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AMERICAN
FOREIGN POLICY

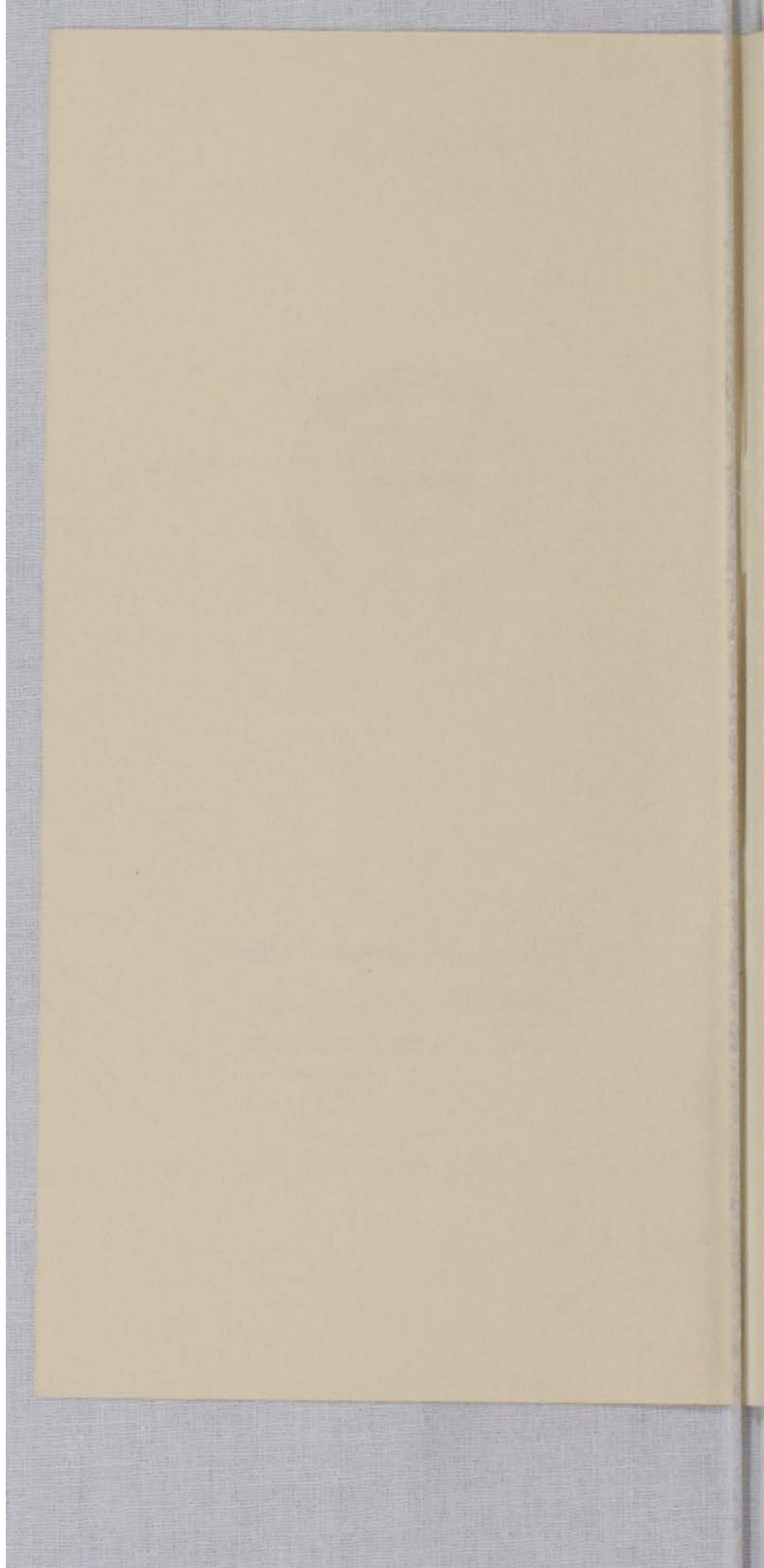


The Commencement Address
Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana
June 6, 1953

The Honorable Michael Mansfield

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American Foreign Policy

HONORABLE MICHAEL MANSFIELD

United States Senator from Montana

When the first bachelors' degrees were conferred by Saint Mary's College over fifty years ago, foreign policy might have seemed an inappropriate subject for a commencement address to a woman's college. Events in the world outside the United States were then of little interest to most Americans, including the men. The voteless women graduates, in those days, were restricted to a few carefully selected occupations and were frowned into silence if they dared to voice opinions when the conversation turned to local politics, let alone to international politics. When Mrs. Mansfield graduated from Saint Mary's, at least local politics and even national politics had become respectable. You young ladies hon-

ored today are graduating into an even wider circle of acceptable subjects for discussion and, what is more, into a complex world which needs your skills and will need your leadership in the near future.

Many of you in this class of 1953 will find yourselves within a comparatively short time in Paris, London, Baghdad, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro or equally cosmopolitan centers. You will be working for the government, for private industry, or for your husbands. The choice, as you can see, is much more varied than it used to be.

Even those of you who never leave the United States cannot live responsible lives as mature American citizens if you close your minds to events in the Soviet Union, China, Great Britain, and the rest of the world. For it is largely on your informed opinions, together with those of countless other Americans, that the foreign policy of this de-

mocracy ought ultimately to be formed.

Because of the presence of students from other countries on the campus here at Saint Mary's, you have already had some influence on our foreign policy and world affairs. When each foreign student now in residence here returns to a distant home, she will carry with her a picture of the United States which has been painted primarily by the students and faculty of this college. That picture will be displayed to her family and friends and will contribute to the overall image of the United States. Cores of friendship between the United States and other nations are being established in this manner on campuses in this country and abroad and they have a long-range influence on the course of relations between nations.

This campus contact is, in reality, a kind of foreign relations in miniature. The problem before us

is to try to introduce some of the decency that is found here on this campus into the larger relations between nations. And because this problem is of vital importance in your lives as it is in mine, I want to talk to you about it this morning.

Let me begin by pointing out that foreign policy is not a formula out of the laboratory of an alchemist. It is not a potion which is guaranteed to cure the ills of the nation and the world's ills in a single dose. There is nothing supernatural about foreign policy and none of us need to stand in awe of it. Foreign policy is made by human beings for human situations. It is simply the course of action which we take to safeguard the nation and guide its progress in a very imperfect and dangerous world.

Underlying the general policies which we have followed in foreign policy during the postwar years have been certain inescapable re-

alities. The first of these realities is that we live in a shrinking world. Distance measured by time is fast disappearing; the world is moving into one neighborhood. The technological advance that has practically obliterated time-distance has also yielded another reality which cannot be ignored by foreign policy, and that is the atomic bomb. This new weapon has placed the potential destructiveness of war beyond the grasp of our wildest imagination. And yet, even in this, there is good. The very existence of so devastating a weapon has challenged our determination to direct all our energy toward the keeping of the peace. During World War II, your faculty will remember, there was much planning of a fine new postwar world. Now there is no leisure for such planning. We must bend our thoughts and efforts to preventing World War III.

A third reality with which our foreign policy has had to deal has

been the need for material aid in many areas of the world since the end of the war. There may be differences of opinion—not at this college, I hope—as to whether the United States, as a nation, should assist in satisfying this need. There are few, however, who would deny that the need exists or that it is contributing to a worldwide discontent and fertilizing the growth of totalitarianism.

Finally, the most pressing reality that has confronted our foreign policy is that there is once again loose in the world a totalitarian nation of great power bent upon world domination. The recent death of Premier Stalin and subsequent conciliatory gestures by his successors do not give us any reliable reason to believe that this reality has changed. An enigmatic scowl has replaced an enigmatic smile within the Kremlin, but the aims of Communism remain unchanged.

I am sure that all of you are fa-

miliar with these aims and the methods by which they are pursued. Communism would seek by totalitarian methods to impose upon the world a system alien to the freedom on which this country was founded. It would place the state on a pedestal to be served by individuals who compose it. It would replace religious freedom with a deified materialism.

These realities, then,—a shrinking world, the atomic bomb, widespread human need, and militant Communism—have been the principal conditions with which our foreign policy in the postwar years has had to contend. In this troubled sea, we have sought a course which would avoid a third world war for which technological progress has fashioned the atomic bomb and the long-range aircraft to deliver it. We have sought to aid the poor and the hungry of the world with our vast, yet limited, resources. We have sought to preserve

freedom which, together with other values of the spirit, has been threatened by the rise of totalitarian Communism.

What kind of foreign policy would weave these aims into a pattern fitted to the realities of our time? This question has occupied those who have been concerned with foreign affairs almost since the close of World War II. First we found it necessary to abandon isolationism. Isolationism has been useful to our nation for the first century and a half of our history because it had allowed us to concentrate our full energies on spanning the continent and developing our resources.

That isolationism, however, was only possible because the nations of Europe were absorbed in their own affairs and because the oceans in those days actually could serve to some degree as protective moats. At that time, moreover, economic self-sufficiency was more of a pos-

sibility than it is now.

Since World War II, however, conditions in the world have worked against any renewal of prewar isolationism. Technological advances would now enable a potential enemy to eradicate with a few atomic bombs not only Hiroshima or Moscow or London, but Washington, D.C., New York City or South Bend, Indiana. Postwar poverty was so extensive in the world that we faced the unenviable prospect of becoming a lush island in the midst of a surging sea of angry, hungry human beings.

For Christians, Pope Pius XII stated the situation in his Christmas message of 1948 in these words: "A convinced Christian cannot confine himself within an easy and egotistical 'Isolationism' when he witnesses the needs and the misery of his brothers; when pleas for help come to him from those in economic distress . . ."

Finally, the rise of Communism

precluded a return to isolationism in the days after World War II. Communist infiltrators showed no respect for national boundaries. By external aggression or internal subversion the Communists were set upon conquering the world. If the United States had withdrawn from its international responsibilities, the rest of the nations would soon have been overrun by the Communists. How long could the United States have existed in freedom in a hostile totalitarian world? If it is difficult today to maintain our liberty against external threat and internal pressures, how much harder would it be without allies, pressed by enemies, and denied the trade and raw materials which form a substantial part of our economy?

The only answer for the United States at the end of World War II was to abandon isolationism and to continue to assume war-born responsibilities beyond our borders

for which our economic, military, and political strength qualified us. We took that step. It remained to be proved, however, that we had the vision and steadfastness of wise leadership that free men everywhere sought in us.

We have, in our fashion, tried to live up to these expectations; we are trying now, and we must continue to try. We will not always do the right thing. We will exasperate our friends abroad on occasion, just as they sometimes try our patience. As long as we hold peace and freedom to be our primary aims, however, as long as we use means which are compatible with our religious beliefs, we will not in the end fail those who have put their faith in us; and I trust that they will not fail us.

If a single phrase can describe the policy which we have pursued since the end of World War II, that phrase is "enlightened self-interest." We have helped ourselves by

helping others, or, to put it another way, in helping others, we have strengthened ourselves. Immediately after the war we devoted ourselves to making peace settlements which would provide the framework for the resumption of normal international relations among all nations. We set about building a United Nations which would have primary responsibility for settling disputes and maintaining international order.

Our hope for peace was based on the expectation of cooperation for peace among the nations of the world. We believed other nations wanted peace just as much as we did.

By the end of 1946, however, Soviet aims had become quite clear to most of us. While this country had disarmed hastily, the Communists had continued to keep an enormous mass of soldiers in a state of readiness, and had embarked upon a program of limitless expansion.

They not only undermined the independence of countries along their frontier, but international Communism penetrated deeply into Western Europe via the roads of economic misery, social discontent, and political instability. Greece and Turkey were brought under relentless Communist pressure.

It does not take an expert in foreign affairs to see what a collapse in Western Europe and the Middle East at that time would have meant to the security of this nation and to the world. Oil, coal, steel—these are the sinews of modern power. The Middle East floats on the world's greatest sea of petroleum. Western Europe produces enough coal and steel to weight the scales in favor of either the United States or the Soviet Union, whichever side Western Europe chooses or is forced to accept.

But beyond the naked fact of the balance of power, the nations which were about to collapse in late 1947

were the birthplace and cradle of western civilization. The institutions under which we live, the hopes we cherish, the origins of most of our citizens, were rooted in Greece and Western Europe. By 1950 the basic aims of the Marshall plan had been largely achieved. The Communists in Western Europe had made every effort to sabotage the project, and they had failed. Following a trip to Western Europe last year, I reported that political stability was being maintained in that area. I also noted that industrial production in France had set a postwar record during 1952 and that the economies of Italy and Western Germany were stronger than they had been in many years. Everywhere there were signs of increasing financial stability.

In Europe these days, you can sense a healthy and encouraging impatience with continued dependence on assistance from the Uni-

ted States. It is eloquently expressed in their slogan "trade, not aid". We must solve together with the Europeans this question of imbalance of trade if for no other reason than that continued one-way assistance tends to separate rather than bring together the giver and the receiver. Despite outward expressions of gratitude from them and professions of magnanimity from us, there is bound to be an underlying note of resentment on our part for having to give away our resources seemingly without end, on their part for having no alternative to continued dependence on us except to turn eastward to trade and tyranny. That there should be some resentment on both sides need not dismay or alarm us. It is a human reaction to a human situation, one which I am sure all of us have experienced in our lives. Rather than lose patience, we must seek to establish greater reciprocity between the Europeans and ourselves. The

Soviet Union has sought and undoubtedly will continue to seek to drive a wedge between us and Western Europe.

Although the way ahead for Europe both politically and economically still is beset with many pitfalls, the gloom of defeatism that once hung over the region has lifted. Europeans dare to believe again in a future of freedom. This restored confidence is due in no small measure to the far-reaching security system which we, in concert with the Europeans, undertook to build in order to protect the area from sudden invasion. The United Nations Charter provides the basis for this system. Under its provisions we had, in September 1947, already joined with the Latin American countries in establishing a system of mutual defense for the Western Hemisphere. Later, this country worked out a similar plan of mutual defense with the Western European nations. On Ap-

ril 4, 1949, twelve nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty. In 1952, Greece and Turkey acceded to the treaty and the groundwork was laid for Germany to contribute indirectly to the total defense of the West, first by integrating its forces with those of France, Holland, Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg in a European Defense Community and then by placing the combined forces of these nations under the overall command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The future of the plan is still in doubt largely because of French fears of a remilitarized Germany. They are understandable fears but they should not be permitted to block the unity of the Western nations.

Postwar developments in Western Europe demonstrate that freedom has the elements to survive if we believe in it and give it a chance to survive. They demonstrate that Communist aggression whether by threat, internal subversion, or ex-

ternal pressure can be stopped if we follow, as we have for the past seven years, a policy of no appeasement, cooperation with free nations, and devotion to peace. We have negotiated with the Russians—as in the case of Berlin, but we have not appeased. Here at home we have refused to retreat into a new isolationism, and, at the same time, we have held in check those who think that a bomb dropped on Moscow would not only begin a war but end it.

Turning closer home, we see that the Communists have made substantial inroads, especially in Guatemala, while the attention of the United States was diverted to the more pressing problems of Europe and Asia. The relative neglect of Latin America during the postwar years has understandably caused resentment among our southern neighbors. It should be now ended to prevent any further spread of the Communist infection.

In the Far East, our foreign policy has had to meet the challenge of a transition as overwhelming as any the world has ever seen. Half the population of the earth, more than a billion human beings, have been stirred into a restless agitation. For centuries these people have led lives of ceaseless toil, to be rewarded only by ignorance, poverty, and disease. In recent years, under a surface serenity of resignation, great pressures have built up for social and political change. With World War II the surface calm gave way once and for all, and from Korea to Pakistan, from Mongolia to the Philippines, tidal waves of unrest rolled over this immense area.

The transition thus engendered has been a violent one. Millions have lost their lives and millions more have been uprooted as a direct result of civil war and religious strife. In its present phase, this transition holds the seeds of both

good and evil. Properly channelled, it could create friends and allies in our struggle for a free world. Unguided, it could fall prey to the enticements of Communism.

Faced with this danger, we have pursued our policy of enlightened self-interest. We have encouraged the political independence of the Asian nations when feasible; we have given technical and economic assistance and encouraged cultural exchange to increase the stability of these new independent nations; and we have concluded military agreements to protect the freedom of this area. By these methods we have sought to stimulate the potentials for good in the Asian transition, and to safeguard against the potentials for evil.

Finally, any discussion of United States foreign policy must turn to Korea. In that country, on June 25, 1950, Communist imperialism, for the first time since the end of World War II, resorted to the tac-

tic of armed invasion. The issue immediately became larger than Korea. It became, in the final analysis, the issue of peace or general war.

The response of the free world was immediate. Americans gave their spontaneous and wholehearted support to the principle of meeting armed aggression with armed resistance. The objectives which we had in going into Korea, 1950, and which we still have, are to preserve the South Korean Republic; to stop and to punish the aggression against the Republic; to make clear to all would-be imperialists, as we failed to make clear to the imperialists in the thirties, that the force of tyranny will be stopped by the force of freedom. By standing against a local aggression we hope to prevent a general war later; by fighting in Korea now we hope to save this land of ours from attack in the future. We have tried to achieve these objectives without drifting into a

full-scale third world war and without getting our armed forces snarled in an endless involvement on the vast Chinese mainland.

In concluding my remarks to you tonight, I should like to refer again to His Holiness, to the statement he made on Christmas, 1948. He said, "A people threatened with an unjust aggression, or already its victim, may not remain passively indifferent, if it would think and act as befits a Christian. All the more does the solidarity of the family of nations forbid others to behave as mere spectators in an attitude of apathetic neutrality . . . Their defense is even an obligation for the nations as a whole, who have a duty not to abandon a nation that is attacked."

That is precisely the philosophy which we have been trying to carry out in Korea.

It is not always easy, however, to convert beliefs of this kind into action. From time to time all of us

are tempted to try to get peace the easy way. We want to carry our world responsibilities but we would like to lighten the burden. This immaturity is not merely an affliction of the young; all of us have it in some degree and sometimes it affects the elders even more. When this is so, it is fortunate that we have younger people to remind us of our obligations. Just recently returned from Korea are some of the young men who have probed the measure of the devotion which freedom entails. They have been hurt, some very badly, in the process, and they have left behind in Korean soil many thousands of their friends. These sacrifices have a penetrating meaning for us. They are a timely reminder that there is no easy way to peace and stability for human society. But they also tell us that if we will it, and if we work at it as individuals and as a nation, we can move the world

closer to the day when all mankind
shall know a deep spiritual unity
under the fatherhood of God.



