



City of Cambridge

23.

IN CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR WYLIE

June 8, 1981

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge City Council commends Harvard University for selecting Thomas J. Watson, Jr. to deliver its major Commencement Day address;

- knowing that as one of the world's foremost industrialist his tough mindedness was unassailable;
- knowing that as the most recent Ambassador to the Soviet Union his current knowledge about dealing with the Russians was unrivaled;
- knowing that as an outspoken advocate of nuclear arms control he surely would deliver a forceful call for ending the nuclear arms race;

Harvard University's selection of Ambassador Watson placed in motion the certainty that we would be warned in Watson's words, that "nuclear superiority does not protect anyone", and that "enough is enough and we're way beyond that point"; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Harvard Commencement address by Thomas J. Watson, Jr. was a great public service and this City Council recommends that every Cambridge citizen read it.

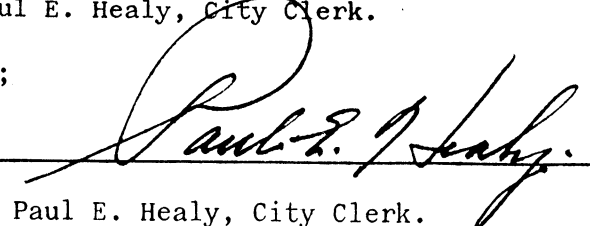
In City Council June 8, 1981.

Adopted as amended by the affirmative vote of 8 members.

Attest:- Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-


Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

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June 4, 1981

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Mrs. Deane W. Lord, Director

1981-86

For Release 4:30 p.m., June 4, 1981

HARVARD COMMENCEMENT SPEECH
BY THOMAS J. WATSON, JR.
JUNE 4, 1981

What future lies ahead?

There are many things to be optimistic about. The view from the Kremlin is bleak, with nearly everyone on the Soviet borders hostile. The view from Washington sees mostly friends, admirers, or neutrals. The overwhelming vote in the U.N. on Afghanistan should encourage all of us.

On the other hand, an anthropologist writing the history of the past forty years since the first atomic explosion might well conclude that we human beings have been preparing for our own demise.

Like many extinct species we have had a massive change in our environment. We have finally invented the ultimate weapon and in a mad technological race have connected thousands of them to two buttons -- one in Washington and one in Moscow. And with two very slight pressures we can literally do away with the world's two most powerful nations, and leave much of the rest of our planet unfit for human habitation.

Is that our future? The answer hinges on many things. But it hinges above all on us: on the United States' policy on nuclear weapons -- on what we and our leaders do about that policy in the days and months immediately ahead. And that is what I want to talk about today.

Let me start out by speaking to today's graduates and those of you who are young.

Throughout the past half century, young people have played many heroic roles. You went to World War II and brought down fascism. You fought and died in the mountains of Korea. Spurred by the challenge of the Russian Sputnik, you made brilliant contributions to American science and engineering, keeping America in the forefront of technology.

You fought heroically in Vietnam. And you worked courageously within the system, joined it in large numbers, became a potent political force, influenced public opinion, and helped bring that tragic war to an end.

We need -- and shall always need -- this kind of courage and conviction. And especially we need today the courage and conviction of youth to face up realistically to a change of course as a nation -- our course on strategic arms control and our whole handling of the nuclear equation.

The hour is late. The imperative of realism and reason is urgent. And we confront many illusions.

First is the illusion of victory -- the illusion that one side or the other can start a nuclear war and win it.

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Sober common sense analysis will tell anyone that this is impossible. Consider this illusion in its most popular package:

The Soviets launch a surgical first strike and destroy most of our Minutemen and Titan missiles in their underground silos. Thus they leave us few weapons capable of retaliation in kind -- of wiping out their remaining underground missiles. And thus they force us to a choice: attack Soviet cities with our submarine missiles and bombers, thereby provoking a counterattack on American cities from Boston to Seattle; or surrender.

What's wrong with this picture? Lots of things. It assumes -- against all common sense -- that the Soviet leaders, notoriously cautious about security, would bet their total nation on at least four foolhardy all-or-nothing gambles:

-- the gamble -- against all technological likelihood -- that their first strike would be essentially perfect -- that it would leave few if any Minutemen or Titans to retaliate in kind;

-- the gamble that we would not use some of our remaining underwater and airborne weapons, nearly three fourths of our total warheads, to attack the thousands of vulnerable military targets in the Soviet Union other than missile silos;

-- the gamble that when our President learned the Soviet missiles were flying our way he would freeze and do nothing -- that he would not send those targeted Minutemen and Titans flying towards Russia's remaining silos before the enemy missiles landed;

-- and the ultimate gamble: That in desperate retaliation we would not rain down total destruction on Soviet cities, even though that might mean our own destruction as well.

Make no mistake: That scenario defies all sober analysis. It would be the most risky and ultimately costly gamble in history. By overwhelming odds, the result of any use of nuclear weapons would not be victory. It would be all out war and total destruction. And in the words of President Kennedy, "The living would envy the dead."

The illusion of Soviet preemptive victory has a corollary: the illusion of achievable American superiority -- the illusion that like the Red Queen in Through the Looking Glass we can outrace the danger by going "faster, faster;" outproducing the Soviets in nuclear arms; playing a multi-billion-dollar shell game in the desert; hoping that somehow with exotic weapons we can erect a protective umbrella over our country.

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So-called nuclear superiority assures no safety -- not for the Soviet Union; not for us; because what counts is not superiority but sufficiency -- the guaranteed power to destroy the other side under all circumstances. And we both have it.

A quarter century ago Donald Quarles, then Secretary of the Air Force and a wise scientist in a Republican Administration, put it succinctly:

"Beyond a certain point, the prospect is not the result of relative strengths of the two opposing forces. It is the absolute power in the hands of each..."

Think of it this way: Would you, if you sat in the Kremlin, attack the United States, even knowing that you could knock out 95 percent of our weapons, but realizing that the remaining five percent could destroy literally the whole Soviet Union?

Would you, sitting in Washington, attack even a smaller country which had only a thousand warheads knowing that if you missed only ten percent they could wipe out a hundred American cities?

You know the answer: There is no safety in numbers. The war planning process of the past has become totally obsolete. Attack is now suicide.

Yet the pursuit of the mirage of superiority persists. And over the years the two superpowers have piled weapon on useless weapon.

In 1945, when we exploded our first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, we had a four-year lead over the Russians. In 1952, when we exploded our first H-bomb, we had a ten-month lead. The Soviet Union closed the gap despite having a country severely torn by the ravages of a war of a ferocity never visited on our country. And it has kept up in the race, despite the burden of a hopelessly inefficient economy, by ruthlessly channeling its resources, and by calling upon the Soviet people for an endless acceptance of sacrifice.

Between us, our two countries now have explosive power equal to a million Hiroshima A-bombs. We have between us some 15 thousand "city killing" weapons -- one bomb, one city. Bigger stockpiles do not mean more security. Enough is enough. And we are far beyond that point now.

There is a third illusion, rooted in the belief that nuclear victory is possible and strategic superiority attainable. It is the illusion of nuclear omnipotence -- that if we just have more weapons we can use nuclear threats to deter Soviet misbehavior anywhere in the world.

I can think of no quicker prescription for disaster. Our nuclear weapons are useless except for their mission of preventing direct attack on us.

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Fourth is the illusion of futility: the illusion that we cannot sign treaties with the Russians because they systematically violate them.

Let us be clear about this: there are major differences between our two countries. Soviet values are diametrically opposed to ours. Contention between us on a global scale is a fact of life. Suspicion is the keynote of our relations.

But having said that, let me add this: on the evidence, the Soviets do keep agreements provided each side has an interest in the other's keeping the agreement; and provided each side can verify compliance for itself.

Look for example at the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Interim Agreement -- the two parts of SALT I. The Soviet Union has violated neither. For these treaties do not depend on trust or good will. They depend on cold self-interest and unilateral verifiability.

Fifth is the illusion of benign neglect, the idea that if we just muddle along, in the phrase of Dickens' Mr. Micawber, "something will turn up;" that the current aging Soviet leadership, for example, will soon be replaced by enlightened and reasonable men; that the Soviet system will crumble from within; or that we can indefinitely stall on serious negotiations, let the Soviets cool their heels waiting, and use the intervening time for our own advantage -- to arm up.

Let us not delude ourselves. We can take no comfort from all these kinds of wishful thinking.

To be sure, the average Soviet Politburo member today is sixty-nine years old. But I have met many of the possible successors, and I can tell you: I foresee no real change. I do not see the Soviet Union becoming more pro-American. I do not see a revolution around the corner. I do not foresee the demise of the rigid system or the rigid thinking that runs it. And I see no chance that the Soviet leaders will be hoodwinked by protracted negotiations while we try to jump ahead in strategic arms.

Finally, we confront the illusion of softheadedness; that anyone who favors an end to the arms race must be soft on U.S. defense or even soft on Communism. And we confront its corollary: the simplistic formula "arm up and stand firm," though war would mean losses of 50 to 75 percent on each side.

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The illusion of softheadedness is thermonuclear McCarthyism. Because the search for a way out of this morass -- the search for an avenue of negotiation and survival instead of confrontation and weaponry -- has a long and honorable heritage.

That heritage includes Republicans and Democrats; military and non-military leaders, among them some of the greatest and most tough-minded of our time.

It began in 1946 under President Harry Truman with the proposal of a hardheaded financier, Bernard Baruch, for international UN control of atomic energy.

It continued with President Dwight Eisenhower, who in his first major foreign policy address denounced the tragic waste of armaments, and in his farewell message warned against the power of a military-industrial complex.

It includes another great five-star General, Omar Bradley, who nearly a quarter century ago called for the country to turn away from "the search for peace through the accumulation of peril."

That heritage embraces the last legacy of President Kennedy, the nuclear test ban treaty of 1963; the SALT I accords under President Nixon; and the SALT II treaty initiated by President Nixon, continued by President Ford, and completed by President Carter.

SALT II was guided to completion in large part by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who sits on this platform with me today, and for whom I was proud to serve in Moscow. Though the U.S. Senate has not ratified the treaty, it was endorsed by former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, one of the world's brightest authorities on modern armaments; by General David Jones, head of the joint chiefs of staff; and countless others.

Thermonuclear McCarthyism is a slander against the wisdom of many great Americans.

Against all these illusions, what is the reality? The reality is that thermonuclear war in any form is suicide.

Our imperative is to change our course -- to take the only road which offers a viable hope for the future: not a road to unilateral action of any kind, but a road toward the joint continuation of the SALT process; a road to a long series of mutually verifiable treaties.

I know from experience how maddening protracted negotiations with the Russians can be. I know what these negotiations will demand of us: in the words of St. Francis of Sales, "A cup of science, a barrel of wisdom, and an ocean of patience." But we have no choice. Because the longer we drift on without firmly capping the arms race, the graver the dangers we create:

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-- the danger that a suspected violation, some unforeseen new technology or a sudden quantitative surge will trigger a desperate response;

-- the danger that we may further split ourselves from Western allies who fear we lack seriousness about negotiation, whether on SALT or on European Theater Nuclear Forces;

-- the danger that each new warhead we or the Russians build inevitably increases the possibility of a thermonuclear accident;

-- the danger that a growing dependence on nuclear weapons to defend our interests major and minor all over the globe will someday trap us in a choice between Armageddon and surrender;

-- the danger that if we don't act now, we shall lose forever the chance to limit future new devices of unimaginable complexity.

The time for action is at hand. And that action must begin in Washington, D.C. -- begin with the same urgency and effectiveness the Administration has shown in confronting our serious economic difficulties; the same urgency and courage the President has shown in already beginning a major buildup in our conventional forces.

President Reagan has pledged to "negotiate as long as necessary to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons to a point where neither side threatens the survival of the other." Those negotiations have not yet started, and dangers escalate. Each week's delay makes the problem greater.

In response to George Kennan's recent drastic yet creative disarmament proposal, the designated head of the Administration's Arms Control Agency, Eugene Rostow, said not only that the Administration was "taking a serious look" at this proposal but added that "the whole miserable business is mad. We must find a way out."

President Reagan is riding a deserved high tide of popularity. I urge that he seize the moment to find that way out.

The time has come for all of us, under his leadership, to listen to the honored Americans -- beginning with Truman, Baruch, Eisenhower, and Bradley -- who have called for an end to the insanity of the arms race.

The time has come for all of us to reject the scenarios of the theoreticians mesmerized by computer projections into thinking that the leaders of the Soviet Union would bet their homeland on a lottery chance at victory.

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The time has come for all of us to reject the scenarios of the theoreticians mesmerized by computer projections into thinking that the leaders of the Soviet Union would bet their homeland on a lottery chance at victory.

The time has come to realize that our nuclear deterrent is robust under any possible contingency. Let our politicians and arms technicians stop poor-mouthing it.

Above all, the time has come for a new effort to cap the strategic arms race -- cap it through a verifiable treaty which gives both sides the security they require.

SALT II offers a good framework. Minor changes could be made at the negotiating table if necessary. But there is little time before technology and pressures on both sides push us into a new and unmanageable spiral.

We cannot wait for improved Soviet behavior around the world, or for better U.S.-Soviet relations. Control of strategic arms is not a concession to the Soviets. It must not be linked to irrelevant issues. Those who urge delay take an awesome responsibility on their shoulders.

Twenty-eight years ago in Sanders Theater across the street, a great American journalist, Elmer Davis, delivered the annual Phi Beta Kappa oration. It was a time of darkness and witch hunts and false accusations. And in calling upon friends of freedom to stand up and fight, he quoted the first book of Samuel, which tells of the fear of the Philistines as they faced a formidable foe.

"Woe unto us!" they said. "Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods?" But when they looked around and saw that no one else was going to deliver them, they said to one another: "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men; and fight." And they did, and they saved themselves.

The title of that Phi Beta Kappa oration was: "Are We Worth Saving? And If So Why?" The title of my remarks today might be: "Can We Be Saved? And If So How?"

I have tried to suggest some answers. And despite the somberness of my theme, I remain an optimist.

I regard the first atomic explosion in 1945 as an arrival -- a culmination of mankind's long advance in ever greater mastery over the forces of nature.

I regard that explosion also as a watershed; because it signaled man's capability for the first time to destroy himself and the earth he lives on.

But I do not regard that explosion of 1945 as a beginning of the end.

The time has come for all human beings to realize that we must live together or die together.

I believe we have the reason and the realism and the common sense to choose life.



City of Cambridge

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June 8, 1981

COUNCILLOR WYLIE

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- Knowing that as the most recent Ambassador to the Soviet Union his current knowledge about dealing with the Russians was unrivaled;
- Knowing that as an outspoken advocate of nuclear arms control he surely would deliver a forceful call for ending the nuclear arms race;

Harvard placed in motion the certainty that we would be warned in Watson's words, that "nuclear superiority does not protect anyone", and that "enough is enough and we're way beyond that point"; and be it further

RESOLVED:

That the promised Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Harvard address of June 4, 1981, was a great public service and recommends that every Cambridge citizen reads it.

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motion the
resolution*

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address by Thomas J. Watson Jr.
was a great public service
and the City Council
recommends that every
Cambridge citizen read it*

C. Wylie re: address by Thomas J. Watson,
Jr. at the Harvard Commencement Day exercise
of June 4, 1981.

In City Council,

June 8, 1981

6/8/1981

Adopted with two
Amendments by
Councilman David
A. Wylie

Certified copy sent to C.
Wylie 6/11/81 (20)