

Remarks by Lt Gen P. F. Gorman, USA
Fathers Club, St. John's Preparatory School, Danvers, Mass.
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My friends,

I left my classes at St. John's in the fall of 1944, having been one of a small group of students permitted accelerated passage out because of World War II. For 38 years since, except for a few months spent puzzling over the intricacies of chemical engineering as an MIT freshman, I have served under oath as a member of the armed forces of the United States. I appear before you today in uniform, and I speak from the perspective of my office. But I ask your understanding that I will speak also as a parent, and a proponent for the educational objectives and standards for which St. John's was founded, and which it has served so admirably over the years.

This group is assembled out of concern for the future--for the future of St. John's students and the institution itself. I submit that the future of both your sons and their school, indeed of our society as a whole, will be profoundly influenced by our answers to at least three questions: How shall we deal with the Soviet Union? What shall we spend to defend the U.S.? How can we provide American leadership for the future?

The USSR presents the principal threat to American national interests abroad, especially our aspirations for world order. The Soviets profess to believe that we and NATO are plotting aggression, even nuclear war, against them and their allies. We have the testimony of Soviet expatriates that the Red Army in its military exercises rehearses, again and again, blitzkrieg offensives to defeat NATO before it can muster its full strength, and that the Soviet Union has well prepared its forces for nuclear and chemical warfare with sophisticated equipment and extensive exercises. Moreover, the Soviet Union, everywhere it can pursue policies contrary to ours, supporting governments which oppose the U.S., undermining governments which are our friends. Nonetheless, the U.S. Government has tried over the last several Administrations to reduce tensions, offering diplomatic, cultural, and economic inducements and military confidence-building measures, but to little avail. At this juncture, two aspects of Soviet behavior dominate the US-USSR relationship: (1) The aging Soviet leadership is under stress from successive crop failures and a sluggish economy at home, and from political bankruptcy and economic stagnation among its Eastern European allies; (2) that leadership nonetheless continues to ignore the needs of its consumer masses and to allocate large and increasing resources to military forces and weapons.

Why the Soviet priority for military forces? Well, one answer they give us should be of particular interest to you, considering where we are met, and our purposes here. I quote from an article titled, "The Atheist Education of the Soldiers," by Doctor of Philosophical Science and Professor Major General K. Pyusov, published in *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (Communist of the Armed Forces), No. 3, February 1982:

"Data in sociological studies conducted in several regions...allow one to draw the conclusion that 70 to 80 per cent of the adult population are completely non-religious and that believers (those who attend church or who more or less regularly observe rites) constitute 8 to 10 per cent.

"A sharp reduction in the recurrence of religiosity among new generations is a grandiose achievement of socialism. Religion is alien to Soviet youth who are purposefully mastering the scientific world view. However, the need for persistent atheistic education has not lost its urgency, including in the Armed Forces..."

The Soviets believe firmly that religion and soldiering do not mix and that their system of conscription should advance the cause of atheism. To quote from the same journal: "No commanding officer, political worker, or soldier should forget that religion is an alien ideology and a negative influence...on the formation in fighting men of the...qualities needed in battle." The writer added that officers should be aware of specific features of particular religions. Islam, for instance, "is often tightly interwoven with vestiges of [non-Soviet] nationalism."

If militant atheism were the only threat posed by the Soviet Union we could regard with equanimity that stultifying society, afflicted by racism and elitism in this century as sorely as it was in the time of the Czars. But it presents much more of a problem for us and our progeny. About a decade ago, Chairman Leonid Brezhnev said, "Trust me comrades, for by 1985...we will have achieved most of our objectives in Western Europe. We will have consolidated our position. We will have improved our economy. And a decisive shift in the (balance) of forces will be such that come 1985, we will be able to exert our will wherever we need to." And just two years ago, in their military journal, Red Star, the Soviets said that the balance of forces had shifted in their favor, "Once and for all and irrevocably."

I regard the following statement, adopted by the Central Committee of German Catholics in Bonn on 14 November 1981, as an authoritative characterization of the moral, political, and military challenge we face in the USSR:

"However open we Christians need to be for new developments leading towards a greater measure of freedom and self-determination, and however much we pin our hopes on them, for the present the following continues to hold good: the conflict between the communist and the democratic states is essentially due to the fact that the communist side subordinates its policy, both internally and externally, to the command of the totalitarian ideology of Marxism-Leninism. It is an ideology which, in fundamental questions, disregards the ethical norms, and misuses the basic concepts that have developed in European philosophical and theological thinking and, over the last two hundred years, have given the liberal, democratic and constitutional state its shape. Marxism-Leninism knows no spiritual and social pluralism and no tolerance..."

- It has used every possible means to endeavor to gain a foothold in the Third World, up to and including the invasion of Afghanistan...
- Since the mid-sixties it has been carrying out an arms build-up on a scale far exceeding its legitimate security requirements, particularly as regards Euro-strategic nuclear weapons.
- Together with the GDR, in particular, it is carrying out a militarization of society which is reflected in the fact that people are systematically taught to hate and in the military training even of children...

"The Soviet Union...is launching appeals for peace while at the same time provoking the fear of war...And it hopes that this fear of war, coupled with the hint that people might rid themselves of it by severing their ties with America, will produce the desired readiness for political capitulation..."

A further danger for the United States is exactly that we may have entered an era in which Soviet generals really believe that the balance of forces has shifted decisively in their favor. If so, truculent, simplistic Soviet generals may present aged Soviet political leaders irresistible incentives to externalize problems by recourse to use of force or threat of such use. Soviet generals plainly miscalculated in Afghanistan, and misled the Politburo into a quagmire war. As serious as was that first breach of the post World War II limits on deployment of Soviet forces, that Afghanistan misadventure would be insignificant compared to any future such miscalculation which led to invasion of Iran or Pakistan, or to intervention in Poland.

And so we Americans must traverse the decade of the '80s newly wary of the Soviets. Our national interest dictates measures to temper their aggressiveness. We want and need to limit arms--especially nuclear weapons--and thus to reduce tensions between us. Your military leaders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, strongly support equitable and verifiable arms control agreements. These have been our strategic objectives for at least 30 years; they will remain strategically urgent in the decade ahead.

I don't suppose there would be any among us who would argue about those objectives, but I suspect that there are at least a few here who would be prepared to support some form of unilateral disarmament, and perhaps many who support some form of nuclear freeze, believing that such moves by the United States would induce the Soviet Union to alter its policies, and to cooperate in reducing the high levels of nuclear arms and the attendant risk of nuclear war.

Unilateral disarmament I regard as fundamentally ill-advised. As Pope Paul VI observed, speaking to the U.N. in October 1965, "So long as man remains the weak, changeable and even wicked being that he so often shows himself to be, defensive arms will, alas, be necessary."

Proposals for nuclear freeze, are not, in my view, in our national interest for these reasons:

- Such moves would reduce Soviet incentives to negotiate seriously the proposals we have advanced for deep cuts in nuclear arsenals. They now believe they have an edge, and any arrangements, which prevented the US from modernizing its nuclear forces would confirm their advantage.
- Because all aspects of a freeze would not now be effectively verified--and some might not be verifiable at all--we would have to spend a great deal of effort negotiating more extensive verification measures. The time spent negotiating the terms of such measures could be better spent on deciding reductions and verification for them.
- We ought to seek more than a freeze. Our arms control proposals go beyond a freeze to substantial reductions in nuclear arms. In the START negotiations we are proposing one-third reductions in strategic nuclear weapons. In the INF negotiations, we are proposing the complete elimination of a whole class of intermediate-range nuclear missiles threatening Europe. We want to cut and then freeze. These proposals would go a long way toward promoting stability and achieving the goals on which we all agree--reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both the US and the USSR in a manner that enhances the prospects for security and reduces the risk of war.

In the sixty-five years since the October Revolution of 1917, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics has never displayed any serious willingness to compromise its implacable enmity toward the United States except under duress, and when its own interests were thus served. We may be on the threshold of a new era: the Soviets face internal duress; they know the American Middle West could be their breadbasket; and they want advanced American technology badly enough to resort to unsubtle espionage. Moreover, they have made it evident that they want to foreclose American nuclear force modernization. In short, the advantages of cooperation with the U.S. and the disadvantages of continued confrontation must be clearer to the Communist Party leadership than ever before. We Americans can ill afford to diminish by referendum any of the incentives which might draw the USSR into serious arms control agreements.

But the Soviet Union is not the only shadow on our future. Everyone here is concerned about the strength of our economy: our industry and agriculture provide the sinew and muscle of this nation. If we wish to pursue national strategies which seek to curb Soviet adventurism, American farmers and workers must be productive, efficient, and supportive of US policy. Obviously, too, any military manpower policy adopted by the government will have to consider competition, the impact of rising or falling employment, and relative wage scales. And so in fashioning national economic policy, we must realize that to an important extent we thereby constrain national security policy and national strategy. Assuredly, the converse is true as well. Now "defense," as we commonly refer to budgetary allocations for funding national strategy,

is patently an economic burden. It will be for us throughout our lifetime, as it was for our fathers and mothers. In 1944, when I left St. John's, President Roosevelt was spending over 35 percent of gross national product for Defense. In 1953, when I returned to Swampscott from the Korean War, President Eisenhower took 12 percent of GNP for Defense. In 1962, to meet peacetime challenges, John F. Kennedy needed nine percent of GNP. And Lyndon Johnson, notwithstanding priorities for the Great Society, allocated for defense eight percent of GNP in 1964 and nine percent in 1968, at the height of the war in Vietnam. For the next decade, defense as a percentage of GNP declined steadily. In 1978, President Carter's Administration spent five percent of GNP for Defense. Since then the trend has been slightly upward. Defense outlays for the past year are around six percent of GNP, and while they will probably rise slightly in the year ahead as a fraction of GNP, they will remain significantly lower than those of the '50's and '60's. In short, looking at long range trends, in GNP terms, we have been cutting back on Defense over the years. You should appreciate that while U.S. defense allocations have remained roughly stable in constant dollars over the past 20 years, personal consumption expenditures and private investment have been roughly doubled. In fact, discounting inflation, the U.S. spent almost exactly the same amount on defense in 1962, in 1972, and in 1981. But payments for individuals were twice in 1972 what they had been in 1962, and in 1981 they were more than 4 times what they had been in '62. In 1982 expenditures on recreation nationwide will approximate the Defense budget. As a further commentary on possibly skewed national priorities, as a nation we spent more on alcohol last year than we did on operating the U.S. Air Force, and for nondurable toys and sporting goods, more than twice what we spent on the Strategic Air Command. But functional airplanes and missiles come dear these days: metal prices have soared, fuel costs are up dramatically, and personnel costs are higher. And in the kind of competition in which the USAF as a whole, and SAC in particular, is engaged, being second-best would be disastrous for the national interest.

During the last two decades, the Soviet Union has been pursuing an opposite economic policy. Despite a smaller overall economy, faltering economic growth, and repetitively unachieved economic goals, Soviet leaders have persistently chosen to devote an increasing amount of their gross national product to military outlays--fully two to three times the US proportion. This year the Soviet military share of GNP will be about 14 percent, roughly double that of the US. To compare actual resources, for the past 5 years the USSR has been spending about 50 percent more on military undertakings than the US. If one strips out expenditures for personnel and operations, where our costs are much higher than theirs, to look only at investments--procurements, construction, research and development--the Soviet Union has been outspending us 80-90 percent over the past 5 years. Even if we take into account our allies, and consider NATO's total investment compared with that of the Warsaw Pact, Pact investment has a 35-40 percent advantage in those years. Now some columnists, and some Congressmen, assert that the US is spending too much on Defense. But what is "enough" is to be better than the foe. For deterrence in peace, we have to persuade potential adversaries that they could not hope to be better in battle. Yet our potential adversaries, at significant sacrifice, are arming themselves to the teeth. We must not allow them to believe that they have achieved the military superiority they so relentlessly pursue. From our strategic viewpoint, the question is always deterrence, and thus not only how much we must spend, but also how well.

There is needless to say, no certain formula for meeting the foregoing challenges, only uncertainties--no black or white, only shades of grey. But there is one verity which is transcendent: no national strategy can succeed unless it be conjoined with informed, determined leadership. If we wish to protect our people and their interests at home and abroad, if we want to develop that strength which will support freedom and foster disarmament, if we would deter Soviet adventurism and lead the USSR toward peace, then America must be well led in all its principal undertakings, domestic and international.

What a job lies ahead of tomorrow's leaders: The writings of Alvin Toffler, Herman Kahn, and other futurists have made it almost trite to observe that America is changing profoundly and rapidly, and that the speed of that change itself--the rate of change--is accelerating. The Catholic Church itself is changing, as we all know. The strategic implications of these broad movements are extensive. America's industrial base is being converted from mass production to high-technology short-run manufacturing which depends on very skilled labor and large expenditures in research, from hard-good production to service industries. Fewer and fewer firms participate in Defense production. In the aerospace industry, there are 50 percent fewer firms involved in Defense contracts now compared with 10 years ago. The US is moving out of whole categories of security-relevant economic enterprise--merchant marine, ship building, and large-produce foundries being especially significant. For these purposes we need our allies in Europe and Northeast Asia more than ever. Of course, the US is at the same time acquiring marvelous capabilities in space, in bio-chemistry, in cybrenetics, and in robotics. Yet we are going to have to find ways to engage our technological strengths and to compensate for our industrial shortfalls. At the same time, in a more direct military sense, we must confront squarely the implications of our inventory of high-cost, high-capability weapon systems. And above all, we must develop leaders who can cope technically and aesthetically with such problems. We, you and I, need to give serious consideration to preparing the next generation of American leaders, your children and mine, to meet these challenges.

I suspect that, since many of you are parents of youths just facing registration for Selective Service, the question of military manpower is of acute interest. At the moment, the manpower position of the US Armed Services is excellent. Thanks to new provisions for pay and educational benefits designed to raise recruiting and retention, and new emphasis on training and discipline, all the Services have experienced a definite turn around in previously adverse trends. This year your Armed Forces have been better manned and led than at any time in the past ten, and some of us would say, better than ever before. But we need to consider carefully the future. Later in the decade we could encounter manpower problems of both quantity and quality. Concerning quality, we must confront growing requirements for individuals capable of working with the coming generation of high technology weapon systems. I am sure you can appreciate that we have been apprehensive over the generally declining Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores and relieved that they now turned up again. But the tests demonstrate that, in this era of high technology, most young Americans are scientific illiterates.

We have no comparable measures of the technological potential of Soviet youth. We do know that Soviet high school students have been receiving much more

rigorous technological training than ours: the average Soviet secondary school graduate, compared to his American counterpart, has completed eight more years of geometry and workshop, four more years of physics, three and a half more years of biology, three more years of chemistry, three more years of mechanical drawing, and at least one more year of algebra, calculus, and astronomy. A report to our National Science Foundation in 1979 cited these figures, and went on to say that "the disparity between the level of training in science and mathematics of an average Soviet skilled worker or military recruit...and an average member of our all-volunteer Army is so great that comparisons are meaningless." In a period of rapid, far-reaching technological change, such as the one in which we live, it is most significant that in recent years Soviet citizens in research and development outnumbered American counterparts 3 to 2, and that Soviet colleges graduating engineers outproduced American analogs more than 4 to 1. Dr. Isaak Wirzup, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Chicago, and Director of the East European Survey of Mathematical Literature for the National Science Foundation in a letter to the National Science Foundation, said this:

"The Soviet Union's tremendous investment in human resources, unprecedented achievements in the education of the general population, and immense manpower pool in science and technology will have an immeasurable impact on that country's scientific, industrial and military strength. It is my considered opinion that the recent Soviet education mobilization, although not as spectacular as the launching of the first Sputnik, poses a formidable challenge to the national security of the United States, one that is far more threatening than any in the past and one that will be much more difficult to meet."

What does all this mean for St. John's? Let me be clear that I am not here to advocate stacking the curriculum with courses on number-crunching, or to urge Brother Keefe to splurge on microcomputers. The nation does not need a short-lived academic frenzy, such as we had post-Sputnik in the late '50's. What we do need is a careful inventory of the strengths and shortcomings of our schooling, and a continuing press for academic excellence. Our objectives should be to offer those among our sons and daughters who have the potential to lead in the clergy, in industry, in medicine, in politics, in education or in government service, the conceptual tools they will need in the years ahead.

I am convinced they will require a strong foundation in science and mathematics. I was so equipped by Brother Philip Neri and Brother Patricius here, without much fancy lab equipment, but with a great deal of intellectual stimulation, and a constant pressure to produce. That training stood me in good stead, for my bachelor's degree is in science.

But I think our sons and daughters must be as strongly endowed with language, letters and ethics.

They will live in a shrinking world in which the future of their country, their community, their firm will be inextricably linked with foreign cultures. I

have often blessed the patient teachers here who led me through Caeser and Cicero, and initiated me into the marvels of the German language. One's first foreign language comes the hardest. Others come easier. I have since added to what I learned here modest attainments in Russian and French. But at St. John's I was led out of lingual darkness.

And here too I learned to speak and write English. Facility with oral and written expression is sine qua non for success in virtually all professions today. I am grateful to this school not only for putting me through repetitive drills in grammar and diction with Brothers Lewis and Placidus, but also for opening my eyes to the panorama of English literature with them and Brother Joseph Gerard. My grounding here in Elizabethan prose and poetry has proved especially rewarding to me personally. We were required to memorize extensively--and I can still summon up the 23d Psalm (the King James version, incidentally), a Shakespearian sonnet, Hamlet's soliloquy and various snatches of poetry. For instance Ruth now knows as well as I, so often have I recited it, Richard Lovelace's "On Going to the wars" --

"Tell me not sweet I am unkind
That from the nunnery of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I flee" And so forth

St. John's enriched my mind with such treasures of expression.

But the most important offering of St. John's to its students is the opportunity to develop moral good sense. The world is a minefield for the conscience, and the moral dilemmas of today will persist and worsen in the years ahead. There are many of these, but prominent among them will be the issue of arms, all arms, for so-called conventional weapons now approach in destructiveness nuclear arms. I am daily seized with such issues; you will face them in your voting booths week after next. Our sons and daughters will grapple with them again and again through the years ahead.

You appreciate, I am sure, that in this day and age some Catholic groups would regard a soldier-speaker for a Communion Breakfast as certainly anomalous, perhaps undesirable; and possibly even morally repugnant. You may know that the Catholic Bishops of the United States have drafted a statement on peace and war which is to be issued in the months ahead. Some press reports concerning that statement forecast its precipitating a "crisis of conscience" for Catholics serving in the U.S. armed forces. I trust that these reports are overdrawn, and that our clerical leaders will not endorse a document prejudicial to good order and discipline in our armed forces. Disciplined forces--that is, trained, morally responsible forces--are essential for effective deterrence and for waging just war, and I and others who wear this garb are charged with providing this nation with such forces. From personal observation, I can assure you that the senior officers in the service of the United States are keenly aware that they are responsible for the moral as well as the physical and technical readiness of the armed forces. Each of us must often rechart his course between the Scylla of aimless armaments and the Charybdis of mindless arms control. For myself, I agree with the statement of the Central Committee of German Catholics, from which I earlier quoted, which held that:

"From an ethical point of view, too, the right to self-defense is justified. The well-being of one's fellow men and the common good, as well as the love of one's neighbor, do not allow us to stand by idly while people's lives are threatened and their human dignity and their human rights are violated through force, instead of being protected against unjust force. Those who are actively involved in the protection and defense of these rights, specifically as soldiers or political leaders, serve the cause of justice and peace."

I admire and commend to you the formulation of Pope John Paul II in his message to the UN General Assembly on Disarmament this past June:

"In [preparing defense] one can see the 'philosophy of peace' which was proclaimed in the ancient roman principle: 'si vis pacem, para bellum.' But in modern times, this 'philosophy' has the label of 'deterrence'...In current conditions 'deterrence' based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself, but as a step toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable...Peace...is the result of respect for ethical principles... To the extent that the efforts at arms reduction and then of total disarmament are not matched by parallel ethical renewal, they are doomed in advance to failure...Peace is our duty: our grave duty, our supreme responsibility...Man can and he must make the force of reason prevail over the reasons of force..."

Let me sum up. You as taxpayers, who pay me to concern myself with our future as a nation, invited me to speak to the future of our sons. I foresee their living amid continued armed competition with the Soviet Union, competition which will exact hard work and sacrifice of them, as it has of us. But deterrence has worked for nearly four decades; we have managed to avoid war with the Soviets. I prayed with you today that peace will be preserved with all the intensity that a soldier-veteran of three years of combat can muster. I rejoice that you have chosen to place your sons in a Catholic school dedicated to excellence in science, language, letters and ethics. Having been profoundly and happily influenced by St. John's, I could wish for your sons nothing so valuable for each as a person, for each as a citizen of the United States, as four productive years like those I spent atop this hill four decades ago.