

ATOMS FOR PEACE + 50

Nuclear Energy & Science

for the 21st Century

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Panel Chairman:

Dr. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., President, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Security Studies, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

PFALTZGRAFF: General Andy Goodpaster is senior fellow of the Eisenhower Institute, Chairman Emeritus of the George C. Marshall Foundation. He has had, as all of you in this room well know, a distinguished United States Army career.

Among his many accomplishments in that career, having been recalled to service to serve as Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point when they needed him there. He was Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. He was Commandant of the National War College and he was Staff Secretary and Defense Liaison Officer to President Eisenhower between 1954 and 1961. So no panel would be complete without having General Goodpaster here as well as Susan Eisenhower. So, it is with great pleasure that I welcome both of these panel members and give them the choice: If you wish to sit down you may do that or you may stand, whatever you would prefer to do to give us what you wish to tell us about this important period as we set the stage. Susan.

GOODPASTER: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure to be here. I see many friends as I look around the room. I see many colleagues who've participated in one way or another in some of the nuclear activities and the policy issues pertaining to nuclear issues. I welcome the opportunity that this meeting affords and I draw your attention to Susan's final remarks as to what remains to be done. A lot remains to be done and I applaud the initiative of the organizers of this, to my mind, very important conclave.

We recognize, of course, that nuclear issues present themselves in new and different forms today. Yet there are concerns that continue and needs for action as Susan so clearly outlined. I'm going to just try to off a few additional remarks and highlights based on Dwight Eisenhower's thoughts and actions as his presidency began and as I drew from working with him over a great many years. The "Atoms for Peace" speech was a very useful encapsulation for this purpose of his thoughts and actions.

And I'll talk in the context that meant so much to me, the context of presidential responsibilities. And I'd like to quote from something that he, himself, wrote a few years after the conclusion of this presidency during the time that he reflected on it, "In insuring the nation's security, the role of the president is central. It is his highest concern and his primary duty. No other responsibility demands more of his attention and effort, even though many others are of great significance to the nation." The key questions to my mind that he had in his mind, what could harm people and countries and, specifically, our people and our country, and second, what to do about it, a question that he learned from General Marshall when the two worked closely together.

His outstanding concerns, I believe, were two, basically, and some that derive from that, the Soviet Union's animosity as manifest during the Cold War, and the massively militarized confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union; and the second, nuclear weapons in large, rapidly growing numbers soon to include thermo-nuclear weapons in large numbers. And it was the combination of these two that were of particular concern. They posed a mortal danger to the United States and its allies and, indeed, to the whole of world civilization.

And the situation was stalemated on a dead center, so to speak, with danger of an accelerating arms race and the events that could trigger a nuclear holocaust. Dwight Eisenhower brought to this situation unparalleled understanding and hands on experience. As Chief of Staff of the Army, he began his deep study and intense concern over the dangers that were posed. He then served as the informal Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the time of his presidency of Columbia University and they, in turn, deeply pondered the implications for the future deriving from the nuclear weapons.

Than as SAC-EUR, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, where I was staff assistant to him, one of our concerns was as to the role of the nuclear weapons as that role was emerging. And his concerns ran from the time of fission weapons, a thousand time more conventional weapons that preceded it and created the enormous destruction of World War II, and then the fusion weapon, which in turn was a thousand times more destructive than the fission weapons.

With the Soviet Union, he had seen the agonies that that great country suffered during World War II. More than 20 million of its citizens lost during that conflict. And that had followed the Stalin purges a decade or so before in which more than ten million of the Soviet people had died. He saw there a tyrannical totalitarianist set of rulers, but he saw also, and had a deep appreciation of just what were the strengths and the limits of Soviet power and what were the driving interests, both of the rulers and of the people of the Soviet Union for which he had such a deep appreciation and admiration for the burdens that they had borne and the suffering that they had undergone during the war.

And how to deal with the situation that confronted him? From his work in NATO, he brought a strategy of deterrence, deterrence under girded by collective defense in place in being(?) in western Europe to make that deterrence effective. And they had a lot of confidence in that deterrence, this also on his deep knowledge of the experiences that the Soviet Union had gone through. From our own experience in the Cold War, he developed a strategic policy of containment, again, under girded by our deterrent efforts. And, again, he brought confidence that a way could be found to work our way out of this terrible set of threats that confronted us.

And his aim, constantly, was to threaten the possibility of major conflict and, particularly, of nuclear conflict. Atoms for Peace brought all of this together. First it would generate actions of a positive nature as pointed out by our speakers. The accent would be on agreement, not war among nations in his own words, and he often spoke of Winston Churchill's advice, "Jaw, jaw is better than war, war," so that was his saying.

Our speakers have already talked about the multiple purposes with the Soviet Union, with smaller countries, worldwide, with our own people, creating a better understanding, a deeper understanding in the way the Oppenheimer had written about in proposing Operation Candor, which was one of the roots of Atoms for Peace. And I won't repeat all of that but I think the message is that he was working to multiple purposes and drafting draft after draft to put all of this together.

What would our assessment be? Susan has spoken to this and others. He would think, in retrospect, that the efforts that he had in mind were achieved to a significant degree and in a significant range of ways. Beneficial, there was still much work to be done. As a matter of fact he, himself, looked at it in historical terms. He thought of this as the book of history not a chapter or a passage on crisis after crisis.

He felt, and I think he would feel in retrospect, that he helped to avoid a nuclear apocalypse, that the nuclear dangers would still continue but not to the extent of endangering the civilization as a whole as they did at that time. I recall early in his time as Chief of Staff of the Army, he received an analysis from the Army's Chief Planner, Brigadier General George Lincoln, big Abe Lincoln as he was known to all of us. And he told Lincoln that this was a matter for continuing study and action and it was a challenge that would continue to exist. The basic principles, some of which he articulated, still retain their importance. The restraints on the role of military force, his comment, "We should be very slow to pick up the sword, and have thought through just why and what we are doing."

The second, the collective, cooperative approach, which has meant so much, carrying us through that dangerous second half of the terrible century just passed. And the third, constantly to accentuate the positive, the mutually beneficial because that's the payoff in terms of our peoples' understanding and support. So, I think he would see the need, as Susan suggested for a reprieve of Atoms for Peace. It would be today and in the future an effort well warranted.

Let me conclude with just one comment. Eisenhower's precept to many of us on many occasions was, "Always try to see the problem through the eyes of the other man." And I hope these few remarks that I've made, may outline some of the major ideas that entered into the thoughts and

actions of Dwight Eisenhower as reflected in “Atoms for Peace” and give you a deeper understanding of the this great leader. Thank you.

[applause]

Questions and Answers:

PFALTZGRAFF: We now have an opportunity for a few minutes at least for questions and comment from the group here, all participants.

GARWIN: I wanted to ask General Goodpaster for a comparison of the pace at which decisions were made in those days compared with where we are now. It seems to me, as a long time observer, that we have an idea about a problem, every couple of years, which in the past, we could have every few days. It is very hard to have a coherent solution to many of these problems, whether they be excess armament or the repository for nuclear waste, if we come back and rethink a little bit ever couple of years. Is this wrong? What can do about it if it's right?

GOODPASTER: It was characteristic of President Eisenhower and General Eisenhower to want to think through these complex and difficult issues before taking his action. In a way it was innate with the man but it certainly was magnified during the time he worked closely with General Marshall. General Marshall often had the question to those of us-- I served in strategic plans at the very close of the war, “Are you confident that you have thought this through?”

And I tell you, if you stand and look into those slate(?) blue eyes and he asks you that question, you can feel a little chill go down your back and you hoped, indeed, that you had. When Stalin died, shortly after Eisenhower took office, there were many, many, many ideas, what should be done to exploit this? Should some rather aggressive action be taken? How do you capitalize on it and so on? And he met with Foster Dulles and C. D. Jackson in the solarium of the White House and initiated a study that was called Solarium Study.

And what they came up with was to define three broad lines of security and foreign policy and draw together small groups consisting of some young officers and some older ones, people from the State Department, from other areas to look at three broad lines of policy in a very comprehensive way. And each group was to make the best possible case for that line of policy. Without going into the detail, let's recall that these groups of eight or nine people each met for five hot weeks in the middle of the summer of 1953.

He called George Kinon(?) back from Princeton to head up one of them on containment. He asked General Jim McCormack, Air Force retired, who was by that time Provost of MIT to head the second on drawing the line with the threat of massive retaliation. And the third was headed by Admiral Connellea(?) of the Naval War College, whom Eisenhower knew very well, on rollback, which had figured in the campaign. Those were thoroughly analyzed, presented after five weeks to Eisenhower in the library of the White House with all of the senior security and foreign policy people present.

And George Kinon recalls that at the end of it Eisenhower himself jumped up and said, “Now I'd like to summarize and comment on what we've heard,” and, in George's words, spoke 45

minutes without a note. And at the end drew the thinking together as to what policy would be followed. And that was containment, supported by, under girded, supported by deterrents, keeping the hope of freedom alive, opening channels of communication with the Soviet Union.

I use that as an example, Dick, of really getting your arms around a big contentious, comprehensive set of issues. In a way he did the same with under his own action in developing the atoms for peace. And we followed those lines of policy, then, throughout his administration. He insisted on having the time to think these things through and insisted, also, on looking at them as a whole.

We have a little saying, brought back from one of the headquarters in Europe, "Give me half the facts, I want to make a quick decision." That, I can tell you, was not Eisenhower's way. But I think, Dick, you make a very good point. And, in fact, those of us who have some bias on this, have been bold enough to make the suggestion that the time is at hand for another solarium exercise.

BRODSKY: Thank you. I'm Alan Brodsky, Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University and senior scientist at SCIC and these excellent presentations brings me back 50 years. And I remember something else that I think happened during the Eisenhower administration. He also seemed to realize that perhaps our efforts would fail. And I know, since I was part of it after a little while, that he established an excellent civil defense program, which was decimated in 1994. And I've been trying to get some of this re-established as a past chairman of Homeland Security for a Healthy(?) Society.

And I wonder if you could tell me, to what degree President Eisenhower really thought about protecting the population as well as these other issues.

GOODPASTER: Oh, he certainly did. He was deeply conscious of the turning point that had occurred with the development of the thermo-nuclear weapons. Prior to that there had been some consideration that the fission weapon was simply another large step in the long cycle of destructive power development. But the fusion weapon represented something different. He set up a group and had it operating very secretly to prepare what was called a net assessment of what would be the effect of a nuclear exchange.

And it was out of that that you began to hear from him that a nuclear exchange would be a form of mutual insanity or mutual suicide. And to make this very graphic, having heard this presentation of the enormous loses of life and destructiveness that would occur, he said, "Well, I guess what we will really need is bulldozers to push the bodies off the streets." So you have a sense there of the depth of concern on his part and his determination to find ways such as containment, such as deterrents, ways to reign in, hold in check and, ultimately, reverse the arms race.

That was very deeply on his mind and it was the protection of our people and his responsibility as responsibilities that he had accepted as President of the United States and he devoted hours and days of thought to what could be done to head off the nuclear holocaust that concerned us all.

PFALTZGRAFF: Well, I know that everyone will join me in expressing thanks for this outstanding panel for opening the conference in the way that it has and setting the stage as it has and providing for us some unique insights into the life and times of Dwight D. Eisenhower and especially the setting in which the “Atoms for Peace” speech was developed and delivered and discussing its legacy.

[applause]

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