



Max M. Kampelman Papers

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

7/10

Informal Comments by Max M. Kampelman
Chairman, Freedom House
to the
Midwest Advisory Council

Chicago, Illinois

Mid-Day Club, July 10, 1984

Thank you, Morrie Liebman. Your introduction leads me to reiterate that I would like this talk to be informal and free flowing, without a text.

The issue that I want to talk with you about is that of East-West relations -- the United States and the Soviet Union. I don't know of any more important issue that faces our society.

I start by asserting my premise so that you'll know where I come from. It is that the Soviet Union represents a direct and real threat to the values and to the national security of the United States. It is, perhaps, the most serious external threat in our history. This reality must be the basis for any kind of analysis that we make of international policy. This is particularly true given our task and the task of any civilized people, which is to preserve the peace of the world.

There is a tendency -- an understandable tendency -- on the part of people so committed to the preservation of peace (as any civilized person must be), not to wish to face the realities that I have set forth. To face the realities of the threat creates an unpleasantness, creates certain consequences, and these are all rather unpleasant consequences that we'd rather not face.

Western civilization depends a great deal on people being rational. We assume the other person is rational. We assume that rationality. To us, it is inconceivable that rational people cannot intelligently sit down and resolve the great issues; and, in this day of potential nuclear-catastrophe, come to grips with and resolve the issues through negotiation. Therefore, the tendency is to say that Americans are like the Russians (and they are) and the Russians are like the Americans (and they are if you are talking about the people).

But what we must understand, and never should forget, is that we are dealing with a totalitarian society. We are dealing with a society which is governed not by the people, but by rulers who do not have legitimacy, and who understand that they do not have legitimacy. They do not have the legitimacy of consent -- that's clear -- which a democratic leader does have. Not having that legitimacy, that legitimacy is replaced by a fear; and it's a fear of anything alien; it's a fear of anything new; it's a fear of neighbors; it's a fear of one another; it's a fear of the people; and this fear grips and permeates that leadership. This phenomenon is a barrier to rational decision-making.

From this premise, let me say a word about my experiences in Madrid. It bears upon what I have just said. Let me then try to draw some conclusions from all of this.

The meeting we had in Madrid was based on the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. The Soviet Union, in 1969, proposed a European security conference. Their idea -- when they said European Security Conference -- was "European." They did not intend to have the United States a part of it. This, after all, is part of a consistent program that the Soviet Union has had since the end of the Second World War, which is to separate the United States from our European friends and allies.

The essence of the message to Europe, in 1969, was, that Europeans have more at stake and more in common with one another than they do with any other peoples on the face of the earth. They should, therefore, be meeting in a forum where they can together discuss those problems as Europeans. They should meet about those problems and arrive at some kind of an understanding about how to deal with the issue of European security. That was the essence of the appeal.

The Soviets understood full-well that the whole defense mechanism of Western Europe was based on American and Canadian participation. This was the essence of the NATO formulation. Obviously, a byproduct of the Soviet proposal to separate the United States from Europe was to weaken the defenses of Western Europe. Obviously, this was one of the Soviet motivations.

But, there were other motivations. There was no peace treaty at the end of the Second World War and the Soviet Union sought legitimacy for its new boundaries. Soviet literature at the

time indicated that they hoped having a European security conference would provide that legitimacy.

The Europeans made it very clear, in the period between 1969 and the few years of negotiation that followed, that they would have no truck with any kind of a concept which separated the United States from European security. Very soon, the Soviets understood that this was not an attainable objective.

We then began moving into the period of Nixon's "detente," when the administration began working very hard at improving the relationship with the Soviet Union. Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union and the confidence that permeated so much of our political language had its effect on American public opinion. Within that context, of course, the European countries pressed very hard to pursue the Soviet proposal of 1969, and to have a meeting on security at which the United States and Canada would be a part. It was very difficult for the United States, which was skeptical of that process, in any way to stop that. We made no effort to stop it; but we did not actively participate, at first, in the negotiations. At a later point, Dr. Kissinger did get involved. In 1975, he recommended to President Ford that the United States sign the Helsinki Final Act, which we did.

The Helsinki Final Act was to be, in effect, the words to define "detente." And in the Helsinki Final Act, there are references to "detente."

The agreement accepted the notion that European security was not just a function of military security. European security was a function of the totality of the relationships among the states. Therefore, the West (not just the United States) perused those who attended the negotiation that any agreement to come out of the negotiations had to be an agreement which dealt, not only with military subjects, but also with the humanitarian ingredient. Thus, the Helsinki Final Act has a unique statement on human rights and human contacts. This totality of the Helsinki Final Act is one that deals with military issues, humanitarian issues, and provides that since "detente" was to be an evolving process, there should be continuing meetings to try to strengthen the process.

The Madrid meeting that I attended beginning with 1980, was a meeting designed to carry forward this process. Of course, when we met in 1980, one would have had to be blind to assume that all we had to do was to carry forward the process; because the record was clear that from 1975, when the agreement was signed on August 1st, until 1980, the record was very clear that the Soviet Union was not living up to its humanitarian obligations under the Act.

There was some discussion in the United States as to whether we should appear in Madrid at all. It was my strong feeling we should. President Reagan, interviewed by Newsweek or Time during the campaign, was asked about this, and said that since we were not sending our athletes to Moscow (for the Olympic games after Afghanistan), he didn't see why we should send our diplomats to Madrid. He later agreed on the necessity for us to be in Madrid.

What we decided to do in Madrid was to use the opportunity of the meeting to highlight the violations. This brings us to the question of our relations -- the United States and the Soviet Union.

Andropov, not so long ago, just before he died, spoke to a meeting of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, where he said that there was a war going on "for the hearts and minds of billions of people on this planet." He was being quite critical of the party cadres because they were losing that battle "for hearts and minds." To him, that was a very important battle. It is a very important battle. Indeed, I believe the Soviets have been losing that battle. The West did look upon Madrid as a battlefield in that war at the same time as we sought agreement. We used the Madrid meeting as a way to demonstrate, for all who would listen or read, the nature of the Soviet Union.

The evidence was overwhelming: the persecution, religious persecution, use of psychiatric hospitals as a form of political punishment, the decimation of national cultures -- and other facts I don't have to describe to you -- the invasion of Afghanistan (there are still 110,000 troops there); Poland -- all in violation of the Helsinki process.

The Helsinki Final Act has no enforcement mechanism to it. The reason for that is that every decision made is made unanimously, by consensus. It is necessary for the Soviet Union to agree, just as it is necessary for the United States to agree. It's obvious that the Soviet Union would not agree to any decision which chastised it for its behavior. In the absence of enforcement, what the West did was to inject the element of accountability into the process. We were going to hold states accountable for their behavior. We were not going to sweep violations under the rug.

This approach followed a unanimous NATO decision and was a demonstration of the complete NATO unity that characterized Madrid. We were able to maintain complete Western solidarity in Madrid to the satisfaction of all of us.

One of the Western foreign ministers -- and he was not alone -- openly asserted that NATO unity in describing the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union with specific factual

information, constantly repeated (I was on BBC every week, and was all over European radio and television) helped a great deal in the decision to deploy the Pershings and cruise missiles. Our relentless efforts helped public opinion. We never forgot the battle "for hearts and minds," and Madrid did play an important role in that battle.

This raises an interesting question. I've had people ask how we can engage in a barrage of intense criticism of the Soviet Union and expect to reach agreement? We need peace and must work to avoid war in this nuclear age; how can we then go ahead and insult them with our criticism of their behavior? These are good questions, and I want to spend a few moments discussing them with you.

I don't know whether the Soviets are insulted by our criticism. I always felt, in Madrid -- and I consider this an essential principle in dealing with anybody -- that we must tell the facts. I'd much rather, for example, not call names, such as "evil empire," which incidentally, I believe the Soviet Union to be. That is not my personal style. But, I do believe in setting forth facts which lead to the same conclusion, so long as they are accurate, i.e., trade union leaders put in psychiatric hospitals. Is that not evil? I'd much rather show the cartoons -- as I did in Madrid -- of government publications that were clearly and blatantly anti-Semitic; read the paragraphs of army manuals and

what they teach their soldiers about Jews. I'd much rather be in the position of publicizing those paragraphs than simply charging "you're an anti-semite." If Soviet authorities are insulted by the presentation of those facts, so be it.

I spent many hours with the Soviet delegation. Besides the three years of formal negotiation, I had close to 400 hours of private talks with the Soviet delegation outside of the meeting halls. That's more than any other person now in our government has had. And we talked about lots of issues. For the first few months of Madrid, the only place we were talking was in Madrid. This was after Afghanistan. If you remember, President Carter pulled our ambassador out of Moscow. We had no discussions in Moscow. We were not talking to Dobrynin in Washington. We were not talking at the United Nations. But we were talking in Madrid.

My approach was candor. I explained our objectives to the Soviets. They understood exactly what we were trying to do. Many times I said to them, "nothing would please me more than for you to show me where I was wrong so that I can stand up and say I was wrong in respect to a fact". This was not done.

I think that if the West should ever choose, for the sake of a superficial "good relationship," to ignore violations of agreements that the Soviet Union has entered into, then we can't be sanguine with respect to any agreement that they sign. There is no incentive for them to take any undertaking seriously if they're

not going to be held accountable for living up to it. We had no choice, in my opinion, but to face that reality. And this, of course, for some, meant confrontation.

Let me give you an example for what happened in Madrid one day. One morning, in a plenary session, inexplicably, the Soviet delegate who was then a 76-year-old man, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, a Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, a survivor who had been editor of Pravda and Izvestia, attacked us very sharply in a manner irrelevant to the meeting. It was a terrible attack against the United States. This was on instruction and at the time when the Soviet Union decided to go after Reagan.

When I first went to Madrid, the terrible enemy was Jimmy Carter. He had established the grain embargo. He had levied the boycott of the Olympics. The Soviets said to me that they couldn't wait to get rid of Carter. Then, Ronald Reagan came into office and they were very hopeful about Reagan's election. They indicated to me that they had gotten along well with Nixon and they thought that now they would get along with Reagan. For a period of months they treated Reagan quite well and gingerly. Then, it began to turn as they noted some of the activities of the President.

In that context, out of the blue came the attack against us. It was irresponsible and he lost his audience. Thirty-five countries were represented at these meetings. I never felt that

I would let the Soviets get away with irresponsible criticism against us. Every time they criticized, I was on my feet and would respond to it. I did so then. I used to carry a briefcase of "rebuttal materials" which wouldn't be appropriate to use except in rebuttal. I, therefore, responded with a strong factual attack which I believe was effective. He became angry and decided to attack us again, this time, by being personal about me. It was in bad taste and again lost the audience; embarrassing some of the Warsaw-Pact people. I couldn't let him get away with that, so I went back again at him. There was a gloomy cloud over that meeting. One could feel it. The meeting ended with nobody else willing to speak that morning.

Coming from my side, the Austrian delegate approached me with a long face and the Finnish delegate as well. They knew that I hadn't started this, but they were worried. They wondered aloud, "Are the Russians going to walk out?" This was a continuing fear of the neutral states. I said that I didn't know whether they were going to walk out or what their purpose was. But I told them that I would find out soon enough, because in a couple of hours, I was scheduled to have lunch at their residence. If I found the door locked, I'd know they're angry.

I went to the luncheon. As a matter of fact, I wondered while driving out there whether I should say anything about the argument. I wondered about the proper thing to do. I decided not to raise the question for two reasons. I had had the last word and he was the host.

My Soviet host greeted me warmly. He didn't say anything about the earlier events. I, therefore, didn't say anything about them and we had lunch. It was a good lunch. I don't mean just the food, which was always good in the Soviet residence. But it was a productive lunch. We made progress on some things that were of interest to us. It was a good exchange. It lasted a long time. At the end of the afternoon, as he walked me to the door, he put his arm around me. He only spoke Russian, and he said, "what I like about dealing with you, Mr. Ambassador, is that we can exchange pleasantries in the morning and then be good and business-like in the afternoon." This was an interesting commentary -- and incidentally, one that fitted in completely with my own thoughts on Soviet negotiations.

The Soviets are a serious people as negotiators. They try to define their national interest and never to lose sight of their national interest. If their national interest calls for them to do something, they will do it. They respond to nothing other than their national interest. They are very serious. You know that, Don (Rumsfeld). This concern about rhetoric never disturbs me. They themselves engage in so much more intensely critical rhetoric than we do. Rhetoric is not the issue. We hear that they won't talk to Reagan because of rhetoric. That is nonsense. They are out to frighten the world half to death.

I use this as an illustration of whether confrontation and negotiation can go hand in hand. I believe that they are not contradictory. I always maintained warm personal relationships with the Soviets where I could. There were some family conversations and informality. We maintained some relationship on a personal level, even though I was as tough as anybody could be about the Soviet system, its brutalities. I believe that this is the only way ultimately to deal in a constructive fashion toward agreement.

I started by telling you my feeling about the nature of the Soviet Union. I also talked about the requirements of peace, which I also feel are indispensable. This puts a tremendous burden on us. I think we are going to have to carry the greatest load in the search for peace. One of the surprises of Madrid for me (I used to teach about communism at the University of Minnesota and other places; I have my Doctorate in political philosophy; I'm not new to the communist movement in the world) was the extent to which leaders of that delegation remained Leninists. I had not expected that.

We must understand that the present Soviet leadership comprises a group of people who believe in an ideology to which violence is integral. They support international terrorism. We know this. There are the recent revelations about the involvement of the Bulgarian secret-police in the attempted assassination of the Pope -- I'd find it very hard for anybody to persuade me that the

Bulgarian secret-police would do anything that the KGB was not fully familiar with. We are dealing with a group that also has confidence in its ultimate victory. They believe that the West is lazy, comfortable, rich, pacifist, and will not be prepared to resist their intimidation and threats of violence. That's their belief. It's a dangerous belief. It can lead to miscalculation.

Given that situation, the burden is going to have to be ours, because the price of war is deadly for all of us. That means that we are going to have to take steps in the area of negotiation, take the initiative. We've got to be very careful never to agree to anything that's not in our interests; but we should always be prepared to talk to them. I am a strong believer in summits; but I don't really believe they're panaceas. If I were sitting in the President's chair, I'd want to look the Soviet leader right in the eye and try to measure him, get some idea as to what I am dealing with. Particularly, in dealing with this "battle for hearts and minds," we must actively engage and be perceived as engaging in the active search for peace. And every time we say that we don't want to talk to them, we play into the hands of those who believe that we are not really seeking peace or not seeking agreements -- bona fide agreements. That's why I am for taking these extra steps, always ready to talk and to engage in dialogue. This is true, particularly since we've got the better case. We've got nothing to be worried about in talking to them.

But I do want to say in that connection that when I look ahead, I am convinced that this country is going to be facing days of great anguish. The West will be facing years of great anguish, agony, trial, difficulty. The Soviet military power is great, and they now have the arrogance that comes from knowing that they have that military power. They are going to test us.

I don't like to make predictions; but they could test us tomorrow, before 1984 is out. I think we will be tested again, and we will continue to be tested.

What we need is military deterrence. We need strong military strength to provide the deterrence so that the Soviets don't engage in foolish actions and adventures. They're a conservative bunch, and if they can't get away with a step or maneuver and think they can't, they won't try it. We need strong military power. We need dialogue. We need to speak facts, describe the way they are, and not try to sugarcoat the facts -- we need total reality. And we need patience. What I don't know is whether we have the patience. And that's going to be the big test. It's going to be a test of American leadership, of Presidential leadership, to try to explain to people that we need patience and perseverance.

Thank you.

July 24, 1984

Morris. I. Leibman, Esq.
Midwest Advisory Council
Suite 4800
One First National Plaza
Chicago, Illinois 60603

Dear Morrie:

Thank you for your letter of July 18. I did review the transcript of my remarks, and I am returning them to you in edited form.

It was great to see you.

All my best.

Sincerely,

Max M. Kampelman

MMK:sm
Enclosure

Midwest Advisory Council

A Project of the National Strategy Information Center

SUITE 4800 • ONE FIRST NATIONAL PLAZA • CHICAGO, IL. 60603 • (312) 853-7511

Committee in Formation

Edward C. Logelin
Chairman

*Kent L. Barry
David M. Burner, Jr.

*David Chang
Herbert Cohen

*Janice Eimer
Morgan L. Fitch
Richard E. Friedman
Robert W. Galvin

*Michael P. Galvin
Chairman

Gerald Gidwitz
Lawrence E. Glick

Leo S. Guthman
Neison Harris

Ronald A. Jacks
Martin Janis

Marlin Johnson
William B. Johnson

Melvin L. Klaffer
Marshall Korshak

John D. Lawlor
Morris I. Leibman

Heinz H. Loeffler
Thomas G. Lyons

Howard G. Mayer

*Jan McKillop
Richard B. Ogilvie
Patrick L. O'Malley

*Lon Otremba
Norman Ross

Maurice Rosenfield
Anthony J. Rudis

Donald Rumsfeld
Samuel Wm. Sax

Arnold Sobel
William G. Stratton

*John Vryhof
Marshall A. Warshauer

Thomas A. Webber
Neil S. Weiner

Robert Wiss

*Terrill L. Wold
John A. Zenko

*Operating Committee

July 18, 1984

Hon. Max M. Kampelman
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver
& Kampelman
600 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Max:

We have transcribed your remarks of July 10th.
If you approve, we would like to distribute it
to our people here and other friends.

If your answer is in the affirmative, please
do not hesitate to make any changes you think
necessary and return the amended copy to me.
In any event, please let me know what you decide.

Again, we had had great reports on your speech
and we would like to make sure that others who
were not present have the opportunity to read
your remarks.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,


Morris I. Leibman

Enclosure