

Statement of
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United States Catholic Conference

to

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In pursuing international justice and world peace our nation's first priority is to work for the replacement of the present international war system--the barbaric and irrational methods for resolving conflicts--by a more civilized and humane system in which justice prevails for all mankind.

As a precondition to this achievement, we acknowledge that, at the present state of the development of a world community, the nation-state has a legitimate responsibility to protect the welfare of its citizens. However, this national goal must not be achieved at the expense of a true worldview. The nation's citizens are obliged always to focus simultaneously on the welfare of the whole human family.

Because of our position in the world, this kind of vision is especially demanded of our nation's political leaders who must extend their thoughts beyond the borders of our nation, and put aside national selfishness and ambition to dominate other nations in any way.

The interests of international peace and justice are not served when the spirit of nationalism and public rhetoric of our government's leaders is such as to delude us into believing that our nation, our ways, our people, are superior to that of any other nation. Such practices work against peace.

When our nation fears its national interests are threatened and the risk of war is imminent, we must seriously examine our intentions to determine the extent to which we are being motivated by fear of the loss of economic advantage; to what degree are nationalistic pretensions involved. Has a desire for the nation's prestige or political domination become determinative; has a spirit of militarism become dominant?

The survival of the planet is implicit in our considerations here today; and, therefore, this presentation--without pretending to be all-inclusive--offers some principles and some expectations for your consideration in planning the Republican Party platform and your Party's subsequent activities.

1. International Community⁽¹⁾

Despite advances in science and technology, nations have been unable, individually, to resolve two basic societal problems: conflicts between nations and imbalance in the distribution of wealth.

It was to resolve these problems that the United Nations was established. We must reluctantly admit, however, that the United Nations is still waiting for its members to give it the authority to settle disputes and to live up to its promise of peace.

Although the United States was a major supporter of the United Nations during its first quarter century, certain recent responses to U.N. needs do no credit to our nation's avowed commitment to the U.N.'s viability. The continued engagement of American Presidents in unilateral actions and big-power summitry when the interests of other nations are directly involved, the Congress' squabbles about funding the United Nations generally and the International Labor Organization specifically, and the American importation of Rhodesian ore which contradicts U.S. government endorsement of the U.N. embargo against Rhodesia are several examples.

Rather than undermine the United Nations by the unilateral use of power, the United States should take positive steps to strengthen the United Nations and its agencies. This calls for acceleration of the process in which the United States and other nations accept a limitation of the power to act unilaterally and an expansion of the obligation to share multilaterally the responsibility of global peace and development.

In this regard, we make the following specific recommendations:

a. We encourage greater use by the United States of the long-established but practically dormant International Court of Justice for the settlement of disputes. As a concrete step in this direction, the Connally Amendment should be repealed since it places preconditioned reservations which permit the nation to judge whether a case falls within the jurisdiction of the Court.

b. We again urge U.S. ratification of the Convention on Genocide and those Conventions which have already been submitted to Congress, e.g., on forced labor and women's political rights. And we urge that others be submitted and ratified, including those on racial discrimination and discrimination in education. Not to do so calls into question the reality of our commitment to our own national ideals.

c. The aims of the Second Development Decade should be fostered. Specifically, a precise percentage of our nation's annual income should be transferred to the under-industrialized and less powerful nations. This specific amount could represent the beginning of a graduated taxation for world development. In making this transfer of capital for the genuine progress of the recipient nations, we must resist efforts to turn their prevailing political situation to our own advantage or seek to dominate them. This would be clearly another form of colonialism, disguised under another name.

d. Fairer prices for raw material and preferential treatment for their exported manufactured goods must be given to growing nations. This is particularly compelling in the name of justice because the commercial relationship between our nation and the poor nations is so asymmetric that the rule of so-called free trade is obviously not capable of regulating world trade with justice. Therefore, deliberate measures must be taken so that the importations from these poorer countries can find adequate markets in the U.S.

Since some American workers may be adversely affected by these measures, justice suggests that the government provide them with financial assistance during periods of adjustment and transition. This would be analagous to government subsidies to farmers and selected industries.

e. Deterioration of the human conditions of non-whites in the Republic of South Africa is of continuing concern to the United Nations. American and other foreign companies are important factors in stabilizing the status quo and strengthening the military potential of South Africa.

The burden of proof lies on those business interests which claim that the economic growth they stimulate provides opportunities for the advancement of the economic, social and human rights of non-whites.

We encourage legislative efforts to bring employment practices of U.S. firms in South Africa into conformity with employment practices in the United States, e.g., equal pay for equal work.

f. The admission into the United Nations of the People's Republic of China is an important step toward making that organization a more realistic international community. Recent efforts by the United States to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China are commendable steps toward substituting negotiation for confrontation in international affairs. Whatever reasons

motivated our policy toward the People's Republic of China for the past several decades, certainly no compelling justification remained for continuing our attempt to isolate the people of mainland China.

Similarly our policy toward Cuba is in need of profound revision. Not only have our efforts at isolating Cuba had adverse political effects, but in human terms, it has caused unnecessary suffering for the people of Cuba. Therefore, we should end this economic blockade against Cuba and normalize our economic relations.

g. The population explosion adds its own difficulties to the problem of development, especially in the developing nations. The temptation is great in our country to check this increase by means of radical measures.

Responsibility for the present problem is primarily attributable to a lack of wisdom in government, on an insufficient sense of social justice, on selfish monopolization, or failures in confronting the efforts and the sacrifices necessary to ensure the raising of living standards of people.

It is certain that governments can intervene, within the limits of their competence, by favoring the availability of appropriate information and by adopting suitable measures, provided these are in conformity with the moral law, and respect the rightful freedom of married couples.

The solution to this question must envisage social and economic progress, and respect and promote true human values.

2. Reliance upon Military Power (2)

a. The arms race must be stopped. Recent agreements between our nation and others, such as the non-proliferation treaty and SALT, are notable advances in this regard. However remarkable these may be, we must admit that the arms race is still with us.

The supreme tragedy of this continuing arms race is that it is unjust as well as irrational. It is unjust on at least two counts. In the first place, the heavy tax burden citizens must bear violates their rights, and this disproportionately high level of spending for military purposes severely affects our nations capability to deal with domestic problems.

Secondly, the developing nations are suffering most from the arms race. Our nation's priorities have become so badly distorted that we are in the untenable position of being "unable" to respond

adequately to the needs of citizens in the less industrialized nations of the world while arsenals hold destructive power equivalent, some estimate, to 15 tons of dynamite for every human person. And the current production of MIRVs is supposed to increase substantially the striking power of the major nuclear nations.

Yet there are those who argue that it is necessary to increase military expenditures to maintain a balance of power. We are not among them. We add our voice to those who say that the military-industrial complex promotes arms production. It is our clear duty to strain every muscle to challenge the need to continue expending precious human energies and natural resources on the development of advanced technological weapons systems, such as MIRV, Trident, F-14's and -15's, B-1 bombers, and laser-guided weapons.

Disarmament is clearly a continuing imperative.

b. The continuing war in Southeast Asia compels us to reiterate three positive recommendations previously stated by the American bishops:⁽³⁾

1) "At this point in history it seems clear to us that whatever good we hope to achieve through continued involvement in this war is now outweighed by the destruction of human life and of moral values which it inflicts. It is our firm conviction, therefore, that the speedy ending of this war is a moral imperative of the highest priority. Hence, we feel a moral obligation to appeal urgently to our nation's leaders and indeed to the leaders of all the nations involved in this tragic conflict to bring the war to an end with no further delay."

2) Our nation has the moral obligation, in consort with other nations, to contribute substantially to the restoration and development of Southeast Asia, once the war is ended. We recognize that "peace is not merely the absence of war, but an enterprise of justice." Therefore, we can do no less than we did after World War II when we launched an unprecedented program of economic assistance and social reconstruction of the war-torn countries.

3) Special concern should be shown to the young men upon whom the burden of this war fell most heavily:

a) We urge strongly on behalf of returning veterans that provisions of the G.I. Bill be increased.

b) We recommend "that the civil authorities grant generous pardon of convictions incurred under the Selective Service Act,

with the understanding that sincere conscientious objectors should remain open in principle to some form of service to the community."

c) The present draft system should be terminated. (4)
"Until recent years, the United States has not drafted men into military service except in times of national emergency. The last two decades have seen a dramatic change in this policy. The nation has continually ceded to its Chief Executive the power to induct men into military service. Even though during much of that period the United States has not actually been engaged in warfare, men have been inducted. This has amounted, at times, to peacetime military conscription, which the Catholic hierarchy has repeatedly opposed in the past."

Our opposition to this system is precisely because such service has been a contributing cause of the breeding of wars for more than a century, and has become a part of the great armaments and armed peace security delusion.

"Congress should end the present draft system 1) by allowing the Selective Service Act of 1967 to expire; 2) by initiating a standby draft system for times of national emergency and as a temporary measure for providing manpower during a period of transition to an all-volunteer army; and 3) by providing the means for the establishment of an all-volunteer army."

In the event that it becomes necessary to conscript persons into military service, the law should prohibit the drafting of selective conscientious objectors as well as conscientious objectors. "The selective conscientious objector should be given the same provision under the law as the conscientious objector, providing his objection is well-founded and constitutes a sincerely held moral conviction."

Furthermore, provisions for alternative service for properly classified objectors should be purged of efforts to be punitive.

"We also oppose the proposals for a compulsory National Service Corps. It is not clear that the country's non-military needs (such as health, education, welfare, social service) would be well-served by nationalization of the youth work force. We oppose this plan as we have opposed in the past other forms of compulsory service during peacetime."

3. Some New Directions

a. World Fund. In this post-Hiroshima era, with the frightful prospect of war threatening to devastate the planet, men are compelled to undertake an evaluation of war with an entirely new

attitude. If war is ever to be replaced by more humane and enlightened institutions, it will be because citizens have insisted on principles of non-violence.

In the light of the profound issues involved in modern warfare and its impact on personal conscience, we seek to interpret and apply to the current situation the insights of the Second Vatican Council. We therefore welcome the enlightened legislation that provides non-military alternatives for persons who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms, and thereby withhold their person from being used for military objectives.

In addition to young men subject to conscription, many men and women in our society object for reasons of conscience to military involvement. However, they have no lawful way to withhold their participation in that involvement. To object to paying taxes to support massive military programs so long as the citizen is willing to pay taxes to support valid alternatives is similar to refusing in conscience to participate personally in warfare and to serve the common good in an alternative way.

We therefore encourage those who are currently designing legislation to provide alternatives which respect war objector's rights in conscience. Notable among such efforts is proposed legislation which offers citizens the option of allocating portions of their tax payment to fund peace- and development-oriented purposes, e.g., peace institutes, the U.N. Development Programme, U.N. peacekeeping. These noble plans are essential steps toward the establishment of a great fund, to be made up of part of the money formerly spent on arms, to relieve the most destitute of this world.

b. International Regulations. (5) The developing nations will be unable to procure the necessary material assistance unless the practices of the modern business world undergo a profound change. While an enormous mass of people around the world lack the absolute necessities of life, giant private enterprises strive to gain supremacy over nations, creating an international imperialism whose country is where profit is. These private corporations can conduct autonomous strategies which are largely independent of the national political powers, not subject to control from the point of view of the common good.

Fifty percent of the direct foreign investments in all of the nations of the Third World is U.S. capital. Because of the enormity of the U.S. private investment overseas and the desperate needs of so many of the world's population, we urge the creation of an international authority to regulate effectively the exercise of power and transfer of profits by private overseas investors.

c. Patrimony of Mankind. The new preoccupation with preserving the human environment merits our serious attention. Highly industrialized nations have no right to claim increased use of the earth's resources if the consequence is either that other nations remain in misery or that the physical foundations of life on earth are jeopardized. Justice requires the richer nations to accept a less materially exhausting life style, so as to avoid the destruction of the common heritage to which all members of the human family are entitled.

As positive moves in this direction we recommend the following course of action:

1) In man's continuing effort to improve his social systems we have come to the point in history where one expression of the common inheritance or patrimony of mankind is an economic instrumentality known as Special Drawing Rights (SDR's) or "Paper Gold" created by the International Monetary Fund.

Distribution formulae for SDR's are now in an incipient and crude stage, and largely benefit the strongest nations. We recommend that the United States give special attention to the creation of a more refined system of distribution, one that would be more just in its consequences, that is, favor the less developed countries.

If this were done, not only would equity and justice be more clearly served since the LDC's have in fact made great contributions to the world's economic growth, but the SDR's could become an international instrument of transfer of economic aid from the developed nations to the less developed in a manner largely free of narrow national self-interests.

2) One of the last remaining frontiers outside the sovereign jurisdiction of nations, is the so-called "high seas," comprising 70% of the earth's surface. The seabeds contain unmeasured quantities of wealth. In 1970, the United Nations passed the historic Declaration of Principles Governing the Seabed and Ocean Floor. The Declaration proclaims that, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, the seabed and its resources are the common heritage of mankind, not subject to the claims of any state, and that the area should be controlled by an international regime.

In August 1970, the United States proposed a draft seabed treaty which defines jurisdiction of the seabed. A notable feature of the proposal is that the resources of the deep ocean floor would be under the jurisdiction of an international regime, and that revenues collected from their sale be used for international development purposes.

We submit that this proposed seabed treaty warrants serious promotion by the United States, and efforts of various interests, including Americans, to pass national legislation which circumvents its measures should be vigorously resisted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is critical that Americans increase their consciousness of several global phenomena of major proportions. The first is that people all over the planet yearn to free themselves from dependence and exploitation. This is expressed in an awareness of their right to develop as they see fit. However, this movement is impeded by systematic barriers and obstacles which tend to re-inforce existing patterns of production and distribution. These stifling conditions oppress great numbers of "marginal" persons and nations who are denied human necessities.

Secondly, developing countries are threatened with a new form of colonialism and may become victims of the interplay of international economic forces. The United States has a grave obligation in this matter because of its powerful role in world affairs. We are both part of the cause of the problem and potentially part of its solution.

It is therefore necessary that our political leadership courageously undertake revisions in the relationships between nations, whether it is a question of the international division of production, the structure of exchanges, the control of profits, the monetary system. In all of this review, however, the overriding consideration must be solidarity with all men, a prior call to international duty.

Footnotes

1. Cf. USCC Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations, April 1970.
2. Cf. Cardinal Krol's Address at the Roman Synod, 1971.
3. Cf. NCCB Resolution on Southeast Asia, November 1971.
4. Cf. USCC Congressional Testimony on Military Conscription, March 1971; cf. USCC Declaration on Conscientious Objection and Selective Conscientious Objection, October 1971.
5. Cf. USCC Congressional Testimony on Economic Power, March 1972.

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