

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AUGUST 20, 1966

FOR THE PRESS

NO. 186

CAUTION - FUTURE RELEASE

FOR RELEASE AT 2:30 P.M., E.D.T., SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1966. NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED, QUOTED FROM OR USED IN ANY WAY.

ADDRESS BY
THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BALL
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE COMMISSIONING OF THE POLARIS MISSILE
SUBMARINE, HENRY L. STIMSON,
GROTON, CONNECTICUT, AUGUST 20, 1966
2:30 P.M., E.D.T.

The Responsibilities of Peace

This magnificent ship, the HENRY L. STIMSON, is today being added to the military might of the United States as part of the deterrent strength our nation is using to discourage aggressors and to preserve the peace around the world. I am honored to play a part in the commissioning of this ship. I am honored also to be able to salute the dedicated officers and men who will sail on her.

This distinguished vessel is named for a distinguished American under whom I had the privilege of serving two decades ago. No ship could be more auspiciously named. Henry L. Stimson, twice Secretary of War and once Secretary of State was a man of rare vision. He understood, as few have done before or since, the basic issues of war and peace. In the 1930's -- in public and in private life -- he saw the gathering storm. He recognized with a sure perception that aggression must be checked in Europe and Asia or it would lead to wider war.

He saw more clearly than most of his contemporaries that war was on its way and he foretold the nature of the coming conflict. As Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of War, he raised the vast armies that were to see us through to victory. He was the President's principal advisers in developing the power of the atom. And even before the first nuclear weapon was exploded and the Second World War was won, he was the first to urge

to urge international agreement to control atomic weapons so that they might never have to be used again.

I.

As I speak to you today, we are engaged in a trial by arms in Southeast Asia. We are fighting a war of limited but vital objectives -- a war to stop the aggression against a small beleaguered country, a war to secure the stalwart people of Viet-Nam the right to determine their own future free of coercion.

These are the objectives that we seek. We are not attempting to destroy the regime in Hanoi, much as we deplore its tactics and its purposes. We wish no additional territory, for we are blessed with a great continent of our own. We seek no American hegemony in Southeast Asia.

We are simply pursuing the course that Henry Stimson recommended twenty years ago when he said: "We must no longer let the tide of Communist expansionism cheaply roll into the empty places left by war, and yet we must make it perfectly clear that we are not ourselves expansionist. Our task is to help threatened peoples to help themselves."

II.

Our objective in Viet-Nam, therefore, as in other places about the world, is to discourage aggression and secure the peace. That is your professional task. It is the wider task of all of us. It is the task that falls heavily upon the United States for two reasons: We have great responsibilities that go with great power, and we live in the age of the atom. Our modern Navy is living proof of both of these facts.

The present generation takes it for granted that American power carries world responsibilities, but to the generation of Henry L. Stimson this truth was not so evident. His generation helped to fight and win the first great war of the century only to reject in isolation the hard responsibilities of peace. His generation turned their backs on history and the implications of emerging American strength. His generation -- in spite

spite of his clear warnings -- abdicated much of their responsibility.

When the Second World War caught us largely unprepared, we were forced again to depend more on American efficiency and gallantry in arms than on the political measures that might have prevented the struggle.

Today, Americans no longer question that America must play a leading role in securing and maintaining a stable peace. They know full well that isolationism is a garment our nation has outgrown and never again can wear. They accept the burdens and duties that are both the rewards and penalties of great power.

It was the genius of Henry Stimson that he foresaw two decades ago what has become apparent to all of us since:

"Americans", he said, "must now understand that the United States has become, for better or worse, a wholly committed member of the world community. This has not happened by conscious choice; it is a plain fact, and our only choice is whether or not to face it. The attitude of isolationism -- political or economic -- must die; ... the vain hope that we can live alone must be abandoned. ... In American policy toward the world there is no place for grudging or limited participation. ... Time after time in other years we have tried to solve our foreign problems with halfway measures. ... It should by now be wholly clear that only failure, and its follower, war, can result from such efforts at a cheap solution."

III.

The power of our nuclear navy is a power that in the physical sense is practically unlimited. You patrol the oceans of the world with courage and speed both below and above the surface of the sea. On constant patrol, you remind the would-be aggressor of the folly of rash action. Our naval power can protect threatened friends and stay the hand of those who would promote anarchic change by violent means. It can do much to preserve an environment in which diversity is safe and peaceful change can occur.

Yet,

Yet, while there is much that we can do by military power, it is only a part of what America must contribute to the world. Our military might cannot build dams and schools, promote literacy and democracy, raise crops and reduce hunger. What it can do is to create and preserve the free climate that permits the world community to move ahead and accomplish those tasks.

IV.

When American power is thrown into the scales, aggression is discouraged in Europe and Asia. The deterrent power of our Modern navy does much to maintain the security of the peoples of the Atlantic and the Pacific -- just as Americans, in large measure, owed their security to the British fleet in the 19th Century.

Two great oceans wash our continent. You in the Navy know best of all how closely we are linked to the nations that touch those two oceans. By culture, by tradition and by history we are members of the Atlantic Community. By later history and by obvious geography, we are participants in the emerging Pacific Community. Just as we have in two world wars redressed the balance of the Old World -- so today in the same spirit our effort in Viet-Nam is the shield behind which a vital free Asia is emerging.

V.

I have noted a second fact central to the business of peace today, that we are far along into an age of nuclear power. You who serve this ship know that intimately. You carry weapons of a destructive force never dreamed of two decades ago. Yet it is the paradox of this mid-Twentieth Century that the successful defense of freedom means that you will never have to use those weapons.

In the nuclear world perhaps more than ever before there is an insistent relevance in the words of Winston Churchill, "We arm to parley." It may have taken a Cuban Missile Crisis to help produce a limited Test Ban

San Treaty. Let us hope that it will not take another major confrontation to bring further progress in the control of nuclear weapons, for, as Henry Stimson said, "the riven atom uncontrolled can only be a growing menace to us all." He joined in the awful decision to use the first atomic bomb since he felt strongly that it would bring an early end to the war and save countless lives, both Japanese and American. But he knew the implications of that decision. "Upon us," he wrote, "as the people who first harnessed and made use of this force, there rests a grave and continuing responsibility for leadership, turning it toward life, not death."

Today, twenty years later we have much still to do to turn the atom "toward life, not death." At the same time, we must strive to halt the further spread of nuclear arms around the globe. As more and more countries are tempted to acquire nuclear weapons, the danger to all increases. We must, therefore, move with all possible speed to bring this process under rational control.

VI.

Our defense of South Viet-Nam does not conflict with our efforts to dampen the arms race and to take other peaceful initiatives. All are part of a common purpose to create a world safe for change, diversity and free choice.

For the future does not belong to tyranny, to closed minds or to closed systems of power. Even within and among the Communist countries there are the beginnings of a new ferment. As that ferment grows, as windows are opened inch by inch, and the appetite for freedom demands more and more sustenance, we may hope to move gradually toward a more stable world.

To be sure, great issues will continue to divide East from West. But changes within the closed societies--quickenened by the pressures of outside example, by expanded trade, by Western unity, by our continued deterrent

deterrent strength--are tending to move the policies of the Communist states off dead-center.

This is essential to a secure future for a stable peace depends upon an evolution in the policies of Communist nations. This will be a slow process, but such changes will one day surely come. For the tattered forecasts of Karl Marx do not point the way to the future, either within or outside the Communist world. And no society can long retain its vitality when ruled by the dead hand of outmoded dogma and reactionary cliché.

VII.

The future belongs to freedom and diversity. For many parts of the world it is a distant future. But there are good reasons for us to believe that if our course is steady and our policy right, over the long run the prediction of Rabelais will come true:

"Intelligence will triumph over force."

The faith and vision of Henry Stimson will help us along that road. Looking ahead on his eightieth birthday, Stimson wrote: The construction of a stable peace is a longer, more complex, and greater task than the relatively simple work of war-making. But the nature of the challenge is the same."

That challenge is yours, as defenders of the peace and participants in the larger American future. Your ship bears a proud name. In the months and years to come, as you carry the power and presence of the United States throughout the oceans of the world, you will be serving the great cause of protecting freedom. We who remain at home rely with confidence on your professional skill and devotion to duty. We are much in your debt.

I wish you the best of luck, fair winds and smooth sailing.

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