

it would be splendid...

“As it is in Chicago, so it is in the larger theater. Is there anyone here who does not believe that the rest of our lives is to be spent in a clash of ideologies, differing on the social, political, and economic fronts at every point? And does anyone here have any doubt about his preference for one of those ideologies, call it what you will: the free enterprise system, the capitalistic system, the profit system, the system of the sanctity of the individual? Probably not. But what price are we willing to pay to see that our favorite ideology does prevail? For we must pay a price. Freedoms are not accidents. They are won by blood and sweat. They must be held by sweat, and if need be, blood. But blood may be saved if we sweat purposely and intelligently. The preparation, the study, the sacrifice, the energy involved in the effort are part of the price we should be willing to pay. If The Economic Club can continue to set the pace in matters of this sort and furnish some of the manpower and leadership required during the next twenty years, it will have done well.”

**General Omar N. Bradley:
Tension is Preferable to War**

Six months into the Soviet blockade of West Berlin and shortly after the reinstatement of the draft, General Omar N. Bradley, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, addressed The Economic Club of Chicago on October 28, 1948, on military strategies for waging a cold war.



“During these last ten years, the American people have been rushed by a speedy succession of events from isolationism into mobilization, from mobilization into war, from war into tension and from tension into another draft.

“Now they have paused to ask themselves: Where do we go from here...”

“The choice as to where we are headed is not up to me but you. You, the American people — and your neighbors east of the Elbe.

“For despite the doomsday warnings you hear, the military has not taken over in Washington or anywhere else. The choice between peace or war is not one the generals will make...In a democracy the people are sovereign...Military judgment and military expedients are valid only after the outbreak of war...”

“However, while the military is saddled with occupation tasks on opposite sides of the world, it becomes the representative of your policy, the symbol of your firmness, the strength by which your convictions are interpreted as resolution rather than words...”

“Everywhere I go, I am asked if war is around the corner. Like you, unfortunately, I do not know...”

“As to whether time is working for peace or for war, that is a question to which you hold the answer. Time may work for peace if by the reconstruction of Western Europe and by the strengthening of our arms, we can quickly make aggression a prohibitive and deadly risk. But time can work for war if Europe suffers a setback or if, by our vacillation, American armed strength is permitted to wither during a tiresome period of reduced tension. While the danger of war is vivid, partly because of these crises, I am certain we shall stand by our arms. But if this cold war becomes a war of boredom where the danger is shrewdly concealed, then our resolution may be tested in our willingness to maintain arms. If we fall victim to boredom and risk curtailment of our armed strength, we shall destroy the world’s only sturdy barricade against the danger of aggression.

“There is, happily, a vast difference between the possibility and the probability of war. Between the

Excerpts

two lies a twilight of tension, a twilight that might last a generation and in the end mean peace or war.

“Sometimes those who crusade for peace would seem to forget that the decision is not wholly the choice of the American people. For just as it takes two to make war, so does it take two sides to keep peace.

“Peace is born out of agreement, agreement out of compromise—and compromise out of good faith...

“Now, three years after the war, having tried patience, trust and discussion, the American people have been forced into a show of arms.

“It is true that arms in themselves cannot make peace. But they can reduce the probability of war. For if by our strength we can make war a grimly hazardous venture, then we might induce the conspirator states to defer the risk—in the hope that some day they might abandon it...

“Because our differences are considerably more fundamental than a corridor into Berlin, there is the prospect that we may have to make a habit out of living in tension. But again, it is better to live in tension than to exhaust ourselves in war...

“It is not my business to speculate either on the possibility of peace or war...

“As a soldier, however, it is my task to ready your army for the possibility of war...

“However, if this army is to prevent war, it must be made part of a stable long-range military policy — a policy as prolonged as the period of tension. If we seek to measure the stress of this tension from week to week or from month to month, we shall confuse ourselves by short-term views...

“If we are to hop, skip and jump every time a paper is rustled east of the Elbe, then we shall place ourselves supinely and helplessly at their feet while they call the tune.

“Our only alternative to hopeless vacillation is a stable long-range military policy in consonance with our needs and our ability to support it...

“A long range military policy must be a bipartisan military policy. And it must relate requirements in money and men to the missions and tasks that are vital in planning for the nation’s defense...

“Obviously, the cost of military requirements are high even though they be fixed at minimum needs. And it would be useless to deny that these security needs are in open competition with social progress, that appropriations for military expenditures exert a strain upon the nation’s economic health. Yet, I must ask you—what is the value of social progress, what is the value of a sound economy, if eventually we are destroyed through neglect of our security needs? We dare never forget that there is nothing we can create by our talents, nothing we can devise through science, nothing we can achieve through knowledge that war—if it comes—cannot destroy.

“When we contemplate the terrible prospect of another conflict in our time, we who survived this last one in well-fed comfort, warmth, and wealth, must face the bitter prospect of deprivation, fear, and death. War is no longer a foreign affair; its weapons have invaded our homes. A struggle between two great powers might readily last for many years and leave each of them stricken to death...

“More than anything else, we shall need patience in this era of tension. For it is unlikely we shall find a quick or easy way out. We dare not minimize the seriousness of this contest nor dare we exaggerate it and give way to frenzy...

“Like many of you, I have hope for agreement—not necessarily in days, weeks, or months. But perhaps in years, or even in decades.

“Therefore, while this tension is disagreeable and trying to those who clamor for peace, it is vastly preferable to war. For it leaves open a door to the hope that we may somehow, sometime, find a solution.