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THE CHANCES FOR PEACE

By Erwin D. Canham
Editor
The Christian Science Monitor

You advance upon the world at one of the great moments in history. We stand at a moment of great peril and opportunity in the affairs of men. Few people, since time began, have had such crucial decisions to make, such need to decide aright, as the American people have today. Our decisions, we all know, will sway the destiny of human civilization for many years to come. You are fortunate people: you come to maturity and go out into the world in great days.

In our time restless, probing, thoughtful, inventive human beings have altered, almost cosmically, man's relationship to nature. Cannot we, even modestly, alter man's relationship to man? We have done so within many nations. Cannot we do something of the same between nations? I think we can, and I think the methods we must use are the same methods we have proved down the millenia, down the centuries, down the decades, to be the most sure and fruitful ways of living together. What are these rules?

These rules are our tradition. They begin, in our western-world experience, with the emergence to men in Judea of the concept of one God and the rule of law. They broaden with the Christian teaching of love and of universality. They include the Greek concept of reason and beauty, the Roman talent for organization and administration. And they blend together and flower in today's insistence --

in the United States and other countries with similar dedication -- on the infinite significance of individual man and a society buttressed by constitutional guarantee and the proving of rights, liberties, and responsibilities. These facts of our experience can be translated into an international program of long-range action for peace and stability.

Are we rising to the challenge?

Only in part. As far as immediate essential problems go, I believe that the decisions of the American people, in these last fifteen urgent years, have been wise and timely on the whole. Sometimes we have been wrong; sometimes our leaders have been wrong. Wisdom after the event can show us missed opportunities and blundering acts. But in broad lines, I believe the people have been relatively well informed, have responded both rationally and instinctively to the problems facing them, and have acted effectively under the impact of the force of events. I do not believe we have been led by traitors or idiots or conspirators. Nor do I think that many of our mistakes were readily foreseeable.

Facing our critics, we may well ask: just what would we have had to do to save China? Were we ever prepared for the cost? Just what would we have had to do to save the satellite states of eastern Europe? Were we ever prepared for the cost? It seems to me that the cost was a long-term American garrison in Manchuria and perhaps elsewhere in China on the one hand and along the marches of eastern Europe on the other. Would the world have been any more stable with this dual confrontation of American and Communist forces across a narrow frontier? And assuming that worse had come to worst and we had fought the Soviet Union -- at what incalculable cost-- and "won" (though

the word is inapplicable) a decisive war. Are we sure we could have made peace after World War III any more successfully than we are making it after World War II? These are questions for which I do not have a confident answer. But it does seem to me that the kind of equilibrium in which we have found ourselves in these post-war years is perhaps the best we can expect in today's world.

We must set ourselves to the task of genuine peace-making in this kind of world. And it is in this task of genuine long-range peace-making I believe we have most notably failed. I believe we have failed to understand and use the dynamic power of the free system of which we are a part. I believe we have failed to recognize the dynamic power of people rising up to demand their freedom elsewhere in the world. I believe we have forgotten that we free men are the true revolutionaries of modern history, and that the totalitarians-- whether of the right or the left -- are reactionaries. I believe we have failed to utilize the ideological and practical potency of freedom as a force against which communism pales into innocuousness. I believe we must mobilize our spiritual resources -- which are in fact very concrete and practical forces -- for the task of winning the in-between majorities of the world who have not yet decided which way to turn.

But before I tell you the sort of thing I believe we should do in the long-range effort to attain stability and peace, let us look at the immediate situation.

I believe it is the view of the best informed persons in the western world -- that the unspeakably devastating nature of modern warfare has become an actual deterrent against global war. President

Eisenhower and Sir Winston Churchill have given us their judgment that nobody could win a modern world war. And it would seem clear that so long as the United States retains its capacity to strike a strong retaliatory blow against any prospective enemy, that enemy would not gain sufficient advantages by a sneak attack.

Of course, for countless centuries, men have thought the horrors of "modern" war would make war impossible. This has been a persistent fallacy. Therefore we all look at the belief skeptically today. But it cannot be denied that today's conditions have changed, and that warfare based on atomic or thermo-nuclear weapons, or upon germs, or upon other devices and concepts of transcendent horror, has become warfare in which no real victor is conceivable and all mankind is manifestly the victim. As has often been pointed out, men and nations rarely have embarked upon war except with the conviction that they could win.

There is a great deal of evidence to show that nobody could win a total, global war.

But there is a good deal of evidence to show that either the Soviet Union, or we and our friends, certainly could win a war based upon regional conflicts as in Korea and Indochina, and upon infiltration and penetration using economic, ideological, and political attacks. That kind of war has been going on since 1945, we have suffered grievous defeats and gained some victories, and we should wage it far more effectively than we have done thus far.

Our record is not one of unrelieved disaster. We lost China, which was indeed a disaster of tragic magnitude. Southeast Asia is

in the gravest of danger right now. The Middle East is unstable and could burst into flame without warning. Italy and France are riddled by communism underneath and corruption (of one form or another) above. India wavers between two worlds, There are serious penetrations of totalitarian intrigue in Latin America. The united States has permitted itself to descend into political bickering, demagoguery and irresponsibility which greatly weakens our role of leadership. This is a partial list of our failures in the cold war.

But our successes are great. They are to be measured against Communist goals and expectancies. The great aims of Communist planning, in the decade following the end of the second world war, must surely have been the absorption of Germany and Japan, with their great industrial might and manpower; the economic collapse of the United States; the total undermining of France and Italy; the further conquest of Southeast Asia; the penetration of the Near East and the Mediterranean.

These things have not happened. Above all, we have held the line in Germany and in Japan. These are proud achievements. Time was-- and not so long ago -- when Soviet power beat at Berlin and would have swept across West Germany. We stopped it, with the visible operation of the Berlin airlift behind which stood the retaliatory possibility of the atomic bomb. The attack down across the 38th parallel in Korea was an attack on Japan. In that sense, it was totally repulsed. It is true that we did not succeed in unifying Korea.

But Korea has not been unified -- and free -- for a very long time in history. The unification of Korea, like the freeing of the satellite states of Eastern Europe, will be possible when the world balance of power changes. Perhaps we might have changed this balance

if we had fought the Korean war in a different way, but this conclusion is far from certain. Had we pressed the Korean war deeper into the Asian mainland, we might have dealt Red China a more severe blow, but we might also have brought Soviet power into the war.

There is no hint that either Peiping or Moscow would have been ready to accept a readjustment of the geopolitical forces which made the frontier of the free and the communist worlds rest upon the 38th parallel. Tragic though the situation is for the people of Korea -- as the situation is tragic for the people of Eastern Europe -- I do not think we can escape the hard fact that the existing frontiers express the power position in the world. Perhaps, indeed, probably, we can change these frontiers as time goes on. But the changes will come as the free world itself gets stronger, and the changes will not come because of wars of other people's making, when and where they choose.

But my point now is that we won a major victory in the cold war when we prevented Japan from being dominated by the fall of the Korean peninsula. Thus far, we have also prevented Japan from being dominated by the capture of its rice bowl in Indochina. And so far, although with scanty access to Asian markets, Japan has been able to reconstitute much of its industry. But for Japan to become strong and remain free, its food supplies must be assured and it must have markets and sources of raw materials. These factors will determine whether or not Japan remains outside the Communist orbit. So far we have succeeded. But the cold war never ends for the Communists and their present economic offensive against Japan is perhaps more sinister and dangerous than the Korean campaign.

Elsewhere in the world, we have skated close to disaster, but have fortunately stayed on the right side. The Middle East could have flared into conflict or collapsed into chaos. It has not done so, and there is still a chance for statesmanship. There is still a chance-- and a major chance -- for France and Italy to turn the corner toward strength and stability. There is a chance to save Indochina, a chance to clarify the muddle into which our relations with India have relapsed. And above all, perhaps, there is an excellent chance to keep the American economy strong and stable and related fruitfully and dynamically with the economy of the rest of the world. I do not need to remind you that a collapse of the American economy would be one of the greatest possible victories world communism could gain.

There are many ways, no doubt, in which we could improve our tactics in the cold war. But I think our leadership is learning, that the people's information and instincts are improving too. The real challenge is the long-range program.

It goes without saying that two integral parts of any long-range program for peace are the maintenance of military and economic strength by the free world. We must always be in possession of sufficient military power and economic stability to make an enemy attack upon us a very bad -- a suicidal -- risk.

But it is important for us to realize that the maintenance of a strong military and economic position might be nothing more than the buying of time. Behind this rampart of basic security against a global, total war we could lose the cold war -- and lose it very badly. For the cold war is only in a minor sense military. It is an attack upon the thinking and the action of the hundreds of millions of people in the world who are not sure whether to turn toward the free system as

notably exemplified by the United States, or to turn toward communism, or to reject both. Today a tragic number of these in-between peoples reject the free system, and even though they may think they are rejecting totalitarianism as well, most of them are accepting fatally large parts of it.

Our problem, therefore, is to make clearer to these people the terms of their choice, and to do our utmost to see that they turn in the right direction. I am not speaking of trying to sell them a rigid American pattern. That would be folly. But in our experience, and in the collective experience of the free world, there are many universal elements. These elements relate to the transcendent importance of individual man, the significance of constitutional institutions, the power of a competitive enterprise economy, the central values of free speech and free religion and free press and all the freedoms which constitute the rights of man. It is these institutions which have enabled us in the western world to bring about the new relationship with nature which offers us such opportunities. It is these things we have to share. These are the dynamic essence of freedom. They ought to be setting the hearts and minds of men aflame everywhere in the world. They have been proved in action and demonstration. They are the true revolution.

Too often these great forces are dormant in the world. They are glossed over with the false label of reaction. They are obscured by the accusation -- sometimes validated by the compromises we make in our own policies -- that we are merely trying to preserve the status quo. Instead of facing mankind armed with a zealous tradition of spiritual freedom and opportunity, we often seem to manifest nothing more valid than materialism and militarism. A strong economy and a

forceful military position are the results of basic spiritual freedom. They are the fruits of the system which offers opportunity to all men. And behind these fruits lies a system which is moral and spiritual in its essence since it is founded upon the importance of man, under God.

How are we to awaken ourselves and the world to these facts? Government must do its part. We must equip and support our official information program to do its task adequately. Happily, the program is now in capable professional hands, it has been organizationally simplified to do an effective job, and its policies are being set in clearer terms. Whenever President Eisenhower speaks in fundamental concepts, as he did last December to the United Nations, or last April to the the nations of the world through the American Society of Newspaper Editors, or on May 31 at Columbia University, he strikes notes which go deep into the hearts of men. In between, our day-to-day policies often raise doubts and misunderstandings. I hope we can clarify these misunderstandings so that we no longer place ourselves in an inconsistent position. But I recognize fully the problems and compromises which are part of any human operation in a very complicated and inconsistent world.

What government can do in its information program and its policy-making, however, is the smallest part of the true voice of America. There is a tool which I am inclined to think is one of the most useful developments of the mid-twentieth century. That is the power of voluntary private organization. Clarence Randall wrote: "We are a nation of voluntary organizations, and it may be that when the history of our times is written, this characteristic will stand out as our most revolutionary contribution to the advancement of human welfare by democratic processes."

I believe this is no over-statement. Many Americans are already doing a great deal through voluntary international organizations to maintain channels of communication with other peoples. But what is now being done could be readily multiplied an hundred fold.

I would propose that every voluntary private organization in the United States should ask itself: What can this organization do to spread and demonstrate the concept of the free system in the world? There are thousands of individual posts of veterans' organizations in the United States; thousands of trade and professional organizations; thousands of women's clubs; thousands of civic groups, thousands of labor unions; thousands of organized farmers, of fraternal organizations, of church groups.

If each individual branch of these infinitely varied and representative organizations would set in motion some single program of international communication in the interest of freedom -- however modest -- it would add up to a critical mass of incalculable potency. Nearly all of these individual units could finance -- for example -- a modest exchange-of-persons program by which qualified Americans could go briefly to some part of the world where their experience and know-how might be most useful, and interested citizens of other lands could come to the United States to inform themselves of the practical working of that part of the free system which interested them most. There are countless other ways in which the same kind of communication could be opened up.

The important point is that this communication must be two-way. We will learn as well as teach, and it is conceivable that what we learn will be as important to us as what we teach will be to others. We

have been the beneficiary, down through history, of the experience and cultural richness of other peoples and societies. We must not stop learning.

In any case, what I am briefly suggesting is that the power of private organization, which is already so significant in making our domestic society work fruitfully, be more effectively set into operation in international terms.

If there is ever to be community in the world, it will be community in terms of the mutual experience and interests of people, not political community. No lingua franca is more eloquent than the language of mutually shared experience and the satisfaction of challenge faced and problems solved. Such bonds of community do not threaten the true values of national sovereignty. But they can build mighty foundations for understanding, which is the key to the solution of the problem of man's relation to man.

The same measures which have enabled us to go so far toward solving social problems inside nations can be used externally. But it is time for us to awaken and to press such programs for freedom much more vigorously than ever before. We must use the time we have bought. We must win the cold war -- by wiser daily policies, by deeper expression and exemplification of our ideals of freedom.

We have not adequately presented the voice or the face of the true America to the world. It is time we began, and we can begin with the channels at hand -- primarily the channels of voluntary private organization. We must press forward more practically and resolutely than ever, for the cold war is at stake and we are not winning.

Yet do not forget the magnificent inheritance we have with which to do the job: the invincible power of free men.