

Speech file

THE CITIZEN AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

Speech to be delivered in Los Angeles, Monday, April 18th
before the Los Angeles Freedom Club.

I have chosen as my theme tonight, "The Citizen and National Defense". At a time when the public concern over national defense is becoming more and more evident in the press, in the Congress and in private discussion, it appears timely to take stock of the defense situation, particularly, as it relates to the responsibilities of the individual citizen.

"Wherever I go about the country I am impressed by the confusion which exists in the minds of many of our citizens as to the fundamental factors ^{involving} affecting our national security. I am reminded a little of my old grandfather, who as a civil war veteran followed my early military career with intense interest. When I would return to visit him as a very green second lieutenant he would question me somewhat as follows: "Son, what is all this drilling about that you are doing in the Army? What are you soldiers doing now when there is no war going on?"

It seems to me that the public today is asking the Armed Services a somewhat similar question, such as, "What are all these military preparations about? What are they intended to accomplish and why do they cost so much?"

All of these are valid questions which are entitled to a simple and straight-forward answer. Unfortunately, the answer is often a babel of contending opinions, voiced by experts of varying degrees of authenticity. Regardless of the correctness

of the answer, it is often couched in technical and professional terms difficult for the average citizen to understand regardless of the sincerity of his interest. Consequently, many of us are inclined to turn away from the problem with the discouraged feeling that its elements are beyond the comprehension of the layman.

I have never agreed that there is any particular mystery about important military subjects. It was to state the defense problem in lay terms that I undertook to write my recent book "The Uncertain Trumpet". ~~X~~ It is my conviction that it is possible to express all of the basic problems in National Defense in simple terms thoroughly understandable ^{for} ~~by~~ any thoughtful citizen. If such were not the case we would be obliged to confess that our whole system of government is impossible insofar it relates to the control of military policy by civilian authority. Our country has always been devoted to the principle of civilian control of the military. This control to be effective implies an understanding of the issues by civilian leaders who bear the responsibility for deciding them. Normally it is the President and the Secretary of Defense, both civilians, who must make the critical decisions affecting ~~national~~ security at the national policy level. If they are to discharge their duty intelligently, they must have a clear understanding of all the factors entering into the military problem. This requirement implies that these problems indeed can be expressed in simple terms for presentation to them by the senior men in uniform, ~~for their decision~~. How effective the

military leaders have been in setting forth their case ~~is~~
~~simple~~ for civilian decision, I will not undertake to
say. But I am sure the job can be done, indeed must be done,
if our present system of governmental control of the military
is to succeed.

The foregoing words ^{are} ~~have been~~ intended to encourage our
citizens to study military affairs and to take intelligent sides
with regard to the issues. We cannot do our duty and be ~~a~~ fence
sitter ^{with} respect to matters which involve the very existence
of the Nation. What are some of the principal issues which we
need to recognize and assess? The most general one perhaps is
to decide how ^{in general} we are doing in National Defense. What strategy
are we pursuing? What kind of military forces do we have and
are they adequate to carry out the intended strategy and thus
to contribute to attaining our national objectives? Are all
~~these~~ ^{these} forces necessary or can we get along without some of them?

Admittedly it is difficult to answer such questions in a
few paragraphs. But having said there is a simple way to explain
such matters I must have a go at it.

The military strategy which the United States has been pur-
suing since 1945 is one of Massive Retaliation. Our use of atomic
weapons at the end of World War II against Japan convinced many
or most of our leaders that the United States had in these wea-
pons a means of imposing an American peace upon the rest of the
World. Particularly at a time when we had ^a monopoly of these
weapons, they seemed to have an absolute character surpassing all
other forms of military force in effectiveness and cheapness.

Impressed by their advantages we proceeded to disband most of the veteran forces which had won World War II and embarked upon a military strategy which placed primary reliance upon the use or the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction. We indicated that we were prepared to use these weapons in order to maintain the peace on American terms.

It is true that subsequent events showed the inadequacy of such a strategy to cope with many military situations. Korea afforded the most striking example of its failure. In this conflict we decided for reasons sufficient to our responsible leaders at the time, to wage a so-called conventional war without using atomic weapons even though our monopoly still existed. In spite of the overwhelming superiority of the United States in the air and on the sea, Korea was a bitter war of ground forces where the victory was determined by the location of the infantry front line along the rugged Korean hilltops. The fluctuations of contact on the ground provided the measure of ^{victory} success.

Other examples arose to show the limited effectiveness of the strategy of Massive Retaliation. Heavy atomic weapons did nothing to solve the challenges of Vietnam, Taiwan, the Middle East or Berlin. Nevertheless, these experiences which should have provoked a reexamination of military policy have not been sufficient to shake our ^{official} reliance on Massive Retaliation as our primary strategic concept. Every defense budget in recent years has testified to this continued reliance. Each year we have spent approximately two thirds of our money on weapons which are applicable only to general atomic war. I refer to

such weapons as our long-range bombers, our big naval carriers which provide transport for such bombers, our long-range and medium-range missiles, our submarine warfare forces, our overseas deployments in Europe and our air defense system in the continental United States. All of these represent weapons or weapon systems with primary if not exclusive use in general atomic war. They are not the kind of weapons applicable to situations short of a nuclear struggle for survival with the Communist Bloc.

This emphasis on general war forces has necessarily been accompanied by a comparative neglect of those forces which would be called upon to fight limited wars. These forces are represented primarily by the Army, by the Marines and by certain elements of the Navy and of the Air Force. When the money has run short or out, these are the forces which have been skimmed. As a result, the United States Army has not been reequipped to any great extent since World War II. Our soldiers are often ^{armed} equipped with weapons which are far from being the best obtainable in the equipment market. In contrast the Soviet Army has been completely reequipped at least once since World War II and in many cases is receiving a second round of new, postwar weapons. Our ground forces have suffered not only from shortages of modern equipment but also from frequent reductions in numerical strength. During my four years as Chief of Staff the Army dropped from a little over a million men to 870,000. This reduction of strength has required a thinning even of our front line units facing the Communists in Korea and deployed along the Iron Curtain in Europe.

use of barbarian mercenaries in the

In Korea we have been obliged to fill the gaps in the ranks of United States divisions by incorporating individual Korean soldiers, a practice uncomfortably remindful of the declining days of the Roman legions.

Another characteristic of the period has been the frozen character of the defense budgets which provide the financial means to build the forces necessary to ~~execute the military strategy~~ ^{for our defense.} *but* Throughout recent years the dollar value of the budget has hovered around 40 to 41 billion dollars. Internally there has been a rigid allocation of funds according to a fixed ratio between the Army, Navy and the Air Force. The Army has always got about 23%, the Navy about 28% and the Air Forces about 46% of the annual budget. While we ^{strange} may debate what the proper percentage should be, it does appear that each year the percentage should be the same. Presumably the military budget ought to take cognizance of changing world events and reflect these changes in the allocation of funds. As there has been no lack of events in recent years with an obvious military impact, the absence of change in the budget is unhappily suggestive of an absence of fresh thought with regard to the changing requirements of National Defense.

A summary reply then to the question of how we are doing in National Defense would be about as follows. In the pursuit of a strategy of Massive Retaliation we have accumulated a very substantial retaliatory force based largely upon the long-range bombers of the Air Force and of the Navy. We are beginning to supplement these bombers with long and medium-range missiles but

they will not be the preponderant strategic weapon for several years. These retaliatory weapons are very expensive and we have been obliged to develop them under fixed budget ceilings. To stay within the ceiling, and pay the bill for the big weapons, it has been necessary to ^{give} ~~pay~~ comparatively little attention to the requirements of limited wars and of those military forces which would cope with such situations. The ^AArmy at home and abroad has shrunk in numbers without the compensation of the modernization of its equipment. We have not been able to do anything about developing a missile defense of the United States and or about providing fall-out protection for the civilian population.

So much then for how we are doing in National Defense. The next obvious question is, "Are we doing well enough in relation to the threat?"

Before we can answer that question I think we should go back and ask another, namely, what changes have occurred in recent years which have a bearing upon our national security? Only if we recognize these changes and take them into account can we decide if our military measures are adequate to the threat.

The first change of importance has been the loss by the United States of technological superiority over the USSR in many important military and scientific fields. For the moment, I refer primarily to the Soviet progress in atomic weapons and the long-range missiles for the delivery of atomic warheads. Though I am always skeptical of information tending to inflate the strength of an enemy, I have reluctantly been obliged to accept the reality and the significance of the Soviet ^{missile} progress.

The fact that the Soviets probably have or will soon have more and better long-range missiles than we is all the more

significant because the United States does not have or is not presently planning an effective anti-missile defense. This defensive ^{weakened} gap in our military program is ^{an important} part of the so-called missile gap which is receiving much public attention today.

Since the United States will not strike the first atomic blow, the need for a missile defense either to deter or ward off attack is perfectly clear. In anticipation of this need the Nike-Zeus anti-missile has been under development for a number of years and its tests have been most encouraging. But it has never been funded for production.

These two new factors, the Soviet offensive missile strength and the non-existent United States missile defense, combine to put our country in a very exposed position during the next few years. They represent factors changing the balance of military power which must be taken into account in our military and political planning. They create a condition of exposure to possible defeat in general war, and ~~it~~ increasing vulnerability to atomic blackmail. This latter vulnerability is enhanced by our continued inferiority to the Communist bloc in conventional ground forces, ^{the} a third important factor which must be taken into account in appraising our military position. To be doing well enough in National Defense we must have some plans for offsetting the effects of the missile gap and our continued inferiority on the ground.

The inquiring citizen will find it difficult to decide whether or not adequate off-setting actions are being taken. A point which will baffle the investigators is the absence of goals in our military programs. No place can you find an answer

to the question of how much is enough
much do we really need in terms of bomb
divisions and the like? We have never agreed
and hence have never constructed our defense
ingful terms. ^{Thus,} Hence, I cannot give you a simple
very natural question.

(A related deficiency in the conduct of our defense business is the absence of any set of books to show whether our military capabilities are in balance with our political commitments. As a personal reminder when I was Chief of Staff, I kept a chart on my wall showing the political commitments which we had undertaken around the world which had military implications. This chart reminded me that we have obligations to between 40 and 50 nations, ^{and that} any or all of ^{these obligations} which might require military force for their discharge. They include our obligations under such agreements as the North Atlantic Treaty, the Rio Treaty, the Anzac Treaty, the Southeast-Asia Treaty, as well as a number of bilateral agreements with individual countries. To answer whether we are doing well enough in national defense will require a careful study of the possible military actions which might grow out of these commitments. Thereafter, we should look at the military forces available to us at any given moment and ask ourselves, are they ^{likely to be} sufficient? Until some such systematic balancing of the books takes place I am afraid that the well intentioned citizen ^{can never reach} ~~will have difficulty in reaching~~ a qualified conclusion as to the adequacy of our military forces.

An added difficulty in reaching ^{such} a conclusion is the limited information available on the possible enemy. We can count our

friends who count on us and hence have an idea of where and to whom our military help might go. But how much will be needed there? What is the measure of the Communist military reaction?

An honest answer is that we don't know much in detail. But we do know that the Communist are doing their utmost to outstrip us in practically every significant area of international competition. We can safely count on the fact that they are doing their best in the military field. Can we say as much?

In the light of the ^{inadequacy or at least the} uncertainty of our military strength to match our commitments particularly in view of the impressive military progress of the Soviets, what should we do about it? Should we stand pat on what we have been doing or should we make some changes? ~~At~~ ^{not} at a minimum should we [^] take another hard look at our military policy and strategy?

This is indeed a capital question, one about which every citizen is entitled to an opinion. The opinion, however, should be an ^N enlightened one taking into account the fallacies which ^{often} obscure clear thinking on National Defense. One hears these fallacies bandied about daily as if they were truisms beyond challenge. To give a few examples for what I mean, here is a favorite, sometimes called "The Great Fallacy". It is to the effect that if we make due preparations for general atomic war, we are ready for any kind of military challenge. The statement of course ignores the obvious uselessness of megaton weapons in coping with situations such as the ones we ^{have} confronted in such places as Korea, Lebanon and Berlin. It is like suggesting that we

hand. grenades

should arm the Los Angeles Police exclusively with high-powered rifles and then expect them to cope effectively with every form of crime and misdemeanor.

Growing out of this fallacy is one to the effect that the Communist outnumber us, hence that it is impossible for us to meet them man for man on the ground. To expose this myth I once went to the trouble of having a tabulation made representing an estimate of the men of military age in the Communist and Free World areas. It shows an advantage on the Free World side of 156.9 millions as against 145.4 millions for the Communist bloc. In making this tabulation there is no suggestion that we should ~~contemplate~~ ^{consider} putting all these men into uniforms and giving them guns. It does, however, expose the myth that on a headcount the Communists are hopelessly superior to us. Our present inferiority on the ground is a self-imposed one.

Since the raising and maintaining of military manpower is always an unpopular business, it encourages another fallacy alleging that modern weapons reduce the need for military manpower. In the case of the Army, at least, this also is simply not true. Because of their complicated nature, the new weapons which we are introducing into the armed services inevitably require far more personnel for their supply, repair and maintenance. The possible use of atomic weapons requires greater dispersion of all military formations and installations, with a consequent increase in the need for manpower. Finally, the incalculable losses of life which would occur in nuclear warfare could justify the maintenance of almost unlimited reserves to fill the anticipated gaps in military and civilian ranks. A final related point is

that the new weapons require not only increased manpower, but also improved manpower in terms of intelligence, initiative and adaptability to face situations in war which will try the staunchest heart.

One other fallacy is that we cannot afford dual sets of forces, one to fight atomic wars and another non-atomic wars. The answer to this fallacy is that no one suggests two sets of forces. Rather our existing units should have what I call an "either/or" capability, in other words a readiness to fight with or without atomic weapons. The Army has followed that policy and has today many weapons which fire both a conventional and an atomic round. However, in my judgement the need to emphasize the continued ability to fight conventional warfare is increasing with the world-wide fear of the consequences of any use of atomic weapons. With this trend the likelihood of the immediate use of atomic weapons in limited war seems to me to decline toward the vanishing point.

The foregoing represent only a few of the fallacies which are current in military discussions, I cite them merely as illustrative of the pitfalls which the earnest citizen must avoid if he is to reach sound conclusions.

To recognize that there have been fallacies in our past military thinking is in a sense to recognize that a thorough reappraisal of our military strategy is required. It is in insisting upon such a reexamination that a citizen can render his greatest service today. The need seems all too clear. There are the changes in the world power balance which we have noted, with the disturbing indications of the relative decline of our military power. It must be apparent that the strategy of

Massive Retaliation has reached a dead end. In a period of atomic stand-off it frightens and alienates our friends and fails to impress our potential enemies. We need a reappraisal to decide how much is enough in terms of military forces. We need it in order to strike an intelligent balance between our military capabilities and the political commitments which may fall due in military payments. We need this appraisal to verify that our civilian leadership is indeed exerting true and ^{effective} ~~specific~~ control over the military ^{elements of the} ~~as in the~~ government.

With regard to this latter point, there is much confusion as to what we mean by civilian control. At times it is taken to mean little more than the relative position of the civilian and military chiefs at the dinner table or the ^{ratio} ~~number~~ of gun salutes which they receive at parade. True civilian control requires the setting of objectives for the military, the allocation of means to create forces necessary to obtain these objectives and the frequent verification of the readiness of the resulting forces. Civilian control today does not fulfill this description. ^{are} ~~Indication~~ of its lack ~~is~~ ^{are} found in the prolonged delays in resolving the divisions within the Joint Chiefs of Staff and ⁱⁿ the uncertain guidance given the military services in the formation of our military strategy.

All the foregoing points should be considered in any overhaul of our military policy. All of them are proper subjects for civilian study and civilian interest. But if the citizen studies these issues and takes intelligent sides with regard to them, if he recognizes and rejects the fallacies which are confusing

thought on military subjects and if he joins in insisting upon a reappraisal of our military ~~strategy and~~ policy, has he done enough?

No, I am afraid not. Though we may be uncertain as to the changes which should result from a reappraisal of military policy I am sure of at least one thing. These changes will be costly in terms of money, manpower and effort. To reorient our strategy from one of Massive Retaliation to one offering a more flexible response will undoubtedly add for a time to the military budget. For this purpose, I have estimated the requirement of from 50 to 55 billion dollars for defense during at least five years. I have no great confidence in the accuracy of this estimate, but I am quite sure that the budgetary trend must be upward if we are to react in time. In addition we must be willing to contribute more and better men to the armed forces. We must put the best heads of America into the military hats of tomorrow.

If we are not willing to take such heroic measures now what will be the consequence? The trend of our military strength is downward; the course of events is running against us. We will soon be faced with a condition of military inferiority with relation to the Communist world. What ever doubts you may have as to the soundness of my remarks tonight I hope you will agree with this final point. There will be no living long with Communism as an inferior.