DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

AMERICA'S GOALS

by

Vice Admiral H. G. Rickover, USN

During the past two decades this country has been thrust into the middle of the Scientific Revolution, into leadership of the Free World, and into a race with totalitarianism for survival. In consequence, vast economic, social and political changes have come with dizzying speed, radically altering the world we live in. Certainties of the past are vanishing, leaving us temporarily unsure of ourselves, and worried at the direction we are taking. It is clearly time for us to pause and consider: What are our aims, our ideals, and our basic principles? And how well do our attitudes and institutions promote these aims and ideals?

We must keep in mind the distinction that exists between the aims of the American government in the constitutional sense -- that is, in its relations with the American people -- and the goals of America in its relations with other nations.

As the Declaration of Independence clearly shows, the colonies subscribed to the 18th century concept that governments are instituted solely for the purpose of safeguarding the God-given rights of the people, notably life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The preamble to the Constitution lists among its aims the securing of these "blessings of liberty" to future generations of Americans. And in submitting the draft of the Constitution to "the United States in Congress assembled," Washington explained the drafters had constantly kept in mind that consolidation of the union was a matter of "the greatest interest of every American," since upon it depended "our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence."

In contrast to the clear statement of the American government's domestic aims, we have only hints as to what role the Founding Fathers intended America to play in world affairs. Of course, they provided machinery to conduct foreign relations, declare and wage war, and make peace. And there is a clue in the Declaration of Independence itself, in which the colonies recognize that "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation" from the mother country. From this one concludes they wished the United States to conform to legal and moral concepts then current in the European family of nations. This has continued to be the precept for America's relations with other states.

We must admit that, until we rounded out our country, war for territorial expansion seemed to us legitimate; indeed, this attitude was shared by all nations. Today, however, we cannot conceive a war to gain more land, nor even a war to help other nations achieve our form of government, as the Hungarian example shows.

Theoretically, of course, every independent nation has a free choice of adopting either peaceful or warlike aims. That is, it may choose to live in neighborliness with other nations, laying claim neither to the land nor the minds of alien peoples, settling disputes by conciliation and arbitration, keeping promises made in treaties, fighting only in self-defense. Or it may choose a policy of conquest. A policy of conquest creates a state of cold war where treaties are honored only when necessary or convenient and the danger is ever present that mistrust and fear will unleash outright war.

Hydrogen bombs are so destructive that a national policy leading to war has become wholly irrational. Since the majority of men are sane, modern democracies cannot make conquest a national goal. It is otherwise when nations are governed by a single absolute ruler or a small all-powerful group. The

spectacle of land-rich totalitarian powers sacrificing generations of their people to the insane objective of world conquest suggests that Acton's famed dictum needs amplification. "All power corrupts," he said, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Such power also appears to destroy reason.

Though senseless, the totalitarian nations pursue their aim of world conquest with more forceful action than we pursue our own peace objective. The contrast points up a weakness that often prevents a democratic nation from achieving its aims.

It has been relatively easy for us to agree on peace and neighborliness as America's purpose; we have even come to recognize that we no longer can choose between isolation or involvement in world affairs. Modern technology has changed the seas, once our protective ramparts, into smooth avenues for silent and deadly assault. All nations now share the same vulnerability to surprise attack; no nation pursuing peaceful aims can now remain in isolation. The United States needs friends, allies and bases, and secure lines of supply for essential raw materials. Whether we like it or not, we are at the center of the world stage.

We have been catapulted into this position so quickly that some of our attitudes and ways of thinking lag behind our altered circumstances. We have indeed accepted world involvement, but we do not seem to understand fully that such involvement directly affects our personal lives; that to provide our country with needed strength we must give up some of our individual freedoms, and make other sacrifices as well.

Traditionally, our aim has been to keep government as weak as possible, lest it compel us to surrender individual or group interests when such surrender may not be necessary for the common good. Today we must recognize that in one sphere -- America's relations with the outside world -- we cannot

afford to keep the nation weak; no private or group interest must claim precedence over the need to strengthen the technological, economic, military, and political power of the United States. To keep the nation strong, to make it even stronger than it is now, has become a national interest we all share, for on it depends our survival as a free nation and a free people.

The principal material foundations for a nation's position in the world are three: land and mineral resources, size of population, and levels of technology. In population and natural resources we are slightly poorer than Soviet Russia; consequently, relative levels of technology decisively affect the issue whether Russia's policy of world conquest or our policy of peaceful neighborliness is to prevail.

Since a nation's level of technology is directly related to the educational levels of its people, it follows that having an excellent system of public education has now become a paramount national interest. When the Constitution was framed, none of the Founding Fathers except Jefferson seem to have thought of education as vital; the word is not even mentioned in the Constitution. The altered circumstances of our day now make a good system of public education essential to national survival. Every community where the schools dispense mediocre life-adjustment training, where children are not taught to understand the world they must live in, constitutes a dangerous focus of infection, scattering across the land uneducated citizens who are ill-prepared for their civic duties.

There are other areas where it has become necessary to narrow the scope of individual and group interests, lest this country find itself unable to survive. The world of nation states is no longer the relatively law-abiding family of nations it was when we joined it in the late 18th century. It is a jungle,

where half the world lives under rulers who acknowledge neither international law nor international comity. If we are to achieve our national goals in such a jungle world, we must put as much effort into making this nation militarily strong as do the aggressors -- more, in fact; for we must guard against surprise attack, whereas the aggressors are protected by our peace policy.

In part, uneasiness about our national purpose springs from uncertainty as to what is required to make it prevail. We are uncertain, for example, about the areas in which the national interest must take precedence over any other interest. Some people believe it would be wrong to divest an American of his citizenship because he fled his country to evade the draft. Some would even have us continue military pay for traitors who went over to the other side in Korea. To such people no national interest must ever take precedence over individual liberties and rights, which they interpret in the broadest manner.

I suggest we might have less trouble agreeing on positive action to support America's purpose in the world if we made a clear distinction in every case between these three "interests": national interest in making America strong enough so the United States can have a purpose in the world; community interest, centered on "establishing justice, insuring domestic tranquility, and promoting the general welfare;" and individual interest in the widest possible definition of the guarantees contained in the first Ten Amendments.

Of these interests, the first must always prevail; it is the only one shared by all citizens. In this time of peril we must realize that our private lives are interwoven with national interests. We would all lose our liberties -- and many of us would lose our lives -- if this nation, being denied the strength it needs, lost the race with totalitarianism. Many people foolishly believe that we can survive as a second-rate power. They would rather take a chance on being second rate than make the sacrifices that would keep us ahead. The truth

is we cannot survive unless the United States is at least equal in power to our adversary.

What seems to prevent our seeing clearly where paramount national interest lies is our imperfect self-identification with this country. Sovereignty resides in us, for we are self-governing citizens; obviously then, in all matters affecting the fate of the nation, we are America. Such identification is harder to achieve in a democracy than in an old dynastic state, where a wealth of shared experiences -- good and bad, glorious and humiliating -- tie the people together as in a national family. It also comes harder to nomadic people like ourselves than it does to people who remain for generations in one spot, for close association with a particular locality nourishes the deep love of homeland that underlies true patriotism.

Yet we must develop this close identification with our country if we wish it to achieve its aims in the world. Perhaps we know this subconsciously, as our habit of personalizing nations seems to indicate. We say England agrees, France concedes, the United States proposes. This conveys a picture of millions of people confronting one another and with a single voice agreeing, conceding, or proposing.

This habit originated in Europe at a time when king and country were in fact and in law one and the same; when princes ruled "by the Grace of God," and owned land and people as if these were private possessions. Shakespeare has his royal personages addressing one another by the names of their countries. "Right joyous are we to behold your face, Most worthy Brother England," -- so Charles VI greets Henry V in the great reconciliation scene after the Battle of Agincourt, in 1415. A hundred and fifty years later, king and people were still so closely identified that men were expected to profess the same faith

as their rulers - cuius regio eius religio was an accepted principle. It seemed a tolerant compromise when the Catholic and Protestant princes temporarily ended their incessant religious war at Augsburg in 1555, by allowing a man to emigrate if he could not bring himself to change his religion with every dynastic upheaval.

The revolutionary ideas that toppled absolutism and brought democracy also led by another road to modern totalitarianism and a return of personal absolutism. Today it would suit political realities if, like the monarchs of old, Khrushchev and Mao addressed one another as "China" and "Russia".

We are fortunate in not being burdened with the class distinctions a feudal past bequeaths, but we lack the strong sense of national unity a dynastic past hands down. History has not prepared us for the close identification of citizen with nation, through which alone America can achieve its aims in the world.

Consider, for example, how different was the origin of the United States from that of England:

Modern England is an Anglo-Norman state that came into being through conquest of its Anglo-Saxon people by a Norman prince. Crossing the Channel at the head of his army, William the Conqueror acquired a kingdom by winning a single battle. Since the defeated outnumbered the invaders and were in all respects equal to them, amalgamation soon began and produced the English people; the conquest thus made no complete break with England's past.

The United States, too, had its origin in conquest by invaders, coming from across the water and appropriating land from people who had lived here for a long time. But few of the natives amalgamated with the invaders. Their Stone Age culture made too great a gap. They were soon outnumbered and in

time pushed into remote corners. Strangely enough, the settlers were hardly conscious of being conquerors. They had not come here as members of a military expedition, headed by a prince looking for a kingdom. America was conquered by humble people, arriving singly, in families and in small groups. To them America was an empty wilderness, where they would carve out better lives for themselves and their children. For most this was a private venture; few had government backing, though government lost no time using these individual conquests to lay claim to the land so won. Of course, neither settlers nor governments had any valid legal claim to this land. It was not empty; the Indians had lived here thousands of years. But by declaring the Indians to be heathen savages, entitled to no recognition in International Law, the European invaders established the spurious "right of discovery." By virtue of this ingenious fiction, the Indian became invisible in law.

When the colonists threw off "absolute despotism," they set up a wholly new kind of nation on a political tabula rasa. Our national life really began with this deliberate act; it marks the real start of a common past for most present-day Americans. The United States was created by something closely akin to Rousseau's "social contract." Individuals had subdued this continent, won independence, and now were agreed to establish a political union.

Our political institutions reflect 18th century rationalism, which was wholly concerned with securing individual rights, and all but oblivious of a more basic need: the state's power to survive onslaughts of foreign nations. Our state and federal governments are governments of limited power both in their relations with the citizen, and in their relations with one another. To expand their powers has deliberately been made a slow and cumbersome process.

The machinery of government established more than 170 years ago has stood the test of time remarkably well. Through amendment and judicial interpretation, the powers of the states and of the United States have been greatly expanded -- on the whole wisely. But around this political machinery have grown encrustations of procedure that tend AT TIMES to paralyze government action. Private and public bureaucracies enlist loyalties that are SOMETIMES [often] put above loyalty to the nation as a whole. Battles among government agencies and between pressure groups [often] run counter to obvious national interest, as when different branches of the military service quarrel so wholeheartedly that the real enemy is almost lost from sight; or AS when the country's need for a stable currency is disregarded in the battle to give the wage-price spiral another twist upward. We are in danger of becoming a pressure-group state.

We need to cultivate a questing turn of mind that is not overawed by the alleged sanctity of the status quo. Novel procedures must be devised to meet novel problems, since all routines eventually become obsolete. Rational persons know change is a part of life; they distinguish between the fixed principles we accept as guides to living, and the changing methods through which we seek to give them substance.

Principles are distillations of human wisdom and experience, having a long life. Changes in the physical conditions of life rarely touch them; they are overturned only during those infrequent upheavals when men reverse the ideals they live by. But in times of great change in our material world it often becomes necessary to alter our procedures so that they will continue to promote ideals and principles upon which we are agreed.

Proposals that we review, and if necessary change, accustomed ways of thinking and acting are always resisted by people who are not governed by reason. They rarely appreciate how necessary such change may be, for as Goethe wrote, "fools are never uneasy." Complacency is rarely found among persons with active minds; it is the disease of the uneducated, the unintelligent, the mentally lazy, who prefer clichés to independent thought. Since abstract ideas are troublesome to such people, they tend to put their trust in the concrete institutions through which we realize our basic principles, instead of in the principles themselves. This is dangerous thinking at a time when changes in the world come overnight.

To retain the essence of the principles and ideals we believe in, we must be flexible in our procedures, and ready to change institutions when they no longer serve our purpose. The mixture of individual, community and national interests must occasionally be altered to preserve the democratic ideal. This country's most forceful teacher of democracy, Theodore Roosevelt, warned us time and again against dogmatism, and urged that we make decisions on practical grounds. We should not be misled into believing that democracy itself limits a people's freedom to create and change the machinery of government.

A democratic nation reflects the human qualities of its people. It cannot have a firm purpose in the world if its citizens lead aimless lives. The shadow that has fallen lately on America's once exuberant self-confidence comes from lack of definite objectives and wholehearted readiness to commit ourselves to them, if necessary by sacrifice of personal comfort or luxury. We have an uneasy feeling that something has gone wrong with the American dream. Already surrounded by gadgets, we hear promises of a pushbutton world just

around the corner, where machines will do our work and our thinking, where every American will live like a king, served by mechanical slaves and entertained twenty-four hours a day with nursery stories about "happy people with happy problems." Gifted men who largely shape our thinking through mass media all too often abuse their great talents by promoting the erroneous belief that democracy can serve no higher ideal than private gain and maximum consumption of goods. It could be that we are becoming bored with their shrill voices; that we are beginning to realize the emptiness of a life centered on material possessions. Perhaps our frustration is a sign that we are rediscovering the truth that man does not live by bread alone -- nor by labor-saving machinery, superhighways, and a pursuit of a good time.

No democratic nation can successfully pursue its international objectives unless its people are willing to subordinate private interest to national interest in all areas where the country's world position is at stake. Our country needs enormous technological, economic, military, and political strength to accomplish its national goal. The test of democracy today is whether free citizens will <u>voluntarily</u> make the necessary sacrifices to strengthen their nation that totalitarian subjects are <u>ordered</u> to make. This calls for a strong sense of civic responsibility, to be found only among self-reliant individuals. Traditionally, self-reliance and self-determination have been typically American qualities. But of late, these qualities have been subtly undermined by a new view of the individual. The so-called "Freudian Ethic" has led us astray by encouraging us to blame our personal inadequacies on "society." In their preoccupation with people who -- because of misfortune or weakness of mind or character -- cannot cope with life in a modern industrial society, psychologists generally fail to emphasize that what may be condoned in

the weak cannot be excused in the strong. Such an attitude undermines the spiritual foundations of democracy. When we shift responsibility for his actions from the individual to society, we are well on the way to totalitarianism.

In the perilous times through which we are passing, it is important to keep in mind two basic requirements for a successful democracy. Half a century ago, Theodore Roosevelt laid them before us with these words: "Only a people of sound intelligence, and above all, of robust character is fit to govern itself. No gift of popular institutions will avail if the people who receive them do not possess certain great and masterful qualities; and above all the combination of two qualities -- individual self-reliance and the power of combining for the common good."

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