SPEECH BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS

On the 8th of December I delivered my second major speech in the field of foreign relations, this time before the UN. The first one was delivered on April 16th last before the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

There has been much speculation on what I was trying to do in a talk that dealt principally with the field of atomic energy and atomic warfare and made definite proposals for international action in promoting the peaceful use of atomic science and materials.

The reasons were several. Of these the first and principal one was exactly as stated -- to make a clear effort to get the Soviet Union working with us in some phase of this whole atomic field that would have only peace and the good of mankind as a goal. If we were successful in getting even the tiniest of starts, it was believed that gradually this kind of talk and negotiation might expand into something broader -- that at least a faint possibility existed that Russia's concern, bordering upon fright, of the certain results of atomic warfare might lead her, in her own self interests, to participate in this kind of joint humanitarian effort. Another important objective was to call the attention of the small nations of the world that they likewise had an interest in the uses to which
the world would put its limited available supply of raw material, out of which the atomic bomb is made.

Too many of these small nations have looked upon this matter as one of concern only to the USSR and to the US -- except, of course, as some of them felt that they would be certain targets in the event of atomic warfare breaking out.

The hope of the talk was to awaken in these small nations an understanding that there were steadily opening up new and promising opportunities for using these materials and these skills to the benefit rather than to the destruction of men. Thus it was hoped to help attention build up a world opinion for turning toward these constructive purposes.

(d). Another reason was that even in the event that the USSR would cooperate in such a plan for "propaganda purposes" that the US could unquestionably afford to reduce its atomic stock pile by two or three times the amounts that the Russians might contribute to the UN Agency, and still improve our relative position in the cold war and even in the event of the outbreak of war.

(e). Another important reason was to give the population of our country the feeling -- the certain knowledge -- that they had not poured their substance into this whole development with the sole purpose and
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possibility of its being used for destruction. This effort also gave
the opportunity to tell America and the world a very considerable
story about the size and strength of our atomic capabilities, but to do
it in such a way as to make this presentation an argument for peaceful
negotiation rather than to present it in an atmosphere of truculence,
defiance and threat.

Underlying all of this, of course, is the clear conviction that as
of now the world is racing toward catastrophe -- that something must
be done to put a brake on this moment. Certainly there is none so foolish
as to think that the brake can be composed only of words and protestations,
however eloquent or sincere. But ideas expressed in words must
certainly have a function in getting people here and elsewhere thinking
along these lines and helping to devise ways and means by which the
possible disaster of the future can be avoided.

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