

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jennifer

Per Mr. DuBois, Special Asst. to the Sec. of the Army, Mr. Bush requested a copy of Mr. Hoffman's address to the Commonwealth Club. Mr. Hoffman asked for a copy of Mr. Bush's address also, which I gave.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
MEMORANDUM

28 July 1976

[Redacted]

STATINTL

Attached is the transcript of Mr. Hoffmann's address to the Commonwealth Club of California, per your conversation with Mr. DuBois today.

Irene Parkhurst

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TRANSCRIPTION OF ADDRESS

ADDRESS BY  
HONORABLE MARTIN R. HOFFMANN  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
TO THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, 9 JULY 1976

President Bates, distinguished head table guests and members, distinguished guests and members, one and all. I'm particularly happy to be here and to have a chance to share with you some thoughts and I hope some enlightening perspectives on conventional warfare in a nuclear age.

- Let me hopefully put you at ease at the outset by saying I'm mindful that I follow not only Tom Reed to the podium, who is a good and close friend and who I am delighted for the opportunity to work with in many ways, but also Fred Weyand who was out and appeared before this distinguished group earlier in the spring. The Chief of Staff of the Army, Fred Weyand, I think, is an unusual man, and his subject that he brought here, the relationship between armed force foreign policy and its correlation to the national will, was a timely one then, and continues to be so. He himself is a very fine example of the military leadership from which the country benefits in this day and age. Fred, who cut his combat teeth in Korea, has seen firsthand the tremendous costs in time and treasure occasioned by lack of preparedness, and occasioned by lack of readiness in the face of a fairly obvious conventional as opposed to nuclear threat. Tom Reed's message 2 weeks ago reflects in profile a problem that all the

services have. You have heard about the B-1 from him and in the newspapers; you've heard about the Navy's shipbuilding problem, in which the number of our warships has shrunk dramatically until our Navy, in terms of numbers of ships, is now at a level approximately where it was slightly before Pearl Harbor, which has some historic as well as interesting perspectives in absolute.

We have the same problem in the Army, and the basic problem is a problem of modernization. A question as to whether or not we will mount a modern capability that is realistically geared to the threat that we face. And so I will hope to capitalize by way of background on the earlier remarks -- Tom's enlightened discussion of the Soviet threat and its buildup of course is one of the key factors that we all regard as being important in this mix. But I would underscore that though you hear a great deal of this from the Pentagon, the problems of which we speak are not our exclusive property or province. These are national problems of deep and pervasive significance in my judgment, particularly as we look ahead. A watershed year, the bicentennial, gives us the opportunity to take stock, looking backward for strength, as well as forward for vision. And I would hope that in that perspective I may make one or two points here today with respect to conventional power that will peak your interest.

Now the Chief of Staff and Secretary Reed and I share the same view of the historical perspective in which we find ourselves, and I would briefly summarize that. Perhaps the overwhelming historical fact with which we must contend today is the achievement by the Soviet of strategic

parity with the United States in the nuclear field. Now we enjoyed after World War II what was fondly known as the "atomic monopoly." That yielded to a position of rather sublime superiority over the Soviet in strategic and nuclear terms, but while we were interested in manipulating and deploying our strategic capability after World War II in order to assure the maximum return for that investment, you will recall that we let our conventional capabilities fall to nearly nothing, thus setting the stage for Korea.

Now the story of the time since that time to this is that the Soviet has inched away both in numbers and in the degree of sophistication of his technology. And our superiority in strategic terms has disappeared to where there is now hopefully a stalemate. And reflected in the SALT Talks we would hope to cap further arms race in the strategic nuclear area in order to assure that neither country and the world in general suffers from too low a nuclear threshold which would invite the nuclear holocaust which we are all of course dedicated to avoid.

Now the second historical fact, in addition to the arrival of strategic and nuclear parity . . . The second overwhelming fact is the growth and momentum of Soviet capability -- militarily, exclusive of the rocket forces. Now this development has not been unseen but it has gone somewhat unnoticed, filtered as it was by the circumstances of the Vietnam war, and I say filtered from our own intelligence community as well as from the public at large. At the time that our defense resources in absolute terms have been declining and also coincident with this period,

the Vietnam war drawing off those resources so that we were spending them for the practical business of fighting a war -- they were current expenditures -- as opposed to being investments against a future contingency. During this time that we were preoccupied the Soviet built his capability in almost every field of military endeavor, slowly, undramatically, but with a constant upward drift of his resources. Interestingly enough, within the money that he spent, although the figure was going up in absolute terms, his percentages that he spent for conventional ground warfare were absolutely steady. The percentage for Navy went down, the percentage for Air Force went down, but the percentage to wage the conventional ground war stayed absolutely level. Tom Reed mentioned a few of the results of this, and I have a number of them but I think a few of them will suffice. To suddenly find the Soviet Union, with a ratio of 6 to 1 in tanks -- he has approximately 42,000 tanks as compared with our 6,000 to 6,500. To look at the ratio of armored personnel carriers -- 3 to 1 in favor of the Soviet; 9 to 1 advantage in artillery pieces deployable in the field; 3 to 1 advantage in people in the Army alone. These sorts of statistics didn't just accrue overnight. They reflect not only this upward trend that I've mentioned, but a tremendous momentum that has built up in his program, which seemingly carry him along at advanced levels every year. And again I would underscore the conventional capability reflected in these munitions.

Now, the third historic aspect is a very simple point -- that the Soviet Union has expressed quite clearly what they intend to do with this

military power and what it's good for. And all we have to do is correlate their protestations with their actions to see that they still regard warfare of all kinds as being an appropriate instrumentality of international policy. And whether you look at the buildup in Somalia that occasioned great congressional concern some 4 or 5 months ago, whether you look at adventurism by surrogates in Angola, whether you look at the general supplying of arms in pressure spots and unsettled areas in the world, you see a pattern which is too unmistakable to mistake.

Now the sum of these developments is found in what one would call in an era of strategic parity or strategic stalemate increased freedom for military adventurism. Increased freedom for, not from, military adventurism.

Now you remember in the Cuban Missile Crisis we were able to face down the Soviet with our preponderance of strategic power and we were able to convert that tremendous deterrent force into a very practical lever, against what was a conventional intrusion into Cuba. Stalemate means we can no longer do that. And the question is, how will he seek to exercise his foreign policy and undergird it militarily, and are we prepared to do this.

Now conventional deterrence, or conventional forces, particularly in a nuclear age, have changed very little in their basic makeup since the old days of World War II and even before. The basic element is still the soldier, the ground soldier. He is still that priceless military capability that allows the holding of territory. The Soviet Union

understands the importance of ground forces, not only in the percentage figures I alluded to, but in their positioning of forces. Their forces stationed in the Warsaw Pact nations are there for a rather unforgettable reason. And in case we forget the reason, we have the reminders of Hungary and Czechoslovakia to see that they well perceive the political advantage of military coercion. And again, the utility of the soldier, in this regard, is very familiar to all of us. And if you look in the Declaration of Independence, you find that the first six complaints of the colonists had to do with the intrusive use of military power for political advantage. And here 200 years ago we see as one of the threats against our way of life in the world today remaining that same basic factor.

Now obviously, if our purpose is to mount a deterrent, which it is, history may have changed but the mission of the U.S. armed forces remains the same, and our purpose is first to deter an enemy from armed aggression, and should deterrence fail, to have the capability to resist him militarily and to defend not only our country but our interests. So that one looks in an age of conventional warfare as to how well we are able to deter his views, not only of strategic capability, which Tom Reed talked about -- and again, remember he talked about the necessity of running very hard in terms of the B-1 and modernization of those strategic means -- running very hard to preserve a stalemate. Now here we are talking in conventional terms about the necessity to mount a deterrent to an adversary who advocates the use of armed ground forces. And the only sure deterrent to that kind of a force is another armed ground force. Historically, the



United States has not done well in mounting ground forces during times of peace. If you look at the instance I mentioned in World War II where we reduced our forces in two and a half years from some 8-1/2 million men to 514,000, which is the number that was available in the U.S. Army when the North Koreans attacked. You see an example of this. It happened after World War I, it happened to some extent after Korea, except at that time we had the handy reminder of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Berlin Blockade to remind us of the necessity to maintain strength in conventional terms. And then of course with the coming of Vietnam we found we had to build our forces again to handle that contingency, and we now find following that engagement that we are once again in a position where there is a requirement to mount a conventional deterrent, maintain conventional strength in terms of soldiers. And that is a process that has not been an easy one for the United States.

We have a myth, born of our tremendous mobilizations for World War II and tremendous mobilizations for Korea, and again for Vietnam, of an instant ground force. We are very aware in Air Force and Navy terms that it's necessary to maintain technology and keep it well exercised and flexed, and that we need to push frontiers in these high technological areas. But we still have a lingering impression which is more a hope than a perception of reality that the constitution of ground strength can be done almost instantly at any given point in time. And with the increased technology of the ground forces of today, that is no longer a practical reality. So that at the present time, although we're faced with the conventional

threat, when we see historically we have not been good as a nation at mounting the kind of deterrent necessary to deter such a threat, we see as well some startling suggestions that perhaps we are on that track again. When you look at an Army that has but 50 percent of the dollar value of the equipment it needs to go to war, one becomes somewhat concerned. When you see the Congress cutting the monies necessary to recruit the quality soldiers that we need in an age of technology, in order to be successful in ground combat, one gets somewhat concerned. And so it goes with an upward level in ground forces, an upward level of resources being expended by the Soviet Union, and up to last year and hopefully again this year, but up till that time a constant declination in the resources we were willing to spend for ground combat.

Now, again, against the background of these shortcomings, I am not here to tell you that all is lost. In the U.S. Army today, to meet that conventional threat, to constitute that conventional deterrent, we are probably in as good shape now as we have ever been in our history, provided we follow through. And let me give you some examples. In the first place, thanks to the Middle East War, we have a very clear picture of what the ground war looks like in this day and age in its most exhausting form. This has been the first clash since World War II of two technologically mature combatants. And what we learned from that war, not only in terms of the advance of technology and a return to the importance of the initiative of the small unit and the individual soldier, but what we learned about rates of attrition, how much it cost to stay in a modern armored

clash, have been very valuable in identifying with some precision what we need to constitute a meaningful deterrent. So we are not in a situation where the future is not clear. We are in a situation where the task at hand is highly discernible and quite readily definable.

Now, our use of resources, particularly in the Army, has never been better. I would underscore that point. Our use of taxpayers' resources, our ability to turn taxpayer funds into combat power, has never been better, and I will give you a small example of that. 1964, just before the buildup to the peak in Vietnam, was the last time in peacetime that we had 16 active divisions. Now a division is armed for 16,000 people, and the division is the main fighting unit of the Army. It's the smallest unit that can sustain itself in combat from a logistical and command and control point of view. It's the equivalent of a ship or a wing of planes or the like, but it's our basic combat unit. Sixteen we had in 1964. Given full funding of the 77 budget, we will, in the first quarter of fiscal 78, again return in peacetime to 16 active combat ready divisions. But the difference this time is we are doing this job with 180,000 less uniformed personnel, and 60,000 less civilians on the Army payroll. And as an indication of conservation of resources and ability to get the job done with less, that is probably the outstanding defense example that we have today. Again, our ability to shrink the base structure in recent years, which is met with some congressional opposition, is a tremendous advantage to us. It gives us a leaner posture in resources for support than we've had in many years. And I would add to that our forward

deployments of troops, both in Korea and in Europe, give us one of the strongest peacetime posturings of ground forces that we have ever had. And that is a capability and an advantage which cannot be overly stressed.

Now, finally, I would say that our assets in terms of people wherewith to build a relevant and a strong deterrent have never been better. We have, as a major power, the greatest array of combat tested leadership that has ever been assembled in a peacetime Army. Vietnam, while it was a bitter experience, was not without its advantages in these aspects. We have the finest leadership at the company level and on up through the battalions and brigades that we've ever had -- combat tested veterans. This, in combination with the all volunteer force, which is yielding us a very determined, very willing, increasingly well qualified and dedicated young man for the force, provides us with the greatest potential to mount an Army that will be sufficient to our needs today and tomorrow that perhaps we have ever had.

I think in addition to the bicentennial, that we are in an era of some historic proportion. We are at that point, from the point of view of the Army and therefore from a point of view of a conventional capability. We are at that point historically where we will make the decisions this year and next year as a people, reflected through our Congress in levels of resources that will be made available, but we will make the choices of how we will constitute our will and our strength for the foreseeable future in an era which we hope is an era of peace.

Leaders from Weyand to Washington have told us that we cannot deter without real capability, and that the strongest assurance we have that we

will not go to war is to be prepared for it. And therefore although a return to conventional warfare, a return to geo-politics, and a return to the basic military potential -- losses of life, losses by destruction of property, and the yielding up of our sons to battle, which has never been easy for the United States. But if we do not respond to this sort of challenge with strength, we shall certainly not fulfill the hopes and expectations of 200 years of a free democracy.

Perhaps most of all the trick is not to substitute our hopes for the way the world should be, or our hopes for a level of force we could maintain in the United States successfully -- not to substitute our hopes for the realities that we see around us. This has been difficult in the past, particularly in the conventional ground force arena. It remains difficult today. But by the same token, we must not let the discomfort involved in raising such a force cloud the utility that comes from being truly strong, truly responsive, and mounting a true deterrent in those conventional terms which are once again the preeminent means of international coercion.

Thank you very much.

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July 29, 1976

*Talked to him  
by phone -  
1st week.  
CB  
8-2-76  
"no comment"*

The Honorable  
George Bush  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear George:

In case I can't reach you by phone,  
let me try the print medium ...

I was kind of surprised when it appeared  
some months back that you had been maneuvered out of  
vice presidential consideration. So now I'm not  
wholly amazed, considering the assets you muster, to  
learn that you might become a factor after all.

If you are tapped as running mate in  
Kansas City, we'd like very much to have you as guest  
on Meet the Press on the Sunday immediately following  
the convention -- August 22. The program could be  
done live out of Kansas City or Washington.

If that's not feasible for some reason, we  
would hope to have you the first Sunday you're available,  
assuming you can give us enough notice so we will not  
have locked in someone else. And if you're disposed  
to provide a hypothetical acceptance to a conditional  
invitation, we'd love to have it.

Good luck.

Sincerely,

*Bill*

Bill Monroe  
Executive Producer  
Meet the Press

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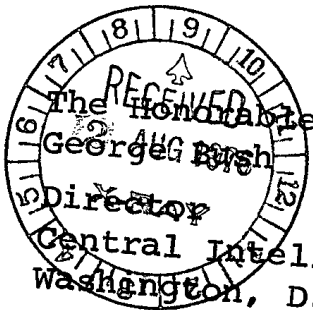
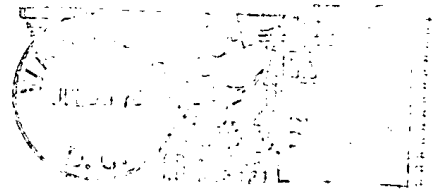
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