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A Communication to the Participants in the Tenth Pugwash Conference

With the assembly of the tenth and largest Pugwash Conference, the time is singularly appropriate for a searching re-examination of the role of the scientist in world affairs.

When the first of these informal and unofficial meetings of scientists from East and West was held in Pugwash in mid-1957, the world desperately needed an expert expression on the hazards of the nuclear arms race. In the five years that have followed, the deadly dangers have been universally recognized, by scientists and laymen alike. At the same time, alas, the cold war has intensified, not moderated, and the will for international understanding has weakened, not strengthened.

In this hour of aggravated suspicion and distrust among nations, the twin causes of disarmament and peace can best be served by a completely candid, not to say cold-blooded, look at the present facts of international life, however unpleasant they are. As an example, let me briefly review the American picture, from my standpoint of practicing capitalist and industrialist.

From the White House on down, there is no official disposition in the United States today to press for a workable international accommodation. The change from a Republican to a Democratic administration in 1960 not only failed to produce the heralded era of better foreign relations, but actually has led to a steady hardening of American policy toward nations of differing political, economic and philosophical views.

The official frame of mind in Washington is well mirrored in a syndicated column by David Lawrence that appeared in the New York Herald Tribune and elsewhere on July 26, 1962. Lawrence is a writer and publisher who has made his headquarters in the American capital for many years, and is recognized as being in close touch with officialdom.

The column proudly recites the answer that Lawrence made, when asked by a leading Soviet journal to participate in a symposium based on the question, "Do you believe that general disarmament is possible now or in the nearest future?" Lawrence congratulates himself on replying that he sees no prospect for American acceptance of a disarmament agreement

with the Soviet Union until the communist government there adopts a belief in God and changes the political system to the American form of popular elections. Obviously, the Soviet Union will no more embrace these two conditions at our suggestion than we would alter our religious and political tenets at the instance of the USSR.

Toward the end of the Eisenhower administration, it appeared for a time as though mutually profitable trade might be initiated between the USA and the USSR. The informal visit of Deputy Premier Mikoyan to the United States early in 1959 was expected to be more or less of a trade mission, and many American businessmen indicated a lively interest in meeting Mikoyan and learning what concrete proposals he might have to offer.

On January 7, 1959, the Deputy Premier visited Cleveland and was my guest at a luncheon attended by fifty middlewestern industrial and civic leaders. His statement that he had come to the United States with the intention of placing large orders for steel and other products was warmly welcomed, and the luncheon meeting ended in an aura of good feeling between capitalists and communist.

Mikoyan traveled on west in the United States for twelve days before going to Washington to present his trade proposals to the Departments of State and Commerce. A week after the Cleveland luncheon, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Douglas Dillon went to Cleveland for a dinner address, and arranged for invitations to go to many of those who had attended the Mikoyan luncheon. Although not more than a small handful of those particular people were in his audience, he used the occasion to congratulate Cleveland industrialists for what he brazenly described as their unwillingness to do business with the Soviets. This was, of course, a slick trick on his part to have his own statement circulated everywhere as representing the Cleveland view.

On January 19, Deputy Premier Mikoyan was in Washington to call on both Under Secretary of State Dillon and Acting Secretary of Commerce Lewis L. Strauss with specific trade proposals, including a request for authorization to place substantial orders for pipe and tubes with American steel mills. All of the Mikoyan proposals were summarily denied, and business that would have been a boon to the American steel industry was subsequently placed by the Soviets with West German mills, to their handsome advantage. In his recently published memoirs, Strauss rejoices that he succeeded in barring American trade with the Godless Russians, even though this particular piece of obstructiveness played some part in the U. S. Senate's historic refusal to confirm his nomination as Secretary of Commerce six months later.

With the election of the new Democratic administration on November 8, 1960, the general expectation was for a clean slate of high officials in the executive department and a fresh approach to the international impasse. A first and sharp warning that this was not to be came a bare two days later, when the President-elect made his first appointments by redesignating the old directors of the FBI and the CIA, perennial leaders of anti-Russian propaganda. To maintain their appropriations and influence, these two most conspicuous agencies in the vast American spying-apparatus work overtime to fill the country with terror of imaginary red bogies, without regard to the damage they do to the United States in the eyes of the world or to harmless individuals on whose rights they trample in defiance of the law and order they are sworn to uphold.

The appointment on December 16, 1960, of Douglas Dillon to the key post of Secretary of the Treasury made the course of the incoming government completely clear. If the new Democratic President felt that he could find no one in his own party qualified to fill the highest financial position in the land, and was obliged to turn to the outgoing Republican Under Secretary of State, a man notorious for his opposition to doing business with the Soviets, then there could be no prospect of a real effort to improve the international climate. History has shown that trade is a reliable prelude to friendship among nations. If we are unwilling to take that fundamental step, which is to our own economic advantage, we are hardly likely to arrive at meaningful political treaties and agreements, no matter how many the conferences and meetings in which we participate.

That the new Democratic administration had scant intention of trying seriously for agreements, moreover, was signaled from the start by the selection on March 9, 1961, of Arthur H. Dean as chief American negotiator in the impending Geneva conference on nuclear tests. At that time, Dean was already as well known for his strong anti-Soviet sentiments as his long-time Wall Street law partner, the late John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State in the previous Republican government. Although the nuclear test negotiations bogged down from the beginning, Dean has also been given the added assignment of chairman of the American delegation to the newer Geneva disarmament meetings.

Ironically, while the United States fails to conclude treaties and refuses to traffic with nations that do not share our politics, economics and religion, we are confronted with serious economic problems. The politicians may not yet be ready to face the music, but it is becoming more obvious with each passing day that the American dollar has been pushed into its precarious position by the unbearable combination of a gigantic defense budget, fantastic commitments for maintaining military forces all over the globe, huge appropriations for military and economic aid to other nations and exorbitant expenditures for vast stockpiles of strategic materials and commodities beyond possible requirements far into the distant future.

Make no mistake. America cannot much longer continue to sustain these colossal and unproductive outlays. Press, radio and television have been so caught up in the cold war contagion that they have fallen down on their duty to educate and inform the public, and to chastise the politicians. The military-industrial complex, against which President Eisenhower warned in his Farewell Address, is becoming more firmly entrenched every minute. Unless we come to our senses, we are soon going to be bowled over by an economic and financial upheaval unparalleled in the annals of history, if we succeed in avoiding the nuclear catastrophe toward which much of our feverish military and political activity is pointing us like an irresistible magnet.

Probably no one who ever lived so well understood the hearts and motives of men as Shakespeare did. I have just been re-reading his King John, and have been forcibly struck by the exact parallel that the portrayal of the completely cynical behavior of his kings, generals and priests finds with the conduct of all too many of their modern counterparts.

What does all this mean to the scientists who have journeyed to London to participate in the Tenth Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs? The challenge to them is not only to consider the full implications of a sadly disordered world, in the light of their special technical knowledge and their long tradition of free international interchange. It is also, and above all, to impress their conclusions frequently and forcefully on the politicians, the press and the people.

Cyrus Eaton

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