about what has happened.

We haven't made any new constructive proposal. All we have been doing is legalistic applications of this other thing. The Soviets have come up with five or six different versions. This is one of our chief drawbacks. We can't do it under the present organization.

QUESTION: I question a little bit this factor of giving anyone an ultimatum, that is our Government, or any political party in this country, and whether or not it would ever get the support of the people. I have felt many times in the last ten years and there was no doubt in my mind that that was the answer ever since 1945, just lay down an ultimatum if you meant it and could back it up, but do you really believe that could ever happen in a government like ours, a nation like ours, I mean being realistic?

DR. KISSINGER: Being realistic, since it didn't happen, it couldn't happen. But also being realistic, I think this is true: that on the whole the American people haven't been an obstacle to the leadership of the country. The only time when leadership ran into really tough public opposition was in Korea after the armistice negotiation, and this again seems to me to have been a question of leadership because casualties were happening every day while armistice negotiations were going on and for no discernible purpose that anyone could understand. This was a tough problem to face, and the miracle to me is not that there was public opposition but that the troops fought, and that the troops fought rather well during the armistice negotiations.

The additional thing to be said, of course, is that, while the public has never been any opposition, it also has not been a great support

because it doesn't think about foreign policy. This could have been an asset to a leadership, I think, if the President at that time had made it plain to the people what was involved.

Ordinarily I would decry ultimatums. This is against the American tradition, but the atomic bomb is also against every traditional experience of this country, and the implications posed by approaching nuclear parity were so terrible that, unless the leadership had the courage to tell the people, "Unless you are willing to support us now, you are going to be facing something horrible ten years from now," I would guess--you may know more about this than I--the people would have gone along. And one could have made the proposal so clear and which would have demonstrated so clearly that the Soviets would not have come along. I have never understood what we thought would happen after the Soviets had the atomic bomb. For what possible reason could the Soviets want the atomic bomb except to threaten to drop it on us? And simply to sit by and let this happen and say that after they have it, they will be more reasonable is beyond me, because nations really have fought for less.

The threat with which Napoleon confronted Britain when he took Antwerp wasn't a fraction of the threat the Soviets have developed by building an atomic bomb, and the British fought a 20-years war to get Antwerp.

This is not a very good answer. I personally think it could have been done, but it's hard to evaluate.

COLONEL BARRETT: Our time has run out. Dr. Kissinger, on behalf of the College, I wish to thank you for your presentation this morning.

(22 Aug 1956--250)K/ljt