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# National Security Management in a Democratic Society

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[The following is a reprint of an address presented by Mr. McKalip on 23 April 1993 in Dakar, Senegal to a group of senior African government officials. These officials were attending a two-week Defense Resource Management Seminar under the auspices of the IMET-Initiative program, and represented 11 African countries: Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.]

Thank you for the opportunity to address the members of the Defense Resource Management Seminar in which you are participating. Thank you for taking the time from the important duties which you have left in your governments to attend this gathering. And, especially, thank you, Senegal, for hosting this gathering of 38 high officials from 11 French-speaking nations of Africa.

The purpose of this two-week gathering has been to discuss in detail the decision-making process involved in allocating resources among competing requirements. This is a problem which confronts all governments of the world, even those of relative rich countries. It will get worse, rather than better, and increasingly better educated and better informed, and growing populations demand more services from their governments. Experience shows that resources do not keep pace with expectations.

But, it is not my intent to speak again to resource management; others have presented this subject during the past two weeks far better than I can. I want to speak to the expectations of our peoples—those citizens of our countries with whom our governments have made a social contract. They have granted us the privilege of leadership; they have rendered themselves vulnerable to the greater power of their governments in return for a social order which allows them to participate and to make choices. In return they expect much, and they have a right to do so.

I will begin with a 1963 quote from the then American Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Adlai Stevenson, who said:

There is little dignity or equality in our natural state. Most human beings spend their lives in utter vulnerability. All are born unequal, in terms of capacity or strength, and survive only through the restraint shown by more powerful neighbors. For years we have struggled to create a social order in which men can exercise free and responsible choice.

Whether democracy can prevail in our time is a valid question. We have good reason to know how clumsy, slow, inefficient, and costly democracy is compared to the swiftness, certainty, and secrecy of absolutism. But the important thing is that it has survived. The important thing is that even the absolutists masquerade

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as democrats. The enemies of freedom miss the essential point that man is greater than the social purposes to which he can be put. He must not be kicked about. He is not a means or an instrument. He is an end in himself.

This is the essence of what we mean by democracy—not just voting systems or parliamentary systems, or economic or legal systems, although they all enter in. It is an irrevocable and final dedication to the dignity of man. In this sense democracy is perhaps mankind's most daring experiment.

It is very difficult to be a government official today. We are all striving for democratic rule, the participation of the governed in their government. A consensus that satisfies the majority while protecting the minority is the goal. This must be achieved with limits to our resources and for a population which is over-informed but often not sufficiently educated. They want it done now and with little sacrifice on their part.

It is even more difficult to be an official in the defense establishment of a government. Defense establishments are viewed by the nation's leadership as a necessary cost for maintaining sovereignty and internal security. Others—usually the loyal opposition—argue that armed forces are a waste of scarce resources and an instrument for maintaining the status quo. And, yet, nations around the world have found that their defense establishments contain exceptional capabilities that are essential to the day-to-day tasks that confront them.

In Bangladesh the armed forces annually provide the assistance needed by the population after the devastating cyclones and floods. In Niger military engineers build a major airfield in the northern reaches of the country. In the United States, the Army, Navy, and Air Force took charge of relief efforts following historic hurricane damage in Florida. Why? Because the defense establishment alone has equipment, trained personnel, and a command and control capability not found in the other sectors of society. And, because those working in the defense establishment of a nation are—or should be—disciplined and dedicated to the needs of their people.

This, as I see it, is where you come in and what the past two weeks are all about. As selected leaders of the defense establishments of the countries which you represent, you have been given the great responsibility for creating and sustaining an appropriate military structure within your state—and of controlling it. You must determine the realistic military requirements of your country, you must seek adequate levels of funding to satisfy these requirements, and you must then field the best military force that you can with the resources that are available. And, I assure you that there will never be sufficient resources.

In my trips throughout the world, I regularly come upon nations with inappropriately sized and organized armed forces. They look wonderful in the military day parade but they do not serve the needs of the people when they consume resources that could be better spent elsewhere. Additionally, they scare the neighbors, are poorly maintained, cannot respond to the more frequent civil crises and, in the worst case, become restless and the cause of domestic instability.

How do you prevent this? By practicing the skills you have discussed here in Dakar. Size your nation's defense establishment to do only the work that must be done, equip and train it as well as your resources will permit, and ensure that the control of the armed forces remains responsive to the people. I will add two specific recommendations. One, vest control of the military in civilian leaders who must answer to the people at the ballot box. And, two, if you do not have sufficient resources for both equipment and training, put available resources into training. Professional education is very satisfying to military people, and a well trained armed force will be better disciplined to serve the nation.

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I must state clearly that the United States does not have all of the answers. Those of us who work in our government are well aware that we are not dealing as well as we should with many of the same problems which confront our nations—education, health care, social assistance, infrastructure construction, and the creation of jobs, jobs, jobs. We come—humbly I hope—to your continent to share our experiences—both victories and defeats—so that you will be able to draw on them. It is your task to learn from the discussions how to solve the unique problems in your unique countries. And your solutions will be unique.

I will end as I began, stressing my firm belief that it is our duty as leaders of our respective military establishments to ensure that we make a positive contribution to the social contracts which our government have made to our people. This is what national security management is all about in a democratic society—providing the military structure that the people need within the constraints which they establish. This will not always be satisfying, but we will be servants of our people—and our people are our countries.