

ADDRESS BY  
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TO THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
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*(off-the-record)*

A NATIONAL MILITARY PROGRAM

Gentlemen, it is a pleasure to return to the Council on Foreign Relations to discuss the subject of a national military program. It was my privilege to participate rather actively in the Council following World War II when I was at West Point. Since that time, overseas service has limited my opportunity to be with you and enjoy the stimulation of your company.

The topic which I bring you tonight is concerned with the building of a properly balanced national military program. In choosing the topic, I do not suggest that we do not have presently such a program. I personally think that we are doing quite well with our military preparations for the present. I am more concerned about the future as the burden of armaments increases with the rising cost of modern weapons systems. Then it will be increasingly important to have a logical methodology to assure that we are putting first things first in our budgets and neither underbuying nor overbuying in the various categories of our military requirements. We will need pretty clear methods for determining how much is enough and when we have reached the point of diminishing returns in developing deterrent strength. Considerations such as these have led me to try to identify the essential blocks required to construct an adequate military program, then to put them together to form a symmetrical structure.

The most serious problem confronting the United States today is how to remain secure in the face of the Communist Bloc threat, without at the same time destroying ourselves and our way of life through the weight of our military preparations. Withal, the basic objective of our national security policy is the preservation of the security of the United States and its fundamental values and institutions. In furtherance of this basic objective, our government seeks, by all means acceptable to the American people, ways of altering the international Communist movement to the end that it will no longer constitute a threat.

Experiences since World War II have impressed us with the need of an integrated national strategy blending all of our assets in a proportion best suited to the needs of the bi-polar situation. We recognize that an adequate response to Communist expansion is by no means exclusively military -- we must learn to use our political, economic, and ideological assets as well. In recognition of this need for an integrated strategy, we have built up a rather impressive organizational and procedural system for dealing with the problem. The National Security Council is the focal point of this system, where all Federal agencies involved in security-related matters bring their views to the council table. From this council table the national security program is developed as the point of departure for the national military program for which the Department of Defense is responsible.

We have today no formal, integrated national military program in documentary form. It exists, somewhat like the British Constitution, in an uncollected mass

of decisions, directives, precedents, and standard operating procedures existing within the Department of Defense and the subordinate Services. I should like to show how we might go about giving more formal expression to a program designed to meet the needs of the next few years.

A word about deterrence, which is inherent in any discussion of a national military program. The deterrent strength which we seek is that combination of force, physical and moral, which will produce in the mind of a possible aggressor recognition of the fact that any action against the interests of the United States will bring unpleasant and unprofitable consequences. The credibility of the probable reaction of the United States is an important part of the matter.

Not only must our deterrent reaction be plausible but it must be potentially tri-dimensional in character. I feel reasonably sure that our atomic-air retaliatory capability today is sufficiently impressive to deter a direct atomic attack on the continental United States. The Russians are quite convinced that, in the latter case, we would respond at once in kind. This retaliatory capability has obviously not been sufficient, however, to deter local aggression in Greece, Korea, and Vietnam. The Russians simply do not believe that we will start a global atomic war for anything less than our national survival. As a result, our atomic deterrent capability has been effective only in one dimension. It has been defective in that it is not tri-dimensional, lacking elements providing a suitable, credible response to aggression on the ground, in the air, and on the sea, any where, and all the time.

Now, to get on with the business of developing an outline for a national military program. Such a flexible program is easy to conceive in principle, but difficult to develop when it gets down to specific cases involving crucial decisions in allocating resources.

To be adequate, the national military program, as I conceive it, must make properly weighted provision for deterrence of general war, deterrence of local aggression, defeat of local aggression, and victory in general war -- victory of the kind which leads to a viable peace. This four-pointed program is fundamental to the theme which runs through my following remarks.

My reasoning goes something like this. The purpose of all military -- indeed, all governmental -- activities bearing upon security is to prevent general atomic war. Accepting that basic thought, I then move on to this corollary: as both sides in the bi-polar world accept this fact of the profitless character of general nuclear war, it becomes increasingly unlikely that either side will deliberately initiate such a war. However, that does not mean for a moment that Communism will renounce aggression as a tool of policy. Inherent in the nature of the Communist movement is a need for dynamism if it is to continue as a significant world force. Therefore, the threat of subversion and local aggression tends to become the most serious threat to world peace. These forms of attack are particularly dangerous, because the small aggression, if not arrested, may lead to the erosion of the Free World and to our loss, piecemeal, of that which we are pledged to defend. If resisted, it must be defeated promptly, otherwise the smoldering "brush fire" may lead to the general conflagration, to that general atomic war which it is our purpose to avoid. Consequently, I place immediately after the deterrence of general war, the mission of deterring, or winning quickly, any local aggression which may break out about the world. Only after meeting these requirements are we justified in attempting to satisfy the almost astronomical requirements, beyond the needs of deterrence, of fighting the big war. In any case, we are never justified in

seeking to be completely safe; reasonable security should determine the bounds of our military efforts. We must be willing to live boldly, accepting calculated risks if we would not degrade our civilization in seeking to allay our fears.

The difficulty of developing a national military program is complicated by the varying possibilities bearing on the use of nuclear weapons. I am sure that within this room there are many divergent views as to the requirement, the probability, and the over-all wisdom of employing nuclear weapons in various types of conflict. I would say that there are at least five or six possible situations arising from the use or non-use of atomic weapons which must be considered in determining the over-all adequacy of a national military program. The latter must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate itself to the decision to fight local wars with atomic weapons, without atomic weapons, or with atomic weapons restricted by certain ground rules. Similarly, in a major war it must recognize the possibility that our national interest at the time may impose limitations on the use of nuclear weapons which are difficult to anticipate in advance.

I would now like to consider the essential elements of a national military program designed, in order of priority, to deter general war, to deter or win local war, and finally to win a general war. What should be the components of such a program, and where should the emphasis be placed? Recognizing the danger of establishing priorities, I would like to enumerate what I consider to be the essential ingredients of this ideal program -- following somewhat an order of priority, but emphasizing that this priority cannot be preclusive. In other words, it is impossible to fail to provide in some degree for all the component elements of the program which I shall outline, but the weighting should be from the top down.

Always bearing in mind that our goal is reasonable security and not 100 percent safety, I would say that at the head of an adequate program must be the maintenance of military technological superiority over the Communist Bloc. We cannot long remain secure if we do not have the potentiality of outstripping the enemy in the quality of our weapons systems. The missile program so much discussed at the present time springs readily to mind as typical of the exploitation of technology to extend the tactical and strategical capabilities of armies, navies, and air forces. We must never relax our efforts, being sure that the enemy is doing his best.

Next, it is hardly necessary to emphasize the requirement for an atomic delivery system, capable of effective and rapid retaliation against any enemy who initiates general atomic hostilities. At the present time, this atomic delivery capability resides only in the long and medium-range bomber, but it will be reinforced in the course of the coming years by the long and medium-range missiles now under design and development. So obvious is the need for this element in our program that we run the danger of considering that it is sufficient in itself for national security. I hope that my subsequent remarks will dispel any such thought. As the President said in his State of the Union Message of 6 January 1955: ". . . we must stay alert to the fact that undue reliance on one weapon or preparation for only one kind of warfare simply invites an enemy to resort to another. We must, therefore, keep in our armed forces balance and flexibility adequate for our purposes and objectives." There are too many situations to which an atomic bomb is no appropriate response. What, for instance, is our atomic superiority doing to solve our current problems in the Middle East? We will be derelict in the use of our tremendous potential

for guiding this world if our military means of suasion are limited to the threat of atomic bombardment to gain our point in the international debate.

The obvious ability to strike hard and decisively, if attacked, against the sources of enemy strength should be accompanied by an equally unmistakable capability to inflict heavy losses on enemy bombers if they attack our own homeland. This requirement calls for a continental defense system, including both active and passive measures strong enough to discourage any enemy from attempting a crippling blow at our country. In the missile field, the Army is expending vast sums of money and allocating considerable numbers of personnel to improve the defense of our most vital centers. At the same time, the Air Force is improving its fighter-interceptor defense and is interested in developing interceptor-type missiles. This is an area in which it is difficult to know how much is enough in meeting the needs of deterrence and domestic peace of mind. It is easy to go overboard in spending for continental defense to the detriment of the more important offensive aspects of our military program. Any serious effort to avoid any risk and to be perfectly safe at home could have disastrous results to the balance of our program.

An equally vital element in our deterrent system is represented by Army, Navy, and Air Force units deployed abroad, ready for sustained combat in the discharge of our international obligations. These forces deployed along the Iron and Bamboo Curtains are a constant reminder to the Soviet Bloc of our determination to defend in place. It is true that these forces are not large in number, but they are sufficient to provide this deterrent reminder and at the same time to maintain the morale and confidence of those countries which live constantly under the Communist guns.

While the presence of the forces abroad are essential to the deterrence of war, they are to a degree potential hostages if the deterrent fails and war occurs. If suddenly attacked, these forces must immediately fight for their lives, as they will be under heavy pressure by superior forces from the outset of hostilities. Consequently, we must maintain as a part of our national military program ready forces of the Army, Navy, and Air Force in reserve, capable of reinforcing rapidly the areas where our forces are presently deployed. All of our forces, those deployed and those in reserve, must have the capability of employing atomic weapons in the manner authorized at the time. Behind them, we shall need a logistical back-up, readily available to support them in action for an indefinite period of time.

I believe we can and should improve our readiness to react quickly to surprise local aggression. The Army itself does not have the organic strategic mobility to organize its own movement overseas. For overseas transport, the Army is a hitch-hiker, dependent upon the Navy for ships and upon the Air Force for aircraft. The sea transport requirements of the Army are not particularly hard to meet, but exclusive dependence on that form of transport sets limits to the rapidity of our reaction. As for strategic air transport, we need integrated plans for the movement of sizable Army forces to such potential trouble spots as Southeast Asia and the Middle East, utilizing not only the organic transportation of the Air Force but also the resources of civilian aviation. On paper, we have considerable assets in 4-engine civil aircraft which could be made available for such movements. However, I know from experience that no airlift operation can get off the ground in time without a great deal of advance planning and rehearsals. I recognize, of course, the objections to a disruption of civil air transport, which would be justified only in time of real emergency.

Our national military program must make some provision for military and economic aid to essential allies. Aid programs must be closely related to our military requirements, although political considerations cannot be completely ignored. Generally speaking, we desire one of three levels of military strength in the countries which we assist. As a minimum, we want all these countries to have the necessary military strength to assure internal stability and order. Beyond this minimum level sought in all countries, we wish in some instances to develop the capability of self-defense against local military aggression. Vietnam and South Korea are examples of this category of country. Finally, in a rather restricted group of countries, largely those of the NATO bloc, we seek to develop allies who can make a significant and prolonged contribution in case of general war.

It is easy to be critical of our military aid programs and of their effectiveness. Undoubtedly, with the benefit of hindsight, we could have improved these programs and obtained greater results for the effort and money expended. However, I would remind you that we have developed important indigenous strength in many countries. Today, the Army is engaged in training, directly or indirectly, over 200 foreign divisions. I would not overstate their military value, because they vary widely in quality from country to country. But this strength, in the aggregate, is an important asset, particularly as a deterrent to subversion and local aggression.

At this point, I would call your attention to a significant fact; namely, that except for our research and development efforts, the top priority elements of the national military program which we have discussed thus far have all been forces in being. Let me enumerate them once more: the atomic-delivery system, the continental-defense system, our overseas deployments, our ready forces to

back up these deployments and to meet local aggression, and finally the indigenous forces supported by our aid programs. All of these items represent visible, tangible strength, which in their totality we hope will create the deterrent impression which is the primary objective of our entire military effort.

In my opinion, we should spend our defense money so as to make thoroughly ample provision for these forces in being. If supported by such non-military factors as a sound economy, unity of purpose, and resolute national leadership, the resulting military posture should give us a reasonable assurance of maintaining the peace on acceptable terms. But, if we are prudent, we will not cut off our national military program at this point. It may turn out that we have underestimated the requirements of deterrence, and that local or general war does, in fact, ensue. We cannot be sure of the duration or ultimate requirements of such a war whether large or small. Arguments about the duration of future war usually center about the question of when and how atomic weapons will be employed. There are those who feel that any significant war will be initiated by an atomic attack on D-day, that the first few hours and days will be decisive, and that the aftermath will be only the picking up of the pieces. Such an atomic attack -- if it takes place as described -- would indeed entail vast destruction and would preclude an orderly mobilization and the deployment on schedule of military forces earmarked for overseas. I do not contend that this is not a possible concept, but I reject it as an exclusive concept and as the exclusive basis for military planning. I have often had occasion to say that to put all of our effort into the preparation for this short, violent type of nuclear war would be to behave like a prize fighter who enters a fight to the finish prepared to fight only one round.

Plainly, if we are prudent, we must have some back-up strength to meet the other variations of war which may well occur. For example, even if general nuclear war develops, it is not certain that the atomic attack will come on the first day, or that atomic weapons will be used without restriction. I am often reminded of the "phony war" which lasted from September 1939 until April 1940, during which time, for reasons of self-interest shared by both sides, the Germans, the French, and the British maintained a self-imposed restraint of active conflict until Germany determined that it was to her interest to break the tacit armistice. Similarly, it is entirely possible in some future situation that both sides will restrict the employment of atomic weapons so that there would be little or no damage to our mobilization base at home. Finally, we may never fight the big atomic war at all; the critical military problem may quite possibly be the prompt suppression of local aggression. In the latter case, a so-called "conventional" mobilization would proceed undisturbed. Consequently, I say that we must, as an element of our program, make some provision for reserve forces and their logistic support.

Furthermore, we must in our program provide stockpiles of equipment for forces of the United States and of selected allies, consistent with meeting the early requirements of the various types of warfare which we have contemplated. These stocks should be held at a minimum, because stockpiling is an expensive business; however, we cannot accept a vacuum in the logistic system in the period when combat is consuming existing stocks and before new military production can become available. So I say that, behind our active forces, we need a certain amount of reserve strength in terms of trained manpower, stockpiled equipment, mothballed production lines, and a training base capable of expansion to meet the requirements of war.

It is my thesis that if adequate provision is made for the foregoing requirements, we shall have a balanced national military program capable of discharging its part in the integrated national strategy we have considered. We will have a good chance to deter war, both general and local, and to win local war quickly. We will also have made prudent provision for survival in the case of atomic attack. Finally, we will have produced an outline of practical value for the military planners in deciding how to use our national resources.

This decision as to how to apply resources becomes harder as time goes on. The extreme costliness of the weapons systems which we are developing creates staggering charges against the Federal treasury. In making these decisions, I know of only one method of guidance; namely, to adhere to the principles and priorities which we have developed in our discussion of the national military program. Our paramount effort must go to those items which add to the deterrent effect of our military posture. Furthermore, we cannot emphasize one element, such as our strategic atomic-delivery system, to the exclusion of other indispensable parts of the program. As I have said, I am increasingly impressed with the fact that deterrence must be tri-dimensional in nature. It must exist on the ground, in the air, and on the sea -- we can accept no chink in our armor of deterrence. Consequently, adequate expenditure of effort must go to all of those items of the national military program, which are, in essence, deterrent in nature. Only after assuring that the requirements of deterrence have been met are we justified in satisfying needs predicated on the possible failure of deterrence.

Furthermore, the national military program must be suitable for flexible application to unforeseen situations, not frozen to any one concept of future war. It cannot and should not be geared to any single weapons system, strategic concept, or combination of allies. It must be capable of supporting our national policy in all situations. It should attract rather than repel essential allies. It should include all reasonable measures to prevent general and local war. Finally, our program should contain the potentiality of waging any war, large or small, in such a way as to assure a better world than the one which existed before the fateful decision to resort to arms.

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