The Organization of the United Nations
January 10, 1947

Adlai Stevenson II's Speech on the Organization of the United Nations
Springfield, Illinois

Excerpt:

Thanks to UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration] we have hurdled the first great barrier to a healthy, peaceful world—mass starvation. By international organization the lives of fifteen million people have been saved. Five and one-half million displaced persons have been repatriated. The work of reconstruction has commenced; hope has been rekindled. Agricultural production is climbing up in spite of the shortages of fertilizer and machinery; industry and commerce arc struggling out of the rubble. I confess that the revival, with all its distressing shortcomings, has been far better than I foresaw from my own observations among just liberated people in Italy, Europe and England during the war.

Background:

Adlai Stevenson played an influential role in the formation of the United Nations (UN). From the rubble of World War II, forward-thinking diplomats such as Stevenson worked together to form a new international organization. They believed the UN could facilitate cooperation in international law, economic development, human rights, and many other issues. They also hoped the UN could promote peace and understanding among nations and peoples, and thus prevent global bloodlettings like the Second World War.

Stevenson participated in UN organizing conferences in San Francisco in May-June 1945, and London in the fall and winter of 1946. In England, Stevenson took charge of the American delegation when Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. became ill. "It was the most exacting, interesting and in many ways the most important interval of my life," he noted later.

Stevenson delivered this speech before a Springfield public library forum. He stressed the importance of remaining engaged in international affairs. The U.S. was the only world power that escaped widespread ruin during the war. The U.S. also stood opposite the emerging superpower, the Soviet Union. As such, Stevenson argued that U.S. had an economic and moral responsibility to make the UN an effective force for good in the world.

The postwar years offered both hope and fear. The U.S. and the Soviet Union,

allied to defeat Hitler's Germany, were now enemies. The two countries, as well the entire world, were entering an era known as the Cold War. "We awoke to discover, as many had foretold, that making peace was harder than making war, and the obstacles and hazards infinitely more difficult to understand and evaluate," Stevenson remarked.

Stevenson was no wild-eyed dreamer. He knew the United Nations was an "imperfect instrument" for world peace and prosperity. Yet he also believed in its promise. In this speech, he touted the success of UN "subsidiary organizations." These groups grappled with problems ranging from hunger to trade. "We have come a long way in a short while," he said.

The UN, Stevenson hoped, would do much to "forge the links in the chain that binds the world together." Sometimes these links were forged simply by listening and working side-by-side with international neighbors. "Best of all, men—men of all colors, creeds and cultures; sober, serious, responsible men—are learning to work together, learning more and more about one another," Stevenson said of the UN. "The nations of the world are sitting around a table together—not one table but many tables—day after day."

FULL TEXT of speech on the organization of the United Nations, January 10, 1947, Springfield, Illinois:

Just about 30 years ago I was a student in this school [Stevenson attended school in Springfield in 1915 while his father was secretary of state] although I am sorry to say, not in this splendid modern building. That old red brick building, which as I recall, incorporated most of the monstrosities of the General Grant architectural period, should have made an historian out of me. But it didn't. I hope none of my old teachers are here to testify how little it did make out of me! I recall that in contrast to the school I had gone to, the classes were very large and my classmates looked very large too. I was a new boy and I was so frightened that when they called on me to recite one of two disasters always overtook me—either I was paralyzed with fright and couldn't speak at all, or I talked nervously without the slightest idea what I was saying. Unhappily paralysis usually overtook me when I knew the answer and a torrent of words ushered forth when I didn't!

I've thought of that agony subsequently—sometimes laterally when I suddenly discovered myself in the middle of a vigorous speech at one of these international conferences without any very clear idea of what I was talking about or where I was going.

I'm afraid I'm like the old lady from Vermont who said she didn't know what she thought until she heard what she said!…

But I'm wandering. I came here to give a lecture. I'm an amateur, but I'm reliably informed that lecturers must start by expressing their appreciation and pleasure. That's easy for me because Springfield has been my home—and who doesn't like to come home—particularly if you are paid for it!

Anyway I am very glad and honored to be here—as a lecturer and not a student, and you can now settle down to a dreary address that will have only one certain conclusion—that you won't invite me again!

Just 18 months ago the bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Just a year and a half ago we awoke from the greatest celebration of the greatest victory over the greatest menace in history. And we awoke with the uneasy realization that our troubles had just begun—that what was finished was just an episode, albeit a critical episode, in the headlong history of our generation. We awoke to discover that the world was restive, that there was a ferment of new ideas all about us, that the delicate balances of the old world had been consumed in the fire, and that a startling new apparition had taken a prominent place at the table. And we don't yet know whether atomic energy is friend or foe. We awoke to discover that our war-born honeymoon with the Soviet Union had unceremoniously ended, and she had become surprisingly aggressive, truculent and suspicious.

We awoke to discover, as many had foretold, that making peace was harder than making war, and the obstacles and hazards infinitely more difficult to understand and evaluate.

There was no war leader with resonance to give us all a text; no one to say "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." Roosevelt was dead; Churchill was out of office, and Stalin doesn't talk that way.

At San Francisco in May and June, then in London in the fall and winter of that first year of peace I became increasingly conscious that people were troubled about the United States. There were many here and more abroad who were apprehensive that we couldn't take it—that after a few frustrated efforts to mold the world according to our liking we would withdraw, mumbling "to Hell with it," slam the door and pull down the shades. There may have been those who hoped the United States would do just that.

But we haven't! We've stuck to the distasteful job of binding up the ugly wounds of a mutilated world, along with a lot of other doctors with very different ideas. We have stuck to it with patience and perseverance—I think with malice toward none, with charity for all, but time will have to pronounce that judgment. And we have been at it for 18 months now—months in which we have, as usual, traversed the whole spectrum of emotion. In 1862 Joseph Medill of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote that the Union cause was all but hopeless. And I recall vividly from my own experience in the Navy Department the excesses of pessimism and optimism in the early days of this war.

It has been the same in the months of peace. The illusion that the United Nations was a substitute for power politics and a guarantee of automatic peace gave way to black despair, to talk of another war. Now, happily, these violent fluctuations of opinion seem

to be leveling off; we are beginning to realize that a cooperative organization of sovereign states can only function thru the instrumentality of international politics, and that the U.N. as such cannot coerce any great power into the path of peace. Our people are coming to realize, I think, that this generation of Americans can never relax; that world peace on an equitable and permanent basis cannot be built in 18 months, or 18 years; that the price of permanent peace is permanent effort to develop an imperfect instrument into a more perfect union of the peoples of the world.

How would an inventory, a trial balance on the 18 months since hostilities ceased, look? On the positive side I'll mention a few important achievements.

First of all the United States, as I have said, has given unmistakable evidence that, politically at least, it is in the world to stay. The concept of security through isolation is dead, and un-mourned. We paid a ghastly price to learn that peace is indivisible, but we learned it for keeps. Instead of refusing even to follow, as we did 25 years ago, we are now leading in the strengthening of international concepts. From my own observation and experience I can say that I very much doubt if there would be a UN at all if it had not been for the American initiative first at Dumbarton Oaks, then at Yalta, then at S.F., then at London with the cooperative participation of other nations growing in intensity with each successive step. Our conversion proves that facts and reason and time can revise a nation's approach to world problems. And that is something to remember when you feel that your patience with the Soviet Union is about to snap.

In the next place—thanks to UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration] —we have hurdled the first great barrier to a healthy, peaceful world—mass starvation. By international organization the lives of fifteen million people have been saved. Five and one-half million displaced persons have been repatriated. The work of reconstruction has commenced; hope has been rekindled. Agricultural production is climbing up in spite of the shortages of fertilizer and machinery; industry and commerce arc struggling out of the rubble. I confess that the revival, with all its distressing shortcomings, has been far better than I foresaw from my own observations among just liberated people in Italy, Europe and England during the war.

But the crisis is not past. Starvation will stalk thru Europe again this spring before the next harvest unless we and other countries send more free relief, particularly to Austria, Italy, Greece and Poland. And I was delighted to see that Secretary Marshall has asked Congress for $250 million and has placed relief at the top of his list of legislative "musts."

But the worst is over and where the needs just for survival were universal, now they are scattered. (The cold that has paralyzed long suffering Britain and all of Europe gives me an all too vivid impression of human suffering and lost production, because I have shivered and shaken thru the unheated horrors of a normal winter in Naples, Paris and London these last few years.)

Some political danger spots have been erased during these first months of peace. The

British and the French promptly withdrew their forces from Syria and Lebanon after the latter complained to the Security Council of the UN. The Russians finally pulled out of Iran after firm persistent goading by the Security Council.

After months of deadlock and exhausting negotiation, patience and compromise have produced peace treaties for Italy and the Axis satellites, Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The Italian-Yugoslav frontier has been settled, a statute for the internationalization of Trieste has been agreed upon, and the principle of equality of economic opportunity in the Balkans and freedom of navigation on the Danube has at least been solemnly recognized.

The liquidation of the awful legacy of war is well under way, and Secretary Byrnes has earned the everlasting gratitude of his countrymen, and in my estimation an imperishable monument for patience and resourcefulness.

Finally, the UN, which was but paper when the bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is functioning with a vigor and enthusiasm that a cynical segment of the press discounted too soon. The General Assembly, sooner than many expected, has become a center where the collective opinion of the world community can powerfully influence the course of events. The Security Council is an open forum for the discussion of any question affecting peace and security, and is about to attack the control of atomic energy and the regulation of armaments under a system of international inspection. The acceptance of the principle of international inspection alone is as promising for future peace as anything that has happened since the war. The Economic and Social Council and its commissions are working across the whole front from an international bill of rights to the economic integration of continents. The Trusteeship Council has been established and a new day has dawned for the many millions of dependent and non-self-governing peoples. The new International Court of Justice has been established. Fifteen years ago we would not join the World Court. Today we have even accepted its compulsory jurisdiction!

Subsidiary organizations have been established. UNESCO [United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization] is now beginning to function to repair the ravages of the war and extend education, science and culture in a world more than half illiterate, where science knows no frontiers and wars begin in the minds of men. We are in sight of the day when, for the first time, there will be enough to eat in the world, and the FAO [Food and Agricultural Organization] is attacking the basic problems of hunger and malnutrition. The International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Labor Office, the International Health Organization are operating. The International Bank is about to make large reconstruction and development loans. The International Monetary Fund is in operation to stabilize currencies. The General Assembly created an International Refugee Organization to take over the care, repatriation or resettlement of some 850,000 refugees who constitute one of the saddest chapters in the epilogue of the war.

Last and perhaps most important is the development of an International Trade Organization to which our government attaches such importance and such hope, because

we know that prosperity, like peace, is indivisible, and that barriers to the expansion of international trade are barriers to peace.

It is an impressive record. We have come a long way in a short while. The weapons of peace have been forged under the urgency of the terrible memory of two world wars in a quarter century, and in the shadow of a still more perilous future. They have been forged by men who dared not contemplate failure.

Best of all, men—men of all colors, creeds and cultures; sober, serious, responsible men—are learning to work together, learning more and more about one another. The nations of the world are sitting around a table together—not one table but many tables—day after day.

It reminds me of a story Woodrow Wilson was fond of telling—a story about Charles Lamb, who said he hated a certain man. Someone said, "But Charles, 1 didn't know you even knew him." "1 don't," said Lamb, "1 can't hate a man 1 know." 1 can testify that it is an encouraging spectacle to see men, not trained diplomats, but politicians, the people's leaders, from all the corners of the earth, from large nations and small, from regions which differ so widely in their attitudes and degrees of development, arguing their points of view for all to hear—fighting for their interests in a goldfish bowl, sometimes heatedly—and then going out to lunch together—or more often to the bar—to talk it over.

I recall so well the day that Ernest Bevin and Vyshinsky [Andrei Vyshinsky] exchanged verbal blows and insults in London for several violent hours, and then when Vychinsky had the last word, as he always did, he reached across the table, still apoplectic with anger, to shake Bevin's hand.

We, the United States, are very conspicuous at those tables—and we are at all of them—because we are the richest and most powerful nation on earth, and therefore have the most to lose if the great experiment fails.

So much for the credit side of our trial balance. How about the debit side?

First, in the Western Hemisphere, our backyard, all is not well. The Act of Chapultepec is almost two years old, and the Argentine has not yet fulfilled her commitments. The other republics don't like it, but they don't like our relentless insistence on strict compliance either. And none of us like the long delay in calling the Rio conference and the implementation of our regional defense [The Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Continental Peace and Security met in Rio de Janeiro, August 15 to September 2, 1947]. It was agreed that an armed attack upon one American state was considered an attack on all. There have been revolutions in South America, bloody and bloodless, and there is widespread political instability. Communist party strength has increased rapidly. A short while ago they claimed a victory in the Governorship election in Sao Paulo, the richest state in Brazil.

At one end of the Mediterranean a Fascist tyrant who actively aided our enemies still rules long suffering Spain with bayonets. Argentina has just sent an Ambassador to Madrid in defiance of the United Nations Assembly decision on Franco [Among the decisions dealing with Franco Spain adopted by the General Assembly on December 12, 1946, was the recommendation that member states withdraw their chiefs of mission from Madrid]. At the other end of the Mediterranean a weak Greek government is confronted with almost insurmountable obstacles to the rescue of that unhappy, impoverished, divided country. China, which we have backed so heavily—in population the largest nation in the world, one of the "Big 5" powers and our hope for stability in the Orient—is still floundering in the morass of civil war and impotence. For Palestine no solution has yet been found acceptable to the Zionists that won't arouse the Arab world which occupies such a strategic section of the globe. Political reconciliation of the Hindus and Moslems in turbulent India seems to be making little progress.

Poland has a Communist President and Foreign Minister. The elections were a cynical mockery of the Yalta and Potsdam pledges of representative government through free and fair elections.

Worst of all Europe, which is so interdependent economically, is sharply and dangerously divided politically between East and West. Two world wars have sharply diminished Britain's power and increased her political, economic and military vulnerability.

I could mention the slow progress toward providing the UN with military forces; irregularities (to use a diplomatic word) in the collection of reparations, and many other things you might choose to put on the liability side of our 18-month balance sheet. But one thing I do want to mention. It has little to do with the balance sheet, but its murmuring fills the air and for the future it dwarfs the details of our accounting.

Asia, the most densely populated area of the world—more than half mankind—is struggling to rid itself of its European masters. China, India, Indonesia, Indo-China—the dark colonial peoples—are in revolt at the moment of Europe's greatest weakness. It is the twilight of Empire as we've known it. The French and American liberation movements have reached the older civilizations of the Orient. And as our revolutions sparked the industrial transformation of the west, the decline of colonialism will accelerate the greater industrial revolution of the east.

Here are markets for our vast surplus production—markets on which our prosperity will some day depend. And here are millions and millions who know but little of the blessings of democracy and private enterprise; millions who will be our friends if we, who freed the Philippines, behave like their friends, and don't forget our own revolutionary childhood. Rebellion and insurrection are seed beds of war. While we deplore disorder, we must not be the complacent champion of status quo or injustice either. We must not find ourselves on the defensive, resisting the same natural, normal aspirations that brought our republic to birth. As the oldest revolutionary democracy we have a great opportunity and a great responsibility to moderate an evolution in Asia which will have much to do with our future security and prosperity.

On balance perhaps the progress of the last 18 months is surprisingly good. But I hope I've said enough to leave no complacency. And I haven't even mentioned Germany and Austria, about which you will hear so much for months to come while the victorious powers are engaged in their longest, hardest and most decisive negotiations. They may take two years, and somewhere beyond the German and Austrian peace treaties—if we get over that hurdle—lies Japan, where similar conflicting plans and interests will arise before a treaty is signed. Meanwhile, the future of the Italian colonies in Africa has not been settled and we can rely on Russia to press stubbornly her claim to a trusteeship on the shores of the Mediterranean. Nor have we seen the end of pressure on Iran, and on Turkey for control of the Dardanelles, a strategic Russian ambition that long pre-dates the Bolshevik revolution [In March, 1947, President Truman announced the Truman Doctrine for economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey].

All these differences and tensions—some old and some begotten by war and change which is the order of life—will have to be met one by one. Some can be compromised and settled, some may not be; new ones will arise, and we will be busy for a long, long time to come forging the links in the chain that binds the world together. We must keep the whole in perspective and not lose sight of the chain because of our preoccupation or irritation with the links. We have chosen the path of international organization instead of international anarchy, and thru the Council of Foreign Ministers and the United Nations and all its agencies better machinery and a better workshop is at hand than ever before. And everyone is using it, night and day, impelled by the terrible urgency that sobered our celebration the morning after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Whether and how soon the war can be liquidated, how soon the present acute tensions will be relaxed, will depend in large measure—as everyone tells you and as you will quickly discover in an international conference—on the United States of America—on the health, wealth and wisdom of the United States.

But the liquidation of the war, like the war itself, is only an episode. When it's finished what a moment ago I called the paramount objective of our generation—the establishment of world peace on an equitable and permanent basis—will still stretch out before us as far as we can see. We must not be lulled to sleep because a few links in the chain have been forged. Even they may not hold. First solutions are not always final solutions. The evolution of the United Nations and the rule of law, like all human institutions, must be progressive and perpetual.

But, of course, international cooperation is not the only way to secure the peace. The Romans did it by dominating the known world—for a while. Others have tried that method, but they have all failed disastrously. There may be another way—universal intellectual conformity. Maybe the Russians think that's the only sure road to security. Maybe they propose, if they can, to carry the doctrine of one world still farther to one Communist, one Soviet, world by gradually eliminating all philosophical dissent. I don't know. But I do know that thus far they have shown no indifference to the United Nations as "a center," in the words of the Charter, "for harmonizing the actions of nations in the

attainment of their common ends" of peace, security and human welfare. On the contrary, their participation has been vigorous and positive and, of course, self-interested.

The prestige of the Soviet Union has reached a level few could foresee before the war. Overnight Soviet influence has been extended from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and into Korea, Manchuria and North China how far we don't know. Greece and France are political battlegrounds. Scandinavia is uneasy. The Middle East and all of Asia feel the ferment. South America is not untouched. The Red Army occupies half of Germany.

There are those—many of them in Europe—who say with despair that Communism is the wave of the future.

But all these familiar facts don't prove that Communism is the wave of the future. It made little progress beyond the borders of Russia between the wars. It has made little since, except by force. Love and fear may produce the same apparent results, but they must not be confused. These facts don't prove that the human spirit's thirst for freedom has been quenched. They don't prove that we have surrendered the citadel of the spirit. At Edwardsville in 1858 Lincoln said— "Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own door." They don't prove that this spirit has been destroyed. They don't even prove the adequacy of the Soviet system for other peoples. But they may reveal disillusionment about democracy. And they do prove that the Soviet Union is going to compete for the allegiance of men everywhere with all the power and influence it possesses, and with an idea that may have a lot of validity for the myriads of the wretched around the world who are groping for material betterment. We may despise communist cruelty, repression and subordination of human values, but we recognize and respect everyone's right to believe as he pleases. Obviously, we Americans would like to see the whole world free and democratic in our image. Why wouldn't the Russians, who believe in their system, we must assume, as devoutly as we believe in ours, want to see the world conform to their ideology? But we are not afraid of competition. We have not lost faith in our way of life—in the sacredness of the individual. All we ask, all we insist upon, is fair competition, live and let live, tolerance.

Whether the Russian objective is world Communism, Imperialist expansion, just its own security, or all of them, it's a contest between ways of life which will last for a long time. I have called it "the 30 years war" —a war not with weapons but with ideas—socialist, communist and capitalist ideas.

The outcome, the hope for enduring peace, depends on you and me, because we are Americans. It depends on the health, wealth and wisdom of the United States.

Health, because if we can't revalidate our system—if we can't make it work at home it will make few converts abroad.

Wealth, because we have most of it, and freedom-loving peoples everywhere are turning to us for assistance.

Wisdom, because we must resolutely lead the perilous way to accommodation between basic differences.

First, as to our health. How can we expect to enlist the masses of mankind under freedom's shining banner when it is stained with bigotry, intolerance and discrimination? It's time we stopped compromising convictions, democratic ideals and, yes, constitutional guarantees. Racial and religious discrimination, double standards of citizenship and oppression are not democratic. They are not Christian. And don't think we are fooling anyone, particularly the Asiatics. You can be sure that they are hearing all about the fire hazards in our basement.

No form of government calls for such intelligence, public spirit and civic virtue as a free democracy. Forty years ago James Bryce said that the greatest obstacles to the success of our democracy were private self interest, excessive partisanship and the sin of indolence. That's still true, and the worst of these, in my opinion, is indolence. He said it consisted of a neglect to inform oneself on public issues and to vote, and in an unwillingness to serve in public office. Indolence contradicts the basic assumption of classical democracy that the average man must be an active, instructed and intelligent ruler of his country. As in the physical body, indolence is a symptom of disease in the body politic.

Somebody once said that "your public servants serve you right." The competence and courage of the people who make and execute American policy is up to you. And the best won't be any too good if our costly, cumbersome, contentious governmental system is going to compete successfully. In the foreign field the best won't be good enough if the people behind them can be diverted by demagogues and newspapers preaching fear and malice toward all.

It would be a wholesome sign if we clamored a little less about our rights as American citizens and reflected a little more about our responsibilities as free men.

And how about our economic health? Our free enterprise system has not demonstrated that it can insure steady production and employment and equitable distribution. Another severe economic depression will drag the economies of our friends down into chaos with ours, just when they are hoping, praying, that with our help and example they can recover their economic equilibrium.

I have no doubt that the Soviet leaders confidently expect severe economic disorder in this country, and with it the extinction of capitalism. Perhaps they view the prospect with mingled feelings. On the one hand the collapse and the disintegration of our economic power would leave little obstacle to Russian expansion in the ensuing chaos. On the other, they may fear that capitalism will try to fight its way out in one last convulsive struggle. The Russians are not alone; many, many people, wise people, democratic people, look upon us as a dangerously unstable giant in the china closet of the world.

If the freest society on earth can't solve its social and economic problems, will the ideals

of democracy and liberty become meaningless to the masses of shoeless spectators around the world? I might even ask you if they will become meaningless to us?

Our political achievements in foreign policy have been impressive. But foreign policy is both economic and political and the halves are no more effective than the whole. "We cannot," as Secretary Byrnes said in his farewell speech, "abandon the policy of political isolation unless we abandon the policy of economic isolation." We still have to see how this Republican Congress will interpret the bi-partisan foreign policy which it has endorsed in terms of tariff, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction [in the 1946 elections the Republicans won control of both houses of Congress]. There have been some disquieting signs. Senator [Robert A.] Taft's position is not clear. The tariff lobbyists are gathering in Washington. Senator [Hugh] Butler calls the reciprocal Trade Agreement Act "a gigantic hoax on the American people." Congressman [Chauncey W.] Reed of Illinois has threatened to introduce a bill to wipe off the books an act which has brought a reduction of 31 percent in average import duties from the Smoot-Hawley Act level of 1930.

Such moves would erase the hopes aroused by our political diplomacy that the United States is going to use its power and prestige for positive leadership to economic security and sanity. And in helping to put economic relations on a healthier basis by wise lending and by active stimulation of foreign trade we are not playing Santa Claus. We are helping ourselves, because no nation in these times can long enjoy a rising standard of living without increasing foreign trade; particularly our country with its vast productive potential, threatened with the specter of mass unemployment. And we can't sell if we don't buy. Everyone's prosperity is our prosperity. America's bread is buttered on the same side as the rest of the world's.

A full belly is a better obstacle to communism than a bayonet. But words alone won't fill many bellies, especially words that have already lost most of their meaning. The easy and eloquent self confidence with which we Americans still prescribe capitalist free enterprise, which made this country great, as the remedy for the world's economic anguish is a dangerous symptom of ignorance. We dare not confuse myths with facts. We dare not disregard the unhappy fact that capitalist free enterprise is almost extinct except in this country, and even here it is no longer very free. The world has gone socialist. The choice most peoples face is not so much between the capitalist way of life and the communist; rather it is a choice between socialism and communism. And it is socialism that doctrinaire communism detests and fears most of all, because the socialists promise economic and social security in a planned economy, and also protection of the fundamental personal freedoms. That's a promise the communists can't better, because communism is the negation of freedom.

Yes, our friends are socialists; governments of the non-communist left. To protect our way of life we must help them. Paradoxically the survival of socialism seems to depend on American capitalism!

We can't lead from ignorance, and there are some other myths we can ill afford. One is

that we can somehow purchase passive acquiescence from the Russians. But when we talk of overcoming the Soviet ideological concept we are talking of overcoming not only a social—a political concept but also the most basic and deepest elements of traditional Russian thought. We are not dealing with individuals, whims or personalities, but on the one hand with deep-seated habits of thought, conceptions and ways of looking at the world formed over the space of centuries, and on the other with the magic of a great idea.

Diplomatic dispatches from the American Ambassadors to Czar Nicholas II regarding the suspicion of foreigners, spying, the difficulty of obtaining information, etc., written in the eighteen fifties, another period of intense Russian Nationalism, almost 100 years ago could be written today to the slightest detail. Nor is there anything new in the messianic quality. From early times a thread of superstition runs thru this people, who have never known friendly neighbors, that they were destined to conquer the world. Witness the old idea of Mother Russia. The concept of Holy Russia extended as far as Orthodoxy. In the days of Czar Ivan the Terrible they spoke of Moscow as "the third Rome."

Like all those who hold beliefs with fanatic conviction the Soviets will seek to propagate theirs, without dilution or compromise. The idea that we can somehow buyout Soviet evangelism is foolish and insulting. We can't convert them with honey any more than they can convert us with vinegar.

But a worse myth is that conflict is inevitable. It is not inevitable. In his speech in the General Assembly Molotov laid emphasis on the concept of the "peaceful competition" of divergent systems. If we can contain the dynamic, centrifugal force of Soviet power and the Soviet idea long enough it will slow down and evolve peacefully—and we can save the friendly Russian people and ourselves from catastrophe. If we are afraid we will fail; if we are impatient and arrogant we will fail; if we are weak and insecure we will fail; if we are unjust we deserve to fail.

I have said more than enough to express my views.

The paramount objective of this generation everywhere is peace on an equitable and permanent basis.

The United Nations is the organized conscience and will of the community of nations. It is an arena, a forum of incalculable influence for peace and progress.

But the work of making and keeping peace has just begun and the end is distant, the perils many.

Failure is death, and success depends on the United States most of all.

It depends on our political health. We can't lead if our own free way of life doesn't work and work well. If we can't solve our problems at home we won't solve many abroad.

Success depends on our economic health. Prosperity like peace is indivisible. The best

assurance of peace and human freedom is the economic stability of this country and the progressive improvement of the condition of the common people everywhere.

Success depends on the wisdom, vision and the courage of our statesmanship, and the moral and physical strength behind it. If we have the statesmanship—labor, management, agriculture, as well as government—tomorrow will be the golden age.

There is nothing to fear save our own cupidity, short-sightedness and weakness. With malice toward none, with faith and tolerance, there is nothing to fear but our own default.

— Adlai E. Stevenson II

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Discussion Questions:

1. What is international law? Did Stevenson believe in international law?
2. How was international law to be enforced?
3. How might the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have affected Stevenson's view of the need for the United Nations?
4. Why did Stevenson believe the United States was in the best position to lead a postwar world order?
5. What did Adlai mean when he said, "...barriers to international trade are barriers to peace"?
6. How does Stevenson differentiate socialism from communism? What does he say about the relationship between socialism and American capitalism?

Keywords: United Nations, UN, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, UNRRA, 1940s, League of Nations, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, isolationism, communism, socialism, colonialism, Marshall Plan, UN Security Council, Axis powers, UN General Assembly, "United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization," UNESCO, Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Labor Office, International Health Organization, International Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Trade Organization, Ernest Bevin, Andrei Vyshinsky, Act of Chapultepec, Zionism, Partition of India, Cold War, American Democracy, discrimination, American Communist Party, Robert Taft, Vyacheslav Molotov