The extemporaneous remarks by the Secretary of State following his radio
address at the dinner meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors
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Our Department of State

Address

By DEAN ACHESON
US Secretary of State

There are several things that I should like to
talk with you about. Before I get on with the matters which I think have some substantive importance, I
should like to clear away some trash which has gathered
about the Department of State.

Now, in doing this, I feel that I have a qualification
which is so unique that it almost amounts to a disqualification. That is, that I know what I am talking
about. I have given 10 years of my life to the Department of State, and before that I served in two other
departments of the government. During the course of
that time I served on two commissions appointed by the
President to study the operations of the Government of
the United States. I have served under four Secretaries
of State and under two Presidents. So I think I am entitled to say that I know something about the Department
of State.

The first thing that I should like to say is in the
nature of a categorical affirmation. I should like to say
that never in its long and honorable history has the
Department of State ever been in better shape than it is today. The Department is manned today, as it has been
manned in the past, by able, by honorable, by loyal, and by clean-living American men and women.

It is also a representative department. People who serve in the Department are drawn from all over
the United States.

There is no need for anyone to be defensive about the Department of State. What I want you to con-
sider with me are facts.

First of all, when we are talking about this Department, let us look at its top command; let us see who the people are who are controlling and operating and directing the Department of State.

First of all, I don't have to tell you about the Under Secretary of State, Jim Webb. You know he comes from North Carolina. You know his record in the Budget Bureau and in the Treasury. You know what he did in organizing the Sperry Company before the war, when it grew from a little place of 800 people to a great corporation of 30,000 employees. You know what he did in the Marine flying service.

But the important point that I want to bring out to-night is that I do not know any man in the entire United States, in the government or out of the government, who has a greater genius for organization, a genius for understanding how to take a great mass of people and bring them together; so that he pulls out of them all the knowledge and all the competence that they have; so that each person is doing what he ought to be doing; so that the whole efforts of this vast group are pulled together to get a tremendously powerful result. And that is absolutely essential in the Department of State.

When Thomas Jefferson started the State Department it had six employees, including himself. Today we have 19,000 employees all over the world, and all of those 19,000 are being pulled by Jim Webb into one great consolidated effort, through a top command.

The third ranking officer in the Department is George Kennan. I don't need to tell you about George
Kennan. You have read what he has written. You know his record. He comes from Wisconsin.

One of the things to which I have agreed, with deep regret, is that George Kennan should have a year off. He went to work for the State Department when he was 22 years old, and he has never had any time off since. What he wants to do is go to the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton and have time quietly to think about things and then come back to us. I have agreed to it, reluctantly, but we shall have him again. (Editor's note.—H. Freeman Matthews, formerly ambassador to Sweden, was nominated by President Truman May 18 to be Assistant Secretary.)
THEN WE GO to another area of the top command, Assistant Secretary Jack Peurifoy of South Carolina. I don't need to tell you about him, except one thing, perhaps, and that is that in all the years that I have been in the State Department he has been with me. When he came to the State Department after he had been in West Point and had to leave on account of disease of the lungs (which, unhappily, I have come to know only too much about from one who is close to me), he very soon became my assistant. He is now the Deputy Under Secretary for Administration, He is in charge of administration. I shall come back to him again in a little while.

Then we have Jack Hickerson of Texas, a foreign service officer of 25 years' experience, whom we have taken out of European affairs and put into something which we want to stress, and that is the work of the United Nations.

Then we have George McGhee of Texas, a former oil man who worked with the government through the war, who was in the economic part of the government during the war, both in Washington and London, and back and forth a great deal of the time; who took charge of the administration of our Greek-Turkish aid; whom the President, at my recommendation, put in charge of our Near East and African work; and who, with incredible energy, has now visited every one of the areas under his control. He has visited and talked with leading men of every country of the Middle East and has just returned from a long trip to Africa.

It would be foolish for me to tell you about Ed Barrett who came from Alabama. He belongs to your profession. You know him. You know the great job which he is doing in overseas information which the President has picked out for such vitally important concentration.

We have put into the Far Eastern work Dean Rusk of Georgia. He was our Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and we thought that the whole Far Eastern matter was so critical that we would take our senior political officer and put him into that work.

Walton Butterworth of Louisiana, who had been in that work, we put in charge particularly of working out some progress on a solution of Japanese matters, one of the most essential things that we must do. In him we have picked out an officer who has the confidence of General MacArthur, who has worked with the military establishment, who is a man of superb integrity and courage. (Editor's note.—Mr. Butterworth was nominated by President Truman to be ambassador to Sweden.)

In case you don't know as much about Walton Butterworth as you do about some of these others, I will remind you that he is the man who had charge of our economic warfare activities during the war in Spain and Portugal. It was he who was in that plane that fell into the river and broke apart at Lisbon; it was Walton who was in the sinking part of the plane in which most of the passengers were trapped; who broke the window through; who pushed his fellow passengers out of the window while the plane was filling up; who then got himself out, kept those who could not swim very well afloat, and helped them onto a wing that was floating. Finally, when the boats came out and picked them up after a very long time and Walton was taken ashore, what do you suppose he had in his hand? It was his briefcase containing his secret papers. That is the type of officer we have in the State Department.

THEN WE HAVE as our Legal Adviser, ranking with the Assistant Secretaries, Adrian Fisher of Tennessee. And I note, as I go along here, that we seem to be loaded up with old-fashioned southern "communists"—no doubt of the Cordell Hull, Walter George, Tom Connally type.

Adrian Fisher was a bomber navigator during the war; later Solicitor with the Department of Commerce; Legal Adviser to the Atomic Energy Commission, and now the Legal Adviser in the Department of State.

I suggest to people, in the interest of their own security, not to fool with Adrian Fisher. Not only was he a former bomber navigator, but he was a former captain of the Princeton football team. Charges lightly made about him might have serious personal consequences.

Eddie Miller of New York was born in Puerto Rico, brought up in Cuba, and then in New York. He speaks Portuguese and Spanish as easily as he speaks English. He is a former partner of Mr. Dulles. He has just returned from two trips to South America in which he has put our relations with the Southern Hemisphere on a basis on which I think they have never been before. They are on a sensible, sound basis of mutual advantage, and both they and we know that we both really mean business when we talk, and when we talk we want to talk business.

George Perkins of New York is a businessman of distinction, who had gone with Paul Hoffman and was working with him in Paris. Paul, with great generosity, let me take him to be in charge of our European affairs.

Willard Thorp of New York is in charge of economic matters. He is an economic expert; a former director of
the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce in the Department of Commerce; a former partner of Dun & Bradstreet.

Jack McFall of Colorado and Indiana has charge of our relations with Congress. He has spent 15 years as the assistant clerk of the Appropriations Committee of the House. If there is anybody who understands, and really understands deeply, the necessities of close relationship between the House and the Senate and the Department of State, it is Jack McFall.

Then in charge of a very important branch of our work, dealing with the new government of Germany and German problems, we have a regular colonel from the United States Army, Col. Henry Byroade, who was lent to us by the Army — and whom I wish I could steal permanently for the State Department.

In charge of the planning staff is Paul Nitze of Massachusetts, former partner of Dillon, Read, a man who went all through the war and was awarded the Medal of Merit for his economic-warfare work.

In charge of our press relations, we have that old friend of yours, Mike McDermott — and you know what sort of a "communist" he is.

In charge of intelligence work is Park Armstrong of New Jersey, a man who all through the war was dealing with this incredibly important business of the evaluation of intelligence. Don’t for a moment believe that the important thing to do is to send someone out with rubbers, dark glasses and a false mustache, to try to steal some paper or find out something. The important business is the evaluation of what you get, either by secret operations or much more importantly, the material which just pours in on you. Secret material is a dime a dozen.

We had, not so long ago, a most interesting and exciting paper planted on us by one of our enthusiastic friends abroad, and it caused a little flurry. But it was Park Armstrong’s cool people who discovered in a short time that it was a phony from top to bottom and saved us from the obvious purpose of their planting it on us.

In charge of the great military program for which we and the Defense Department are jointly responsible, we had Jim Bruce of Maryland. Now that he has resigned, Jack Ohly of New York is taking it over.

Now, we have also brought in Phil Jessup, Senator Dulles of New York and Senator Cooper of Kentucky. You can imagine how helpful they would be in covering up all "subversive" activities.


ning staff, with the co-operation of all of these men. The policy is laid down and they are given their authority.

I don’t sit behind them and pull their coat tails or look over their shoulders. I am kept informed, by the central secretariat, of everything that happens. I am permitted to get in, if I wish to, before something is done, but I don’t wish to do that. These men are too good. They cannot hesitate. They cannot be saying, “What does the Secretary think?” They know what the policy is, and they go out and operate. Then we post-audit the operations; we change the policy if it is not working, but they are given responsibility and they are well able to carry it.

So I say to you — this is something very, very important, and I suggest that you ask your correspondents in Washington whether what I say to you is true — that today, as rarely before in the State Department, there is no backbiting, there is no jealousy, there is no undercutting. You have an organization of people which is loyal to those within it, which is loyal to the President of the United States and which is loyal to the United States of America.

Let us turn for a moment to the career service. The career service, made up of the Foreign Service and the departmental offices, is equally in good shape. This is a service of men and women who are giving their entire lives to the United States, not for a few years, not even 10 years, as I have given, but their entire lives, from the time they are young men until they retire at the end of their service. They are giving their whole lives to the United States. They are competent, they are courageous, and they are devoted.

Only this past week, two of our missions were bombed. That is not a pleasant experience. Have any of you ever had it? Have any of you ever had a bomb tossed in the window of your house and had it go off and injure people? Two of our missions have been through that this week. Fortunately, no one was killed, but many people were hurt. Do these people want to come home?
Do they say, “This is too dangerous?” Not at all. This is in line of duty. They know their duty. They perform it. It is quite likely that they may be killed, but there is no squeak out of them.

We have just had an officer home who had been held by the Chinese communists for a year, many months of which he spent in jail, under conditions of incredible hardship and torture. At the direction and request of President Truman, he is going about the United States telling people of what was done to him. Does he ask to retire? Not at all. With great difficulty, we are keeping him in the United States doing this. He wants to go back to the most difficult area that we can find for him. He is not asking to quit. He is not asking for sympathy. This is his duty. He likes it. He wants to go into it again.

We have scores of our people who are now in Chinese cities which are being bombed by the Chinese Nationalists. Are they whimpering about it? Not in the least. They were ordered home because the President decided that was the wise policy. They were perfectly willing to stay there and take whatever came to them.

WE HAVE SCORES of people through southeast Asia who are in areas of hot war—Indo-China, the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia. Bullets are flying all the time. It is not a cold war in those areas; it is a hot war. And these men and their wives and their children are there, and they are doing their duty. They don’t ask to be transferred. They know it is their duty, and they are performing it.

And in other places, in Africa and other parts of the world, we have men with their wives and children who are in situations of the greatest danger, so far as their health is concerned. They are living under very unhealthy conditions. If they are ill, they take their chances under the most primitive medical conditions. There are no schools, there are no oculists to take care of the children’s eyes. There are no doctors to give them all the inoculations which your children take. None of those things are available. They don’t complain. This is their duty. This is their life. All they ask is that occasionally they be transferred to some situation which is not quite so tough.

Then there are others who are behind the Iron Curtain, and there they are treated as criminals. They cannot have any association with anybody. They cannot have any of the ordinary pleasant relations that all of you have. Anyone who meets them or talks with them will be in jail the next day and possibly hang the day after that. They have to live in a little circle, seeing the same few people day after day after day. But that is their duty, and they are carrying it out.

Here, again, there are no schools. And if you have a toothache and you want to go to a dentist, you don’t call up a dentist; you call up the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office calls up the secret police, and the secret policeman makes an engagement and comes and sits right beside you in the dentist’s chair to be absolutely sure that

An appeal from a Detroit woman for assistance to a destitute family in Bavaria drew prompt response from Neubiberg’s 86th Air Base Group, which subscribed to buy a truckload of food, clothing and supplies which an all-Detroit team headed by Sgt. Anderson (at left in photo) delivered to the appreciative family. (USAFE photo)

the dentist does not take a message out of your tooth and give it somebody else.

Those are the circumstances under which these people live.

I DON’T HAVE to defend these people. There is no reason in the world why they need any defense.

I should like to suggest to you that you would find it a very interesting exercise to try, in your papers, an open letter to these Foreign Service officers of the United States, who are now your front line of defense, who are serving you in these dangerous and difficult parts of the world. Explain to them the attacks which are being made upon them and upon the service of which they are just as proud as you are proud of the profession to which you belong. Explain to them, if you can, what is happening to this country behind them.

Explain to them why it was that during the war we had USO’s and letter-writing campaigns and everything in the world for the soldiers at the front to show them that the country was behind them and recognized the sacrifice that they were making; and try to explain what is happening now when it comes to these soldiers, these people who are in the front line of defense of their country. Explain to them if you can. You will find it difficult to do.

That is the Department of State as it exists today.

IT IS NOT STRANGE that efforts should be made to penetrate this Department. Efforts of that sort have been made throughout the history of the United States, and they are being made today.

In the past, these efforts have been made by professionals. But with the spread of this fanatical doctrine of Communism, the old profession of professional spies is under competition from amateurs.

Now, this creates difficulty. We are familiar with the methods of counter-espionage and the security methods which we have used in the past to protect ourselves from professional spies. In the last few years we have had a
new problem to solve — and we have gone about solving it.

There is a right way to solve that problem, and there is a wrong way to solve it. The right way to solve the problem is to go at it from the point of view of meeting the evil which confronts you and preserving the institution which you are trying to protect. The wrong way is one in which you do not meet the evil that you are attempting to meet, but you destroy the institution that you are trying to protect. Not only do you destroy that, but you destroy the faith of the country in its government and its institutions. You destroy the faith of our allies in us and you delight our enemies. Those are the right and wrong ways.

The right way was set up by General Marshall in 1947 in the State Department. It was set up under the directive of the President setting up the whole loyalty program. I have never known a man I thought had a surer judgment about people than General Marshall has.

And General Marshall picked out Jack Pearsifoy to take charge of the loyalty program in the State Department. He took charge of it. He worked at it through General Marshall’s administration. When I came, it seemed to me that there was absolutely nothing better that I could possibly think of to do than to confirm Jack Pearsifoy in that particular job. I did, and I have never had occasion to doubt that I did the right thing.

He is not trying to do all this by himself. He has a security staff under a former FBI agent, who is recognized as one of the ablest men ever trained in the service of the FBI. He has a staff of 74 investigators who carry on our investigation work. That is not the only staff that does it. Mr. Hoover’s FBI co-operates fully in the whole process.

By one method or another, all people who come into the Department and all those who are in it have gone through a thorough screening process. This is a process which is not based on the idea that all these people are crooks. It is a process which is based, first, on protecting the United States but, at the same time, protecting the individuals’ rights, protecting their reputations, urging and permitting them to continue to serve the United States with enthusiasm.

SEARCHING EXAMINATIONS are made, so that if we find anything which causes trouble in our minds, we then put it into another level of screening. It goes to the Loyalty Board in the State Department.

General Conrad Snow is the chairman of that board. He is an old-fashioned New Hampshire Republican “communist,” a man who, incidentally, is vouched for by Senator Bridges.

That board, and the people who work on it, have gone through every single case about which any doubt has arisen.

When they get through with it, whatever recommendation is made — whether it is that the man be cleared or that he is not cleared — the whole matter goes on again to the President’s Loyalty Board, headed by Seth Richardson, a former Assistant Attorney General under President Hoover, with a group of associates not one of whom works for the Government of the United States. All of these people are private citizens who are giving their time, their effort and their devotion to the Government.

That is the right way. The wrong way is to smear everybody’s reputation; to make charges on the basis that, if one is not right, you try to find another one you hope will stick; to try to destroy the confidence of people in their Foreign Office and in their Government in one of the most critical hours of this nation’s history — to do all of those things, and to make it absolutely certain, as a result, that under no circumstances could you ever possibly find a spy in the whole place. It is as though

HICOG personnel were serenaded May 23 by 77 members of the Swiss Folklore Union who interrupted a return trip from Copenhagen to play a big “Hello” on lawn in front of Headquarters Building in Frankfurt. Group represented six towns and appeared in native costume. They gave a second performance in the Roemerberg, section of old Frankfurt. Resounding calls on huge Alpine horns (right) were a quaint feature. (PRD HICOG photos)
you said to yourself that the best way to find a fire is to ring every fire alarm in the city; not that you know of any fire, but if you get all the apparatus out and have it wheeling around through the city, you might find one.

But I think what is going on is much madder and much more vicious than that. It reminds me more of that horrible episode in Camden, N.J., which happened not so long ago, when a madman came out on the street in the morning with his revolver. With no purpose and with no plan, as he walked down the street, he just shot people; one was a woman coming out of a store; a man with his wife in an automobile. That automobile happened to stop because the light turned red. The car ahead of him went on. The car behind him was not where the madman was. So the madman just walked up and shot everybody in the car, without sense, without purpose, without direction.

You remember, I am sure, that poem of Browning’s called “Caliban Upon Setebas.” Caliban is talking about this horrible amoral god of his. He says that his god operates in the way that Caliban himself does on the beach. Along comes, says Caliban, a procession of crabs going down to the sea across the sand. And he says something like this: “I stand there and I let 20 go by. The twenty-first I pick up and tear off a flipper. I let three more go by. The next one I crush in order to watch it wiggle in agony on the sand,” and so on. It is that degree of vicious madness which has been going on here.

Now, I don’t ask you for sympathy. I don’t ask you for help. You are in a worse situation than I am. I and my associates are only the intended victims of this mad and vicious operation. But you, unhappily — you by reason of your calling — are participants. You are unwilling participants, disgusted participants, but, nevertheless, participants, and your position is far more serious than mine.

As I leave this filthy business, and I hope never to speak of it again, I should like to leave in your minds the words of John Donne in his “Meditations,” in which he says:

Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore do not send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

Bremerhaven Making New Bid For Passenger Traffic

To re-establish its former position in transocean passenger traffic, the port of Bremerhaven has completed the construction of new passenger facilities replacing the Columbus Quay, the so-called “Railroad Station at the Sea” which burned down during the war.

Participants in the reopening ceremonies included Capt. Charles K. Jeffs (USN), US state commissioner for Bremen; Dr. Hermann Apelt, senator for ports and shipping; O.M. Taylor, chief, Economic Affairs Division, OLC Bremen, and representatives of local and foreign shipping agencies.

The passenger facilities, constructed at the Bremen State’s expense and costing DM 2,500,000, consist of a large building containing waiting rooms and offices for the customs, quarantine, mails, railroads and exchange of money; as well as two railroad platforms and a highway between the station and the city.

In addition, two quays 812 and 985 feet in length, with enough water for ships up to 50,000 tons together with drydock facilities for the biggest ships in existence, now enable all North Atlantic passenger shipping lines to use the port of Bremerhaven.

In his opening speech Dr. Apelt expressed the hope that these new passenger facilities will re-establish a considerable part of Bremerhaven’s former passenger capacity, once one-third of all Germany’s North Atlantic passenger traffic.

Marking the lifting of the last restriction on outgoing international telephone calls from western Germany on May 15, Mrs. Christel Liebler of Frankfurt made a call to Lawton, Okla., to talk with her daughter, Mrs. Emmy Tingley. Witnessing the call were (left to right) H. Liebler; Dr. Hans Steinmetz, state secretary of the Federal Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications; Eugene H. Merrill, chief of the Communications Branch, Office of Economic Affairs, HICOG; C. A. L. Nicholls, assistant controller general, Office of the UK High Commissioner. The call was made from the new radio telephone station recently built in Bonames near Frankfurt at the cost of DM 2,500,000 ($595,000). Prior to lifting the restrictions, international telephone calls originating in western Germany and western Berlin were limited to occupation personnel and German holders of special permits issued only to import and export firms. (PRD HICOG photo)