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THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY

The Senate resumed the consideration of Executive M (88th Cong., 1st sess.), the treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater.

Mr. ERVIN. Mr. President, after much deliberation upon its provisions and implications, I have decided to vote to approve the test ban treaty. This is the most difficult decision I have had to make since coming to the Senate 9 years ago.

Candor compels the confession that I shall cast my vote for approval without great enthusiasm. The test ban treaty does not outlaw all testing of nuclear weapons. It carefully preserves the right to test underground.

While compliance with the test ban treaty will lessen the overmagnified danger of nuclear fallout, it seems obvious that the United States should not have negotiated with Russia any test ban treaty other than one which prohibits all testing of nuclear weapons and establishes, within the borders of Russia, a system of inspection sufficient to detect any clandestine testing. Such a treaty would not have subjected the United States to disproportionate military disadvantages. Besides, it would have virtually assured the discovery of any attempt to test in secret.

Until the negotiators of the test ban treaty went to Moscow, the United States had consistently and wisely taken the adamant and implacable position that our country would not agree to any test ban which did not provide for adequate inspection.

The test ban treaty constitutes a complete surrender, upon the inspection issue, by our negotiators to Russia. I find scant comfort in the suggestion that we may be able to develop improved methods of detection which will minimize the need for inspection within the borders of Russia. This is true because I cannot indulge in even an uneasy hope that the total surrender upon the inspection issue has not implanted in the Russian mind the abiding conviction that negotiators from our State Department do not possess sufficient fortitude and stamina to withstand for long any demand which Russia may make in any negotiations on any subject.

Since being assigned to the Senate Armed Services Committee about January 1955, I have given much consideration to the things affecting our military posture and that of Russia. As a consequence, I am satisfied that the proposed test ban treaty imposes upon the United States disproportionate military disadvantages. As a matter of fact, virtually every military man and nuclear scientist who has testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or the Preparedness Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee admits this to be true. For reasons of national security, I refrain from detailing these military disadvantages.

I would vote without hesitation to reject the proposed test ban treaty because of these military disadvantages if the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others possessing expertness in military and nuclear matters had not given the Senate and the Nation positive assurances that the United States can overcome these military disadvantages by extraordinary measures, and if the President had not given the Senate and the Nation positive assurances that the executive branch of the Government will pursue with unrelenting energy such extraordinary measures.

Despite these assurances, I would vote without hesitation to reject the proposed test ban treaty if my judgment permitted me to base my decision solely upon military considerations. The tragic truth is that this particular test ban agreement should never have been negotiated. Even with the extraordinary measures suggested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and promised by the President, the treaty will not enhance in any degree the capacity of the United States to defend itself and the free world against a potential enemy which is preoccupied with troubling the peace of mankind and is threatening to bury us.

Unhappily, however, we are not confronted with the comparatively simple question of whether the test ban treaty should have been negotiated.

It has been negotiated, and it has been submitted to the Senate for approval or rejection. Moreover, it has been acclaimed and adopted by most of the nations of this earth, in the uncertain hope that it presages a more peaceful existence for all mankind.

When a Senator votes on the question of approving the test ban treaty, he will not be making an easy choice between what is good and what is bad, or between what is wise and what is foolish. He will be making a choice between somewhat undesirable alternatives. If he votes in favor of approval, he will vote for approval of an agreement which imposes upon his country military disadvantages. If he votes in favor of rejection, he will vote to cast cold water upon the hopes of mankind.

I entertain misgivings, based on military considerations, concerning the wisdom of ratification of the test ban treaty.

Nevertheless, I shall vote for approval of the treaty, because I think it the lesser of the two undesirable choices available to us. This is true because I am convinced that the political and psychological impact upon the other nations of the earth of rejection of the treaty by the United States would irretrievably damage, if not absolutely destroy, any opportunity for the United States to furnish to the free world any effective leadership during the foreseeable future.

We must not permit the making of this treaty to blind us to the realities of our precarious world, or to lull us into a false sense of security. Eternal vigilance is still the price of liberty.

The men of the Kremlin have not changed their hearts or their purpose. They and their puppet governments still hold in captivity behind the Iron Curtain hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians, Czechs, East Germans, Hungarians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, and Rumanians. The men of the Kremlin still maintain armed forces in Cuba—only 90 miles from our shores, in violation of the letter and spirit of the Monroe Doctrine. They still hold fast to their dream of world conquest.

Let us remember the solemn warning given us by the late Elmer Davis:

Atomic warfare is bad enough; biological warfare would be worse; but there is something that is worse than either. It is subjection to an alien oppressor.

If Americans are to preserve their liberty and that of the free world, they must keep their hearts in courage and patience, and lift up their hands in strength. There is no other way.