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The Joint Staff

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U.S. Marines

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FOREWORD

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THE VALIDITY OF LIMITED OBJECTIVES

A Lecture delivered by
by Dr. H. M. Wriston
at the Naval War College
on 10 September 1951

Admiral Conolly, Gentlemen:

I am going to take as my topic, "The Validity of Limited Objectives." The century between Waterloo and Serajevo saw the most promising evidences of progress toward a peaceful world of any period in modern history. It was by no means a quiescent or stagnant era. Indeed it was one of the most energetic in human history. Nor was it free from war. On the contrary there were many wars, in many lands, for many objectives. There was hardly a year when there was not a manifestation of the use of force for international purposes somewhere in the world. There were at least 30 wars among established states and more than 50 cases of forceful intervention, besides wars of conquest in Asia and Africa. The peaceful character of the era, therefore, did not arise from the absence of strife; rather it came from the fact that wars were not general conflagrations but isolated instances of the employment of force for specific objectives.

The century of relative peace was not achieved at the cost of inaction, nor by clinging to the status quo. Indeed, changes were swifter and more sweeping than in any preceding age. Progress toward the goal of peace consisted in the multiplication of devices to keep wars small, to quarantine strife with a view to preventing its spread. So despite the presence of local, carefully quarantined wars, the ideal of rational peace was dominant.

Dr. Henry M. Wriston, President of Brown University, is prominent in the field of International Affairs.

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The idea of limited war for limited objectives gained such headway that it came to seem the normal procedure. The first great war of the 20th century has been called World War I because men had forgotten that before the 19th century wars were common. They overlooked the fact that the Napoleonic Wars and earlier struggles had been as extensive as the political world. They did not realize that the failure of earlier global struggles to produce global peace was one of the reasons for the reversal of emphasis during the 19th century toward the limitation of war both in space and in objectives.

Along with those two limitations in dimension went a third—the limitation of legal action. The rights of non-combatants were expanded; humane practices regarding prisoners were developed; certain types of arms were banned. In short, the aim was to shrink strife to the least size and scope consistent with the attainment of limited objectives.

World War I, as we commonly call it, represented not only an abandonment of attempts at containment spatially; it was global in its objectives also. Woodrow Wilson, who became the expositor of the philosophy of the war, spoke of a “war to end war,” a “world safe for democracy,” and used other phrases indicative of the vast sweep of its objectives. At the Paris peace conference, statesmen sought not only to solve all the territorial, economic, and political issues, they wrote a constitution for a world government to perpetuate their work.

Coincident with their grandiloquent concept of global war for global settlements was the overthrow of many, perhaps most, of the old limitations and restraints. Non-combatants lost much of their privileged status; poison gas and other inhumane weapons were used. In the complete reversal of mood the rights which

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neutrals had gained in the previous century were whittled to a sliver; nearly every restraint was denounced or evaded. In short, all three efforts at containment—in space, in objectives, in methods—were virtually abandoned.

Everything was done to bring more nations into the struggle, to expand objectives to the dimension of a new world order, and almost any means were held justified by the ends. Wilson elevated the use of force to a degree that prepared the way for “total war” when he spoke of “Force, Force to the utmost, Force without stint or limit.”

Moreover a false assumption of absolute moral superiority was developed. The Treaty of Versailles was regarded not alone as an expression of the will of the victor; it assumed the guise of a moral judgment upon a criminal. As it would be absurd for a judge to negotiate with a culprit, so the treaty was, as the Germans called it, a “diktat.” The defeated were not consulted as to its form or substance.

One might suppose that, when most of the assumptions upon which peace at the end of the First World War was based were proved wrong, it would have a marked effect in persuading men that those assumptions were incorrect. Yet despite the breakdown of the League of Nations, the collapse of the structure of reparations, and the failure of the prohibitions of Versailles to survive experience, the basic notions regarding war and peace were retained; they have dominated international life ever since. The idea that the 19th century could teach the Atomic Age anything has been rejected. Everything has been “globalized”—health, welfare, nutrition, culture, economics, finance, and politics. World-embracing institutions have been established as the instruments of this unification of all problems under one aegis. The dogma has

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been advanced that not only does everything that happens anywhere affect everyone else in some measure, it can almost be said that the assumption is made that anything that happens anywhere affects everyone vitally.

A new set of terms has been tailored to fit the new structure of ideas. They match the sweeping inclusiveness of the concepts which the 20th century has substituted for 19th century experience. They lack the qualifying adjectives of earlier expressions and are usually stated as stark absolutes.

One such phrase is "total war." It is characteristic of most of the new patterns of speech; the slogan leaves no room for any different or competing idea. Yet even a few moments of serious reflection make it clear that the term is as imprecise as it is unqualified. History shows no instance, ancient or modern, of "total" war. The nearest approximations certainly would not be found in the 20th century—or at any time after the Red Cross, for instance, was established.

Not only is the phrase not justified by experience; to Americans it is incredible as an idea, for if ever there were such a thing as total war, it could never end. Peace would become an impossibility. If every thought, word, and deed were completely engrossed in war, there would be no room for even thoughts of peace; any move in that direction would be an impairment of the totality of war.

The origin of the expression shows this to be true. It was a German creation, and reflected both the ideal of the totalitarian state and the belief expressed by Ludendorff that "War is everything." "War is the highest expression of the racial will to life, and politics must be subservient to conduct of war." It assumes that

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war is normal and that peace is abnormal. It goes so far as to say that war is not only a common occurrence, but is the most desirable experience.

There is a long history behind the development of this martial philosophy. For our purposes it is enough to point out that it is antithetical to the tradition, thought, and action of Americans. Even in Germany the dogma was expressed as an ideal rather than an achieved reality. In the United States the phrase never has corresponded to action nor does it have the slightest validity as an idea compatible with democracy.

The simplest analysis exposes the fallacy of the doctrine. How, then, could it gain such currency? To begin with it shares with all other absolutes the quality of being a half-truth, and half-truths are often easier to believe than the whole truth. It reflects part of reality—namely the undoubted reversal of emphasis from war limited in space, scope, and objectives to global strife for grandiloquent ends, using means beyond those permitted in recent times.

Furthermore, the expression “total war” has a deceptive simplicity and clarity. It can be quickly grasped. Like any slogan it is easy to remember. Constant iteration has a kind of hypnotic effect; it inhibits the reflection which would reveal the other half of the truth which the phrase suppresses.

In short, such absolute expressions blind public opinion to other significant realities; that makes them dangerous as guides to policy. Unreal thinking is no safe path toward any desirable goal. The problems before us are serious enough without having them complicated unnecessarily by confusing expressions and by dealing in absolutes where relativity is the reality.

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“Unconditional surrender” was another verbal absolute which misled even those who gave it currency. It is the necessary and proper goal of the military to reduce the enemy to a condition where he will yield the point at issue with a minimum of bargaining. To do more than that is to waste life and treasure without achieving any enduring goal. Political leaders, however, should never employ as a political concept an idea appropriate only to the military; to do so is to lose touch with reality.

The reason for the difference in military and political expression is simple: when the armed forces have overcome the enemy, they have fulfilled their mission; the principal emphasis must then shift from the use of force to the employment of reason. If a great power is really rendered politically impotent, the politician faces an impossible task. The scientific truism that nature abhors a vacuum applies equally to politics. When a power vacuum or a political vacuum is created, new forces will rush in to fill it.

A third absolute which captured the public mind also arose from the abandonment of the 19th century proposals for the limitation of war in the interests of peace. With all the advertising fanfare that might herald a new discovery we were given the phrase “One World.” As we look back across intervening events it seems hardly credible that so obvious a political fantasy could so long have dominated public opinion. That result was achieved by inflating one aspect of reality until it looked like the whole. An admitted physical reality is the globe—one world, indeed. Another aspect of reality is the interplay of forces around the world—undoubted and deeply significant. But the neglect of racial, religious, cultural, economic, and a thousand other differences, the suppression of all inconvenient aspects of reality made the “one-world” dogma only a mirage.

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Now that the hypnotic effect of the slogan has evaporated, the mad irrationality of this absolute expression is starkly revealed even to the most obtuse, though a short while ago it was difficult of discernment even by the normally astute.

As a kind of reaction from one extreme we are likely to run to another. There is danger that the one-world concept will give way to a two-world dogma. Biaxiality is as false an absolute as its predecessor. Because the United States and Russia are the principal protagonists, there is a strong tendency in the United States to forget that neither power dominates large sections of the world, and that they influence other sections in varying degrees.

Biaxiality leads to the cognate belief that Stalin is behind whatever goes wrong—whether it is the Asianism of Nehru, the nationalism of Iran, the obstreperousness of Egypt, or any other uncomfortable attitude or episode anywhere about the globe. Discussion about the Far East, for example, often oversimplifies the problem by assuming that Mao is only a puppet, that all the strings of Chinese policy are manipulated in Moscow.

On the Communist side there is an equal and opposite fallacy which attributes the Korean crisis to “aggressive American capitalism.” We are well aware of the absurdity of any such contention. Knowing its untrue character, we assume that those who use the phrase do not believe it, themselves, that they consciously lie about us. We should not reach that conclusion unless we, for our part, take adequately into account the other forces besides Russian imperialism which make trouble in the world today.

So long as we sincerely (but erroneously) see only one “real enemy,” we must assume equal sincerity (however mistaken) on the part of our major antagonist. Without in any way discounting

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the malevolence of Stalin's desires and schemes, it is folly to attribute everything to one source. The "two-world" fallacy is as dangerous as the "one-world" fantasy so far as rational, competent estimates of the international situation are concerned. It makes any understanding of Nehru impossible.

The cultivation of the habit of thinking in political absolutes culminates in the incapacity to make wise political decisions. It is an established fact of political mathematics that no number of half-truths will ever add up to the whole truth.

Under the principle of political absolutism there is no way to deal with Russia except by total war. That is a simple, direct conclusion; yet analysis proves it to be self-defeating. It is a mere effort to avoid political action. Nevertheless after force to the ultimate has been employed, politics must supervene. From this there is no conceivable escape.

The absolutist would deny that assertion and say that there is one way out: occupy the country, remain in possession and continue to rule it for many years. That is an incredible program. No nation would be willing to pay the cost in life and treasure that any such project would involve. No nation which was at all alert to the consequences would be willing to pay the cost in moral decay, for the exercise of absolute power over another people for a long period of time eventuates in the moral collapse of the conqueror. But even if the price in life, treasure, and integrity were paid, the project would still prove futile; for at some time in the future, however far, the occupation would have to come to an end in substance if not in form also. In short, it would eventuate in political action. The effort to substitute force for reason can be successful only in a transient sense; ultimately reason must be the principal implement of political action.

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I am not so naive as to believe we could now negotiate a settlement of our differences with Russia. After recent experience those who take that view seem to me totally unrealistic. One has only to recall the sterile futility of the deputy foreign ministers' conference which met at Paris in the Pink Palace for four months this spring and summer. It proved unable to agree even upon the heads of consideration for an agenda of a proposed meeting of the foreign ministers. When you cannot write the preamble to the preface, it does not make getting the book written look very hopeful.

But again we must beware of absolutes. Because we cannot settle all our problems with Russia, many people accept the conclusion that we can settle none of them. That notion is just as dangerous to sound policy making as its opposite. It has proved possible, even during the last five years, to relieve some tensions. The Russians withdrew their threat to Iran; they were stymied in Greece, they lost control of Yugoslavia; they modified their stand in the face of the Berlin air lift. None of those problems is permanently settled; there is no such thing in politics. But even a change in tension is a relief. We are well aware of that physically; that is why there is a brief pause before the discussion that follows such a talk as this. Change in political tension is just as helpful. The fact that the relief is transient is nothing to worry about any more than we should feel concern at having to resume a physical position.

We are confused in these matters by the assumption that there is one true absolute—peace. But peace is far from an absolute; it is always relative, for it does not consist in the absence of tension, but only in its adequate compensation. We are at peace with the British; more than that, we are joined with them as allies, committed to work together militarily, politically, economically, over a vast range of territory—the “North Atlantic” seems likely to pass

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the Bosphorus—and an even vaster range of problems. Nonetheless there are recent differences with Britain which have proved as intractable as our differences with Russia—the recognition of Mao, for instance, or the future of Formosa. If one set himself seriously to the task of listing all the areas of tension with our principal ally, and omitted to take adequate account of the asset side of the ledger, he could easily come to the conclusion that the alliance was bankrupt and that the tensions might lead to a break. Many people take that view, and seek to make it the dominant one.

The difference between our relations with Britain and those with Russia is that in one case the tensions, though severe in some instances, are at least partly compensated; in the other case compensations are wholly inadequate.

Merely to state the proposition that because we cannot do everything, we can do nothing, is to make clear its absurdity. Yet the current mood of public opinion comes dangerously close to that attitude. In fact, there is grave danger that the sentiment is so strong that any effort at negotiation will be damned as “appeasement” and so doomed to failure at home even if it should succeed abroad. The very word “peace” has become tainted. The phrase “peace offensive” is current. It tends to make anyone who seeks any accommodation at any point seem like the dupe (or agent) of Russia. Few want war, but fear of the accusation of being tricked by the “peace offensive” leads many people to seem more afraid of political negotiation than of all-out fighting.

The sound immediate program is to abandon the ideal of global settlement and substitute specific efforts to achieve limited goals. Even progress along that modest line requires action of two sorts. First, we must negotiate where negotiation is possible. Until a better program comes along the clear objective of policy

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should be to nibble away at any problem, a solution for which seems at all promising. By that method we must do whatever is possible to compensate for tensions. It may not produce dramatic headway toward a general settlement, but the useful is often not dramatic. It may be only a short step with long intervals before another step can be taken; yet every advance is worth while.

Simultaneously another sort of action is essential. The free world should be strengthened to such an extent that the area of negotiation can be extended. There is ample historical evidence that negotiation from a position of strength is easier than from a condition of weakness.

Here we must be aware of a tension between the military and the political branches of the government. The military must be ready for any eventuality: that requires more preparedness than the political is usually willing to undertake. Partly this unwillingness arises from the necessity to sacrifice constructive programs of production and social welfare, calculated to raise the standard of living. It is hard to substitute a program that not only contributes little to the health of the economy, but is actually a drain upon it, and a drag upon the standard of living. Partly it arises from the necessity of financing such a program through taxes—and imperiling reelection thereby.

There is, however, a worthier and more significant reason for the tendency of the political branch to go more slowly with rearmament than the military, which has a heavy but particularized responsibility believed essential. It is the danger that instead of producing a situation of strength as a basis for more effective negotiation, too large a program may eventuate in an arms race, the effect of which is to postpone negotiation until after war has come and has been completed.

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Thirty years ago nothing seemed clearer than that the race to arm was the short cut to war. From the point of view of the military there is always need for enough superiority to produce a margin of safety in any eventuality. By definition, both sides cannot have that margin. The most effective spy system in the world cannot discover all that the opponent is doing. By temperament, both assign the margin to the opponent; and tension mounts.

Today equally honest and well-informed people will say on the one hand that Russia is ridden by fear, and assert on the other that it is driven by dreams of world domination. Though there is a great difference between the motives which produce policy in those opposite states of mind, the two ideas may produce similar results in action. The Monroe Doctrine was defensive in purpose; nevertheless it led to the hegemony of the United States in this hemisphere, crudely but clearly expounded by the Secretary of State, William L. Marcy, when he said, "Its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." Clearly defensive measures can lead to expansionism, to imperialism.

The British hold Gibraltar, Malta, Singapore, Hong Kong, and other stations along the "life line" of empire. But in the 19th century this defensive chain involved the rule of the seven seas and produced war with the United States.

Woodrow Wilson's "world safe for democracy" was clearly a defensive phrase, spoken in response to the threat of German dominance. But Wilson directed the occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, sent troops to Mexico, and did other things that seemed imperialistic to many.

The necessity of cleaning up a mess on our doorstep led us into the Spanish War. That speeded the annexation of Hawaii,

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and eventuated in possession of Guam, Wake, and the Philippines and mastery of most of the Pacific. If an American president had proposed any such positive program of expansion, it would have been angrily rejected by an aroused public opinion. That episode in our history illustrates a profound truth: imperialism is not always intentional; indeed it is often the outcome of a defensive mood. When Nehru rejects the Japanese treaty because it does not deliver Formosa to Mao and Okinawa to Japan, we see his act as the expression of a hostile idea, perhaps Russian in origin. He may see our new arrangements with New Zealand and Australia, and with the Philippines, and our continuation of troops in Japan, our possession of Okinawa, and our denial of Formosa to Mao as unconscious American imperialism arising from a defensive mood.

Any nation with a unique political ideal and a distinctive economic system is always in danger. It is never understood by strangers who view it with suspicion and dislike. The situation may develop to such a condition of fear and tension that the "threatened" nation feels "surrounded" and turns to expansion as essential to survival.

The description applies both to the United States and to Russia. We have expanded enormously; but there are still Americans who feel that we are surrounded, and that there is no way out but war; they are the advocates of the so-called "preventive war." They have no official spokesman; but their number is very large and some incident might supply the leadership that would make the movement dangerously significant.

If the idea of preventive war is dangerous in the United States, with its diffused form of government which prevents the ready crystallization of such an idea, how much more dangerous could it be in Russia with its centrally dominated system. Russia has vivid memories of the "cordon sanitaire," a deliberate attempt

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at encirclement; the aid to the "Whites" and the expeditionary forces in Russian territory. Once the idea were accepted that "peaceful coexistence" is impossible, the Politburo could launch a "preventive war" whenever the occasion seemed most propitious. Fear, a defensive condition, easily leads to aggression, an offensive action.

That explains why it is the inescapable function of political authority to determine how much preparedness is essential to make possible negotiation from situations of strength, and how much more preparedness would eventuate in so sharp an arms race as to precipitate war. There is no rule of thumb that has the least utility in deciding how much is too much. The one practical course is to combine rearmament with alert seizure of every opportunity for useful negotiation. If those negotiations are handled with deftness and skill, their success will be an indication that the situation of strength is being attained. If more and more irritations are ameliorated, the evidence of adequacy in armament becomes cumulative.

At the moment the utter sterility of recent negotiations offers clear enough proof that the situation of strength has not yet been attained—or else that negotiations are inhibited by fear of accusations of "appeasement," or have failed for want of adroit and shrewd management.

Meanwhile the Russian use of the veto, the abstention of the Soviet Union from many world agencies, its neglect to abide by the agreements it has made, its aggressive acts (or, as Aneurin Bevan would call them, its "adventures") have eventuated in the Korean imbroglio. That has all but dissipated the myth of genuine global collective action. It raises anew the validity of the concept of a limited war for limited objectives. For some months

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we have observed the tussle between those who would deal with one issue at a time, and those who have fully accepted the theses of the world wars—force without stint or limit to the point of “total war,” involvement of as many nations as possible rather than as few as possible, anticipation of a general settlement rather than a modestly specific agreement on a few subjects.

The issue is not sharply defined and the dilemma has not been clearly stated. Those things seldom happen in politics. Indeed there is much evidence that most people are utterly confused. The key to the confusion is that Korea epitomizes the tension between competing concepts—the global theory on the one hand and the limited specific objective upon the other. Unhappily almost no one has been wholly consistent in supporting one view or the other. Minds have wavered between the two basic ideas as the tide of battle swayed.

Nonetheless there are definite evidences of the competition of the opposing concepts. The horror of the British when President Truman in an offhand moment said, “there has been active consideration” of the use of the atomic bomb, their resistance to advance beyond the narrow waist of North Korea to the Yalu, their refusal to sanction the “hot pursuit” of enemy planes into Manchuria—all are evidences of at least a foggy concept of a limited war for limited objectives. On the other hand the participation of several nations as active combatants or by token forces, the pleas for more men and materiel from more nations, the Kem Amendment, the Battle Bill, and other evidences of an effort to expand the economic as well as the military phase of the war tend toward the global idea.

Angry discussion of what may properly be regarded as a “satisfactory” settlement shows that many, whose general phil-

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osophy of international relations normally comes close to isolationism, nonetheless feel no confidence whatever in the validity of limited operations or limited objectives once strife has begun. Indeed they denounce those who make any such approach as though they were not in error, but deliberately treasonous. Their view is that any departure from "all-out" tactics has nothing whatever to be said for it.

If Korea is one manifestation of the competition between two fundamental ideas as to proper procedure in the search for peace, we have other evidences of a tendency to revive some of the 19th century concepts. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, despite its vast sweep in territory from Alaska eastward, presumably beyond the Bosphorus in its new incarnation, nonetheless is a limited organization. Formally it is related to the United Nations, but substantively it is an attempt to handle a limited range of problems in a specific area with which the United Nations could not cope effectively. In the same way the new mutual defense agreements with Australia and New Zealand, the proposed agreement with Japan, the Schuman Plan, and even the Marshall Plan make a limited approach to a defined objective.

All are evidences that there is a dawning realization that many of the world's problems are like food: they cannot be taken in too large amounts. While, like the items in a well-balanced diet, they all have an interrelationship, it is necessary to take one bite at a time. Perhaps a chess game offers an even better metaphor. Each move must be made with reference to the whole strategy, but the next move is dependent upon the counter move of the opponent, which, except in some highly formalized situations, cannot be predicted.

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The plain fact is that there is so much diversity of interest that the attempt to deal with everything at once must break down. Even when we use the words "national interest," the phrase conceals the fact that the interest of a nation is itself a complex structure. The day of the economic determinists is over. If there had been any need for a *coup de grâce* Gandhi certainly delivered it. If it is asserted that India is a special case, it is necessary only to look at Iran today; surely it is defying its economic interest.

Many nations are pursuing interests which are not only non-economic, they are intangible. There are all kinds of variations upon emotional, spiritual, political, economic, and cultural themes, which dominate the idea of national interest from time to time, and place to place. The assumption, therefore, that nations follow their interest has validity only when interest itself is specifically defined for each nation, and often that has to be differently defined for the same nation at various times. Under these circumstances the experience of the world in more than a generation of attempts at global solutions illustrates the folly of excluding limited objectives by limited means merely because those concepts have not been fashionable. *

Bismarck offers the classic example of a statesman who followed the doctrine of limited objectives. It is important to lay emphasis upon that fact, because it demonstrates a point of first-class significance: namely, that the theory of limitation upon action and objective was not the sole property of the peace-loving, or the neutrals, or the weak.

Bismarck was an aggressor. He deliberately made war; when a real *casus belli* was lacking he was not beyond manufacturing one. He was as callous to moral considerations as Machiavelli. His object was the erection of Prussia into a first-class power, and

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he employed any available means to that end. He was not seeking to serve as midwife to a "brave new world," but to achieve a specific goal. He had no thought of "total" war. To Bismarck such an idea was the height of stupidity, because it would prevent reaping the fruits of victory. His advice to the King of Prussia epitomizes his whole thought on the subject. "War," he said, "should be conducted in such a way as to make peace possible." That may be regarded, perhaps, as a mere paraphrase of the classic dictum of Clausewitz: "War is nothing but a continuation of political activities with other means intermingled.....Political activities are not stopped by the war.....but are substantially continuous." The passage has been worn so smooth by repetition that it requires some effort to appreciate its fundamental character.

The reality which must be grasped is that in the long run every peace is a negotiated peace. This has never been expressed any better than by Lloyd George who wrote to President Wilson on March 25, 1917, "You may strip Germany of her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force and her navy to that of a fifth-rate power; all the same *in the end* if she feels she has been unjustly treated in the Peace of 1919, she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors."

No one has said it more plainly. Never has a prediction been more dramatically justified. Indeed it was not necessary to wait for Germany to fulfill the prophecy. The Treaty of Sevres, imposed upon a completely defeated Turkey by the Paris peace conference, seemed to the Turks so intolerable that they were roused to desperate, and successful, resistance. The Treaty of Lausanne was quite different from that of Sevres.

This reality that a treaty to end a war must be acceptable to the defeated nation is reenforced by the nature—and the cost

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—of modern warfare. After victory is won the triumphant nation is virtually exhausted. After the first World War Churchill, whom no one could call a defeatist, wrote, "Victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat. It was not to give security even to the victors." Briand, the almost perpetual Foreign Minister of France, used words of the same import. In the light of our current situation Churchill could today safely repeat the words he uttered a generation earlier.

For many reasons, of which exhaustion is only one, the moment of victory is brief and the settlements made in that moment are brittle unless they are satisfactory, not superficially but fundamentally, to the defeated. For politics is continuous, while war is episodic. And nothing is writ larger upon the pages of history than the reversal of alliances. Italy, allied with Germany, then warred against it in the first World War as our ally; under Mussolini it returned to the German alliance, was our enemy, was defeated, disarmed, and now returns to the status of a quasi-ally. Ways and means are being sought to modify or nullify the prohibition on rearmament in order that the Mediterranean flank of free Europe may have more strength.

From Japan's surrender on the deck of the Missouri to the terms of the Treaty of San Francisco is a far cry. The alteration is not the consequence of a cooling-off period. It is the result of political developments in Russia, China, and Southeast Asia that make Japan more valuable as a solvent friend than as a helpless bankrupt. By deliberate action we are returning that nation to the status of a great power, with all the hazards it implies. Five years ago such a proposal would have received no serious consideration. The mutations of politics are such that Japan as a great power seems less dangerous to us than a power vacuum.

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It is only a few years since Yugoslavia was counted as one of the satellites of Russia and hostile to the West. Yet, today, Tito has defied Russia and occupies a somewhat distinctive place in the world by reason of that action. No one could have predicted the course of Titoism nor do we know how permanent it will prove.

The Morgenthau plan for reducing Germany to an impotent agricultural economy is already but a dim memory to most of us. Germany is in the process of being wooed away from Russia to provide a buffer—or bastion—for the protection of Western Europe. Even our army of occupation is no longer concerned with holding Germany down but primarily with protecting it until its own strength can supplement ours. The High Commissioner has explicitly admitted that Germany must be treated as an equal.

These are modern illustrations of a point made by George Washington in his Farewell Address. In specific training and background he would not be regarded today as an “expert” on foreign relations. But he had personally studied all the diplomatic correspondence of the Confederation which preceded the Union under the Constitution. He decided that the French alliance of 1778 had become a danger to the interests of the United States; he set the neutrality policy in 1793, though Madison thought it a “mistake” and Jefferson called it “pusillanimous.” He was clear-headed enough to read aright the signs of the times and realize that an alliance which was not only useful, but necessary, at one moment could be not only a burden but a danger in altered circumstances. He was not long out of office before the naval war with France vindicated his opinion and led to the ending of the alliance.

On the basis of study, reflection, and hard experience, Washington got hold of one of the fundamentals of sensible foreign policy. Aware of the sharp changes that circumstances produce in the

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policies of states, he realized the impermanence of every political arrangement. As one of the means to flexibility, which mutations require if one is to pursue a realistic policy, he sought to drain political decisions of emotional elements in order that a commitment made in good faith at one moment could be modified when circumstances altered. To this end he urged the avoidance of "passionate attachments" and "inveterate antipathies."

The phrases embody two basic concepts. First, emotion is exceedingly hostile to wisdom. Affectionate sentimentality and bitter hatred both defeat reason, which is the only sure guide to sound policy. That is being illustrated today in Iran. Emotional drives are forcing that nation to decision and action which are inimical to its economic welfare, internal stability, and international security. The passionate quality of its behavior is manifestation enough of its unwisdom. It is not necessary to argue that the status quo was satisfactory, or that change was not only inevitable but was overdue. The folly of policy emotionally oriented finds only its most recent, not its most significant, illustration in the current crisis. Washington was profoundly right on that matter.

The second basic concept embodied in his brief phrases is equally significant: in politics nothing is permanent. Attachments and antipathies alike are, in the broad range of history, transient. It was not until the opening of this century that Americans came to regard Britain without "inveterate antipathy." Twisting the lion's tail was a popular trick of politicians seeking public applause; even so moderate a statesman as Cleveland used startlingly strong language in the Venezuela affair: "It will in my opinion be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power as a willful aggression upon its rights and interests the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands or the exercise of governmental jurisdiction over any territory which after investigation we have

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determined of right belongs to Venezuela." It would have been difficult at that time to foresee the diplomatic revolution within a very few years by which the English speaking peoples would come to be partners in two world wars and the cold war that was to follow.

Current assumptions that there will *never* be another shift in this orientation cannot be proved. It is difficult to foresee circumstances which would produce such a startling change. There are many reasons to hope none will occur. But our attachment to our allies should be founded upon reason, not emotion.

Similarly our tension with enemies should be coldly rational, not founded upon "inveterate antipathy." We are dimly aware of this fact, though it seldom finds adequate expression. Recently the Congress passed a resolution, which the President transmitted to the Kremlin, in which it was declared that "the American people deeply regret the artificial barriers which separate them from the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which keep the Soviet peoples from learning of the desire of the American people to live in friendship with all other peoples and to work with them in advancing the ideal of human brotherhood." There was the implicit, though unspoken, suggestion that, when the Russian people altered their government, peaceful intercourse could be resumed.

Unhappily the resolution was conceived more as a tactical maneuver in the cold war than as a sincere expression of an underlying reality. Nonetheless it is not inconceivable that if war is avoided some accommodation can be found. We shall never have a viable policy vis-a-vis Russia until we read, learn, and inwardly digest Washington's parting admonition.

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When it seems as though the ideals of the two nations were so antithetical that it would be impossible to live together, we must remember that for a long time Mohammedans and Christians carried on religious wars. Now they manage to live on comfortable terms with each other by restricting their religious enthusiasm adequately so that they do not exhibit it in efforts to use force for purposes of proselyting.

There was a time, also, when the principles of monarchism and legitimacy were so passionately espoused in Russia and most of Europe that it seemed it would never be possible to have true peace with the revolutionary upstart republic in America. Yet the time came when, during the Civil War, friendly gestures upon the part of Russia were helpful.


Today we tend to regard the Russian state as it now exists under the Bolsheviks as permanent; but it is scarcely more than thirty years old. In the course of that thirty years it has gone through different phases, during some of which it was actively co-operative. It would be as grave a mistake to regard the current phase as ultimate and decisive as it would be to say that it is transient and likely to fall in a brief period of time.

In the light of what has happened, it is almost amusing to go back and look at the *New York Times* headlines during the first two or three years of Bolshevik control. Almost constantly there appeared the prediction that the Bolsheviks would fail promptly and shortly be driven out. There was no expectation that Russia under their leadership could ever become a dominant force over half of mankind. That obviously was a wrong estimate. We are likely now to make an equally wrong estimate by assuming that what has happened is permanent and that there will be no change for the better. Perspective upon the problem should indicate to us

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that there may well be a marked change. Passionate emotion, inveterate in its depth, can blind us to those mutations which Washington so long ago perceived so clearly.

 For the sake of stimulating thought I have been suggesting the thesis that limited operations for limited objectives offer a valid method of achieving steps toward peace. Actually, it is a far more hopeful method than stubborn insistence upon making every incident a global affair. Determination always to use a tank, even when a fly-swatter is a more appropriate instrument, is not a good way to attain a peaceful objective.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

1

- Q. Would you apply your theory of "limited objectives" to the probable outcome of Korea?
- A. I think I shall have to apply it in Korea. In other words, I do not think that the Korean action offers leverage enough to decide all the questions in the Far East. Nor do I think that within the limits of action to which we are now committed by reason of the alliance that we can hope to get a long-range settlement even in Korea. The most we can hope for, under the messy situation in which we have found ourselves, is some *modus vivendi* which will lay the foundation for future decisions. I say that regretfully, but I am fully convinced that the limitations which have been put upon us (and from which we cannot now escape) are such that we can't get a general solution. That is an unhappy remark, but it is my view.

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2

- Q. You spoke of Russian withdrawal from Iran as a victory, which it was. In what manner was that brought about?
- A. I think that was one of the things to be credited to the United Nations. What happened there (and here I speak from memory and without immediate review) is that world public opinion became so clear as to what was going on that the Russians did not want to hazard direct action. It seems to be true, in the last five years, that the Russians are not ready to take the responsibility for ultimate action themselves. Whenever they start something, as they did there, if you can expose the fact that it is they who are acting and that they are acting directly and that they must take responsibility for it — they will withdraw. They would rather use puppets, like the North Koreans or the Bulgarians or the Romanians, or somebody else. But in that instance they were in a position where they would have had to take full responsibility for what transpired. Once the spotlight was on that fact, they just didn't want to take that responsibility. That's my own view of it.

3

- Q. I took your statement about "the limited objective in the use of forces" to indicate you believe that the fewest possible number of nations should be represented in Korea. Is that consistent with the ideas of the United Nations?
- A. I will give you my view of the United Nations in order to answer. I don't want you to think that I am the oldest living man, but I was an advocate of the League of Nations, particularly as it was originally promulgated by the American Bar Associa-

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tion and the League to Enforce Peace, in the First World War. And I stayed with the League of Nations until after Russia came in and the League began to go to pieces. When the United Nations was organized, I was in favor of its organization. I did not join the committee led by Colonel Stimson for the United Nations because I felt they were advertising something that they couldn't deliver. I noticed an editorial in the *Providence Journal* (I think it was yesterday) that said that General MacArthur *derogates* the United Nations. I didn't have a dictionary at hand and I just have to guess at how you would "derogate" a thing. Whatever it means, I suppose that it means that he didn't think it was God Almighty. Now, there are two ways to kill the United Nations. One would be to sabotage it, and the other is to load more on it than it can carry. I'm afraid that we are in danger of destroying the United Nations by giving it too much load to carry. I feel, at this time, that the participation of the United Nations in Korea is more formal than real, and that in some respects we would be better off if we were there alone. At least we wouldn't have to submit our policy to people who do not have the same commitments that we have. This is a beautiful illustration of the fact that when you get too many people making decisions, the decision tends to be the decision of the stupidest.

4

- Q. Would you comment on the statement of Justice Douglas that we should recognize Communist China?
- A. I think that the business of judges is to decide cases in the Supreme Court, and that their statements should be judicial.

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5

- Q. In connection with Nehru's apparent attitude towards Kashmir, would you interpret that as paralleling the leaning of Hitler and Mussolini to see what the other nations did with Japan's aggression in Korea—that he is waiting to see what is done in Korea before deciding what he will do in Kashmir?
- A. Speaking in the Kashmir matter as an amateur and not as an expert, there are some of these things which I have studied more intensively than others. My own view is that we have in India two factors which are of first importance. The first is that it is a nation of immense poverty. We have a strong tendency to say that if they do so and so they will lose their liberty. But most of them have never known liberty—they have none to lose the outcasts, the lower classes, the people ground in utter poverty. And, therefore, it is by definition a politically unstable nation. The second is that India is a new nation. Nehru has just won a victory on policy by being elected Chairman of the Congress Party, but even the experts were somewhat surprised at it. In other words, his own tenure of power is tenuous. In America we tend to think of him as without competition for power; yet within his own party and with the opposing party he is in intense competition for the maintenance of his own authority. My own feeling is that so far as Kashmir is concerned, he is a captive of that fact—that he doesn't *dare* make a wise and statesmanlike solution for fear it will upset his own power and then he can't make any contribution to India. I spoke about the danger of the appeasement label getting on any negotiations and so inhibiting *our* political action—I think that's what has happened with Nehru. I can't imagine a man with as much intellectual power and spiritual sensitiveness as he has in

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some matters being so defiant of both common sense and morals as he is in the Kashmir matter, unless he is inhibited from rational action by his environment.

6

- Q. Dr. Wriston, do you see any possible areas in which there is a prospect of successful negotiations with the Russians for small or limited objectives?
- A. That's a tough one, and I'll answer "Yes" before I get scared. We may be in the midst of one now in Germany. It seems to me that in the last six weeks there has been a change in the Russian attitude towards Western Germany. There are some indications that they have become convinced that they cannot woo Western Germany away from us and that they may be ready to make some kind of an interim arrangement by which they will leave us more alone. That's not much. Also, as you know, the other day an interpreter called around at the State Department and asked why we didn't reopen negotiations on Lend-Lease. It was a crazy way of doing it, but if you can get the oriental point of view it's a good way to "save face," because you let the suggestion be made by somebody who can be repudiated. It looks as if they had some second thoughts which might make a solution possible. I have some hope, now that the Japanese Treaty is out of the way, that we may make some headway in Korea—either militarily or diplomatically, or both; the two have to go hand in hand. I think the defeat of Gromyko in San Francisco may have marked effects upon some sectors of Russian policy. In other words if you ask me do I think there is any significant point which can now be settled, I'll have to say "No." If you ask me whether we can pursue this policy of nibbling, my answer is "Yes." And there are

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two or three places where something may be done. The point that I wanted to make is that we must be alert to seize those small opportunities and not scorn them because they are small, and not get ourselves in such a frame of mind that we don't seize them.

7

- Q. Dr. Wriston, if you assume that your enemy has an unlimited political objective (I'm not saying that he has, but assuming that he has), would your theory of "limited objectives" put you at a disadvantage?
- A. Well, the answer of course is "yes," as you ask it in those terms. But I do not think that they have an immediate unlimited objective, or could have under their situation. Perhaps I should make it clear that a "limited objective" does not mean that you don't have a long-range, broad-gauge policy—it means that the devices you take to achieve that won't have to be a global war or a global peace, or a global settlement. You should never have a limited objective which has no relationship to your total policy. Having said that, I think nothing is clearer than that the Russians are pursuing limited objectives. That is one of the things which has given them their strength; they break out in Iran, or they break out in the Balkans, or they break out in Korea, or they break out in Berlin—and then they withdraw, if they don't succeed. If they do succeed, they take Czechoslovakia, or they take Poland, or they take Rumania. But where they fail, they retreat and wait for the situation to mature again. For example, it may well happen that if the folly in Iran goes far enough the Russians will act in that field again. When I speak of a "limited objective," therefore, I don't mean that it isn't part of a larger scheme. I think that we have suf-

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ferred from laying down general categories, in the United Nations and elsewhere, and then finding they didn't fit local situations that often makes us look foolish. For example, the United Nations said that Korea was one. It set it up as a united nation, but couldn't carry out the decision. It sent a body of observers there who weren't allowed across the 38th parallel. Now the British and ourselves are in an argument as to what our "objectives" are. Are we after the unification of Korea, or after some *modus vivendi*? The record makes it perfectly clear that we wish for a unification of Korea, but that we didn't start out to achieve it by military action. We started out to repel aggression. After the Inchon Landing and the dash to the Yalu, we thought we had achieved a victory and of course we then said, "We're for the unification of Korea." After the retreat and the reestablishment of the line in the vicinity of the 38th parallel, we have to return to the original idea. It is very hard to swallow—our words about unification—but we're gulping, and sooner or later we'll swallow them unless there comes a change in the military situation—in which case, of course, we'll again be for the unification of Korea.

8

- Q. Dr. Wriston, you indicated that Gromyko had suffered a defeat at San Francisco. I rather felt that he was defeated before he went there. Did you mean that his defeat became greater by going to San Francisco?
- A. Yes, I think he dramatized her defeat. In general I think that the Japanese matter has been handled with great skill. The treaty that was signed was a very difficult thing to negotiate. Fifty-two nations were present, of which about forty had no real business to be there. Their interests were not deeply involved.

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Despite parts of the treaty they disliked, they felt they had to vote with the United States. That makes them look like satellites and makes them uncomfortable—and it ought to make us uncomfortable. It would have been a lot better if many of those nations had unilaterally declared peace with Japan—declared peace and stayed away—and left it to the people who are really involved in the Japanese war to make the treaty. On that last night John Foster Dulles, in very candid statements, showed that the Russians were invited for a specific purpose and that they came for another purpose; they had no excuse for “misunderstanding.” Therefore he said to them, “You could have stayed at home; when you chose to come you chose to be guided by the rules of this conference. They have been adopted, and therefore you’re out of order.” Gromyko was clumsy and so stupidly repetitious that he didn’t carry any conviction even by way of propaganda. That dramatic moment when he wanted a cigarette, or some other form of relief, and went out for a minute, the whole place dissolved in an uproar; when he came back it looked like buffoonery. It made him appear ridiculous; expecting high drama, the conference got slapstick comedy. When he made the effort to keep the newsmen from being present at the signing by the device of having a press conference and stalling to keep reporters in attendance, he was defeated by the newspaper men who said, “We’ve heard all this.” And they walked out. He expected to have more time for propaganda and hoped to be more successful in detaching Indonesia and two or three other Asian states, conceivably Pakistan. So I feel the Russians were lots worse off for having come there and having failed than if they had stayed home. Nehru stayed home, I think, so as not to have to vote with the Russians. Now he is going to make a treaty which concedes much that this treaty conceded.

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- Q. I had the impression that the strength of the United States in the peace conference at San Francisco was based principally on the support of general principles of international justice, rather than what might be called "limited objectives."
- A. I don't want to be cynical, but think that after we've got a good settlement we often glamorize it by using large terms. What had actually happened in the eleven months that they referred to so often as the period during which this treaty was negotiated was some of the toughest bargaining that has ever been done. The Australians and New Zealanders really put the finger on us to sign a treaty we didn't much want to sign. This mutual assistance pact with Australia and New Zealand is not anything that anybody in Washington would ever have proposed. I cannot believe we are very happy about our new arrangements with the Philippines—I don't see how we can be, because we have accepted a responsibility which we are not in a position fully to discharge. We are going to have to let political leaders in the Philippines play "ducks and drakes" and at the same time we've got to go in and clean up after them, and that's a very bad situation when the politics are as bad as they are in Manila—and New York. Therefore, while I do think that there were great principles of justice and decency, I think also that there was a great deal more of hard-headed reasonableness, which was then (as I say) generalized in moral terms. I think so far as Asia is concerned Pakistan had a certain reason for signing; each nation had a particular reason which you can analyze for signing. When the nation has reached a decision, its representatives seldom say, "I think this is good business." They say, "This is an act of justice and right."