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A STRATEGY FOR PEACE

In preparing for this paper, I reviewed a number of documents I brought with me from Washington more than thirty years ago. Among them I found a mimeographed copy of a speech presented by President Kennedy on June 10, 1963. This was a commencement address delivered at the American University in Washington. I remembered setting aside this copy which came to my desk in a routine distribution from the White House Press Secretary. Attached to the copy was a rusty paper clip (now 34 years old). Also in evidence were several light pencil checks of points to be reviewed for further study.

The President's topic was, in his words, ". . . the most important topic on earth: world peace."

"What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace -- the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living -- the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children -- not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women -- not merely peace in our time but peace for all time."

After discussing the need to keep our guard up against the continuing threat of Soviet aggression, President Kennedy then suggested that we re-examine our own attitude toward the Soviets with a new and dynamic approach, because, he said, "peace is a process -- a way of solving problems."

Finally, he said, "Confident and unafraid, we labor on -- not toward a strategy of annihilation but toward a strategy of peace."

I have quoted this address extensively because I have come to see this as exactly the attitude we should maintain toward all of our adversaries. Also, I think it is interesting that in the recent past extremely difficulty negotiations in the Middle East have been described on both sides as a "process for peace."

For Kennedy this was a difficult time because we were still anxious over the Cuban missile crisis, and there were hot spots all around the globe, any one of which might spark a conflagration.

While this was late in President Kennedy's administration, it was still early in the Cold War. The Berlin Wall was only two years old and would be standing for another 27 years. When the Wall did come down, we were so concerned with a growing crisis in Kuwait, we hardly had a chance to cheer the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The core issues of the Cold War were the same for each succeeding American President, beginning with Harry Truman.

Fifty years ago, President Truman took the first small step in responding to a recognized Soviet threat. Unknown at that time, this was the beginning of the longest and most costly period of hostilities in our nation's history.

Truman's first step was the dispatch of American troops to Greece and Turkey to assist those countries in their individual efforts to combat local communist insurgents supported by the Soviet Union.

This was noteworthy for many reasons, but mainly it was a signal that the United Kingdom was no longer able to protect its own interests around the world, in this case, the Suez Canal whose future was at stake. A United States commitment was needed to guard against a possible move by the Soviets to control the Dardanelles and pose a threat to the entire eastern Mediterranean. For the first time in history, peace in the world would depend upon the power and the will of the United States alone.

This cooperative endeavor with Greece and Turkey was the forerunner of the North Atlantic Alliance, put together two years later by Truman and subsequently greatly strengthened by President Eisenhower and supported to this day by each succeeding U.S. President.

Now we know that the idea of collective security embodied in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was unprecedented at the time, was exactly what was needed to protect against the continuing threat of Soviet aggression in Europe. (It came too

late to save Czechoslovakia, taken in a coup by the Soviets in 1948.)

In 1947 most Americans were still recovering from the enormous effort required to win World War II. More than twelve million returning veterans were going to school and starting their families while industrial production was converting to meet pent-up peacetime needs. The U.S. government was busy canceling procurement contracts and still engaged in the disposal of surplus properties at home and abroad.

Peace and prosperity were very much on the minds of the American people.

It was in this setting that America's strategy for peace was debated in the Congress and around the country.

With his dispatch of American troops to Greece and Turkey, Truman issued a declaration that the United States would meet communist aggression anywhere in the world. Moreover, he declared we would do this whenever possible in collaboration with other western nations. In this stand he was supported by a bipartisan Congress led by Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan.

After extensive and sometimes acrimonious debate, the Senate in 1948 adopted the Vandenberg Resolution, and the Truman Doctrine thus became the basis of a bipartisan foreign policy that would last more than 45 years. The threat of communist aggression became the recognized enemy of both major political parties.

Our strategy for peace became a strategy of strength through international cooperation, and the positioning of military forces as close as possible to the prospective enemy. With notable exceptions, that strategy was a successful one. It was not always easy, but we did avoid the most dreaded prospect, that of a nuclear holocaust called World War III. A massive conflict between the world's two superpowers was avoided. Today, instead of preparing to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles, we are dismantling most of them, and we are essentially buying down some of the most lethal weapons once aimed at us from inside the Soviet borders.

Fifty years ago this was an outcome almost undreamed of. Even though we fought two limited wars, in Korea and Vietnam, and the Russians were stalemated and eventually defeated in their final act of aggression in Afghanistan, neither side resorted to the use of nuclear weapons. Throughout we maintained a strategy of nuclear parity that enabled us to establish a tradition of nonuse, a term used by McGeorge Bundy to describe this period of world history.

In 1947, we faced an uncertain future. We stood alone as the strongest nation in the world. Our enemies had been devastated and our wartime allies were in need of further aid and assistance from us. At the same time, we had to deal with a post-war Soviet Union still driven by a dynamic that made peaceful international cooperation almost an impossibility.

In the face of increasing and persistent Soviet intransigence in occupied European countries and with the prospect of a communist takeover in China, some Americans began looking for scapegoats. Many of our best informed experts were purged from the State and Defense Departments because of their prior associations or writings.

Congressional hearings and a few high-profile investigations sought to uncover communists or communist sympathizers in various segments of our society. "Fellow traveller" became a handy label for someone who could not furnish solid anti-communist credentials.

At the time, I personally thought this was almost laughable. Later, when I joined the Government, it was no laughing matter that my hometown neighbors here in Lynchburg and some of my family were queried about my loyalty to the United States of America.

Still, at the time, I mistakenly thought the whole red scare would blow over. Soon it became serious business as the FBI dutifully updated my file as I moved along in my Federal career. Top Secret clearance required a full background investigation which became fairly routine. My eventual access to atomic energy and weapons information required a more sophisticated clearance process.

I never resented this intrusion into my private life, partly because I always considered Government employment a privilege and not a right.

Interestingly, the only direct personal contact I ever had with an investigative agent came six years after I left the Government when I was appointed to a national advisory body. At that time, the local FBI agent called on me at my Lynchburg College office. We had a friendly chat, and he noted that I had moved around a lot during my 14 years in the Government. (He knew my personal history better than anybody else!)

Internal security was a serious matter throughout the Cold War, but I learned very little about the inner workings of the system. If we have time, I will mention a couple of cases in which the system produced dead-wrong assessments.

The United States strategy for peace during the Cold War evolved from Truman's simple resolve to resist Soviet aggression to a series of collective security arrangements around the world. It became a strategy of peace through strength and international cooperation.

I watched the debate over "containment" from the College campus. As a veteran of the "big war," I actually believed we could stare down the Russian menace. When I joined the Government in 1949, we were in the process of downsizing and streamlining our armed forces. NATO would secure our European interests and the occupation forces in Japan represented a formidable U.S. military presence in the Far East. Things looked pretty cozy until the North Koreans launched their surprise attack against South Korea where a thin line of U.S. troops had been deployed to guard against just such an eventuality.

The impact on my professional career was immediate and profound. A week after the attack I was assigned a very small task in the preparation of a so-called white paper on the Korean situation. (My part was a newspaper search for the previous year.) After that, most of my work in the Congressional Research Office was related to national security matters, and eventually my title was changed from "social science analyst" to that of "defense specialist."

In the next dozen years my assignments opened up a variety of venues relating to our strategy for peace during some of the most difficult periods of the Cold War. Quite by chance, I came in contact with a number of the major players on our side. From my position in the Library of Congress, I was detailed to work with several House and Senate committees, during which I assisted in the conduct of public hearings and the preparation of committee reports.

Our fields of inquiry shifted from topic to topic, depending upon the interests and concerns of our subcommittee members. We traveled to most parts of the country, we examined NATO operations in Europe, and we visited the Soviet Union, where our stated purpose was to assess the civil defense posture of the Russians. While our committee was en route to Moscow in October 1957, the Russians startled us all by the launching of their orbiting spaceship *Sputnik*. We cut short the remainder of our schedule, after two cold weeks in Russia, and returned home as soon as we could. (I never did get to see Spain and Italy!)

With *Sputnik* in orbit our subcommittee members became keenly interested in the U.S. missile program, so the staff promptly undertook to become experts on that subject. Soon thereafter we held hearings and issued reports on missile technology and the effects of a possible nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

These were exciting times. We were briefed by Gen. Curtis Lenay at his Omaha SAC Headquarters. We examined the underground complex of the North American Air Defense Command in Colorado. We observed one of the atomic test explosions in the Nevada desert. We received hearing testimony from all of the principal military and civilian officials in our defense establishment, as well as from some key experts in the Atomic Energy Commission.

The most exciting moment in my career came later, during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, when I was serving as Director of Emergency Plans and Readiness in the Executive Office of the President. You will recall that the Russian military presence in Cuba at that time had been described as purely defensive in nature. Both publicly and through back channels we had been assured that no offensive weapons would be placed there by the Soviets. Unmistakable U-2 photographs showed to the contrary that launchers were being prepared to handle nuclear missiles with a range of 2,000 miles. Moreover, Soviet ships loaded with missiles were found to be en route to Cuba.

This was a strategic-nuclear threat clearly unacceptable to the United States.

While the President was working up his response in consultation with approximately 15 of his closest advisers, my task was to alert the civilian agencies and advise them of any change in our Def Con status. For three nights I slept on a cot in a large conference room in the Executive Office Building. I had been called in on a Saturday afternoon and told to bring a change of clothing. (Betty was not pleased!)

My immediate boss at that time was Edward McDermott, who was a statutory member of the National Security Council (deriving from a provision of the National Security Act of 1947). While he was not a member of the famous "Crisis Committee" put together by the President, he participated in that group's deliberations and kept my group informed.

Neither the public nor the Soviets were advised of our Cuban discoveries until the President was ready to respond officially.

Inside the Executive Office Building we heard all the arguments for a military response. The one most talked about was a "surgical air strike" against the launching sites. Clearly, something had to be done.

The following Tuesday, the President gave the Russians and the American public his response in the form of a televised address, which was preceded by confidential briefings for a few of our key European allies.

Instead of attacking Cuba or destroying the missiles, the President announced that we were imposing a "strict naval quarantine on offensive weapons" in Cuba, and we were proceeding

with a number of "initial steps" to build up our military forces in the area and to evacuate dependents of military personnel at our Guantanamo base in Cuba. "Moreover, any missile launched from Cuba," he said, would be treated "as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union."

This was a block-buster in world diplomacy. The Soviets chose not to challenge the blockade. In one of the most dramatic moments in world history, the Soviet ships turned around and departed under the watchful eye of the U.S. military.

While the Cuban Missile Crisis was the most exciting moment of my Federal career, the saddest came a year later with the loss of the President to an assassin's bullet. A few months after that I returned to Lynchburg and became president of my alma mater, Lynchburg College.

In the years since my return to the College, my view of world events has been influenced by my Washington experience. From time to time, I have felt like a baseball player taken out of the game. You know you're not going to get back in, but you maintain a keen interest in the outcome.

During this time there have been many anxious moments for all of us. Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy were followed by presidents equally committed to the strategy of peace through strength and international cooperation. President Bush actually saw the Berlin Wall come down, but his predecessors, without exception, share the credit.

If time permits, perhaps we can discuss some of the key contributions each president made in his own way. After reading McGeorge Bundy's 1988 assessment, I came around to his view that Eisenhower was probably the most significant participant in the entire Cold War.

In several previous papers touching on my Government experience, I was unable to mention a few interesting things because they were classified secrets. One of these was the elaborate underground facility at The Greenbriar Hotel constructed and maintained for the emergency use of the U.S. Congress. This facility was constructed in 1956 with President Eisenhower's approval. It came under my jurisdiction in 1961 when I became Director of Emergency Plans and Readiness. At that time, I also had the responsibility of completing the construction of the underground facility at Mt. Weather, which was to house the Executive agencies of the government in the event of an emergency, i.e., <u>nuclear war</u>!

The Mt. Weather facility was generally known to exist, but there was enough confusion regarding its purpose that it was probably never targeted by the Russians.

The Greenbriar facility was different. Its secret was so closely held that not even members of Congress were told about it. The whole plan for relocating the House and Senate was carried out under the direction of the Architect of the Capitol. Funds were channeled through the Army Signal Corps which employed a civilian company to maintain the facility. When I was briefed

on the existence of this activity and my middle-man role in its future operations, I was required to sign a document stating that I was aware of the penalties contained in the National Secrets Act. Moreover, I was advised that I could not discuss the project or the name of the project with anyone!

The whole thing was made public by a news reporter a few years ago, as you know, and the once-secret spaces have now been converted for use by the Hotel.

An interesting side-light of this is that as a part of the Congressional relocation plan, we provided a direct cash subsidy to the small airline serving the airport near the Homestead Hotel, which was in driving distance of The Greenbriar. We told the Homestead owners and the airport officials that we wanted to facilitate visits to the Homestead by busy Washington officials who could not spare the time to drive up. As far as I know, no one got a hint that our real interest was in The Greenbriar.

Another interesting side-light took place several years after I had left the College. In 1986, while serving as a temporary consultant to Congressman Jim Olin, I inquired into the possibility of getting the Federal subsidy restored for the Homestead airport. The traffic there had dropped to a level that no longer justified its operation.

I was met with a stonewall. Within a week, two Federal security agents called on me and, in the privacy of Olin's Lynchburg office, I was asked to sign a document once again acknowledging that I was aware of the grave penalties that could

come to me for unauthorized disclosure of national security secrets.

Although the Homestead was in his district, I never told Congressman Olin about the secret facility or about the two strangers who came to see me in Lynchburg!

I guess we can now say that The Greenbriar facility, Mt. Weather, and the Berlin Wall are relics of the Cold War, together with 15,000 unused ICBMs, thousands of ships and strategic warplanes, and unknown numbers of nuclear warheads, all because of a strategy for peace that worked!

I am also declaring that our Congressional hearings and reports are likewise relics of the Cold War to be consigned with other memorabilia to the safe haven of my basement!