

THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

By Clinton Davidson

UNCERTAIN TRUMPET

At a time when hopes are the highest in ten years for world peace, perhaps the most controversial issue before Congress is the building of a strong national defense.

Just where do we stand on national defense? Is Russian missile superiority making the United

States a second-rate nation militarily? Is there real danger that World War III may come soon, and that we might lose it?

Those are questions this Congress is debating and will continue debating until it adjourns, probably about July 1. The debate unquestionably has political implications, but sincere differences do exist.

President Eisenhower sincerely believes that we and our allies have sufficient military strength to discourage the communist nations from attacking us, and that full military equality is not immediately imperative.

PEACE TALK

The people of this country, as well as in the other Free World nations, have great faith in the President of the United States, both as a man of wide military experience and as a man dedicated to building a peaceful world.

He recognizes both our lag in missiles and our hopes that peace can be secured at a series of Summit conference, the first to be held next May, as "calculated risks." Both as a military man and as a statesman dedicated to peace, he is accustomed to taking those risks.

It is nevertheless disturbing that men of comparable military experience and stature, firmly believe that we cannot afford to, as they express it, "gamble with our existence as a nation."

General Maxwell D. Taylor, who retired less than a year ago as Chief of Staff, is one of those who has expressed great concern over our lag in military preparedness. He has little faith in Russia's expressions of peaceful desires.

A BIBLICAL WARNING

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"—First Corinthians, 14th chapter, 8th verse.

From that Gen. Taylor takes the title for a new book that thoughtful Americans will want to read. He calls it "The Uncertain Trumpet." It should be kept in mind, however, that this is a military man writing, and that his experience in diplomacy is limited.

He presents only the military man's side of the argument. Nevertheless it should not be ignored. There is cause for concern and we are sure that President Eisenhower shares at least some of that concern.

Gen. Taylor writes that "the nation will face a serious crisis beginning about 1961. For a period of years thereafter, the balance of military strength will tip dangerously in favor of the Communist bloc unless we take action now."

Sen. Stuart Symington, former Secretary of the Air Force, fully shares the fears of Gen. Taylor. Sen. Symington is a member of the Senate Armed Service Committee and possible Democratic nominee for the presidency.

Whether we will go all-out now to overtake Russia in missiles, or wait and see if the Summit Conference can make a start toward disarmament and peaceful co-existence may well be the most important decision America makes in 1960.

All we can do is hope and pray that the decision, whatever it is, is the one that will preserve our nation and our world as a society of free men.

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