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U. S. Can Steer World, Asserts Messersmith

Must Champion Democracy To Halt Dictatorships, He Tells Albright Grads

A world afflicted with a "breakdown of international morality" was pictured today by George S. Messersmith, native of Berks, and Assistant Secretary of State, as responding to the tremendous influence of the United States as a "champion of democracy."

Speaking at the 80th annual commencement exercises of Albright College, where later he received an honorary degree of doctor of laws, Messersmith inveighed against the spread of dictatorships and rise of totalitarian states.

"It is well for us to realize," he declared, "whether or not we wish it to be so or like to have it so, the United States can speak today among the nations with a weight of authority which is perhaps not equaled by that of any other country."

"The responsibility which rests upon this country is great, for whether we wish it or not, and no matter how much we may endeavor to avoid it, what we say and do in these troubled times will influence to a considerable degree the policies of other nations."

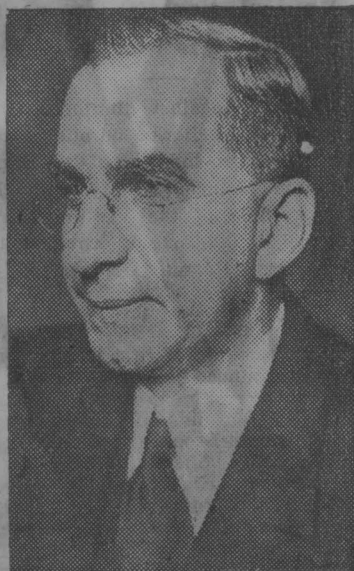
Isolation Policy 'Futile'

Declaring that it would be futile to attempt a policy of isolation, Messersmith added:

"While we have not wished to assume that role, it has become a part of this country's task to be one of the principal champions of the principles of democratic government. The world is faced by a situation in which certain totalitarian states are determined to force their ideologies on other parts of the world. They have definitely proclaimed their faith in force as an instrument of acquisition and achievement rather than of defense and security."

"We have seen one country after another fall under their domination through their use or threat of use of aggressive force. We know that this domination means no longer purely political domination, such as conquests so largely meant in the

Speaks Here



GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH
At Albright commencement

past, but that it means an inexorable forcing upon victimized peoples of ideas alien to their traditions. It means the forcible emigration of peoples; it means the destruction of human ties; it means confiscation of private and public property."

Messersmith devoted a large portion of his talk to the activities and workings of the State Department at Washington and abroad and said that his observations were backed up with more than 25 years' experience in the diplomatic service.

U. S. Aims for Peace

"I believe that I am warranted in asking you to believe that I speak with a knowledge of the facts when I affirm that the foreign policy of our government is based squarely on the principles of maintaining the peace and security of our country and using our country's influence towards the maintenance of peace and prevalence of security as world conditions," he declared.

Speaking of dictatorships and totalitarian states, Messersmith added that "there are abroad in the world, forces, fundamental and elemental, if you wish, which are making for destruction of all that is finest in the civilization evolved through so many centuries of painful and costly experience and effort."

"There are nations which, for purposes of policy," he continued, "have reverted to force, accompanied by intimidation, coercion, perversion of truth and, in general, practices which we had believed far behind us as discredited methods of the darker ages of the history of mankind. Propaganda machines, using every means of modern communication, and reaching out into every part of the world, have been set up, and fact and truth

are being cleverly and subtly distorted to persuade, to convince or to compel.

Liberties Suppressed

"Under various pretexts, the sovereignty of peoples is destroyed, their political liberties suppressed, their material property sequestered, and physical indignities and mental tortures and persecution inflicted. The mailed fist is to displace well-founded right at the conference tables and in relationships between states. Even within their own boundaries men who have arrogated to themselves dictatorial powers aim at the enslavement of the will and the conscience as well as of the lives of their own people, proclaiming that might is greater than right, that food is less important than firearms. Such are the realities in this grim world of today, and it is in the presence of such situations

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that the foreign policy of our government has to be shaped and our relations with other states conducted."

Messersmith challenged critics of the present administration who claim it "does not have a well-defined foreign policy." He declared the government aimed at maintaining friendly and peaceful relations with all countries through a recognition "by all states of the full sovereignty and rights of others." He said the present government believes in refraining from interference in internal affairs of other states and the keeping open the avenues of trade.

No Change In Policy

"There has been no change in our policy—which remains that of safeguarding this country's peace and security, not only for today, but for tomorrow as well," he said. "No foreign policy is sound which does not envisage both the problems of today and the problems of tomorrow. In order to maintain these principles, it has been found essential, as cardinal elements of our policy, to retain at all times this country's liberty of action, to maintain our defense strength always at such a standard as to be able to repel attack from whatever source it might arise, and to be prepared to play our full part in cooperating with the other American republics in keeping the Western Hemisphere free from any form of aggression. Any government which would neglect to do these things with the knowledge that we now have of developments elsewhere would be failing utterly in a primary duty to its people."

The speaker declared that there was nothing "mysterious or secret" in the conduct of the United States' foreign affairs. The active participation of the public in government, he said, led to the establishment of a system of international law which had general acceptance.

Growth of Dictators

"In recent years, under the pretext of correcting so-called wrongs, individuals in several great countries have set themselves up as arbiters of the fates of their peoples," he continued. "These individuals arrogate to themselves the right not only to regulate the lives of their peoples to the smallest degree, but to force other peoples to accept their sovereignty and their political, social and economic ideology."

"It is this reversion in the last

few years by a few countries to practices in internal and external policy which we had believed discarded which has led to the breakdown of international morality that is bringing states in a status in their relationships, in which the threat of war is constantly on the horizon and more than one part of the world is becoming an armed camp. As a consequence, in this period of history, when we so much wish to believe that reason and morality control to a greater degree than ever before, brute force has again shown itself nakedly and has become operative—with the disastrous consequences which we have recently witnessed. Fear, distrust, force and all the miserable consequences growing out of them are factors which we have to deal in international relationships today."

Messersmith pointed out that while the State Department is one of the most important branches in government today, it is "the smallest and least expensive to operate."

No Secrecy

He added that there is "no more secrecy about the conduct of the relations between the United States and other countries than there is in the relationships between individuals or groups in any one of the thousands of small towns in this country."

The foreign service, which he described as the "hands and feet of the department, eyes and ears of the department," has ambassadors, ministers and other officials in 57 capitals and 253 strategic centers in all parts of the world.

"The foreign service of our government is not excelled by that of any other country," he declared. "Placed on a career basis in 1906, the diplomatic and consular services were amalgamated into one service in 1924. We are now in the process, under the reorganization act of 1939, of consolidating the foreign services of the departments of commerce and agriculture with that of state, giving us for the first time a single foreign service for the handling of our official contacts with other states. It should be a source of great satisfaction to every one of us that in these times the department which is in a very real sense the first line of defense of our people is in the hands of competent leaders and expert collaborators."

self-defense and to "so serve the cause of justice."

"Between those who believe this way and those who believe otherwise," he said, "there lies today the real, great world issue."

He praised the Hull reciprocal trade treaties as "based on sound principles" and added that "it is tragic that because this program does not work miracles in a world in which miracles no longer occur, selfish interests in this country are beginning to attack it in insidious ways. The fact remains that we are making this definite, constructive contribution to the maintenance of that peace which we covet for all and to the economic stability which must be the basis of that peace."

Period of Transition

Speaking directly to the graduates, Messersmith pointed out that "we are now in a period of transition with all that such periods involved."

"Great changes are taking place in our social structure," he said. "We are accommodating ourselves to ideas which, while not new in our philosophy of life, are coming to fruition with astonishing rapidity. This transition is more serious for us because changes come so fast and readjustments have to be made so rapidly. All at once we found ourselves obliged to face in a realistic way the precarious situation of several millions of our population. At the same time with the coming upon us of these internal problems, we have had to face the new external situation in which there are such serious implications for the future. In several parts of

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the world we find the fundamental ideas in which we built our national life definitely threatened. We know that the threat to our own way of living is coming closer. We know that, strong as we are, we cannot hope to maintain our own way of life unchanged in a world

in a large part of which other ideas prevail."

Must Consider External Factors

"There is no one who should doubt that we can solve our internal problems, but we should understand that these problems are definitely influenced by external factors, which we must consider. In order to uphold here a way of life which is disappearing, or has disappeared, in some other parts of the world, we shall have to make, both in the regulating of our domestic problems and in the conducting of our foreign relations, definite efforts which will require wisdom and courage. We live in a world of which we are a part, and from which we cannot separate ourselves. We have there tasks which call for united and intensive effort, tasks which we must make it our business to understand, tasks which we must perform—in the struggle to maintain the way of life to which our forefathers committed this country and which we all cherish."

U. S. Strongest Country

Messersmith asserted that, by virtue of its geographical position and vast resources, the United States was "the strongest country in the world."

"But," he added, "a policy of isolation for the United States would be in no means realistic and for any policy based on the thought that such isolation could be maintained would lead us into troubled waters."

Drawing a distinction between force "rightly conceived and appropriately employed," and force as an instrument of conquest, Messersmith asserted "most nations" believe in the use of arms only for

Dignitaries at Albright Graduation



George Strausser Messersmith (left), Assistant Secretary of State of the United States government, and Dr. H. V. Masters, president of Albright College, are caught by the camera as they step out of the administration building for the commencement procession on the college campus today. Dr. Masters presented Messersmith, who was born in Bernville, with the honorary degree of doctor of laws.