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Armed Forces Day Address by General Maxwell D. Taylor, U. S.
Army (Ret.), Houston Texas,
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I am most happy to have been invited to Houston on the occasion of your observance of Armed Forces Week. In the course of my forty years in the Military Service I have served in Texas and alongside of Texans in many parts of the world. It is fair to say that no state of the Union has contributed to the Armed Forces more high quality fighting men than Texas. Not only have I observed them as members of the regular military establishment, but as Chief of Staff and in other capacities I have visited many Texas National Guard and Reserve Units and have always been impressed by their enthusiastic devotion to duty and to readiness for combat. The example of such reserve units is a reminder to any observer of the indispensable contribution made to our National Defense by the citizen soldiers of the Guard and of the Reserve. Their progress in recent years in achieving new standards of efficiency and degrees of readiness has been one of the most encouraging development in strengthening the military posture in our country.

I have taken as my subject the slogan habitually adopted for Armed Forces Week throughout the country - "Power for Peace". It is a title broad enough to permit the kind of discussion which I think is pertinent on such an occasion as this. In my judgment Armed Forces Day should not be the occasion merely for muscle-flexing and breast beating. It ~~is not justifiable~~ ^{does not justify} for complacent self-congratulation ^{upon} ~~our~~ ^{as a nation} seat among the mighty of the earth.

Rather it should be an occasion for a serious appraisal of our readiness to do our duty as a leader charged with grave responsibilities. We should remind ourselves once more of our national objectives and ^{of the} ~~the~~ solemn commitments we have undertaken to go to the help of ^{many of} our neighbors. Then ^{And only then} ~~we~~ ^{we} will be ready in proper humility of spirit to take inventory of our armed forces and to form a judgment of their adequacy to provide the power needed for peace. Thus, by stressing facts more and oratory less we may accomplish the serious purpose of Armed Forces Week - to give our citizens a better understanding of where we stand in national defense.

This need for a popular understanding of the military problems is always with us. In this connection ^{*} (I am often reminded of the anecdote concerning General Von Steuben, the Prussian general who came to America and assisted Washington in the training of his Revolutionary Army. Von Steuben was a stern man, a hard taskmaster, insistent upon what we would call today "spit and polish." But he was also a reflective soldier who studied closely the American volunteers whom he was called upon to train. After some months he wrote back to a friend in Europe the impressions which he had formed of his hosts. "The genius of this American nation is not the least to be compared with that of the Prussians, Austrians, or French. You say to your European soldier, 'Do this' and he doeth it. But I am obliged to say, "This is the reason why you ought to do that' and ^{then} ~~he~~ [^] does it."

This trait which Steuben recognized in our revolutionary forbears has not changed throughout the years. Certainly today the American citizen needs to know the why of things if he is

to be an effective member of society and an intelligent judge of the important issues of his day. ^{and our tradition firmly} I find this desire to know ^{is to be found in the Constitution - and fighting for them make this possible} the reason why about military matters wherever I travel about our country. There is a keen interest to know the reason for our military preparations, to understand the import of the new and vastly destructive weapons and to acquire an overall appreciation of the nature of the military threat confronting ^{us.} our country.

When we first contemplate our military preparations, we are struck at once with the magnitude of our military power. A tabulation of our bombers, our carriers, our submarines and our divisions creates a natural feeling of pride in the strength exhibited by the many units of our fighting services. We read of our new missiles, their range, their accuracy and their incredible destructiveness. We learn of our atomic submarines with limitless capability of staying at sea and of serving as a hidden launching bases for the new missiles. We understand that the Army will soon have small atomic weapons giving the squad the fire power of many battalions of the old artillery. Surely, no nation was ever more secure from physical harm.

But to stop with this complacent feeling is not enough. The truly inquiring citizen should next ask "What do these forces of the three services mean in effective fighting strength?" They represent much power but what kind and how much? Is the aggregate effect enough to keep the peace in the face of the threat which confronts us? We recognize that all strength is relative. Hence we may properly ask: whether our strength is proportionate to the danger represented by Communism in arms!

The fundamental reason for maintaining power in the form of armed forces is to prevent war. The word "deterrence" is heard more and more in describing the objective of our military preparations. We mean thereby that our Armed Forces seek to possess appropriate military power which will deter any would-be aggressor from seeking his objective by force. We need this capability because we know that the nations of the Communist bloc use subversion, infiltration and open aggression as means to political ends. If we have the obvious power to frustrate such means and the attainment of their desired ends, we may hope to preserve the peace by removing the profit from aggression. If our strength/^{is}properly conceived it will deter an aggressive nation from a course of action clearly doomed to failure.

Military threats to peace may take many forms. Since the World War II our principal concern has been the threat of general atomic war fought on a global scale. Originally, while we alone had atomic weapons, our nation had hoped that these new weapons would guarantee the peace on American terms. It seemed for a while that, because of their great destructiveness, we could impose a sort of Pax Americana through the very threat of their use against aggressions, all and sundry. But their ^{limited usefulness}uselessness ~~because of~~ resulting from the indiscriminate nature of their destructiveness soon became apparent as specific cases arose. In such places as Vietnam and Korea, our responsible leaders decided, rightly or wrongly, not to use atomic weapons even though we had a monopoly at the time. Although we had proclaimed our intention to indulge

in "Massive Retaliation" to keep the peace, when the cards were down we refrained.

The growth of Soviet atomic power soon broke the U.S. monopoly and rendered meaningless the threat of Massive Retaliation to prevent or defeat limited wars. But it did emphasize the need for our continued superiority over the Soviets to deter a general war directed at the United States. To ~~deter~~ ^{prevent} such a conflict we concentrated our military efforts in the following years largely on the development of forces which can deal ^{only} with that particular form of challenge. Our defense budgets have favored the development of strategic air power poised to launch devastating retaliation against the targets providing the sources of Communist military power. We have hoped that the threat of Massive Retaliation on the part of these strategic forces, if not sufficient to keep the Little Peace, would be sufficient to deter the Great War. But in placing our main reliance on general war ^{forces} ~~proportions~~ we have left unanswered the question of how to cope with lesser wars.

As a result, the period of history between World War II and the present has been far from peaceful. While there has been no general atomic war, there has been no absence of military conflicts. Specifically there have been some eighteen limited wars since 1945. In these local wars the Communists have been frequent participants. Considering only the years since World War II, ^{the} USSR or its satellites have taken part in eight of the small wars which have occurred. They did so apparently uninfluenced by the fact that during most of this period we enjoyed an atomic

superiority which for a time was a complete monopoly.

In these breaches of the peace by Communism, Russia has been a direct participant only once - the case of Hungary. It has been generally the satellites which have furnished the men for the real fighting. Usually, they have gone into battle cheaply armed and equipped. They have relied on the sheer weight of manpower rather than on the capabilities of machines. In Korea, the Communists used saturation attacks, with one successive wave of men mounting on the dead of the preceding in order to overwhelm the firepower of the defenders. With vehicles in short supply, men served as beasts of burden. But as the price was paid largely in satellite lives, these conflicts represented to the USSR a cheap "bargain basement" kind of war by proxy, entirely to their liking.

In recent years the Soviets have improved considerably the equipment of their ~~allies~~ and future proxies on the battlefield. This improvement has been possible because of the continuous program for modernization of the Soviet Army. As new generations of weapons have become available for their own troops, the Soviets have been able to pass ~~on~~ the previous models to their satellites. Thus, the military quality of their proxies is becoming better, a fact which will inevitably encourage the Soviets to indulge in limited war in the future with greater ~~as-~~ expectation ^{in the past.} ~~assurance~~ of success than ~~ever~~. At a time when both sides of the power bloc will destroy each other if they use the big atomic weapons, the Soviets have a cheap "cut rate" method for pursuing their aggressive designs about the world.

Their increased inclination to limited war is likely to be strengthened by our own neglect of conventional, limited war

forces. As I have said, our military budgets in the past have emphasized primarily the development of weapons of mass destruction which are inapplicable or of limited use in local situations. I would estimate that about two-thirds of most of our budgets have gone for such forces ^{as} the long-range bombers, the big missiles, the missile-launching ships, the antisubmarine warfare forces and the elements making up our continental air defense system. In the aggregate these represent great military power - but to be used only in general atomic war. In contrast, the Army, the Marines and certain elements of the Air Force and the Navy are equipped and trained to fight in both general and limited war. Being useful in both, there would be strong arguments to give ^{these forces} ~~them~~ the necessary funds for modernization and expansion. Generally speaking, this has not been the policy. When the funds have run short or out, these are the forces which have been skimped. Thus, in the face of military commitments to some 48 foreign nations ^{there is} ~~I have had~~ ^{justified} serious misgivings as to the adequacy of our capability to cope with limited wars.

In short,

/ We have much power but much of it is not the right kind.

Not being the right kind it has produced only one form of peace - the absence of general, atomic war. But by placing principal reliance on the weapons for that ^{one} kind of war, we have not had the power to prevent many other forms of war and military aggression in many parts of the world.

So much for the past. What about the immediate future?

Is our ^{for peace} ~~deterrent~~ power/likely to increase or to diminish?

In my opinion the next five years will be a most critical

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period for the United States. The present balance of atomic striking power depends largely upon our superiority in long-range manned bombers. In view of the vulnerability of these bombers on the ground to long-range missile attack and to their vulnerability in the air to Soviet surface-to-air missiles, this great bomber force is a dwindling military asset. It is true that we are now trying to make up for lost time in the missile field, but for several years to come we will be dependent on first generation missiles which are immobile, slow to get off and uncertain as to reliability.

Thus, we are face to face with the consequences of the so-called "missile gap". By this term I refer not merely to the probably Soviet superiority in numbers of operational missiles, but also to their protection, concealment, and over-all effectiveness. Although we are now awakening to the missile danger, it is unlikely that we can match the Soviets in numbers of operational missiles between now and 1965. Actually, it may not be necessary as numbers are not too important when we are considering weapons with megaton warheads. It is more serious that we cannot match them in concealment and hence in protection from attack. Although our Navy is pressing the development of Polaris submarine-launched missile and the Air Force is now showing interest to giving mobility to its land-based missiles, it will take several years to have reliable weapons of these new types. We will still be largely dependent upon first generation missiles and manned aircraft.

Meanwhile, Soviet measures to defend their homeland against bomber and missile attack can be expected to continue to improve

in the next five years. We know nothing about anti-missile developments in the USSR, but we can be sure that they are leaving no stone unturned to develop a missile defense. If they beat us to such a weapon system it will give them a technological and military victory far more important than their Sputnik I Satellite. Meanwhile our ^{own} anti-missile program has been brought to a virtual standstill by ~~with~~ the sales resistance of responsible officials of the United States to the Nike-Zeus antimissile system which has been ready for production for the last two or three years. As the result of delays in decision, we now have no prospect of an anti-missile defense for several years even if Nike-Zeus suddenly received the green light. At the same time, we are doing little or nothing about shelters for our civilian population, whereas the Soviets have a reasonably good shelter program now and will undoubtedly improve it as they go along. Thus, both in the offensive and defensive aspects of the missile gap, I am afraid that the United States will be at a serious disadvantage to the USSR in the years under consideration - that is ^{from} 1960 to 1965.

Now for the other side of the coin - the situation with regard to conventional, limited war forces. I see nothing to suggest that the current superiority of the Soviets in this vital area will be affected by anything the United States is likely to do. We could change the situation in a few years, but I see every sign that we will stand pat on what we have done or not done in the past. It is true that the lead time for the formation of limited war forces is not so great as for the strategic weapon systems. Thus, a timely decision now to strengthen

ourselves would produce results in about two years rather than the four or five required in the case of the strategic weapons, but as I have said, there is no present indication that this will be the course that we will follow.

Summary

In summary, it is fair to say that in the next four or five years there will be a dangerous imbalance of military strength in favor of the USSR. The Soviets will be superior to us in their ability to wage both general atomic war or limited conventional war. It may be, as I hope, that there will continue to be doubts and uncertainties in the minds of the Soviet war planners, which will continue to discourage a deliberate choice of atomic war. However, it seems incredible that the Soviets will not capitalize in some way upon their over-all war-making superiority. At a minimum they can be expected to exploit their strength in pressing hard on the soft spots about their periphery. We may expect a higher level of aggressive provocation backed by the use or the threat of the use of conventional forces under the shield of their preponderant missile strength. This situation is not inevitable, but nearly so. It can be improved, though only in part, by vigorous stop-gap measures taken now and by an intelligent use of increased defense budgets to shorten the duration of the period of the danger.

The stop-gap measures which I have in mind are not particularly difficult or particularly demanding in time or money. They include such actions as the concentration of responsibility for the readiness of our limited war forces, the increased dispersion of the Strategic Air Command, the better exploitation of

the Jupiter IRBM as a mobile, field weapon and the initiation of a modest fall-out shelter program. These things can be done while the longer term measures are getting under way. In the meanwhile they will help bridge the period of danger in the early years of this decade.

The long-term measures are not so easy and they come high. They include the needs of a small but secure long-range missile force clearly able to survive a surprise attack and still strike back. For its security it requires an active missile defense and a virtually instantaneous warning system. Of equal importance are the expansion, modernization and mobility of our limited war forces/^{to make them} ready and able to fight anywhere on short notice with or without atomic weapons. In combination, these forces would give us both a general and/^a limited war deterrent and would provide a flexible response to any military challenge. This kind of defense is essential to our security; it can be had if we are willing to pay the price.

These have not been pleasant words to pronounce on Armed Forces Day, Fourth-of-July type oratory would have been easier ~~for me~~ but I feel that the people of Texas should know and want to know the reasons for legitimate concern over the condition of our national defense. As a people we need to shake off complacency, look the facts in the eye and draw the unpleasant conclusions which are inevitable from a knowledge of the facts. If we have a deep conviction in the need to act, we can restore the military balance — provided we show imagination, resolution and a willingness to sacrifice. The alternative is to accept continued military inferiority to the Communists. While many of you may take issue

with other of my remarks today, I hope that you will join in agreeing with me at least on this one point. There will be no living long with Communism as an inferior.

MDT/smf