

The original documents are located in Box D13, folder “Women's Action Committee for Lasting Peace, March 1947” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The Council donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Spoken by Gerald R. Ford Jr. before Women's
Action Committee for Lasting Peace - March 1949

A VETERAN'S BASIS FOR WORLD PEACE

Corrected

Gerald R. Ford, Jr.
Women's Action Committee
for Lasting Peace

Practically every reasonably intelligent man or woman these days knows that War has been and always will be an expensive and devastating experience. However, I would like to present to you a few facts and figures to show that this world has not, in the past, been immunized from War, and that the cost of waging war has reached sky high altitudes. "The Society for International Law of London reports that in the last four thousand years there have been only 268 years of world peace: that in spite of more than eight thousand peace treaties." War suspends all consideration of thrift and solvency. " It is said that using the same method of purchasing power, in the time of Julius Caesar the cost for each man dead upon the battlefield was .75%. That expense rose through succeeding wars until finally in the 30 Years War of the seventeenth century the cost was \$50 for every battlefield fatality. Again the cost increased until our Civil War when each dead participant in battle represented an expenditure of \$5,000. In World War I the cost with the same element of purchasing power reached the high of \$25,000. In this war the cost of each dead soldier on the field of battle represents the unbelievable expense of nearly \$ 200,00. This one nation has spent nearly three hundred billion dollars in our prosecution



World War II
of the war a sum as great or greater than all our accumulated personal and real property.

It cannot be denied that the continuation of such trends will bankrupt the world morally as well as materially. The Veteran of World War II has, right now and will have for years to come, a greater stake in the future well being of this world, than any other group.

In the U. S. alone approximately 20 million men & women served in the Armed Forces between 1939 and 1947. 20 million out of 150 million is a sizeable block however you look at it. Because the personnel of

our Army and Navy were a heterogeneous group, unanimity on any subject was well nigh out of the question with one exception. In our citizens

Army, where men of all races, creeds and religions fought side by

side, there was but one ^{overall} objective WORLD PEACE. Our fighting men

wanted PEACE before the global conflagration started in 1939; they

prayed for PEACE during the horrible days that men on both sides

were falling in battle; and those that have returned fervently hope that

the PEACE they struggled to attain will continue everlastingly.

Unfortunately the Veterans of this country have not and will not act

in unison in attempting to achieve the objective. If the ex-service men

of the United States would only think and act as a unit, our own country's



foreign policy would be more effective and powerful for the other peoples of the world would then know that the majority of the citizens of this country were behind whatever our foreign policy might be. All veterans espouse and champion the cause of ^{in their own little way} peace, but unfortunately because of a total lack of any common denominator as to how it should be attained, this country's leadership at the World's Peace table ^{is} ^{will} ^{be} not as influential as it might be. The potency that our diplomats

now wield during the international negotiations is more dependent upon our present possession of the atomic bomb secret rather than upon any accord among our citizens as to how Peace should be achieved.

I say this in spite of our present bi-partisan foreign policy and in so doing I am not criticising this step which has at least unified our foreign policy on the top level, but at the same time down on our

level there is not as much unison of thought or equality of information as there should be.

Just how did the men who fought in World War II feel towards War and Peace in the years before December 7, 1941? Most of the 20 million

who served became of age during the 1930's when the debate and the partisanship between isolationism or pacifician and internationalism or interventionism grew in intensity, and most of the 20 million knew they

in the years to come

Maybe Veterans organization should be way to unity thought



were inevitably faced with the prospect of war, ^{service if War came} and probably ^{the vast majority would have} combat service.

The horrors and futility of World War I had been indelibly impressed upon

them by their education and by the passing events as they matured. Cer-

tainly the nation as a whole during the aftermath of World War I during

the 20's wanted Peace ^{but} and by not joining the League of Nations we adopted

the isolationist tack ^{to achieve it}. During the 1930's the trend began to turn the other

way, slowly yes, but ^{gradually} certainly people came to the realization that the

events in Europe proved we, as a nation, should be exerting our influence

^{in world affairs.} more directly. However all during the "30's" the various anti war

organisations flourished on the campuses of our colleges and among

youth groups throughout the country. Perhaps this attitude existed be-

cause their parents as a whole felt the same way, although less demonstratively

so, I will admit. Perhaps ^{the students} they felt this way because in their schooling

they learned that wars only resulted in temporary truces, that ^{soon} ended

without without any concern about the sanctity of peace treaties. Perhaps

~~too they felt that way because the veterans of the last war, as represent-~~

~~ed by the American Legion, were uniformly isolationists. Perhaps we, who~~

later fought, did not like the thought of dying in an apparently futile

struggle before our day.

Whatever the basis for this anti-war sentiment, it existed among the "to

be G. I's and as a result the diplomats handling our foreign policy had



little or no support from a large segment of the public on behalf of an interventionist or world participation policy. The "to-be G. I." seemed to hope that time alone would cure the World's problems and he hope that slowly by giving in to those who made territorial demands, perhaps a solution might be evolved.

We all know that such a policy utterly failed with horrible ^{the} climax coming December 7th 1941. From that date, the attitude of those already serving in the Armed Forces and those about to be inducted, abruptly changed. It was no longer a question of how Peace could be maintained for War was upon us; it was simply and quite directly a question of how we could hold and preserve our America as we knew it. Undoubtedly ^{some} many G. I.'s during the war thought they were fighting for a New World, but from

my contacts with those who fought in the Pacific, I sincerely believe *that vast majority of* the serviceman was principally interested in winning the war, and that *until nearly the end of the fighting* alone. The winning of the Peace hardly occupied his thoughts, that was a chore or a question beyond his immediate job and present capabilities.

With the capitulation of Germany in the spring of 1945, the more thoughtful G. I began to wonder what we, as a nation, were going to do about the tremendous responsibility now thrust upon our shoulders. I recall quite distinctly the days of the United Nations organization conference in San Francisco and the interest evidenced in those meetings by the men who



were serving with me. The fall of Japan meant the shooting war was over;

no longer was our country's survival the principal consideration. In

most if not all ~~fact~~ the ~~average~~ ^{were} G. I. was thereafter interested primarily in getting home, and once home ~~he~~ ^{they} became generally enmeshed in a multitude of local and personal problems.

How does the G. I. feel now since he is a Veteran? The vast majority of

veterans follow and live up to the catch phrase held by the A. V. C.,

"Citizens First, Veterans Second".

However the Veteran does have a few ideas of his own on what our country's

foreign policy should be and how it should be attained. Some of these

thoughts are expressed personally in small get-togethers or in letters be

tween friends. In some instances the various public opinion polls test

the veterans and publish the result. Another medium for the publication

of veteran opinion are the platforms and policies of the various veterans

organizations.

The A. V. C., an all World War II organization, adopted in July of 1946

the following as the Preamble to its International Affairs platform.

I quote in part "We support a strong United Nations as the basis for

world understanding.----We further urge, as a means of enforcing this

authority, the creation of a world armed Force recruited from individuals



of the United Nations who will owe exclusive allegiance to the United Nations." To my knowledge this is the most straightforward and forthright approach by any veterans group, whether any of us agree with the various particulars or not. At this time let me state that I am not a member of the A. V. C. but I do admire the stand they have taken on a great many issues.

The other veterans organizations have not gone on record as favoring any particular foreign policy. A study of their various platforms indicates that they all favor an "adequate preparedness program" In other words the Veterans organizations as a whole feel that our nation should maintain a substantial Army and Navy. I actually feel that the individual veteran sincerely believes in such a program.

Just how the veterans would vote on the proposed budget allocation for the Army and Navy might be an interesting question. I fear that the veterans would demand a cut in the Armed Forces proposed budget, not because they were against military preparedness, but simply because their own experiences have taught them that the military system could be more efficiently handled. All G. I 's believe that the same job could be done by the Army and Navy for less money if a halfhearted attempt were made by the "brass hats" to institute certain obvious economies.



What is the Veterans attitude toward the United Nations? According to the Gallup Poll the United Nations has been becoming of late more popular with our citizens as a whole. I give you the results as tabulated by the American Institute of Public Opinion They asked of the general public on for different occasions this question "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the progress that the United Nations has made to date

	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
May 1946	37%	37%	26%
July 1946	26%	49%	25%
Nov. 1946	27%	43%	30%
Jan. 1947	39%	33%	28%

This same Gallup Poll found that the Vets of World War II in early 1946 were one of the most outspoken groups in expressing dissatisfaction with the progress made by the United Nations They felt largely "there is too much hickering and arguing" and that the worlds statesmen were not keeping faith with the soldiers who had given their lives on the battle fronts to make world peace possible. In January of 1947, the veteran's attitude had changed, at least it is more in line with the view of the general public. The comparative figures are as follows:

In July of 1946 the general public were 26% satisfied with the progress of the United Nations, 49% dissatisfied and 25% holding no opinion When a group of Veterans were asked the same questions in July



27% were satisfied; 60% were dissatisfied; and 13% held no opinion. In January of this year figures more closely parallel one another. The general public was 39% satisfied; 33% dissatisfied and 28 % held no opinion. The veteran was 41% satisfied; 38% dissatisfied and 21% held no opinion. Mr. Gallup in his analysis of the results states that the public believes in a post war world organization and not a return to isolationism. The Veterans, as well as other citizens, merely feel that the diplomats representing the various countries should talk less and accomplish more.

Does the veteran believe in the Truman- Vandenburg, bipartisan foreign policy, or the Henry A. Wallace approach? The Wallace policy is definitely one of appeasement to Russia or an emphasis on a "Compromise peace".

The present Republican-Democratic bipartisan foreign policy is one of firmness and candor with a de-emphasis on vacillation.

Fortune Magazine in a recent edition questioned veterans as to what man they would favor for our next president. I believe the results of the poll indicate to a large degree just which of the above two foreign policies the veteran does favor. Unfortunately Senator Vandenberg's name was not interjected into the list of possible candidates, but the foreign policy stand of the other men are well enough known so that we can come to some fairly sound conclusions.



The poll showed that Dewey, Stassen, Truman, Wallace and Taft in that order would get the vote of the veteran. There was little difference in the vote for Dewey and Stassen. It should be noted that Wallace ~~and Taft~~ who believes in compromising and Taft who is perhaps the most isolationist of all of our national figures bring up the rear. Stassens views are well known, he is a firm believer in the United Nations and follows the Vandenberg policy closely. In the poll he was one of the leaders. President Truman likewise paced the other two.

I believe that we can rightfully assume from ~~therefrom~~ this that the veterans favor a man or men for President who believe in a firm, non vacillating ^{Fewer like} foreign policy. ~~They don't like~~ Henry Wallace and he epitomizes the opposite point of view to that of Senator Vandenberg. It is quite interesting to note that the man least favored is Senator Taft and he represents the "old school isolationism." ^{World War II} The ~~few~~ Veterans attitude in this regard ^{parallel} ~~is quite a contrast to~~ that exhibited by the veterans of

World War I in the days following their ^{war service except the World War II} veterans wanted principally adequate preparedness while it appears the recent veterans who fought a global war want a global peace. In conclusion let me quote from a letter which states perhaps ~~idealistic~~ idealistically what one soldier fought for in his post war world. He warns

Every time someone says league, or democracy or freedom or international organization, don't think of a definition but think of hundreds of millions of Africans, Indians, Chinese, Tibetans & South Americans who cannot read



check this

or write, who have no conception of their world. They have never seen
or heard of radios, streetcars, vitamins, books but they are people and
I am fighting for them and for their development.

World War I met served relatively a short
time & he supported military preparedness
in interim between I + II
World War II vets who served a much longer
time became closer to the horrors in
in a better position to evaluate cost etc.

51-D-12

