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# How Can the United States Aid in Maintaining Peace?

By FELIX MORLEY

IT IS over twenty-three centuries since the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, in which oligarchic Sparta and democratic Athens sought successfully for nearly a generation to destroy the glory that was Greece. Yet this war, so far back in ancient history that even its name is unfamiliar to many of us today, is now in many of its fundamental aspects being repeated in Spain.

Let us for a moment reopen the pages in which Thucydides gives his graphic account of the upheaval in Greece more than four centuries before the birth of Christ. There was, he says, "every form of murder and every extreme of cruelty." In this civil strife "the father slew the son and the suppliants were thrown from the temples." The prime cause of the fighting, he points out, was the lust for power and gain. But once war is begun, "men are tempted by dire necessity." In consequence "there was no treaty binding enough to reconcile opponents; everyone knew that nothing was secure and therefore he thought only of his own safety; he could not afford to trust another." And then the tragic, ultra-modern conclusion: "We have been driven to this," say the Athenians in extenuation of their turn towards despotism, "for the sake of our own security, our honor and our interests. . . . It has always been the custom for the strong to rule the weak, and we consider we are fit to rule."

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE

"It has always been the custom." And yet the ancient Greeks, in their Amphictyonic Council, had already planted that seed of the coöperative

idea which in our time has grown to somewhat frostbitten flower in the League of Nations. They had sought to put into operation the two fundamental ideas of arbitration between independent states and confederacy on equal terms. There is nothing essentially new in the disastrous civil strife between conflicting social philosophies which today we see unrolled in the Iberian Peninsula. But equally, there is nothing new in the responsibility for the civilized state to do all it can in maintaining the peace of the world community.

This tragic rhythm of effort and frustration runs through all recorded history. And those who study the record are entitled seriously to question whether there has been anything really worthy of the name of progress since the days when Sparta and Athens bled each other white, and when the exponents of democracy in this struggle arbitrarily violated the claim of Melos to stand neutral in the conflict. The answer of the Athenians to the protest of the Melians is also worth recalling today:

We do not fear the judgment of the gods for we are doing nothing new. We know that men by the law of their nature will rule wherever they can. We did not make that law nor are we the first to follow it. We found it before our day and we shall hand it down after us.

With such a heritage it would seem pardonable to deny any validity to the question posed to us. There is not necessarily undue cynicism in the assertion that the United States at the present time can give no constructive aid in maintaining peace. But if we come to that conclusion, to which the

lesson of history gives great weight, we shall clearly have to give equal weight to the experience of Melos and many other states which have vainly sought to maintain a comfortable isolation since the days of the Peloponnesian War. Possibly it is futile for us to cooperate with other nations in behalf of peace. But certainly only a fool can believe that national security is furthered by a refusal to cooperate. Our military experts, who step up their estimates of defense needs in direct proportion to the inclusion of mandatory provisions in neutrality legislation, are very clear on that.

#### IDEOLOGICAL BASIS OF WAR

I have gone back to the Peloponnesian War because it is well for us to realize that there is nothing new in a form of hostility which is ideological rather than national in its basis. Sparta and Athens fought each other not as exponents of the modern concept of statehood, but essentially because each thought its social order was menaced by the inferior pattern agreeable to its rival. So it was with all the religious wars and indeed with practically all organized conflicts down to the rise of the modern nation-state.

But the present recurrence of this primitive form of struggle, as exemplified by the world antagonism of the fascist and communist ideas, seems new to our civilization. It has been a long time since nationalism became established as the basis of political organization; and Americans, who do not like abstract ideas, hesitate to believe that wars of the future may refuse to be bound by nationalistic limits. Yet the return of the ideological type of struggle, waged continuously with propaganda and intermittently with arms, introduces elements which must be taken into consideration.

Many of us had until recently assumed rather easily that a liberal na-

tionalism would in time, almost automatically, complete itself in some form of international organization. The rise of influential dogmas in which nationalism plays only a secondary part forces a reconsideration of this pleasant optimism. We have seen the way in which a ruthless minority leadership, exerted successfully by Japan, by Germany, and by Italy, has torn apart the structure of the league of democratic nations which Woodrow Wilson visualized. An intense reaction from this development on the part of the American people is natural, the more so because during the period of its promise we did not have the intelligence to realize how much a democratic league of nations might have meant for our security.

From the introverted American viewpoint, a large part of the world today appears as a ghastly exaggeration of the meaningless quarrels of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines; and if this were a true picture it would seem a sane policy for America to cry, "A plague on both your houses," and to endeavor to withdraw behind the shelter-belt afforded by two great oceans. That is certainly a prevalent attitude in this country today, and it is not difficult to understand why.

#### IMPOSSIBILITY OF ISOLATION

But the quarrels of Europe are not so meaningless as they sometimes appear. And even if they were, the isolationist attitude would be definitely impossible for the United States as we know it and as most of us wish to see it maintained. To everyone who realizes how intimately the very fiber of our society is connected with the outside world, it is evident that this country must, in its own behalf, do something in behalf of international solidarity. What it can do is another question.

One of the factors which make iso-

lation impossible—the economic factor—has already been touched upon at some length by other contributors. There is no need to labor that point. It is abundantly clear that the preservation of what we are pleased to call the American standard of living, probably even the preservation of the present social order in this country, imperatively demands continuous and improving commercial coöperation with the outside world. It is perhaps theoretically possible for the United States really to withdraw within its own borders as the isolationists seem to desire. But it is certain that such a withdrawal could be accomplished only at the expense of revolutionary changes. There is little reason to suppose that such changes would stop short at the sharp curtailment of national income and the sharp increase in hopeless unemployment which would be inevitable.

The financial factor, though often discussed as though it were merely a part of the general economic picture, provides separate evidence that isolation is an impossible course. When we read that the death penalty has been decreed in Germany for those who violate the rules of financial autarchy, we realize both how primitive and how impossible of success is such an attempt. Our need for such controls is far less acute, but, even so, not the least of the problems confronting the Administration is the prevalence in this country of that "hot money" which has come here in spite of managed currency systems. The outstanding attribute of a managed currency is its unmanageability. Real financial isolation, like economic isolation, would bring consequences far beyond the imagination of those who talk of its theoretical feasibility.

The impossibility of either economic or financial isolation really answers the question of whether or not political

isolation is a practical issue. But there are many who have no realization of this. An eminent Republican Senator has recently been advocating mandatory neutrality legislation as "insulation" for the United States. The phrase is reminiscent of the practice of those terrified burghers who in the Middle Ages locked their doors and shutters to keep out the plague. There is no insulation by legislation against the infiltration of political ideas.

The United States would go fascist or communist far more quickly by seeking to cut off all contacts with the outside world than it would if, with rising unemployment, the Government were to pay propagandists of these two systems to advocate them from the public platform in this country. One of the most dangerous attitudes in the United States is that which assumes that the setting up of barriers of one kind or another will maintain the virtues of our civilization while excluding the vices of others. That was the policy of the Chinese, our chief rival in an attitude of naïveté towards foreign devils.

There is also a moral factor—and it is important—which makes our participation in the effort to maintain peace inevitable. Even if it were economically, financially, and politically possible, many Americans would be unwilling to fold their hands while the world sinks into a period comparable to the Dark Ages. If one asks why this is the case, at least two answers can be given.

In the first place, it is not in character for the American people to be indifferent to the world about them. Our curiosity may not always be productive, but at least it is always sincere and insatiable. In the second place, there is a growing national realization that power and responsibility are inseparable. Very few of us, in

the last analysis, would be willing to see the United States slip back into the position of a second- or third-rate nation. Many of those who are unwilling to see such a development fully realize that the maintenance of power demands an increasing acceptance of political responsibility in the world community.

It seems foreordained, therefore, that the United States will continue to work for peace. Nor is there anything essentially discouraging in the fact that we are now in a period where our past endeavors in this line have proved relatively fruitless, and where we are undecided and uncertain as to what new endeavors can profitably be made. Evidently what we need is a new diagnosis. That diagnosis is not difficult, though curative efforts afterwards may well prove to be so. In what follows I shall, therefore, attempt to discuss not what seems to me the ideal course so much as that which seems severely practical at the present time. But diagnosis comes first.

#### BASIC SOUNDNESS OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations, as an effective body for safeguarding peace, has clearly broken down. That outcome is not due to any fundamental mistake in the formulation of the Geneva instrumentality. The idea in the minds of Woodrow Wilson, Lord Robert Cecil, and the others who drafted the Covenant was as logical as it was essentially simple. On the assumption that the war had really made the world safe for democracy, it was reasoned that democratic nationalism should lead to a form of federation. This seemed as logical for the world in the early twentieth century as it had been for the American Colonies at the close of the eighteenth century.

If that assumption had been true,

there would have been no occasion for criticism of the organic law of the League of Nations. All the bunk about Article 10 and American boys in Armenia would have done no harm; for the world confederation which the Covenant sought to set up was of the loosest possible character. The right of withdrawal from the confederation was specifically provided. The Covenant acted only upon the member states and not upon their citizens, which, you will remember, was one of the essential distinctions between our own Articles of Confederation and our Constitution. In other words, the League of Nations was designed not as a permanent union but as a purely voluntary association. It is a diplomatic and not a governmental instrument.

#### REASONS FOR DISABILITY OF THE LEAGUE

The setbacks which the League has suffered since the Japanese invasion of Manchuria are not due to any constitutional defects, but fundamentally to the demonstrated fallacy of the assumption that the world had been made safe for democracy. The obvious evidence to support this assertion is found in the fact that it is the undemocratic nations which have found the Geneva experiment most unsatisfactory. It is an ironic political accident that the abstention of the United States, in spite of its loyalty to the democratic ideal, has also been one of the factors in the collapse.

There are, of course, other reasons for the difficulties which the League has experienced. The League might well have surmounted its problems except for the depression which was an aftermath of the war that brought the League into being. It probably would have been more successful if there had been less effort to emphasize the the-

oretical equality of member states, like Guatemala and Germany, which are actually anything but equal on any realistic basis of comparison. But in the last analysis the major difficulty was clearly the false assumption of common political purpose among the major members. If Virginia and Massachusetts, as a comparison, had preferred the dictatorial to the democratic form of government during our own period of confederation, it is clear that the United States could never have been successfully established.

It is my belief that the dictatorships of today are much weaker, and the democracies much stronger, than may appear to be the case on the surface. But pending proof of this, it is necessary to conclude that the League of Nations, for as long a period as the world is divided into two antagonistic political systems, is not likely to fulfill its earlier promise. Nevertheless, the Geneva experiment has taught us many valuable techniques. Examination of these techniques, and consideration of the reasons for their success, should enable us to answer with some assurance the question which we are posing.

#### COÖPERATION BETWEEN DEMOCRACIES

In spite of the failures at Geneva it has been clearly demonstrated that practical and mutually profitable co-operation between democracies of fairly equal power is entirely feasible. And it is interesting to see how clearly this basic fact has been seized upon by the people of this country.

Recently the Institute of Public Opinion conducted a poll to examine the popularity of various foreign countries with the American public. Of those polled, 55 per cent placed England first, while 11 per cent selected France as their favorite country. In

spite of the very large part of our population with German and Italian blood, these two countries together received only 11 per cent of the votes, as against 66 per cent for the two great democracies. Here is a clear illustration of the instinctive leaning of the American people towards the nations with a kindred political philosophy. This ballot could be rationalized by pointing out the extent to which American institutions are based on English and French experience. But such inquiry is not necessary. The point is that the American people have a natural desire to coöperate with those European nations whose general outlook on life is akin to our own.

This is only one of many indications that we would do well to build on this basic identity of interests between the United States, Great Britain, and France, whether or not our official action is taken through the agency at Geneva. The League of Nations should be utilized as much as possible in the development of such coöperation, for the simple reason that this would prevent anything of an exclusive alliance aspect, and would help to enlist the further coöperation of those smaller democracies which are as akin to us in political philosophy as either Great Britain or France. But for immediate practical purposes, the liaison between Washington, London, and Paris is most important.

#### EFFECTS OF NEUTRALITY LEGISLATION

Time is of the essence in working out this system of coöperation, partly because the United States, whether we act or whether we fail to act, exercises so great an effect upon the rest of the world. That this is not adequately realized here is shown by our bungling efforts in the field of neutrality legislation. Many Americans undeniably

believe that some form of mandatory neutrality will keep this country from taking sides in any future war. We do not realize that, because of our tremendous power, we swing the balance as soon as we say that we will not take sides. When we serve notice that we will draw no distinction between an aggressor nation and the victim of its aggression, we automatically favor the potential aggressor. We encourage him to proceed with a line of action he would not dare to follow if our position were not so defined.

The purely sentimental pacifism which is so strong in the United States, the pacifism which definitely encourages war by promising that the United States will do nothing to discourage it, is a line of thought which must be exposed in all its shallowness if we are to make any contribution to the cause of peace.

#### COÖPERATION WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH

But in spite of the destructive influence of the defeatist pacifists, it is encouraging to see that our contribution in practice has lately been tending to follow a line which a purely theoretical approach would conclude to be desirable. In various fields we are definitely tending to work with the British and the French. We are beginning to create new tissue to take the place of that which was destroyed in the international body politic by the injuries the League of Nations has experienced. This is the more appropriate because of the part we played in weakening the Geneva enterprise.

In the financial field the recent tripartite agreement between this country, Great Britain, and France has proved a development of definite practical value to the United States and of even greater potential value as a rallying point for the permanent currency

stabilization which will be necessary to permit enduring recovery. The way in which other democratic countries are coöperating in this agreement, and the *de facto* stability which it has helped to bring to the exchanges, illustrate the value of a type of international action which our Government can initiate without fear of serious criticism from any quarter.

In the economic sphere the field of possible governmental action on our part is very extensive. Illustrations of recent constructive actions are found in the World Textile Conference of the International Labor Organization, which has just terminated its valuable sessions in Washington, and in the establishment by the League Council of a Raw Materials Committee at Geneva, with Dr. Henry F. Grady, formerly chief of the Trade Agreements Section of the Department of State, as the American representative.

#### ECONOMIC LEADS TO POLITICAL ACCORD

This type of international action is admittedly not sensational, but its value is not to be minimized on that account. If we can knit together and extend the wantonly torn fabric of international economic coöperation we shall find that more effective political collaboration will follow almost automatically. It is to be noted that the three democracies for which I am urging closer association of an informal character are also three of the world's greatest trading nations. It follows that their association in economic activities of mutual interest is thoroughly logical.

We need not demand formal political collaboration if this economic association is firmly established; but we shall have ample cause for anxiety if we find that collaboration for mutual

economic benefit is impossible, for that would spell a further political deterioration of the type which every thoughtful American is anxious to avoid. Democracy is in no danger when the industrial and commercial life of a nation is prosperous, but setbacks in the economic field are a real threat to the maintenance of the political advancement which has been so slowly made over so many centuries. Little will be gained by fighting superficial aspects of dictatorship if we cannot counter that economic autarchy which makes dictatorships inevitable.

The outstanding contribution of the Roosevelt Administration to the maintenance of peace is probably the trade agreements policy. This is important not so much for what it has actually achieved in the lowering of trade barriers, although that gain is considerable. The development is particularly important because it has set the course of national policy in the direction of coöperative international effort. It is not the fault of the Department of State that an agreement with Great Britain under this general policy is still lacking. When that is achieved, another very substantial rivet will have been placed in the structure of world peace.

Just because the trade agreements policy is so significant, our panicky effort to achieve a water-tight neutrality is the more unfortunate. Obviously a mandatory neutrality program, threatening embargoes on important commodities at the outbreak of any war, must cast an atmosphere of uncertainty over any trade agreement.

The inevitable tendency of a mandatory neutrality policy is to force potential belligerents—and every nation is a potential belligerent—to seek or develop dependable sources of supply other than in the United States. To the extent that this policy operates,

it encourages an isolation which is not merely injurious to our agriculture and industry but is also a preventive of constructive peace effort. Take a specific case. We force purchasers of our cotton to develop alternative sources of supply. Then, by deficit financing, we subsidize our cotton growers. As wards of the Government they cease to worry about curtailed exports, and instead of developing foreign trade, demand more of that paternalism which is an insidious introduction to dictatorship. The problem is to cut this evil at its root.

#### OFFICIAL POLITICAL COLLABORATION

I have mentioned a few of the co-operative undertakings already in operation. They are of a type capable of almost infinite expansion. But technical collaboration of this sort is not the only form of assistance which the United States can give in seeking to rebuild world order. There is also the question of our potential contribution in the field of official political collaboration.

It is natural that we should be timid in this field, and it is probable that blundering overtures by the United States would here do more harm than good. But it is also unquestionable that we have not attempted what we might have done with perfect security.

I take as an illustration of a serious error of omission the failure of the United States to participate in the work of the nonintervention committee which is attempting to localize the Spanish war.

From the outset it was apparent that public opinion in this country strongly favored a policy of nonintervention. It was also early apparent that there were certain European nations which favored direct and effective intervention, although at first



they hesitated to express that policy openly. At the insistence of Great Britain and France, what proved to be an ineffective nonintervention policy was put into operation. Now, nine months after the outbreak of war in Spain, and after several very narrow escapes from war on a much broader scale, it appears that the Anglo-French effort may bear fruit in contracting and therefore in shortening this conflict.

If the United States had accepted membership on the nonintervention committee it is a fair assumption that our influence would very materially have retarded the interventionist efforts of Germany, Italy, and Russia. Although it was manifestly in our national interest to cooperate with the Anglo-French effort in this respect, we have failed utterly to do so. As a result of this blunder we have probably materially lengthened the duration of the Spanish war and have materially increased the chances that this conflagration would become universal.

#### PUBLIC OPINION NEEDS REVISION

It is not fair to blame the Department of State alone for its failure to seize constructive opportunities of this character. The Department of State is exceedingly sensitive to public opinion, and if it has reason to fear that a policy will be sharply criticized in Congress or by the press, the likelihood is that it will take the easiest course and do nothing.

But, as I have pointed out and as I wish to emphasize, our power in the contemporary world is such that we are a great influence, for peace or for war, whether we act or whether we fail to act. It is that which, somehow, has got to be brought home to the American people. And until the extent of our influence and the responsibility

thereby implied are realized, we may have the most efficient Department of State in our history, we may have the most ideal diplomatic service and the most competent Secretary of State imaginable, and still the Nation will fail to pull its weight in the way which our position in the world community demands.

Our national interests are so closely bound up with the preservation of peace that our failure to visualize peace as an integral problem from which this country cannot be successfully dissociated is doubly tragic. We have unconsciously slipped a long way back from the position which we took at the time of the Kellogg Pact.

Then, as a result of our leadership, nearly all the nations agreed to outlaw war as an instrument of national policy. That was a magnificent gesture which we failed completely to follow up. And of late, far from endeavoring to implement the Kellogg Pact, we have been steadily receding from the position we reached in 1928. Our present neutrality legislation says in effect that a country which violates the Kellogg Pact, a government which employs war as an instrument of national policy, can be sure that it will not receive even moral censure from the United States.

In a truly craven manner, which comports ill with both our traditions and our national strength, we practically invite violations of the treaty which we were instrumental in initiating. To aid in maintaining peace we must do something to reestablish the sanctity of the Kellogg Pact. And this clearly means a very different neutrality policy from that which at the present time appears to be desirable to the American people. I say "appears to be" because I am convinced that this neutrality legislation was only put across through the fallacious argu-

ment that it would guarantee us immunity in the event of another war. There is no intelligent student of the subject who believes in his heart that this is true.

I do not believe the United States should embroil itself in every political entanglement outside its borders. But it does seem to me a reasonable part of a "good neighbor" policy, which we claim to be following, to draw some moral distinction between an aggressor and the victim of aggression. If that is too much, it is at least essential to demand that we should not in advance serve notice that no such distinction will be drawn. Therefore, I fear that we have got to recast our whole viewpoint on the subject of neutrality before we can hope to be of much practical assistance in the necessarily coöperative effort to maintain peace. Fortunately it appears that the tide has already turned in this matter, though it must recede some distance yet before we can undo the damage we have already done.

#### PAN-AMERICAN COÖPERATION

Yet there is a good deal that is optimistic in the situation. Our leadership in the effort to build Pan-American coöperation, by some regarded as a swing away from League principles, is in reality nothing of the kind. If we really wanted to be isolationists we should have to be isolationists with regard to Latin America as well as the older continents.

The effort to consolidate peace in the Americas, in which we are making substantial progress, is simply a sensible regional undertaking with the underlying objective of consolidating peace as a whole. President Roosevelt made this plain on his recent visit to South America, and the significance of the trend is not to be underestimated. But again this tendency is

out of key with our neutrality policy, and the latter will have to be reversed before the aspirations voiced by Mr. Roosevelt at Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires can be fulfilled.

#### DEMOCRACY AT STAKE

Let us always remember that even more than the preservation of peace is at stake. We must develop a national policy which will not merely tend to diminish the chances of another world war but will also preserve the democratic system, at least in the countries which gave it birth. Those countries which have developed democratic processes during the past century have now for the most part cast them off. Democracy is on the defensive and is still firmly entrenched only in the lands where it has a very long heritage behind it.

Democracy is, we now know, unlikely to survive another world war. It is a complicated and difficult form of government which can only hope to operate successfully under conditions of established peace, which means world peace. In seeking to achieve such conditions we are not serving any abstract ideal; we are not merely seeking to fulfill the fundamentals of the Christian religion and of civilized ethics; we are, more particularly, endeavoring to safeguard a form of government without which the word "America" would have a totally different connotation. No intelligent effort in this direction can be misspent and no endeavor to awaken the people of this country to the magnitude of the issues involved can be a waste of time.

I confess that I dislike the somewhat patronizing and altruistic title allotted to me. To ask "How can the United States aid in maintaining peace" is something like asking how can we best assist the poor. This is not a matter for a charitable or a superior attitude

on the part of the American people. It is an issue of the utmost importance to the very existence of the form of government established in Philadelphia a century and a half ago.

We can make more effective progress in the work of maintaining peace if we start from the unquestionable assumption that world peace is essential to the preservation of our democracy.

In war, as Thucydides said, "men are tempted by dire necessity." But in the present ghastly condition of quasi-war, which Thucydides did not know, dire necessity equally confronts our civilization. Is our national character really so flabby, our intelligence so subject to emotion, that necessity will fail to be the mother of constructive invention for the maintenance of peace?

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