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TRANSCRIPT OF
REMARKS BY
GENERAL MAXWELL D. TAYLOR
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY
AT THE JOINT CIVILIAN ORIENTATION CONFERENCE NO. 23
ROOM 3E-869, THE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON, D. C.
THURSDAY, 4 OCTOBER 1956

THE UNITED STATES ARMY

Gentlemen, I am very happy to reinforce the welcome which Secretary Finucane has given you in the name of the Army and to express my great appreciation for your interest in military matters.

As Chief of Staff I frequently find myself on the soap box undertaking to explain the roles and missions of the Army and explain what it is up to. In that respect I am reminded of my early days when I was attending West Point. I would return on furlough to my home and talk to my grandfather. Grandfather was really responsible for my martial ambitions, having been a private and corporal in the Civil War. So I learned a great deal about the war from him in my younger days, and then as I would come back he would show a reciprocal interest in the Army to which I belonged. But when I got through explaining to grandfather what we were doing at West Point and why, he always faced me with a question very difficult to answer: "But, son, I don't see what you soldiers do when there is nobody to fight." I have a feeling that that question, a very legitimate one, is always in the back of the minds of our citizens. Hence, as I go about I try to explain what all this drilling is that goes on in the Army when there is nobody to shoot at, at least for the moment.

I would say there is a very significant word that is heard over and over again in our military councils in the Pentagon. That word is "deterrence." It is not a new word in the dictionary, but it is certainly one that occurs with increasing frequency as we discuss our world-wide strategy. I think it is fair to say that all of the Services are as one in recognizing the fact that our utility, the justification for our existence, is strangely enough not to fight wars, but to prevent wars. Everything we do, everything we think, every dollar we spend, and all of the energy we put into our operations should be tied directly or indirectly to the prevention of war.

Now that rather simple concept has become all the clearer to us as we reflect upon the consequences of general atomic war. Certainly we recognize that we have either reached the point, or are approaching the condition, where both of the two great power blocs have sufficient atomic power and sufficient atomic delivery capability to make general atomic war a matter of self destruction or mutual suicide. Hence, as military men, our primary purpose should be to prevent that great atomic war which nobody can truly win.

That leads us to a second thought which follows logically out of the first premise, namely, that although that condition of relative balance in nuclear capability may deter reasonable governments from ever embarking deliberately on atomic war, it is far from clear that the Communist world will renounce power and military methods as deliberate instruments of policy. However, it

appears increasingly likely that the form will be different, that the emphasis will be placed upon the techniques of subversion, coup d'etat, civil war, and other pressures at the soft spots about the Communist periphery. Hence, we have a growing feeling of the great importance of being ready for something less than general atomic war. We believe that if we are not prepared for the lesser aggressions we are in danger then of losing the Free World piecemeal. If we do not resist the lesser aggressions, or if we resist them in a slow and dilatory manner, then the small conflict may expand into the great nuclear war which it is our purpose to avoid.

Hence, right after the need to prevent general atomic war we must possess concurrent ability to prevent or to suppress quickly anything less than the great war. Therefore, deterrence of the big war and the little war are concomitant obligations and responsibilities of the three Services.

Now with that general background, I would like to pose the question: What does the Army contribute to this deterrence of war? I would like to point out several categories of activities in which we are involved, activities which in my judgment do contribute, directly or indirectly, to deterrence. First, the Army lives largely overseas. Some 40 percent of our personnel are outside the United States in 73 different countries. However, our major concentrations of force are in Europe and in the Far East. In Europe, we have five divisions which make up our Seventh Army. In the Far East, we have three

divisions, two of which constitute the I Corps and are deployed in Korea. Now certainly these deployed forces facing the Iron and the Bamboo Curtains are effective instruments for the deterrence of war because they are a reminder to any aggressor in these areas that any movement forward will be met readily by the armed might of the United States. Most assuredly then we maintain these divisions at 100 percent strength. We give them the best officers and weapons we can obtain, and I am happy to report you can be proud of your overseas forces. They are instantly ready for action, and they set a standard in the area in which they are deployed which guides, directs, and influences their neighbor's forces which also stand guard along the Communist front.

Now in my judgment it is important that these deployments be maintained in first class condition and that they represent significant military strength. In Europe, for example, we hear talk of "trip wire" or token forces. I do not feel that these will ever fill our requirement for security because we must have something visibly ready which will deter any attempt on the part of the enemy to move quickly by surprise, say, into Western Europe. Furthermore, trip wire forces would be so weak that they could not hold an aggressor sufficiently long for us to use our most effective weapons. The continued presence of strong ground forces is necessary to both deterrence of aggression and successful military operations in the event of conflict.

In Korea, as I mentioned, we have a corps still facing the Communists

which are only 4,000 yards away. The Communists still have something over 500,000 troops in North Korea, a definite threat to us although there is certainly no present indication of any desire to renew the conflict there. We have developed the Korean Republic's Army into a force of 20 divisions plus one Marine division. These 21 divisions man almost the entire battle-front facing the Communists. Our corps is held back as a hardhitting reserve force ready to enter action if hostilities are ever renewed. Meanwhile, it sets the standard for the ROK Army alongside it.

So much for the Army's overseas deployments, which are certainly a contribution to deterrence. Behind these overseas deployments we must also have military strength at home, something of a "fire brigade force" ready to send out into areas where our troops are not deployed overseas. Hence we maintain in the United States a number of divisions which are combat-ready and prepared to move to a port or airfield, depending upon the means of deployment. For strategic movement, of course, the Army is really a hitchhiker, dependent on its friends, the Navy and the Air Force, and we work very closely with those two Services in developing plans and procedures for a quick movement to any threatened area. The Air Force represents our greatest hope to get there quickly because we are constantly impressed with the need of quickly arriving on the spot and reacting promptly, if we are going to react at all. I have often had occasion to mention that Korea was probably the only area in which

the Communists could have challenged us in the peripheral areas where we could have arrived there in time. We got there in time because we had our force in Japan nearby. Unfortunately, as we look about the world and see areas like Southeast Asia, we have no such advantage of forces pre-located now. Hence, the Army Strategic Reserve here at home must be highly mobile and ready to go.

I think it is significant that we recently activated a new airborne division thereby replacing an infantry division. This unit is the 101st Airborne Division which with its new structure will greatly reduce airlift requirements, and for the first time will give us a division that is 100 percent air transportable. This indicates the ideal we have set for all of our Army divisions of the United States.

I should mention, of course, in talking about reaction to peripheral situations, the importance of indigenous forces, of having allies in these countries who can do something for themselves. That is the great military justification for our military aid program. At a minimum we are trying to create indigenous strength that is sufficient to maintain local internal order or perhaps something better, namely, to hold back Communist aggression until such time as we might come in, if that is the national decision.

I think you may be surprised at the strength of the Army effort in developing the ground forces of our allied nations. We are training or contributing to the development of over 200 foreign divisions. This is a very substantial

force, a real asset on the side of the Free World.

The next Army activity which I would like to comment on is our reserve program at home. We have always been deeply concerned over the absence of trained manpower that should be available quickly in case of an emergency. I am happy to say I think we are making progress in developing our Army Reserve and also in improving the National Guard. We have set as our goal reserve combat readiness within the first six months of any war, feeling that this is the only acceptable time lag to prepare additional forces to back up the active Army. We think that the Reserve Forces Act of 1955, while lacking mandatory provision for serving with the Armed Forces, is definitely a stride forward. We have been working very hard to exploit this act to the maximum.

Now the final element contributing to deterrence, which I would like to mention briefly, is the Army portion of the continental air defense. We recognize, of course, that to have a great nuclear striking power is only part of the problem. We know that it is the other fellow who will initiate any war of which we can conceive, and we may well receive the attack of his bombers as the first indication of the outbreak of war. Hence the growing effort which the Army, Navy, and Air Force are placing in continental defense. Our continental air defense is under the Continental Air Command headed by General Partridge of the Air Force. Underneath that command are all of the Army antiaircraft battalions. These battalions are increasing in size, compass, and effectiveness

in proportion to the increase in number and quality of our missiles. We are proud of the NIKE I missile which many of you have seen or will see deployed around our cities. We anticipate a constant improvement in our missiles system and hence a mounting capability to assure an enemy that if he attacks us he will pay a prohibitive price. I might say, as Dr. Furnas pointed out, these are also increasing our budgetary problems enormously because all of these things are vastly expensive. Thus it is very difficult to know how much is enough in such a field as continental defense.

In closing, I would like to make the following point: People ask me how will the Army accomplish its missions under modern conditions of war? Have the principles changed essentially in determining victory in battle on the ground? I am afraid I sound reactionary sometimes when I say "No, the same principles that won for Napoleon will win for us -- firepower, mobility, and good people." Firepower we are obtaining in the modern Army to a degree never imagined by Napoleon or any other soldier of the past. We are achieving it by incorporating atomic weapons into our organizational structure, so that atomic weapons are a common weapon system, ever available to us. We are securing mobility by increasing the quality of our equipment both on the ground and in the air. The Army is very interested in its aviation program which provides us with internal mobility through the use of air vehicles on the battlefield. I believe there have been many misunderstandings about our goal because I am

sometimes charged with trying to compete with the Air Force. I can assure you that is not the case. The only kind of aircraft or helicopter that the Army wants is the small light plane that can take off from unprepared airfields, land in cow pastures and continue to operate. It is true that modern technology is improving, increasing the size and the performance of planes that can do that kind of thing, but it is inherent in the Army demand that the airplane live with us on the battlefield. The kind of plane we want must respond immediately to requirements of the ground commander.

The third and final component of the formula for victory is good people. Of course, that applies to every operation that man conducts. But the modern Army is a challenging Army requiring a wide gamut of skills. The Army offers a promising career and a satisfying life to men of many types and many capabilities. So I go about the country, and to all who will listen I proclaim the slogan, "Let's put the best heads of America in the Army caps of tomorrow." I hope when you gentlemen return to your home regions you will help me just a little in this respect.

Thank you very much.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

VOICE: General Taylor, several years ago we heard a great deal of talk about brainwashing tactics, etc., and the programs the Army adopted to train its personnel to resist that. Would you care to comment on that?

GENERAL TAYLOR: Would you repeat that? I missed a critical word.

VOICE: The brainwashing technique, you know, used against the soldiers in Korea and the present program.

GENERAL TAYLOR: As you know, a great deal of attention and study was devoted to that question to determine just what could be done practically. It resulted, of course, in the Code of Conduct which has been promulgated and is a basis for training in all Services. We have taken very seriously the findings of the committee, and wherever we see ways of introducing counter techniques within our training program we have done so.

VOICE: There is considerable criticism that in the over-all program we have put too much dependence on our armed strength and on money we may provide foreign countries. Could you suggest what the Army is doing in a psychological way to educate its own personnel and foreign peoples on what it is we are defending?

GENERAL TAYLOR: We certainly recognize the fact that a soldier is no better than his belief in his cause. We are constantly using our internal education system to explain to our soldiers the "why" of what they do. Before we send troops to Europe or the Far East there is an intensive period of indoctrination, for lack of a better word, to explain why it is important to go to Korea, and why it is important to go to Europe. When I commanded the Eighth Army we put tremendous effort in explaining to the soldiers that it is really worthwhile sitting on the hilltop hour after hour, day after day. I think we did fairly well.

VOICE: The other part is what are we doing in the line of educating foreign populations? What is the Army doing?

GENERAL TAYLOR: The Army is not in that business, frankly. That is somebody else's job.

VOICE: How satisfied are you with the 68 percent slice combat of your men?

GENERAL TAYLOR: How's that?

VOICE: We heard earlier there was 68 percent of the men were actually infantry or riflemen. How satisfied are you with a 68 percent slice of the pie?

GENERAL TAYLOR: I think that it is pretty good. There is a great mistake, gentlemen, in assuming that you get better as you reduce your noncombat

strength. Obviously there is some balance which should be maintained. If you go too low you are leaning on a support system that will collapse in emergency. So only by experience and common sense can you strike a balance. I have frequently pointed out, however, as we obtain more modern weapons and use atomic weapons freely on the battlefield the percentage of combat strength to support strength is likely to go down for a variety of reasons.

VOICE: Is that comparable to the Russian slice or—

GENERAL TAYLOR: There is absolutely no basis of comparison between our slice and anybody else's slice because the fundamental question is how far are you from home, and we are always a hell of a long way!

VOICE: General, what is the comparison in firepower between our unit and a comparable unit in Russia?

GENERAL TAYLOR: We know of no Russian unit that will have anything like what we are putting in our new units. I would qualify that by saying there are a lot of things they have we don't know about the Soviet Union.

VOICE: General, we have heard a lot of editorial comments divergent on the ability and combat readiness of these foreign divisions. Can you comment on that?

GENERAL TAYLOR: There is a tremendous disparity between the readiness of the divisions which I mentioned. Two hundred divisions sounds like a lot of force, and it is. But as you very rightly suggest, there is a great

difference in the capability of one of our divisions and say a British division, Iranian division, etc. So all I can say is they vary from very good to almost nominal type of divisions.

VOICE: General Taylor, we have heard that the six months reserve training program is not satisfactory. Is that due to lack of publicity?

GENERAL TAYLOR: I would say definitely not. I do not know of a single activity of the Department of Defense that has received more effort, more publicity, more salesmanship -- if that is the word, than this particular program. Actually we think it has done quite well considering the fact there has been no compulsion in the program.

VOICE: General, is most of the work in developing indigenous divisions in Western Europe?

GENERAL TAYLOR: No, sir, it is world-wide. Actually in Asia, numbers-wise, I would say we probably have more indigenous divisions. I was about to say the same, but probably not. But Korea, Taiwan, Southeast Asia are important areas of military activity on our part.