

# ... a Time for Greatness

For the first time in all history, science has put in human hands two completely opposed powers. We have the knowledge and the means to destroy mankind by total war. We have also the knowledge and the ability to provide all the people of the earth with at least a measure of comfort and plenty.

## Which Shall It Be: Swords Or Plowshares?

Like men of good will everywhere, we Americans know how we would choose. For ourselves and for others we want freedom, friendship, peace and security.

Our nation's foreign policy has been directed for several years primarily at the "containment of Communism". Our reliance has been placed increasingly on military force to deter possible aggression. It has been assumed that this is the only means by which we can achieve an honorable peace.

Perhaps the time has come when every American should soberly reconsider this assumption.

Where do we stand today? We talk of rearming the countries we

fought to disarm. We are losing the confidence of our friends in Europe and in Asia. Absorbed in trying to checkmate a handful of men in the Kremlin, we have forgotten the millions of human beings for whom the real enemy is hunger, poverty and lack of opportunity.

Even for ourselves the hope of security, freedom and peace grows more remote, and the danger of losing our basic liberties increases. By choosing the way of the sword we face only two alternatives. One is the possibility that we may be hastening the very war we would avert. The other, hardly less grim, is the prospect of a global stalemate of indefinite duration—years of fear and hate, in which two great powers, armed to the teeth, wait for one or the other to crack under the strain.

## Is There No Other Way?

On our country and on each citizen falls the moral responsibility of answering that question—of coming to grips with it again and again, whatever others do. Fundamentally, we are a generous and peace-loving people. We Americans must do all in our power to find a better way.

The American Friends Service Committee believes there is a better way; a way consistent at once with the law of God and the precepts of democracy. It recommends to America a brave and positive peace offensive. "For God gave us not the spirit of fear but of power and love and of a sound mind."

### WE ENCOURAGE EVERY AMERICAN TO SUPPORT THESE STEPS TO PEACE

**1** A new kind of negotiation. America should seek not so much to impose as to listen. The situation demands that we forget protocol, national pride, vituperation and formalities in a strong lead toward genuine discussion. A new approach to negotiation might include, as in labor disputes, less publicity during sessions but full publicity of results; more flexibility in the instructions given negotiators; more use of skilled, neutral mediators; and at least on our side an open minded approach to matters at issue as problems to be solved rather than as public debates or contests to be won.

**3** A new approach to disarmament now. In the three years since effective international control of atomic weapons was first studied, the nature of the problem has changed. Some earlier objections to detailed disarmament proposals have on both sides been recently withdrawn. The time is ripe for fresh discussions, undertaken in good faith, with the intention of proceeding as far and as rapidly as agreements can be achieved. All parties stand to gain from reducing the burden of an arms race. And agreements made in mutual self-interest are longest kept. Such action would quicken the hopes and faith of millions.

**2** Strengthening of the United Nations as a peace-making agency. This, rather than waging war, was its original purpose. The UN should include without prejudice, as was first intended, all governments willing to accept the responsibilities of membership. Fully a dozen such nations, not counting colonies, are not yet members. In an armed and divided world, the United Nations should act as a mediator, with greatly strengthened commissions for this purpose. To America and the other countries, great and small, it has more to give in this role than as a partisan or belligerent.

**4** Economic, financial and technical assistance. Through the United Nations, America should help launch an increased co-operative effort to eradicate poverty and disease. With agreed reduction in armaments, much more of our money, manpower and materials could be pledged to this purpose. Such a program of genuine friendship would build co-operation, courage and self help in areas where otherwise suspicion, hostility and despair are likely to increase. It would substitute plowshares for swords, butter for guns, construction for destruction, friendship for enmity.

These steps are practical. They require no surrender of moral principle, no loss of stature. The American Friends Service Committee believes they represent the voice of reason.

Long experience in dealing with people all over the world convinces us that a bold initiative in this direction would call forth widespread support. In this country it would give fresh hope to millions who are troubled and uncertain. Overseas it would be welcomed with relief and with renewed confidence in America's leadership.

We have deep faith that such leadership will be found, in government or among our citizenry, to turn the tide of threatened disaster. Now, if ever, is a time for greatness.

### AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, INCORPORATED (A QUAKER AGENCY)



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