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Taking Stock of 1950, 1950.

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TAKING STOCK OF 1950

December 31, 1950

The year 1950 has been a prosperous year for our country. Close on to 62 millions of our people were gainfully employed during the past year at the highest hourly and weekly earnings ever recorded. Corporations and stock holders have enjoyed the highest net average earnings in history after payment of taxes. Our national income was close to 300 billions of dollars.

Were this the entire picture, the close of the year would be an occasion for unmixed gratification, but unfortunately, it is not the total picture. The past year witnessed a steady inflation and a sharp rise in the cost of most commodities which have greatly reduced the purchasing power of the dollar. The dollar increase in our national income did not, therefore, represent a corresponding rise in the standard of living of our people. Feeble attempts at curbing this inflation were made during the year by government, but inflation is still with us and is still on the increase. Our national debt has likewise increased to a point where it is now close on to 260 billions of dollars, 5 billion dollars above last year's, 120 billion dollars above the year 1943; a per capita debt for every man, woman and child in the United States of nearly \$1700.

But withal, the year 1950 was one of substantial material wellbeing for the American people - farmers, businessmen, working men alike. If it were not for the Korean war and its reverses, and for the dread uncertainty of greater wars to come, which have hung like a pall over our people throughout the second half of the year, 1950 could have been recorded in our annals as a very good year. We continued to share our resources with other countries during the past year. Our generosity did not abate. Through the Marshall Plan and by means of military supplies sent to the Atlantic Pact countries and elsewhere, we again spent billions of dollars to assist in the economic restoration of those countries and in their military rearmament. Congress, during the last year, the year now closing, voted $6\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars more for future spending in these directions.

Now, one may question the wisdom of the methods which we employed in extending this aid with its unmistakable political leanings and its unmistakable political consequences, and one may wonder whether our generous action has won us the friendship which we had hoped to win. There have been serious speculations on both of these scores and considerable disillusionment and resentment at the widespread anti-American sentiments among the peoples which have been the beneficiaries of our help. I say there may be serious questioning about this, but no one can doubt the extent of our giving, of our generosity. In the last four years the United States gave away a sum approximating 42 thousand million dollars to the nations of the world.

It seems, however, that on the international scene nobody really loves the cheerful giver. Nations would welcome, I believe, a Santa Claus who would come down the chimney once a year, deposit his rich and welcome gifts, and then as quickly, go up the chimney again and vanish for the rest of the year. But a Santa Claus who stays on throughout the year, sitting in at conference tables, dictating policies, and assuming political direction of the lives of these nations on the strength of his gifts is either envied or resented, or both. I am afraid in our case it has been both.

Politically, the November elections of the year just closing sharply reversed the electoral verdict of our people of two years ago. The Republicans scored heavily over their Democratic opponents in the 1950 elections. It is interesting to note that there was a marked trend away from the Left - what we call the Left - towards the Center or towards the right of the Center in the elections which were held during the past year in a number of democratic countries in the world. In Great Britain, for example, the Conservatives scored very heavily against the Laborites in the February elections. They almost succeeded in winning a clear majority of all seats in Parliament and in unseating the Labor government. In the previous election in Great Britain in 1945 the Conservatives won 189 seats in Parliament; the Labor Party, 393. In 1950 the Conservatives won 308 seats against Labor's 315, a difference of four seats would have voted the British Labor Government out of office.

In Australia and New Zealand the liberals also, the Center Party, as it were, won over Labor. Even in the new and small State of Israel, the recent municipal elections showed a decisive increase in the strength of the Center party, the General Zionists, and a decrease in the strength of the dominant Labor party, the Mapai.

One cannot help but draw the inference that a reaction has set in in many countries against socialist experiments, which have not brought the large-scale social benefits and improvements which were prophesied for them, and that many peoples are coming to fear that these experiments, which carry with them vast increase in the control of government over the lives of people, may lead ultimately to all the evils which are associated in the minds with dictatorship.

I do not believe that the voters in each country clearly thought through the motives which impelled them to vote the way they did, but subconsciously there must have been an instinctive reaction against excessive governmental inference and control and increasing bureaucratic regimentation. And the excesses and brutalities of Communist regimes in the various parts of the world are evidently accelerating on the one hand social reforms in democratic countries, but on the other hand, are making the citizens of those countries wary and suspicious of anything which approaches state socialism. They want progress without governmental monopoly. They choose to believe that that is possible. They are fearful for their hard-won human liberties which, in the name of social and economic justice, have been destroyed and are being destroyed and in so many parts of the world. How long this attitude will persist, no one can say. However, it will persist really as a liberal centrist movement or swing over sharply to an outright rightist reactionary neo-Fascist movement, as it did once before. Only time will tell.

It is clear that 1950 witnessed a sharp recoil from statism, in those countries where a recoil is still possible.

Now, of course, the outstanding event of the year was our intervention in Korea. This event will cast its shadow over American foreign policy and world events generally for years to come. I do not wish to dwell at length upon this subject at this

time, but I have spoken to you about it more than once in the last few months, and as recently as two weeks ago, but some observations I should like to make. Last June we passed from the cold war to the shooting war. The shooting war is now on. Already we have suffered some 40,000 casualties. The man who invented the term, cold war, and thought of it as a possible substitute for the shooting war unfortunately broadcast a misleading slogan or term. The cold war is no substitute at all for the shooting war. It is only a brief, a very brief, overture, and the overture is about over. The question now is whether the war which is now being waged at such a frightful cost in Korea can be contained or not. Will it spread? Will it expand into a full, bloody panorama of the Third World War? The year 1951 may give us the answer.

We already find ourselves in the midst of an officially proclaimed state of national emergency. Full-scale military and economic mobilization is on the way. Every phase of our civilian life and activity will soon come to be channelled into the prior claims of military defense. Five short years after our glorious victory in the Second World War - five short years - and we are girding ourselves now for the Third World War, and against a nation which was our strong ally in the last war. We are feverishly proceeding to rearm Germany and Japan who were our bitter enemies in the last war. We are restoring to diplomatic respectability and have voted millions of dollars to the arch assassin of democracy in Europe, Franco. We are rallying former Nazis, Fascists, Falangists and reactionaries to our banner of freedom in the hope that they will help us fight for the democratic way of life in the world. One wonders, one really wonders, for example, whether the Germans of the Western Zone, whom our military leaders are now wooing so zealously and upon whom they are building their future strategy in the event of war - one wonders whether these Germans will ever willingly agree to have Western Germany become the bloody battlefield of the Third World War, with themselves fighting other Germans of the Eastern Zone and the dreaded legions of the Soviet army, who at Stalingrad broke the might of the German armies in the last war - one wonders whether they will do this fighting for the sake of making the world safe for democracy.

Five years ago under Hitler they were fighting most resolutely to destroy democracy in the world. When did German armies ever fight for democracy? Our democratic allies in the last war - England, France, others - are not at all of one mind with us in some of the essential parts of our strategic program and our foreign policy. They do not see eye to eye with us on the question of China and Formosa. They are for restoring Formosa to China, as we ourselves consented to in the Cairo Agreement of 1943. They are for the admission of Communist China to the United Nations. They are for the early liquidation of the Korean war, out of fear of an inextricable entanglement and a hopeless bogging down of allied military strength in a deepening and extended Asiatic war. They are not as hot about an anti-Communist crusade as we seem to be. They believe more firmly than we do that the two systems can co-exist in the same world. Now, our political leaders do say that they believe it, that they believe that the two systems can co-exist, but they do not seem to act as though they really believed it.

A few days ago the President of the United States declared: "There is no conflict between the legitimate interests of the free world and those of the Soviet Union that cannot be settled by peaceful means." And a few years ago Dean Acheson, then Under Secretary of State, stated a fact which was generally accepted by the American people. He said, "Never in the past has there been any place on the globe where the vital interests of the American and the Russian peoples have clashed, or even been antagonistic, and there is no objective reason to suppose that there should be such a place. We understand and agree with them, that there are friendly governments along her borders is essential both for the security of the Soviet Union and for the peace of the world." Now, at the time this was said the Soviet Union had been in existence for more than a quarter of a century. Its Communist ideology and program were very well known. Dictatorship, godlessness, ruthlessness, expansionism and all! And they have not changed. Today we have begun to act as if the two systems cannot co-exist in this world. But our democratic allies in Europe and Asia do not feel the same way about it. They are unwilling to put themselves on a footing of national emergency in

anticipation of war, as we have done.

The year 1950 closes with a furious political debate raging here at home about our foreign policy and our strategy of defense. In my judgment it is a very good thing that the whole subject is now being aired and discussed and re-examined. There are those in Washington who would like to clamp down the lid upon all discussions and so to draw the curtain down upon their own manifold blunders and tragic mistakes. They cry unity when the country wants, above all, clarity. Once there emerges a clear, intelligible line of policy that makes sense to the American people, once consistent leadership makes itself felt in Washington, there will be confidence among the American people and there will be unity.

I believe that the events of 1950 brought to most Americans a few sobering lessons which will prove most salutary in the re-vamping of our foreign policy which is now, in my judgment, long overdue. Americans have learned that their government must not proclaim global policies like the Truman Doctrine in order to meet some local situation, as was the case in Greece. We must not make commitments on which we cannot make good. Our choice does not lie between isolationism on the one hand, and global meddling on the other. This is a fictitious choice of alternatives. There is a golden mean somewhere between which we must find. We simply have not sufficient military power and financial resources and never can have, to police the whole world, nor should we rely so much upon the power of dollars to win friends and influence people. Dollars have their decided limitations, even in international relations. We cannot arm allies in the hope of having them fight on our side when the time comes if their own self-interest dictates otherwise. We should support only those peoples who do not need to be coaxed and bedevilled into rearming, who are themselves prepared to pay part of the price of their rearming, and who can be counted upon at the critical moment not to go Vichy. (Let us arm ourselves fully! We must be strong, we should be strong, but let us arm ourselves, as Dr. Neibuhr said "without pointing our weapons at any particular enemy" during the process of rearming. Let us not so inflame our people by violent anti-Communist agitation that a negotiated settlement of world dif-

ferences with the Soviet becomes impossible.) We have learned, too, I believe ~~I hope~~ that we should not act first, as we did in Korea, and then get the approval of the United Nations. (We should not act first and then try to find out who is prepared to go along with us. In Korea today we are carrying 90% of the military load, and we have suffered 90 times the number of casualties than all other United Nations' members combined.) We should act as a member, as a loyal member, an important member, to be sure, of the United Nations, but only as one member. We should channel the maximum ^{of our contribution} through the United Nations and wait upon the directives of the United Nations before we act in a military way. And we must not spurn opportunities for conference with the Soviet Union, ~~however unpromising~~ however unpromising they may appear. It is better to have ten international conferences fail ~~heavily~~ ^{ten thousand} than to have ~~6,000~~ American boys perish in the ice and snows of Korea.

We must be alert, but calm and resolute. ^{We should arm ourselves fully. We should be strong. I believe that} We are strong and not weak. We can afford to be patient. We must learn to be wise, not emotional, not dissheveled in our thinking and sporadic in our actions. We must not be misled by slogans or swept off balance by shrewd propaganda which does not always emanate from the left. If we apply these lessons, these sobering lessons, we may come through the dangerous hour which is upon us unscathed - we and the world with us. A world war is not inevitable. War can be averted. Alone, of course, we cannot avert it, but let us make sure that we do our utmost, our full part, to avert it.

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Here in 1950, friends, and in spite of the prevalent strains and tensions, progress was made in our country in the direction of safeguarding the fundamental liberties of the American people. And progress was also made in the United Nations. The United States Supreme Court, by unanimous decision, towards the close of the year, upheld the right of witnesses before Federal Grand Juries to refuse to answer questions covering their alleged Communist affiliations if they pleaded possible self-incrimination. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States states that "no person shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself". This decision of the Supreme Court will undoubtedly affect the endorsement of the McCarran

Act which the President of the United States denounced and vetoed, and which contains, in my judgment and in the judgment of many others, so many dangerous un-American features. It might also affect the numerous contempt of Congress cases. It will help to preserve our own freedom here at home during the tense and trying times ahead when demagogues and patrioteers and hate-mongers will be riding high, wide and handsome.

Progress has also been made in our country in the direction of expanding the benefits of Social Security. Ten million persons were added to the eligibility rolls and the benefits were doubled. The minimum wage was raised from 40 cents to 75 cents an hour. American democracy is clearly looking after its citizens in the American way. Progress was also registered in the direction of reducing discrimination in industry and our armed forces and in educational and professional fields, prejudice on the grounds of race or religion, although a federal FEPC and other civil rights measures have not yet been adopted by the Congress of the United States.

America is moving forward in tolerance and good will. America lays no claim to perfection, but its aspiring democratic spirit is still gloriously alive.

As we face the new year, friends, I should like to read to you a few sentences which were written at the age of 80 by Henry L. Stimson, once Secretary of State of our country, in his book on "Active Service in Peace and War":

We must not let ourselves be engulfed in the passing waves which obscure the current of progress. The sinfulness and weakness of man are evident to anyone who lives in the active world, but men are also great, kind and wise. Honor begets honor; trust begets trust; faith begets faith; and hope is the mainspring of life. Those who read this book of mine will mostly be younger than I, men of the generations who must bear the active part in the work ahead. Let them charge us with our failures and do better in their turn, but let them not turn aside from that which they have to do or think that criticism excuses inaction. Let them have hope and virtue. Let them believe in mankind and its future, for there is good as well as evil, and the man who tries to work for the good, believing in its eventual victory, while he may suffer setbacks and even disasters, will never know defeat. The only deadly sin I know is cynicism.

At the close of this year, dear friends, let us hope that the new year now dawning will disappoint our gravest fears and speed our fondest hopes. Prayerfully we

invoke God's counsel to guide the deliberations and the actions of our President, our leaders and our legislators. May the spirit of wisdom and understanding and of counsel and of courage rest upon them and upon all men in all parts of the world in whose hands are the issues of peace and of war, and may the new year be a year of peace for us and for mankind. Amen.

