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SENATOR HENRY M. JACKSON (D., WASH.)

Thursday, March 10, 1966



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THE DUTY OF THE FREE AND THE BRAVE

Statement on the Senate Floor

by

Senator Henry M. Jackson

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(~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ *Long*)

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i.

For a long time Americans have been talking about Vietnam as though it was the only item on our national agenda. This week the letter of President de Gaulle to President Johnson -- in effect, an eviction notice -- reminds us that there is more to the world, even in 1966, than Southeast Asia. If President de Gaulle expects the United States to beg to keep its troops and bases in France, he is living in a dream world. I support President Johnson's polite, swift, firm "no" to De Gaulle on this issue.

De Gaulle's challenge to the international commands of the Atlantic Alliance is not a matter between France and the United States; it is a matter between France and the other fourteen allies. I back the President in his position that De Gaulle's challenge is a matter to be handled collectively by the Alliance, and not bilaterally with one ally.

In all of this the President's determination is backed by the firm will of Congress and the American people.

I have been deeply concerned about Vietnam. Our stand there is very important. I have also been concerned lest the drama of Vietnam command so much attention that we neglect areas of the world which are at least equally crucial. It is for this reason that the Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations, which I have the honor to chair, recently issued a study on The Atlantic Alliance: Basic Issues. It is for the same reason that I have frequently called attention to Europe and our relations with Europe, which are still central to the survival and success of liberty.

-2-

II.

Mr. President, the United States need apologize to no one for its basic policies in the years since World War II. Our purposes are the purposes written into the Charter of the United Nations -- to help create a world in which individual liberty, healing, reconciliation, and peace prevail. It is a noble cause. But a cause must have its leaders, and we may take pride in being counted among them.

Of first importance is our will -- our national resolve -- to defend our liberties, and to champion vital free world interests however bleak the prospect or rough the going.

This attitude, this approach to affairs, was the great strength that saw the free nations through the dark and difficult days twenty years ago when a devastated and shattered postwar Europe came under the hammer-blows of Stalinist policies. The words of Winston Churchill help remind us how grim the future looked in 1947:

"But what is Europe now? It is a rubble-heap, a charnel-house, a breeding-ground of pestilence and hate. Ancient nationalistic feuds and modern ideological factions distract and infuriate the unhappy, hungry populations. Evil teachers urge the paying-off old scores with mathematical precision, and false guides point to unsparing retribution as the pathway to prosperity. Is there then to be no respite? Has Europe's mission come to an end? Has she nothing to give to the world but the contagion of the Black Death? Are her peoples to go on harrying and tormenting one another by war and vengeance until all that invests human life with dignity and comfort has been obliterated?"

Churchill spoke these words in an appeal to Europeans to put aside their quarrels and to join forces to build a united Europe.

Likewise, a gallery of great Americans chose not to look at the future with despair. Despair was not part of the make-up of men like General Marshall, Robert Lovett, Dean Acheson, Senator Vandenberg, Senator Connally, Representative

-3-

Herter, Averell Harriman, and Will Clayton. It was certainly no part of the make-up of that scrappy and sensible man from Missouri, Harry S Truman.

The Marshall Plan laid the foundation for the North Atlantic Alliance. The historic association of North America with Western Europe and the commitment of the United States and Canada to the defense of their allies in Europe have transformed the weakness of 1947 into the strength of 1966. Western Europe has enjoyed a period of high prosperity and rapid economic growth. It has made important progress toward building a European economic community and together with the United States, Canada, Japan, and other countries, it has reduced barriers to trade and developed impressive practical measures of international monetary cooperation.

At the same time the defensive forces of the United States and its allies have been greatly strengthened, both absolutely and relatively. The shift in the balance of power since 1947, coupled with firm reaction to Soviet expansionary probes -- from the first Berlin crisis in 1948 to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 -- have closed the door to Soviet westward expansion. No armed attack has been made on Western Europe or North America, and provided an appropriate balance and resolve are maintained, none is likely.

The basis of today's hopes that a genuine European settlement will one day be attainable rests on Soviet recognition of, and respect for, the durability of this balance and the constancy of this resolve.

A traditional saying has it that "where there's a will, there's a way." Our experience in the Atlantic community confirms the truth of it. The problem has always been, at bottom, a problem of will. The Atlantic community had, at least potentially, the capabilities to assure its security -- but capabilities without the will to use them are as sand.

-4-

Since 1947 the United States has shown by its actions both the will to resist aggression and the will to exercise restraint in the use of its power -- and the combination has been the mainstay of peace in the Atlantic area. What brought an end to the Berlin blockade but the will to break it with the airlift? What led Khrushchev to back away from two challenges to the Western position in Berlin but the will of the United States and its allies not to yield? The decisive factor in the Cuban missile crisis was Khrushchev's recognition that the United States was prepared to take whatever risks were necessary to obtain satisfaction of its minimum demands. Khrushchev's reply to Peking's criticism on that occasion was wholly free of diplomatic double-talk. He simply said: "the paper tiger has nuclear teeth." And, when Khrushchev found that he might be starting something bigger than he was ready to risk, and when he discovered that our will was firm, he rushed to get his missiles out.

We are of course not yet out of the woods in the Atlantic community. But our problems now, unlike 1947, are the problems that come with strength, not weakness -- and that fact alone is a measure of how things have changed since 1947.

III.

Mr. President, I am reminded of these things by the events of recent weeks and months. What has happened to the spirit with which we stayed the course in the West? Are we losing our capacity for calm, steady pursuit of our purposes?

To be sure, the problems we face in the Far East are different from those we faced in Europe twenty years ago. Mao is not Stalin; Communist China is not the Soviet Union; Vietnam is not Germany; Ho Chi Minh is not Tito; the circumstances of 1947 are not the circumstances of 1966. The circumstances are new -- but the problem of will is not new.

-5-

When Peking refers to the United States as a paper tiger, it is placing its bet on the table. It is gambling that we lack the will to persevere, that we will weary of the struggle, that the tactics of "protracted war" -- according to the gospel of Mao -- will prevail. That is the burden of Mao's message to Hanoi, as it is to every revolutionary group everywhere, and Hanoi has been a studious pupil.

Ho Chi Minh has based his policy since World War II on the belief that first the French and then the Americans lacked the will to win. He may now be having his private doubts, but he is still urging his forces on with the argument that the patience of the American people, like that of the French public, will wear thin, that the United States will not stay the course, that American opinion will eventually give Hanoi the victory it seeks despite the inability of its forces to win that victory on the battlefield.

It has of course been necessary and desirable to make evident our readiness to negotiate on reasonable terms. But this effort involves dangers. If we push too hard to get the adversary into negotiations, he may only hang back. For to him eagerness to get to the bargaining table is weakness.

There is another danger. Ho and Mao are exponents not only of "protracted war" but also of "protracted conference." To them the conference room is not a place to give up the struggle, but a place to win more than they have been able to win on the battlefield. If we call off the military pressure in Vietnam, as soon as the other side requests negotiations -- as we did in Korea -- Ho and Mao will know that our move to the conference table is a sign of weakness, and they will raise their terms. The lesson of Korea is plain: we should not sit down at a conference table without also keeping up our military pressure, for it is the pressure outside the conference room that largely determines whether a negotiation can be brought to a satisfactory end.

In any event, we may be sure that Hanoi will not ease up the struggle in Vietnam as long as it sees any chance that the will of the United States is brittle and may break.

A recurrent note in the discussion of Vietnam these past weeks has been concern that the war there is "open-ended," that it may lead in the direction of a "general war in Asia." This is very unlikely. China has almost no nuclear capabilities today, and would risk devastation were it to initiate the use of nuclear weapons. It would be far more difficult for the Chinese communists to deploy and supply massed forces in Vietnam than it was in Korea, because of the hard facts of geography, transportation, and climate.

It may be true, as some students of Red China believe, that Peking would intervene in Vietnam if the survival of the Hanoi regime were threatened. But we are not seeking to overthrow that regime or to unify Vietnam by force -- facts which should be evident to Hanoi and Peking by our obvious self-restraint in the use of force.

Clearly, our stand in Vietnam is not without risks. But if we were to plan how best to whet the ambition of Communist China or to encourage revolutionary upheavals, we could find no better way than to retreat or accept a humiliating compromise in Vietnam. That would be the proof the Chinese rulers need that the United States is, after all, a paper tiger -- and the signal their disciples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America need that the time is ripe for revolution.

I know my colleagues in this chamber well. No one here has any doubt about the determination of Congress to support our fighting men.

The problem of responsible dissent and constructive criticism in this kind of limited war can be a difficult one for Congress -- given our traditions and our constitutional responsibilities. We may and do freely discuss domestic issues, and not infrequently criticize those who disagree with us in extravagant terms.

It is not of great consequence: few are listening or, if listening, they do not care. But when we discuss foreign affairs, friend and foe are listening, and our foes, in particular, have never understood the meaning of "loyal opposition." We need to bear this in mind so that what we say does not obscure the nation's fortitude.

It is my belief that the recent overwhelming votes in Congress in support of our military and economic efforts in Vietnam have helped to create a solid basis for turning now, with new unity, to the tasks ahead.

Above all, it is time to stop talking so much about Vietnam, and to get on with the job we have to do there.

IV.

If we want to talk about something let us talk about the letter of President de Gaulle to President Johnson. If the French President does not consider the Atlantic Alliance important enough to do his part, that is his decision. But other members of the Atlantic Alliance consider it one of the greatest accomplishments of modern history. America and Europe, linked in the Atlantic Alliance, are the center of world power -- the great bulwark against which the communist so-called wave of the future can be broken.

There is no hard evidence that Moscow has given up the contest for Europe, or is ready to move toward a genuine European settlement. On the contrary, Soviet forces are still in the center of Europe, the Soviet rulers continue to invest enormous resources in arms, and to reject inspected arrangements for the limitation of arms. The tempering of Soviet behavior in Europe is a matter of expedience -- a consequence of the balance of forces created by NATO, not of a permanent change of course by the Soviet Union. Anything that would upset the balance of forces would encourage the Soviet rulers to be less cooperative on every front -- not more cooperative.

-8-

There is no question that American policy supports the Atlantic Alliance in all its basic aspects -- including the international commands. When war can mean anything between instant, massive destruction and a limited probe with conventional forces, deterrence requires an instant readiness to respond appropriately. The basic justification of the international commands is to be ready and able to take charge, within minutes, of the national forces which would come under their control in an emergency -- and thus, by virtue of such readiness, to strengthen the deterrent power of the Alliance.

The American commitment to help the allies defend themselves was made on the assumption that each of the allies was determined to do its part in a cooperative undertaking. The French President is playing a very risky game -- counting on the American commitment regardless of what he does to his allies or tries to do to the Alliance. In short, he wants to have his cake and eat it too. The risks he is running include a rising resentment toward the French government across the length and breadth of the United States with the resultant alienation of the American people. Under the circumstances President de Gaulle is creating, it may be necessary to revise and reduce the American commitment to the defense of France.

Also, under the circumstances, the United States must work closely with Great Britain and West Germany and the other allies who see their common interest in a common defense. If the key Atlantic allies move ahead together on the urgent issues -- as they have the right and duty to do -- sober second thoughts may in time prevail in our great and ancient ally, France.

-9-

V.

American democracy has succeeded because enough Americans have been reasonable enough, steady enough, balanced enough not to panic when the going got rough but to face difficulties with the understanding that to do one's best is the best one can do -- and with quiet confidence that our best will be good enough.

On March 15, 1946, Winston Churchill was honored at a Mayor's Reception in New York City, and he chose the occasion to draw a moral for the United States. His words are as appropriate today as they were twenty years ago:

"I come to you at a time when the United States stands at the highest point of majesty and power ever attained by any community since the fall of the Roman Empire. This imposes upon the American people a duty which cannot be rejected. With opportunities comes responsibility. Strength is granted to us all when we are needed to serve great causes."

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

10 March 1966

Executive Registry

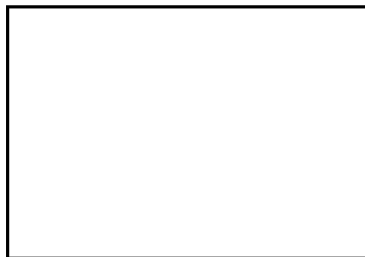
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

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1. I thought you might be interested to see Senator Jackson's speech of today. I picked it up in his office.

2. We had a good talk, but there was nothing new or particular about it. He is certainly a great friend of yours, and is, I believe, a good friend of the Agency. We discussed a range of situations around the world, but all in relatively general terms.

3. Senator Jackson had noted the White column this morning and was much pleased by it.



Richard Helms

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