



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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OVERCOMING NUCLEAR DANGER

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Thank you very much for your invitation that I join you in greeting President Gorbachev in his visit to this historic campus. Mr. President, I greet you as one of the worlds most impressive and responsible leaders of this historic period.

It is not for me, as a guest, to set a theme for this event, but the most serious threat to the survival of our two countries and the civilized world remains nuclear weapons of mass destruction – a danger that you, Mr. President, and President Reagan recognized very early during your public service. The threat remains and is, I suggest, even greater than it was twenty-two years ago in Reykjavik. Today, both of our countries are aware that there are no secrets about the widespread use of technology capable of developing a realistic nuclear threat to our lives and to our civilization.

Both of our countries, Mr. President, have a moral and indispensable responsibility to declare the development and possession of nuclear weapons of mass destruction to be crimes against our civilization. Nuclear weapons should disappear and our two countries should take the lead in seriously proclaiming that goal as a realistic one. Our two countries should proclaim that we are willing to destroy all of our nuclear weapons once we are assured that the world joins us in that goal and in the practical steps necessary to achieve that goal. Indeed our joint effort

should form a world wide consensus defining a series of practical steps necessary to remove the nuclear threat to our civilization and to the lives of our children and grandchildren. Together, within the United Nations, we should form a world wide consensus defining a series of practical steps necessary if we are ever going to remove that imminent threat to our civilization.

Yes, there is a nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has also been suggested that both of our countries unilaterally reduce some of our nuclear weapon inventory as an example to the world. The reality, however, is that the treaty has not been ratified and is, therefore, not applicable. Some of our experts have also considered it appropriate for the United States and Russia unilaterally to reduce some of their inventory as an example to the world. It may be that neither of us needs the numbers we now possess, but that does not deal with the urgent need for the world to declare the possession of nuclear weapons to be totally illegal under the United Nations and contrary to a civilized way of life.

It is appropriate here to note a recent article by two distinguished scientists Harold Brown and John Deutsch expressing skepticism about the practicality of reaching for the goal of zero. I assume they may not challenge its desirability. I obviously hesitate to ignore a conclusion of two distinguished and highly respected scientists any opinions expressed by these experienced experts deserves serious attention by our decision makers and by those of us active in public life. I respectfully suggest, however, that those of us in the social sciences (my doctorate is in political science) also have a claim to be recognized in judging recommendations relating to the realities of our body politic in this democracy of ours.

The obvious challenge we face relates to our ability to form a worldwide consensus defining a series of practical steps necessary if we are ever going to remove the threat to our civilization emanating from the existence and further development of nuclear arms of mass destruction.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its goal of zero is usually the first thought that comes to mind. It is also appropriate to take note of the suggestion made by some that the United States unilaterally reduces some of our nuclear as an example to the world. The argument continues that we do not need eight thousand nuclear weapons and we could set an example by reducing that number. Suggestions have also been made that since the U.S. Senate has not ratified the proposed comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, we should perhaps modify that treaty and consider a compromise measure.

I respectfully suggest that efforts to strengthen the treaty have failed and are likely to continue to fail along with other highly motivated constructive ideas and plans which have also failed. The number of nuclear arms in our world has increased significantly. The number of countries which have a capacity to produce and utilize those weapons of mass destruction has increased not decreased. We also know that terrorists have acquired the means of utilizing that technology. The vision of nuclear weapon elimination has slowly disappeared until recently, out of the composition of reality.

My own view as a political scientist, as a father and grandfather and as a citizen of our country is that we should shake up our leaders and our leaders should shake us up into understanding that our civilization is at stake – that the welfare and lives of our children and grandchildren are at stake. Our experts tell us that if the 9/11 attack against the U.S. had included nuclear arms on those airplanes the catastrophe to our nation would have been overwhelming. It is that disturbing reality which should lead us to understanding that total nuclear weapon disarmament is not and must not be considered to be a “fantasy.” I do not know how many countries today have the capacity to destroy us with their nuclear weapons. Is it twenty, is it forty? What I do know is that a Pakistani scientist who helped Pakistan develop its own nuclear weapons now acknowledges that he sold that knowledge to other countries and to

other groups. We have every reason to believe that those who acquire that knowledge have done so with the intent of utilizing them against our friends and us.

I realize that we have made strenuous efforts to persuade countries like North Korea and Iran to withdraw from their aspirations to possess nuclear armaments. I reluctantly suggest, however, that those efforts have failed and will continue to fail. It is something like lecturing an audience not to smoke because of its danger to our health, but as we speak, a lighted cigarette is dangling from our lips.

The danger is great and time is not on our side. What to do?

Were the President to ask me how can we effectively deal with what appears to be an inevitable catastrophe facing all of us, I would urge the following:

Our President should call for a special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He should introduce a resolution in effect declaring the development and possession of nuclear weapons of mass destruction to be a crime against the basic intent and principles of the U.N. and should be considered to be a crime subject to a punishment of total political, cultural, and economic isolation from the rest of the world. A number of us are prepared to give the President a proposed text of that U.N. resolution.

I look upon this action by the U.N. General Assembly to be a major "ought" for the world as we look ahead to the future and to the safety of our civilization.

Obviously, there are serious questions relating to possible cheating and to the need for effective inspections. The UN General Assembly resolution proposed by us should refer those

vital questions to the Security Council and to the U.N. appropriate agency specializing in inspections and international stability.

It would be my hope that the President of the United States would invite the President of Russia to join him in making such a proposal to the General Assembly. Other countries now openly possessing those weapons should be invited by the President to join our initiative as well. This is what the world "ought" to be working towards and what our country "ought" to be urging.

American public opinion and world public opinion must be mobilized to support that "ought". Many of us see no other salvation for the human race other than the total elimination of these weapons. Without that "bold vision", we are in serious difficulty. My former leader and teacher, Hubert Humphrey, reminded us that "we have to decide today whether we will design our future or resign ourselves to it".

Permit me to conclude this presentation with a few words about "The Power of the Ought". Our nation is an example of that power.

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, the Americans he met also seemed to have one common unifying theme for our society - that of our Declaration of

Independence - we all should be treated equally under the law. He observed that the there – 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, many believe was a permanent part of the human race - even the Bible accepted it. I could hear the practical politicians of that day saying: "Get away - don't bother us now we are at war – we are losing the war - 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." We did not, I remind you, set out to regulate or reduce slavery. We set out to abolish it. The world needs an "ought" [that is what motivated the champions of civil rights during my days in the Senate in the face of deep institutional and geographical 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!]

An experienced Washington journalist recently told me that he senses the existence of a quiet consensus building among the emeritus elites of U.S. foreign policy. He says that for former U.S. Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Defense and a former Chairman of the Senate Arms Services Committee - all calling for the abolition of all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth the country will increasingly conclude that "urgent new actions" are called for or the world faces destruction.

It is urgent and timely that we and our friends move steadily and rapidly to the "ought of peace and stability. There is no rational alternative.