



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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REMARKS BY
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INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS IN POLAND

March 2, 1984

Thank you Mr. Chairman:

It is a privilege for me to be with you and your many illustrious speakers and guests at this noteworthy conference dealing with the international consequences of the crisis in Poland. You are to be commended for helping to assure that the heroic struggle of the Polish people for human dignity is not forgotten by those of us who are so fortunate as to live in democratic societies where human freedom is our cherished possession.

It is, however, more than a moral statement that you are making with your academic inquiry. History may well determine that the emergence of the Solidarity movement in Poland will have caused a ripple effect on the waters of change whose consequences will be long felt. The breath of fresh air injected by free unionism into repressive societies may well introduce a humanizing process whose ultimate realization is essential for stability and peace.

My task this afternoon is to analyze this development from the point of view of Western policy.

You have been informed that I represented the United States at the recently concluded three year Madrid meetings called to review the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. On the eve of Madrid's opening session, the names of Lech Walesa and Solidarity began to sear our awareness. Solidarity, the rebirth of a movement for freedom in Poland, reappeared on its national scene. Among its initial set of demands was that the text of the Helsinki Final Act be republished in the Polish press so that the Polish people could be reminded of their rights under that international agreement. As we assembled, we saw before us a living demonstration of the vitality of the process launched at Helsinki.

We should here note that under the Helsinki Final Act there was an acknowledgement that people had the right "in full freedom, to determine . . . their political status"; the right "to pursue their political, economic, social and cultural development"; and the commitment that these rights were to be exercised "without external interference". It was thus with great concern that the Madrid meeting learned with the rest of the world in early December 1981 that the Helsinki principles were violated as martial law was imposed on the 36 million courageous men, women and children of Poland. Immediately thereafter, I was invited to meet with the head of the Polish delegation who assured me on behalf of his government that martial law would quickly disappear;

that those interned and arrested would in a matter of days be released; and that fundamental freedoms would be restored. I recall responding then and in the days to come that the use of violence would not solve the deep problems of the Polish society. Dialogue and reconciliation, rather than violence, were required.

When it became clear to us that Polish military authorities were either not permitted (or had no intention) of living up to their responsibilities under Helsinki, we proceeded to maintain the integrity of the process by seeking to hold Polish authorities accountable for behavior that ran contrary to those principles.

That standard of accountability required us -- all of us in NATO and others in the West -- to fill the record with violations by the Soviet Union of its Helsinki obligation: large scale imprisonments for religious beliefs; punishment in psychiatric hospitals for political and trade union activity; denial of emigration and requests for the reunification of families; a series of other actions reflecting a disdain for humanitarian standards; and, of course, the presence of 110,000 invading Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

The Helsinki Final Act has within it the formula for lasting peace. It recognizes that lasting peace requires a

commitment to encompass the totality of the relationships between the 35 states which freely and publicly affixed their signatures to that document. Principles enunciated in Helsinki were universally agreed upon as indispensable to lasting peace. These included security arrangements to minimize the risk of surprise military attack; exchanges of people as well as information; and they included a human dimension. The West, in persuading the states in Helsinki to recognize the indispensability of human rights to peace, made clear its belief that a government which declared war against its own people could not be trusted to remain at peace with its neighbors.

We, of course, faced the option in Madrid of remaining silent in the face of the blatant Helsinki transgressions. For us to have remained silent would have turned the Helsinki Final Act into a historic irrelevancy. It would have persuaded Soviet authorities that they can, when they perceive it to be in their interest to do so, ignore solemn obligations entered into. The integrity of Helsinki would have been undermined. We would have also forfeited our obligation to educate people as to the nature of the Soviet Union. Equally important, we would have missed the opportunity to communicate to Soviet authorities our message that words alone do not create "detente". What are required are deeds in the spirit of "detente."

Furthermore, to have remained silent would have been a betrayal of our commitment to human liberty by abandoning those who fight for it. We have no moral right to persuade others to sacrifice for these eternal human values, but we have a moral duty to assure those who do so that they have friends who wish them well. And these friends include those who heroically continue to scrawl on walls throughout Poland: "Winter is yours, but Spring will be ours."

Lech Walesa referred recently to a system of "shared fundamental values". The source of these shared values he said is "not hard to find -- it is contained in every copy of the Bible." We have here an explanation of Solidarity's deep roots in the hearts of the Polish people. The identification with the church produces a legitimacy to the rebellion, a respectability and righteousness to it which takes it away from the fringes and puts it into the mainstream of the society. The existence of the Helsinki Final Act freely signed by the heads of 35 states produces the same legitimacy and strength.

This faith in human values is an integral part of the human species. It transcends national boundaries and cultural differences. It exists wherever the human being, alone or in groups, seeks to stretch to new dimensions and to learn. It is no wonder, therefore, that one Polish military leader was recently quoted as saying: "students are troublemakers in the

best of times." Learning is always troublesome to those who seek to govern without consent of the people.

Today in Poland, teachers are placed under the supervision of political commissars; and compulsory socialist indoctrination has been reinstated. In higher education, military discipline has replaced academic freedom, which had emerged during the period before martial law was imposed. The independent students' movement, which had been among the strongest elements of the Communist Party's reform wing, has been outlawed.

The Russian language is once again a required subject for almost everyone; imposed curricula have replaced flexible scheduling; students who do not comply with regulations are subject to military call; university democratic reforms have been rescinded; obligatory formal courses in Marxist-Leninist theory have been reinstituted [and all students are required to sign a document saying they understand the rules, which include possible expulsion for engaging in political activities.]

The totalitarian subjugation of education means the corruption of education. It is self-defeating, particularly in this age of explosive new educational horizons. No society, including those of Eastern Europe can reconcile to that corruption and survive. Rather, rulers who attempt that subjugation, serve only to alienate an entire generation of young men and women. We must not forget that in Poland, for

example, 60% of the present population is under thirty years of age. These young men and women will, in the not too distant future, be directing Europe's industry, universities and its government.

What then is our task in the West?

It is first to understand that East and West share the same planet and we must do what we can to help us learn to live together in peace. The Soviet Union, with its massive military power, with the determination of its leadership to keep itself in power through repression whatever the human cost, is a major threat to Western security and values. But we dare not and cannot blow it away. We cannot wish it away. We thus must make every effort to find a formula under which we can live together in dignity.

A strong and united NATO is indispensable toward that goal of peace. A united Western group of nations, speaking in many languages but in one voice brings with it immense strength and persuasiveness. With the deterrence that came from NATO's military ingredient, Europe has after all enjoyed its longest period of peace in modern history. That unity of purpose among democratic states must continue.

Let me say a word about our alliance of free sovereign states. We must think of ourselves as an orchestra. There are times when the music calls for the drums and the trumpets.

On other occasions, the music highlights the harp or a soft touch on the piano keys. Some musicians play more than one instrument. What is important is that the drummer and the harpist all appreciate that they must play music together. Our music in NATO has as its theme our common values of human dignity.

With our unity and from our unity we must then proceed to dialogue. For our part we must be direct and candid about our concerns. If we are not, we will not be understood and we certainly will not be taken seriously. And with our military strength we must genuinely be open to agreements designed mutually to reduce armaments.

Negotiation to be serious means more than talking. It means listening as well. It is particularly important for the United States to understand and to let others know we understand that our super-power status does not necessarily confer super wisdom on us. We like you have special national interests, and we do define and advance them. We have views, and it is our right to assert them. But other countries, our friends as well as those hostile to us, have their national interests which must be understood if we are to achieve understanding.

A major difficulty in US-USSR negotiation is a feeling by both of us that the other is not listening. They want us to listen to their security needs. We want them to appreciate our's and to appreciate as well that no country's national

security interests can be fostered through aggression and through a lack of respect for the sovereignty of its neighbors. In Madrid, I spent more than 350 hours in private discussions and negotiations with my Soviet colleagues outside of our formal meetings. I listened a great deal. I believe they finally began to listen too. We were able to come to an agreement on words. I trust they are pondering our further message in Madrid that, just as their deeds undermined our confidence in their intentions, so must their deeds, and not just their words, begin to restore that confidence.

Now let me say a word about my country, the United States. We still look upon ourselves as a young and developing society, even though we are now one of the oldest, stable systems in the world. We did not seek the role of world leadership, and our people today still tend to shy away from it. At the end of the Second World War, however, our relative geographic isolation, our pursuit of liberty, our bountiful natural resources, and our productive people made us strong. By the end of the war, we were somewhat like a young giant among nations. And, being a giant is not easy. It is not easy living with a giant, and our friends are learning that. It is hard to find shoes to fit if you are a giant; and the bed is always too short. Being strong, the giant can afford to be gentle, but he is also, at times awkward. His good intentions are not always so interpreted by others.

We make mistakes because we are unaccustomed to and hesitant about the responsibilities of leadership. As a result, our policy is at times one of fits and starts that frequently bedevils our foreign policy and confuses others.

We talk a great deal about values and about liberty. We mean it, even though we are not always consistent. Some of our more sophisticated friends see this linkage of values with world real-politik as a form of naivete. We, of course, talk about the values of liberty because, to us, just as to you, they are not abstract. We also know they are not abstract to those unable to enjoy them. They are the distinguishing characteristic between ourselves and the totalitarians and authoritarians of the world. We feel, therefore, that this is our strength.

We here know that the future lies with freedom because there can be no lasting stability in societies that would deny it. Only freedom can release the constructive energies of men and women to work toward reaching new heights. A human being has the capacity to aspire, to achieve, to dream, and to do. He cannot be permanently prevented from stretching his muscles to exercise his freedom and achieve ambitions for himself and his children.

Your government and mine and all responsible people understand that we must define our objectives consistent with

Hobbes' first law of nature: "to seek peace and to follow it." We must engage in that pursuit of peace without illusion, but with persistence, regardless of provocation. Thus, in Madrid, we attended, talked, debated, negotiated, argued, dined, condemned, talked some more. We achieved some results in words. We have not yet achieved a change in patterns of behavior. That will only come, if it ever does come, when the Soviet Union concludes that it is in its interest to change, and when its leadership decides that it can thereby best keep itself in power.

The Soviet Union is not likely soon to undergo what Jonathan Edwards called "a great awakening," or see a blinding light on the road to Damascus. Yet, the imperatives for survival in the nuclear age require us to persist -- through the deterrence that comes from military strength, through dialogue, through criticism, through negotiation -- to persist in the search for understanding, agreement, peace. The attainment of these goals, we must continue to assert, requires conformity with the agreed upon rules of responsible international behavior such as those enumerated in the Helsinki Final Act.

The peoples of the Soviet Union, who comprise hundreds of different nationalities, along with the other peoples now subject to totalitarian Communist control, share the same values of human dignity that we proclaim. They are as dedicated to the elimination of war as any other peoples.

They have no wish to be isolated from their neighbors and from the forward movement of civilization. This creates a fear on the part of Soviet authorities, who then go to great lengths to fence in their own citizens, lengths not before equaled in the history of the world. It is appropriate here to be reminded of the words of the great Polish man of letters, Czeslaw Milosz, who reminded us: "you who harmed a simple man, do not feel secure; for a poet remembers."

The "correlation of forces" has moved against the Soviet Union. The credibility of its system as a viable alternative has collapsed for sensible people. "the gas has largely escaped from its ideological balloon."

It is time for Soviet authorities to comprehend that repressive societies in our day cannot achieve inner stability or true security. We hope they will come to understand the need to show the rest of us that cruelty may not be an indispensable part of their system. Just as the Leninist aim of achieving world Communism has no relevance in this nuclear age, so must it be understood by an evolving Soviet leadership that in the long run it cannot survive without humanizing its controls and its image in the world.

People cannot long be denied. The famous German playwright, Bertolt Brecht, a particularly apt source in any analysis of Eastern Europe and its future, once made this wry observation on another occasion when force was used to crush the aspirations of his countrymen: "The people have lost confidence in their government. The government has therefore decided to elect a new people."

Lech Walesa recently sent a letter to an American university which honored him. He proclaimed his conviction that with the birth of Solidarity a process began which cannot be halted. It was a process which instilled a new sense of awareness among the people of Poland. He saw that awareness he said in people everywhere -- "in every factory, steel mill, mine and shipyard -- everywhere -- even in the prosecutor's office, the courts, the police and security service."

An important question was raised from the floor yesterday by one of the Polish scholars here. I believe it reflected the sensitivity of his own experience when he asked whether Solidarity and its activities may not be an embarrassment to many interested in East-West relations. I believe this is so on the part of the short-sighted who do not understand the complex dimensions of the problem we face. They might well like to have Solidarity disappear as a source of irritation. I recall being struck at the time of martial law with the unseemly rush by a number to excuse the military by blaming

Solidarity for being excessive in its demands.

I believe that those who struggle for democracy and free trade unionism do so for all of us. There can be no real understanding unless we deal with the realities, the real issues. Superficial agreements between East and West are empty charades. They will fail to produce the peace we seek. They will fall apart at the first sign of strain.

History will record that there is indeed a direct relationship between peace in the world and human values as expressed in the repudiation of violence at home. Those like Lech Walesa who keep reminding us of this truth represent the effective, realistic, and true peace movement of our day. There cannot be peace without freedom. The quiet of the repressed and the oppressed, too tired or too intimidated to lift their voices is not the peace that people yearn for. The pursuit of peace requires the pursuit of human dignity. This is what Poland does not permit us to forget.

Thank you.