



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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THE POWER OF THE "OUGHT"

By
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Henry, I am deeply grateful for your introduction and for its most welcome exaggerations. Your decision to be with us today means a great deal to me. Good sense should now call for me to grab the plaque, and quickly sit down but those are not my instructions from our President, Brandon Groves. I also want to note that we have had 66 Secretaries of State in our history, but I am convinced that when our nation celebrates the swearing in of our 100th Secretary of State, the name and wisdom of Henry Kissinger, our 56th Secretary, will still be remembered with appreciation and respect.

To Tom Pickering, the Chair of our American Academy of Diplomacy, I say "thank you" - the award was totally unanticipated and immensely appreciated. Tom and I first met when he was our Ambassador to El Salvador. Secretary of State Shultz asked me to head a delegation to

observe that country's first national elections after a period of turmoil and violence. It is my recollection that I was by then serving in two positions. I was Counselor in the Department at the same time as we were putting the finishing touches to the two nuclear arms treaties I had helped negotiate with the Soviet Union.

Tom invited me to join him on a plane trip throughout the area of El Salvador so that we could more intimately witness the country-wide excitement and long lines of first time voters. During the flight I occasionally noticed the plane's strange behavior, but it wasn't until we returned to our base that Tom pointed out the many bullet holes on the shell of the plane, which explained its erratic behavior. You will understand therefore, if I report to you that I've always respected and admired and enjoyed and been enriched by my friendship with Tom, but I would never again fly with him, even on a Boeing aircraft!

Permit me, as I accept your award, if I am reminded of a fantasy that went through my mind when I first learned in 1980 that my assignment to head the follow up CSCE meeting in Madrid brought with it an Ambassadorial rank. I could fantasize returning to my early days in the Bronx, New York and informing my family that I was an Ambassador. The puzzled disbelief would be broken by my Aunt Rose the skeptic who, in my imagination, would say "Alright

Maxie. By me you are an Ambassador; by you you are an Ambassador, by Momma you are an Ambassador. But tell me Maxie, by an Ambassador are you an Ambassador?" Thank you my friends for providing me with an answer to that question.

During my 86 years, I have been fortunate in having a variety of experiences. To support my education as a youngster I sold magazines and newspapers, worked as a steamer in a sweater factory, was fired as a bus boy in a summer resort because I could not make salads – all until I found my niche at a law firm while going to law school at night.

The war took me to Civilian Public Service where, among other challenging assignments, I became a human guinea pig in a scientific starvation experiment financed by the Department of Defense at the University of Minnesota. After the war, I accepted the University offer to earn a doctorate and teach political science. This led to a later offer to come to Washington for two months to help our newly elected Minnesota Senator, Hubert Humphrey, open his office. The two month leave from teaching lasted for six enriching years, participating in the legislative process. To remain in Washington, I decided to practice law and be active in public affairs.

On that scene, Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski and Vice President Mondale interrupted my life. President Carter took their advice and appointed me to head our American delegation to the Madrid meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. I only vaguely knew of the Helsinki Final Act, but Secretary Vance assured me the assignment would only last for three months. At the end of the three months and the election of a new President, I submitted my resignation. President Reagan and Secretary of State Haig did not accept my resignation and the three months became three years. I must here confess that Moscow blamed me for the meeting lasting three years instead of three months. They were correct and this brings me to my theme.

During my teaching days, the Swedish economist, Gunnar Myrdahl, published his important work, An American Dilemma. I explained to my students that the Carnegie people wanted an objective study of the American Negro and chose Myrdahl for that assignment. His impressive report emphasized that wherever he went throughout our country all Americans he met seemed to have one common unifying theme - that of our Declaration of Independence - we

all should be treated equally under the law. – That was the essence and strength of our democracy.

I reminded my classes that the Declaration was submitted for consideration in Philadelphia at a time when we had slavery, no equal rights for women, and property qualifications for voting. I could imagine the pragmatic politicians of that day complaining that this was no time to confuse our problems. We were losing the war to the British; our survival was at stake; we had our hands full with many problems. Slavery, furthermore, was a permanent part of the human race - even the Bible accepted it. I could hear them saying: "Get away - don't bother us now - we've got our hands full." And yet, the Declaration was accepted and became a vital "ought" for our American society. Our politics and our history moved us steadily toward the goal of that "ought". It was slow and sometimes unsteady, but the history of our country has been one of movement from the "is" of our origins to the strength of our "ought." That is what motivated the champions of civil rights in the Senate in the face of institutional traditional resistance.

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act, as I read it for the first time, struck me as an expression of a vital agreed upon international “ought”. Two good diplomatic friends with experience advised me not to accept the assignment because the origin of the Helsinki agreement was a move by the Soviet Union to undermine and replace NATO. You will remember, Henry, that I consulted with you. But I read the agreement and believed it could and should be an “ought” of where to head as we challenged the dangerous “is” of our world. Russian Ambassador Dobrynin later wrote in his autobiography that Foreign Minister Gromyko persuaded the Politburo to accept the Helsinki agreement because its economic and security provisions were to Soviet advantage and he did not believe anybody would take the human rights provisions seriously. This, of course, explained why my three month assignment became three years!

We are living in an increasingly dangerous world. Our options are limited. It is essential in these days of international turmoil and threats to our survival that our nation and those associated with our values develop and define an international “ought” as an indispensable goal for our world to accept. I respectfully propose that it is today in our vital interest as a nation and as human beings to declare that the “ought” of our diplomacy must be the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Will it be difficult to attain? Probably. Will it take time? Probably. Is it necessary?

Absolutely. That is the goal that should permeate our diplomacy today. I respectfully suggest that our future depends on that commitment. I fear for our safety and the safety of my children and grandchildren when I learn that at least forty countries are today at different stages of developing their capacity to produce nuclear weapons.

In 1945, President Truman understood this goal of zero and said so. In 1953, President Eisenhower understood this when he urged "the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but constricted to his life": President Kennedy understood this when he said those weapons "must be abolished before they abolish us". And it was President Reagan who called for the abolition of "all nuclear weapons" which he considered to be "totally irrational, totally inhumane" and "destructive of life on earth and civilization".

Yes, we "ought" to destroy all of the worlds weapons of mass destruction. That should be the center piece of our diplomacy. But it would be foolhardy for us to destroy a single one of our approximately 10,000 nuclear weapons without the assurance that the zero commitment is totally secure and that cheating can be identified and subject to total world isolation and

punishment. A difficult task? Yes. But there is power in the “ought” and the alternative is unthinkable.

I conclude by confessing my reluctant view that neither of our two major national political parties have as yet communicated the extraordinary capacity to govern our society in this period of international crisis. We must, therefore, now turn to this building and to those who inhabit and lead it as an arm of the President for the indispensable leadership which is essential in this period of danger. Let us strive to move our “is” to the “ought”! That should be the goal of our diplomacy. Our nation and our world need it and our principles and future demand it.

Thank you