

THE CITIZEN AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

Speech file

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As given

I have chosen as my theme today, "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 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?" *None did*

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 expressed in technical and professional terms difficult for the average citizen to understand. Consequently, many of us are inclined to turn away from the problem with the discouraged feeling that its elements are apparently beyond the comprehension of the layman.

I have never agreed that there is

I have never agreed that there is any particular mystery about important military subjects. It is my conviction that it is possible to express all of the basic problems in National Defense in simple terms thoroughly understandable 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. How effective the military leaders have been in setting forth their case in simple terms 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.

*Agreement on level
Gen War
Armed War
Government war
Strategic
deliberate
Regulatory
force*

*slow
cost decision
Efforts to change
Sup Ct.*

The foregoing words are 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 fence sitters with respect to matters which involve the very existence of the Nation.

If we agree that we must face up to these problems, what are some of them which we need to recognize and assess? The basic one is to decide how in general we are doing in National Defense. What kind of military strategy

*reasonably
are we safe*

are we pursuing? What

are we pursuing? What kind of military forces do we have to carry out this strategy? Are all 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 let us have a go at it. *First, history.*

The military strategy which the United States has been pursuing since 1945 is one of Massive Retaliation. ^{explain} 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 weapons 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. *Part of A bomb* 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. *Ineffective use of modern weapons in bombing small planes*

Other examples arose to show

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 up to recent times to shake our 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 over-seas 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 re-equipped 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

*Useful
also in
general war*

despite the efforts of Sec. Brewer and many others

from shortages of modern

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 required a thinning even of our front line units facing the Communists in Korea and deployed along the Iron Curtain in Europe.

Another characteristic of the ^{has been} period was the frozen character of ^{Katouras} the defense budgets which provide the financial means ^{Budget the} to build the forces ^{pay off} necessary to execute the military strategy. During recent years the dollar value of the budget has hovered around 40 to 42 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 may debate what the proper percentage should be, it does appear strange 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 significant events in recent years affecting our security, 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 have been 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

meet the bill for big

meet the bill for big weapons, it has been necessary to pay comparatively little attention to the requirements of limited wars and of those military forces which would cope with such situations. The Army 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.

*new weapons
replace need
for more power
explain*

So much then for how we have been doing in National Defense. The next obvious question is, "Have we done 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 ^{that threat} our national security? Only if we recognize these changes and take them into account can we decide ^{upon the dimensions of the threat} if our military measures are adequate ^{and the adequacy of our military measures} 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 progress.

^{I accepted as a} The fact that the Soviets ^{probably} have or will soon have more and better long-range missiles than we ^{do, I know it to be a fact that} is all the more significant because ^{in the face of this Soviet superiority in missiles,} the United States does not have ^{and} is not presently planning an effective anti-missile defense. This ^{serious mission} defensive gap in our military program is a part

of the so-called missile

of the so-called missile gap which is receiving much public attention today.

Because of the ~~the~~ public attention ^{maybe} which it is receiving, it is worth our time to consider what is meant or should be meant by the missile gap. It ~~really~~ ^{should properly} refer to our ~~likely~~ ^{overall} inferiority in missile effectiveness in ~~comparison~~ ^{word form} to the Soviets during the next few years. Missile effectiveness ^{is a} depends on four factors; numbers, reliability, ^{target} intelligence and vulnerability, ^{Explain} of which numbers is probably the least important. Neither side needs many of the ^{each} intercontinental missiles ~~each~~ of which carries the life of a city in ~~its~~ warhead. Some finite number - and not a big number - is enough if they are sure of getting onto target. ^{But} To get onto target we must first know where the target is. On this point, the Soviets have a clear advantage over us. We publish the location of our ~~missile~~ ^{missile} sites in the newspapers whereas we know little about the location of their missile installations. ^{is known} ~~Given~~ the location of the target, the missile must then get off the ground without being destroyed and on to target without technical malfunctions. We have no data so far as I know as to the relative reliability of missile performance, ^{- ours and theirs -} but we do know that our present missiles are fixed, immobile and unprotected on launching sites known to the enemy. ^{Thus} It adds up to this - that there is ^{indeed evidence of a} ~~a present or imminent~~ missile gap in the form of inferiority in missile effectiveness resulting, if not from numbers and quality, certainly from ^{the} greater vulnerability of our missiles ^{on} and poorer information on the location of theirs.

These remarks must make very clear the importance of our getting an anti-missile missile. Since we are pledged not to strike the first blow, since we will probably never know where many of the Soviet missiles are found, we must be able to ~~ward off~~ ^{absorb} a surprise attack and retain the ability to retaliate. In anticipation of this need the Niki-Zeus anti-missile missile has been under development for a number of years and its tests have been

most encouraging. But it

because of a strange tendency in contrast with our weakness in securing other weapons systems

most encouraging. But ^{this project} it has never received funds for production. I

sincerely hope that the new administration will give this vital program ^{and timely} full support ^{before it is too late}

These 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 ~~the~~ increasing vulnerability to atomic blackmail. This latter vulnerability is enhanced by our continued inferiority to the Communist bloc in conventional ground forces, ^{which is} the 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 ^{in fighting} 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 in military forces. ^{but he should certainly ask} How much do we really need in terms of bombers, missiles, ships, divisions and the like? We have never agreed on such matters and hence have never constructed our defense budgets in meaningful terms. Hence, I cannot give you a simple answer to a very natural question but I urge you to ask it of our responsible officials again and again.

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

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, any or all of 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 and our iron-clad guarantee to West Berlin. 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 sufficient? Until some such systematic balancing of the books takes place I am afraid that the well intentioned citizen will have difficulty in reaching a qualified conclusion as to the adequacy of our military forces. Indeed, the high official in Washington is confronted with the same uncertainty.

*Example
Berlin
Detroit*

An added difficulty in reaching 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 when it gets there? What is the measure of the Communist military reaction?

An honest answer is that we don't know much in detail about communist capabilities in many parts of the world. But we do know that they are doing their utmost to outstrip us in practically every significant

one thing -

area of international

area of international competition. We can safely count on the fact that they are doing their ^{best} best in the military field. Can we say as much?

In the light of the uncertainty of our military strength to match our commitments 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? Or 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 enlightened one protected from the many fallacies which have obscured clear thinking on National Defense in the past. One still hears some of these bandied about 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 ^{confronted} ~~we are confronted~~ in such places as Korea, Berlin, the Congo and Laos.

(with which) Growing out of this fallacy is another 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 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.

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 combat 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 judgment 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.

*Importance of small A-weapons. See - brush
Can small A-weapons be kept small?*

The foregoing represent only a

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 control over the military ~~as~~ in the government. *true civilian control*

At this point, I would like to say that I am very much encouraged by the announced intention of the Kennedy administration to proceed with such an appraisal without delay. All of us should wish the officials well who undertake this important work. As citizens we should follow their efforts with intelligent understanding of the issues which we have outlined this morning. But will this be enough to discharge our obligations?

No, I am afraid not. Though we may be uncertain as to the exact changes which will 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 efforts. To

manpower and efforts. 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 ^{with} events is running against us. We will soon be faced with a condition of military inferiority with relation to the Communist world. ^{if we are not already in that unhappy situation} Whatever doubts you may otherwise have as to the soundness of my remarks this morning I hope you will agree with ^{my} this final point. There will be no living long with Communism as an inferior.