

SPEECH BEFORE THE ROTARY DISTRICT 769 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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It is a special pleasure to address an organization that has such a long tradition of interest in foreign countries. As you know, Rotarian fellowships for various kinds of education offer to students from 153 countries the opportunity to study abroad. This is an outstanding example of an active international interest that seeks to promote understanding of other cultures.

It is especially significant to be here on February 29, 1980, which is 75 years and 6 days after Paul Harris founded Rotary. His memory is commemorated by the Paul Harris Fellowship Award, which funds the international program. These fellowships award students from all over the world with travel money, school tuition, and pocket money for study.

Learning about other countries first hand is one of the most effective ways of breaking down misunderstanding about other cultures. If this could be done on a massive scale, I think that our present problems throughout the world would be eased substantially. And that is something we would all welcome.

In the past three months, we have been subjected to one diplomatic crisis after another. We now mark our time, or at least Walter Cronkite does, by the days our hostages have been held in Iran.

On the positive side, the Olympic games are a good example of healthy international competition just as the Rotary Fellowships are a good example of international education. In the Olympics there are rules, international judges, and top contenders; the victor is assured that a gold medal does represent an ideal performance. The U.S. hockey team's upset of the Russian team and its gold medal and Eric Heiden's five gold medals brought the country together in a celebration of our athletic ability. These games underline the fact that we live in a shrinking world where athletes can meet in such competition and share their hopes and dreams, their victories and defeats. The threatened boycott of the Moscow games this coming summer reiterates the sobering truth that even such idealized competition has political overtones. The feeling of pride that we all shared so recently points out the sacrifice that our athletes must make to strengthen our diplomatic efforts.

As Americans we are interested in foreign relations; we always have been. Whether this derives from some curiosity that was inherent in our founding fathers or from our diverse national origins, we have always been keenly interested in world affairs, and our government, from the start, has been adept at managing our interests abroad.

I am sure that you are all aware of the origins of our foreign policy during the American Revolution. I am still amazed that a frontier people inhabiting a few cities and some clearings in the wilderness could forge alliances that aided in the drive for independence. Those thirteen colonies eventually bonded themselves into a nation, the diplomatic powers were vested in the national government, and our present system of diplomatic relations evolved.

When we think of our diplomatic problems today, consider the history of the United States in its first thirty years. After concluding the Revolution, we fought an undeclared naval war with France, brought our commerce in the Mediterranean into order with a show of force at Tripoli, purchased Louisiana, fought the British to a draw in the War of 1812, and issued a hemispheric declaration in the Monroe Doctrine. When commentators remark on how our position in the world has changed since World War II, consider the changes that took place at the very beginning of our history. We were successful then; we will be successful now.

Of course, our situation today is quite complex, and this is complicated even more by our being in the midst of a Presidential election. Tremendous tension is produced because candidates obviously disagree with President Carter's foreign policy, but to challenge it, as candidate Kennedy has learned, is to court unpopularity from citizens who have become accustomed to bipartisan support of foreign policy. Once a decision has been announced, our tradition is to give broad support to the President.

There are any number of problem areas that we could discuss today, but I would like to turn my attention to the one that seems most pressing--Afghanistan. It is at this interface that Russian expansionism and the United States policy of containment collide. Significantly, this confrontation breaks a period of thaw in Soviet-United States relations. With SALT I and negotiations for SALT II, we had moved to a position of detente with the Russians. That trend has come to a grinding halt. The SALT II Treaty is on the shelf, probably forever, and we are now gearing up for whatever crisis that may come from the latest Soviet move.

President Carter has been a man of peace, and we can see the wisdom of his steps in the Panama Canal Treaty, the China Policy, the aid in helping the British solve the Rhodesian crisis, and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Yet we have had previous Presidents who were men of peace but who were pushed beyond the limit. Thomas Jefferson decided that American honor would no longer permit our paying tribute to Mediterranean pirates, so we fought at Tripoli and in the Mediterranean area to defend our honor. Jefferson later embargoed all shipping from the United States. These crises led the next President, James Madison, into the War of 1812.

This is certainly not a precedent that I would welcome in our present crisis, but I will say that no American President should be written off as lacking the conviction to fight when our interests, or our honor, is at stake. I have backed the President's policy in these crises so far, and I know, and you know, that if events conspire to threaten us, then we must fight.

Appeasers believe that if you keep throwing steaks to a tiger the tiger will become a vegetarian. I think it was Konrad Adenauer who said that an infallible method of conciliating a tiger is to allow oneself to be devoured.

It is ironic that President Carter today enjoys a popularity that is widespread--much more comprehensive than before the Iranian and Afghan crises. When you think back to August when Andrew Young resigned, or to September when the presence of the Soviet Cuban combat brigade was handled awkwardly, or even to November when the Shah entered the country, there was little enthusiasm for our foreign policy.

With the take-over of our Embassy in Teheran, however, the President's image improved. This crisis showed his ability in handling what was an exceedingly tough problem. I see the support given to a President who was not able to make a sudden and decisive move that would free the hostages as a measure of our diplomatic maturity. A less mature nation, a less able leader, would have demanded rash action. This could have led to an attack on Iran, the sacrifice of the hostages, and perhaps started a seething revolution exactly like the Russians have on their hands in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the crisis in Iran has tested my patience, as I am sure that it has yours, but I hope that our patience will ultimately reward us with the return of our hostages and even an understanding with the new Iranian government that we can control our foreign affairs and are certainly not the mad CIA adventurists portrayed in their press.

With this background in mind, I would like to raise three questions about our present policy in the Persian Gulf.

1. Are we in the initial stage of a great power conflict?
2. Can we rely upon regional cooperation?
3. Is the United States ready and able to deal with any military eventuality in the area?

1. Since Russia consolidated its satellites after World War II, there has been stability along its borders. Without exploring the various uprisings in these satellites, the Berlin crises, or the skirmishing along the Chinese border, there has been no overt expansion of Soviet domination beyond the borders established after the war. That time of stability has come to an end with the invasion of Afghanistan. As President Carter noted, "The Afghan invasion is the most serious threat to our security since the Second World War." This violates the principle set out by George Kennan, the "Containment" policy, that the Russians must be contained within their present borders and challenged every time they try to expand.

Before I outline the complications that may come from this, I would like to observe one problem that the Russians face that should be a lesson to us. Frankly, I am quite surprised that there has been so much resistance to the Russian take-over in Afghanistan. The Russians have no scruples about marching into a country, forcing a new government on it, killing the dissidents, and stabilizing the country for their own purposes. Actually, I have had some grudging admiration for the way the Russians can be so ruthless--perhaps the same admiration that I have for Genghis Khan.

But even the Russians are facing tremendous opposition in Afghanistan. They have underestimated a force that in many cases

large powers are prone to ignore--nationalism. People in a country can tolerate so much meddling in their affairs before they rebel. It depends on many factors, of course, when this point is reached, and perhaps some nations could never be pushed to rebel. Yet the Russians are seeing something that we should all pay more attention to. Without popular support, even the most repressive government finds difficulty in forcing its will on the people. When the Russians, who are ruthless, find such intense opposition in a desolate country like Afghanistan, then perhaps it's time to reconsider the force of nationalism.

Why did the Russians invade this country when they already had a sympathetic ruler there? There has been speculation that they have begun a new adventure that will ultimately lead them to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf where they could obtain the port that has been denied to them historically.

It could be a move to further pressure the Peoples Republic of China.

Or it could be a move to drive a knife toward the heart of the oil producing nations of the Middle East.

President Sadat of Egypt warned in an interview on "60 Minutes" that we are presently witnessing the beginning of a

power struggle over the Persian Gulf oil fields. Western Civilization as we know it, he observed, was threatened by this struggle. The factories of the world depend on the lubrication and power that comes from Middle East oil. If this oil supply were cut off, it would lead to technological ruin. In some ways, a cessation of oil flowing from this area would be similar to an attack by neutron-like bombs that dried up all lubrication in factories rather than killed off people.

President Carter has recently observed that any threat to this area of the world will be interpreted as a threat to our national interests. He puts himself in the long tradition of American Presidents who have foreign policy named for them-- notably Monroe, Roosevelt, and Truman. I think that the President acted wisely in this pronouncement. There must be a line drawn, just as schoolboys draw lines on the playground, and the outcome must be the same. A step across the line leads to a scrap.

At present, the Russians seem to have all that they can handle in Afghanistan. It would be foolhardy for them to bite off even more when they cannot chew the mouthfull they have. Even their attempts at subversion in other oil producing countries will be threatened by the Afghan rebellion.

Russia has always exhibited stubbornness in the Middle East. In 1946 an incident occurred that pointed out the tendencies of Soviet aggression. When the deadline came in 1946 for the Russians to evacuate Iran, the Red Army remained. The Iranians, over the objection of the Russians, took their case to the Security Council of the U.N. The Russian delegate stalked out and continued to absent himself whenever the issue was discussed, but pressure from world opinion, the United Nations, and the United States finally induced the Soviets to withdraw.

More to the point, if the Soviets are faced with determination, they will pause before challenging us. After World War II as the Russians set up their buffers in Eastern Europe, the United States drew the line in Greece and in Turkey. President Truman in March of 1947 issued the doctrine that stated, "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." This led to economic and military aid for Greece and Turkey and halted further Soviet aggression.

The more telling confrontation that we have had with the Russians came in Cuba, and in that crisis the Soviet Union did withdraw their missiles. This crisis, thousands of miles from the Soviet Union, is quite different from the present crisis in Afghanistan, on Russia's back door step.

Nevertheless, the situation in the Persian Gulf is critical. We have seen one ally, the Shah of Iran, fall from his Peacock Throne. Afghanistan is now in the midst of a revolution against Russian intervention.

As the political development continues along these confused lines, the military forces of both the United States and the Russians are mobilizing. Russia has guided missile ships in the Indian Ocean, and we have two aircraft carriers, the Coral Sea and the nuclear-powered Nimitz, stationed about 150 miles off the Iranian coast, which places both Kabul and Iranian cities in range.

Are we facing a war with the Russians? I will venture to say NO. The Russians are learning a lesson with their invasion of Afghanistan, and I doubt that they are going to be interested in confronting the United States over further adventures. What I do think will happen is that Russia will continue its attempts to undermine Persian Gulf oil states, but their policy will be subversion rather than overt invasion.

2. Now, let me address the second question briefly. Can we rely upon regional cooperation? Frankly, I have been disappointed with the reaction both in Europe and in the Middle East. Europeans

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see the Afghan invasion as a move which upsets the stability of the area, but they do not see the Russians having some grand design. Instead of thinking that Russia is ultimately pushing for a warm water port or Middle East oil, they think that Russia is only interested in stabilizing its borders or perhaps threatening the Peoples Republic of China.

Our NATO partners have not responded to this crisis with overwhelming support, nor has Japan. The response from our Middle East allies has likewise been disappointing. The President left the door open for cooperation when he noted in the State of the Union Message that he would be prepared "to work with other countries in the region to share a cooperative security framework that respects differing values and political beliefs, yet which enhances the independence, security, and prosperity of all."

Simply put, we are left in a unilateral position in the Middle East. I don't think we can either count very much on our European or our Middle East allies. We are faced with a decision of some magnitude on this point. Are our interests in the Persian Gulf worth a continued presence there? How many resources are we willing to commit to keeping our oil lines open? Is there a point that will be reached when we will be faced

with war? Or is there a point in the opposite direction where we will have to leave the area because our investment outweighs the returns?

I think that President Sadat is correct in his observation that we have reached some turning point in the Middle East. Perhaps a struggle for the oil fields of this area has begun, and perhaps the Russians have fired the first salvo. In the next months and years, our country is going to have to face some tough choices in this area, and we may be standing alone in many cases.

3. Finally, is the United States ready and able to deal with any military eventuality in the area? President Carter has stopped short of rattling rockets over Afghanistan. While some people cynically say that a tankfull of gasoline is not worth going to war for, there are larger strategic considerations that go far beyond that rather narrow view of our stake in the Middle East.

President Carter has taken some symbolic actions. The grain embargo will hurt Russia some, though I fear that there will be alternate supplies that the Russians can tap. The ban on high technology will also slow down some of their plans, but again, this is not critical. The boycott of the Olympics will also sting,

especially if we can attract a large number of other nations. Draft registration will also show our determination to be prepared, and since I have been advocating this for several years, I hope that this crisis will lead to registration. The SALT II Treaty is dead, at least for now. The fact that the Russians invaded Afghanistan only weeks before the Senate was to debate the treaty shows how much they thought they had to lose.

These symbolic actions have had little or no effect on the Russians. George Kennan pointed out that by demanding withdrawal from Afghanistan immediately we have painted ourselves into a corner. Russian pride is now on the line, and though they might well wish that they had an option to withdraw, to do so now would seem to be bending to United States pressure--something that they would not likely do.

Our military response has centered on the establishment of a Rapid Deployment Force that can act on land, sea, and air. Yet it will take some time to get this force into action. We are sending 1,800 Marines to the area, and our fleet in the area is being beefed up. All of this will add to our show of determination. My opinion, and that of my colleagues, is that the Russians have gone as far as they are going. We will make sure of that. It would be irresponsible to appease the Russians

and allow them to push to the Persian Gulf for a port. Historically, the Russians have always hungered after this objective, and historically this has been denied to them. I, for one, am unwilling to be part of the nation's leadership that would allow this to come to pass. The line is drawn. The Russians should not cross it unless they want to suffer the most grave consequences.

I do not want to leave you with the specter of nuclear war hanging over us. If our resolve is unshakable, if we make our position clear, if we inform the Russians of the folly of any more aggression, then I think that they will stop their aggression. At the moment, I think that they are having second thoughts about invading Afghanistan. If they have any sense of history, they can profit from our lesson in Vietnam. They may well face the choice that we did--to win the war would mean to destroy the country and kill a nationalist movement by annihilating a large part of the population. The future will tell us how much resolve the Afghans have and how ruthless the Russians are.

In a world that has been balanced between the power of the Soviet Union and the NATO countries, the Persian Gulf now is the fulcrum. Which way will it tilt? No doubt the Soviets will attempt to undermine the stability of the area in their favor. I am just as certain that we will stand resolved to protect our interests.

We must show resolve and strength. I agree with President Carter.

"Together as one people, let us build our strength at home. And together as one indivisible union, let us seek peace and security throughout the world. Together let us make of this time of challenge and danger a decade of national resolve and of brave achievement."