

J
82
.D69
1952

Development

PG-AAA-437

15A 89176

Point Four—A Revolution Against Hunger, Disease, And Human Misery

A. I. D.
HISTORICAL
COLLECTION

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT TRUMAN¹

I cannot tell you how much it means to me to come and meet with you tonight. You have come here from all parts of the country, and from all sorts of organizations—church groups, business groups, labor unions, and farm organizations. You have come to discuss ways and means of going ahead with our plans for Point Four.

Point Four takes its name from the last point of a fourfold program for peace in the world—the program I set forth in my Inaugural Address, 3 years ago last January.

We have been working on that program, and we have been making progress.

We have done well on the first three points.

First, we have supported the United Nations.

Second, we have carried forward our plans for world economic recovery.

Third, we have strengthened free nations against aggression.

But these three points by themselves will not bring us the permanent peace we desire. The fourth point, helping the free peoples of the world to help themselves—to produce more—to raise their living standards—and to achieve decent, satisfying lives—this fourth point is in the long run the most important of all. Without it we cannot reach the goal.

Through the measures we have taken in the last several years—aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty, the Pacific treaties, the defense program, the resistance to aggression in Korea—through measures like these we are preventing conquest and world war. We have bought time—we have bought it at a great cost in lives and money.

Now it is up to us to use that time intelligently and courageously. We must use it to wipe out the root causes of war. We must use the time we are gaining by defense to campaign against hunger and disease and human misery.

¹Delivered by Secretary Acheson for the President before the National Conference on International Economic and Social Development at Washington on Apr. 8 and released to the press by the White House on the same date.

Mass suffering has been used by every dictatorship of our times as a stepping stone to power. It was used by the Japanese war lords. It was used by Hitler. Today it is the weapon of Soviet imperialism. Unless it is wiped out it may be used in the future by some new dictatorship more terrible even than the Soviet.

To have peace, we must strike at the conditions of misery that envelop half the people of the earth. That is the purpose and the meaning of Point Four.

Point Four Seen in Light of History

It will help us to understand Point Four if we step back and look at it in the light of history.

In this century, scientific progress has brought us to the point where mankind, for the first time in human history, can wipe poverty and ignorance and human misery clean off the face of the earth.

Yet this cannot be done unless scientific progress is linked with political freedom. That is the lesson of history. Without political freedom, scientific progress can become a menace, rather than a boon to humanity. In the hands of totalitarians, scientific progress can be used to destroy civilization.

But working together, scientific progress and political freedom can open such a future as mankind has never dreamed of.

We have seen what this means in our own country.

What we did here in the United States was to create the kind of political system in which men could breathe freely and work freely—the kind of government in which the energies of human beings could be released to make the most of the material resources around them.

This is why our country has become the center of industry and science. This is why we have been called upon to lead the fight for freedom. We have given greater opportunity to the individual than has ever been known before. We have given more material well-being to all our people than any earlier society was ever able to achieve.

That is what scientific progress and political

32
269
952
freedom have done for us—and for many other countries founded in the traditions of our Western civilization.

Self-Development Fostered in Asia and Africa

Moreover, the tremendous developments that have taken place in the Western world in modern times are having a profound effect upon the ancient civilizations in Asia and Africa.

The people of these areas have learned that they need not suffer hunger, disease, and poverty. They know that something can be done to put a stop to these things. They also have learned of the ideals of political liberty and self-government.

These peoples have watched us and learned from us. Now they are determined to share as equals in the benefits of modern progress.

They are determined that their resources will no longer be developed in the interest of foreigners on the pattern of the old imperialism. And they don't want them developed for the benefit of Soviet imperialism either. They insist that these resources be developed for their own benefit.

They are determined to establish their own free political and economic institutions—institutions which will make use of the best of our experience and will, at the same time, retain the best of their own cultures, and their own great traditions.

This, I believe, is the mood and the temper that has come to Africa and Asia in my lifetime. It is real. It is good. It holds tremendous promise.

Common Sense as Basis of Point Four

At the same time, it has great dangers. Such a movement can be easily misled. Communists or reactionaries can exploit the hopes and aspirations of these peoples for their own evil ends. Unscrupulous agitators can use these forces of change to bring about disorder and bloodshed. We must do all we can to keep this from happening.

We want to help the people of these areas. We want them to learn the methods of our science and our industry and use these methods to develop their own resources.

Above all, we want to help them find out and apply the secret of our own success, the secret of our American Revolution—the secret that the vitality of our science, our industry, our culture, is embedded in our political life—the secret that only free men, freely governed, can make the magic of science and technology work for the benefit of human beings, not against them.

Now, what does Point Four have to do with this? It has everything to do with it. It is the way we have chosen to give our help and share our experience. It is the right way—and the only way—this can be done.

There is nothing of imperialism in our concept of Point Four. We do not propose to dominate other people, or exploit them, or force them to change their ways of life.

The two ideas that guide Point Four are—first, cooperation, freely sought and freely given, and second, help to those who want to help themselves.

Those are the only methods that can succeed today. We must never forget them or depart from them. In no other way can we work as friends and brothers with the awakening peoples in the underdeveloped regions of the world.

This is what Point Four means in the perspective of history. It is the way to prevent human progress from going off the rails—to prevent a smash-up of civilization—and to help bring mankind to the threshold of a brighter, more wonderful future.

This is not starry-eyed idealism. It is just plain, practical common sense. If we fail to do this job, we will never have world peace. We cannot survive as an island of prosperity in a sea of human misery. But if we do the job, the world will be transformed.

Point Four's Message to the World

Just take one specific example. If we could help the people of the Orient get a well-balanced diet—three square meals a day—instead of the few mouthfuls of rice that most of them eat now, just that one change alone would have more impact on the world than all the armies and battles of history.

It is not easy to do a job like this. To raise the level of diet means more than sending seeds and hoes abroad. It means that the people of these countries must develop farm-credit institutions, and irrigation projects, and roads and railroads, and new industries and new employment for the millions who live in cities. This will take technical assistance and capital development.

It will take work by the United Nations and by the governments of other free nations. It will take work by many of our Government agencies. Point Four is not just the concern of the State Department or the Mutual Security Agency, but of the Department of Agriculture, the Public Health Service, and other agencies.

But Point Four was never meant to be just a Government program. It is a program of people — our people — helping other people throughout the world.

Individually, and through our organizations, there is much to do—and no time to be lost. Many private organizations are carrying on Point Four programs overseas and they need all the help and support they can get. We can send them tools and books and medical supplies. Our young people can train themselves as technical experts to go abroad. We can welcome students and visitors to our country; we can learn from them while they learn from us.

In all we do, we must remember our great tradition. The American Revolution has never stopped. In almost every generation we have

returned old ways of life, and developed new ones—always moving toward more freedom, more opportunity, and a better life for all our people. We have had setbacks on the way—but in the end we have always moved forward.

Now, through Point Four, we can help the people in the underdeveloped regions to move forward along the same path. We can help them to adapt the principles of freedom, which have inspired our development, to their own needs and circumstances.

This is the way for us to live up to our ideals as a Nation, and fulfill our destiny as the greatest and most favored Republic God ever made.

ADDRESS BY SECRETARY ACHESON 1

[Excerpts]

Very often before the committees of Congress and in other audiences to which I have spoken I have been asked the question, "Do you think it is right that in our requests from the Congress we should have so large a proportion of our funds requested for military purposes as against the smaller portion which goes into the constructive work of the world?" And I always say: "I think it is very sad, it is nothing that we want; we would much prefer to have it otherwise."

We are taking the leadership in the world in trying to make it otherwise. We have proposals now which are being discussed in the United Nations which would lead to disarmament, lead to the world being relieved of this dreadful burden. But until that can be accomplished we must, whether we like it or not, spend a large part of our time and effort, just as the early settlers of this country had to do, in protecting ourselves, building up our defenses so that behind that shield the peaceful work can go on.

And this, in passing, leads me to refer to a matter which is perhaps connected with it, and that is the matter of organization. So often in talking about programs of this sort we get distracted into the matter of organization. I'd like to say only a few words about that, and that is that it's a characteristic of the human mind that if it fixes itself intently upon a purpose, and in order to accomplish any purpose you have to fix yourself intently upon it, but if you do that then that purpose begins to expand until after a time in your mind it encompasses the whole world. I see this happening in all the departments of government at the time.

People can start saying, "Well, this is a matter of foreign policy and since it's a matter of foreign policy the State Department must do it and foreign policy affects everything in the world," so

that people who take that view want to tend to expand the jurisdiction of the State Department. Or if you start from the point of view of the Treasury Department or the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Commerce you can say this leads to that and that leads to the next thing, and so this department should control all. And so you find people who say, "All you have to do is to find two characteristics in a program that means that it should be organized and managed by one organization" and those two characteristics are (1) if it's overseas, and (2) if it's economic.

Now, everything that is not in the United States, Canada, or Mexico, in a sense is overseas. And everything that is not purely military is economic and even most of the military program is economic. So that this conception, in which you must have an overseas organization which will run everything outside of the United States, is, I think, to lose sight of the real purpose of some of these programs. I will not go on with this at length but merely say that the economic work which is being done in Europe itself in connection with the military program is far more closely associated with the military program than it is with the sort of thing that we are doing here in Point Four. So I urge you not to waste your time on these matters of organization at present but to concentrate on the main point.

So we not only have to build our shield here, our military shield, but we have to give great effort and great thought to the economic environment as well as the security environment. And here I'm sorry to say that there is much to discourage the person who is interested in helping to get international developments in the economic field. It isn't enough to have programs which will develop undeveloped areas, if you have a completely stagnant situation in the exchange of goods throughout the world. We all know that in the early stages of development of underdeveloped areas we must concentrate on the agricultural side of affairs. And that means that there must be considerable trade in other goods. And if one has a situation where trade is stagnant because of barriers, because of lack of foreign exchange, because of all the impediments to it which exist, there will be a very great break and great drag upon the development of underdeveloped areas, no matter how enthusiastic we are about Point Four and no matter how much effort we put into it.

I have been working for 12 years on the effort to free international trade from some of its barriers and I regret to say that there are as many now as there were when we began and the outlook is discouraging. But we must continue to fight for it and you must continue to help us because this matter of freeing trade throughout the world and bringing about a greater exchange of goods is essential for the purpose that you are meeting here today to consider.

Made before the National Conference on International Economic and Social Development at Washington on Apr. 9 and released to the press on the same date.

Cooperation From Private Investors and Organizations Urged

Similarly, in the economic field, there is the matter of investment. Unless there is a climate to encourage investment abroad you will not get the developments in underdeveloped areas which we are seeking. And unhappily the climate does not seem to be getting better but in many parts of the world to be getting worse. There seems to be an idea that there is something bad about foreign investment in some parts of the world. Companies, people who have put a great deal of money, a great deal of effort into developments in underdeveloped areas are treated as though they were enemies of the country in which they are working. If that goes on it just means that there will not be foreign investment and there will not be, as you all know, governmental capital sufficient to do this job. And, after all, it doesn't make much difference whether the investment is the property of all the citizens of the country or some of the citizens. If the whole climate for the reception of foreign investment in a country is bad, then the capital will not go there, whether it's private or governmental.

And, again, there must be an environment which is congenial to the exchange of persons and ideas. If, in parts of the world, foreigners are regarded as suspicious and as enemies, then again you have a lack of the necessary environment to carry on the purposes which we want here. In other words, this must be a two-way street, there must be friendliness on the side of those whom we are trying to help as well as the desire on our part to be of help. And all through everything that we do we must keep in mind that what we are after here is to preserve and safeguard the underlying human values.

It's very helpful to me to have this opportunity to come and talk with you. A conference of this sort, this conference is of tremendous importance to the carrying out of this program because this program is fundamentally not something which a government as a government carries out. Now, I don't mean by that merely that private organizations are very important in actually carrying out programs abroad. That is true, but even more than that the entire effort that the government agency carries out here is really carried out through private organizations.

We do not have in the Government sufficient people to staff these operations, sufficient people to give us all the ideas, to give us all the working groups which are necessary. We turn to you. We turn to the colleges, to the groups, and to the organizations in the United States. And it is only if we are successful altogether in doing this work, as one great undertaking in which we are all concerned, that it will be successful. It takes the unending labor of organizations such as yours to make young men and women want to go into this

sort of work and want to go into it with a sense of dedication, with a sense of believing, as the early missionaries to this country believed, that there is something worth any degree of sacrifice in the task.

I know, in speaking with you, that I do not have to convince you that the Point Four Program is a good program. I don't have to stress its importance. What you would like me to do is to talk in the first place, about the subject of the morning, the Program in Action. And in doing that, again I shall do it not with the purpose of trying to build up your enthusiasm—because that is built up and you understand this program—but from the point of view of pointing out some of the underlying factors which we have to have in mind when we operate here.

Understanding Necessary to Allay Suspicions

And, again, if I may go back to a hackneyed subject, in order to understand the limitations which are necessary in the Program in Action and the methods which are necessary, we have to remind ourselves once more what it is that we are trying to do and what is the background out of which our present efforts emerge. Now, that background, as the President pointed out last night, is that two ideas of greatest importance are striking millions of people in the underdeveloped parts of the world at the same time, striking them with great suddenness and with great power. And these two ideas are, first of all, that a life of misery is not foreordained, that something can be done about it, that much can be done about it. And the second idea is that independence, freedom from foreign domination and foreign direction, is within their grasp and nothing is going to be allowed to interfere with that.

Now, these two ideas are ideas which have moved peoples profoundly over the centuries and they are hitting people, millions of people, in the underdeveloped areas for the first time with great power since the war.

And that leads to tremendous ferment. It leads to tremendous comings and goings in the population and the thoughts of the population. The purpose of the Point Four Program is to help direct this energy, this ferment, into peaceful channels of development, rather than into mere chaos. We know perfectly well that there is a tendency to look for panaceas. Indeed in many parts of the world these two thoughts which I have been describing to you are often confused. Many people in many parts of the world are led to believe that the mere attainment of national independence will bring automatically the fuller life, the freedom from poverty and misery and disease. We know of course that that is not the case. Therefore, these people, once being disappointed—because being free they are not merely immediately in good shape—turn to another panacea, which is

that of communism, which promises them that if they will embrace this doctrine then all these things will happen.

But what the Point Four Program is intended to do is to say we have knowledge, we have skills which you have seen and which are in part the cause of this great ferment which is going on in your minds. We are ready to share them with you. And we wish to work out with you methods by which you can know what we know and we can help you develop your own resources for your own purposes.

Limitations in the Program

Now, this being so, if we look at the nature of the people and the nature of the situation with which we are dealing we begin to see some necessary limitations in the Program in Action. One necessary limitation comes from the fact that many, if not most, of the peoples with whom we are dealing are suspicious of foreigners. Foreigners have come to them very often in the past and not always, or perhaps not often, with the best results. Therefore, they are suspicious. Why are these people coming to us? Why are they offering to do this for us? Is there some hidden purpose? Is there some desire on their part to get control of our country? These are the questions they ask themselves.

Then there is the limitation of the absorptive capacity of the peoples we are trying to help. Absorptive in several ways. First of all, they must take it in through their mind and through the training of their hands. And this cannot be done overnight. This is a long process.

Then there is the confusion in their minds as to what they want. Some want one thing and some another. Very often they haven't the real knowledge to understand what it is that they really need at the moment. There is a great desire in every part of the world for industrialization and there is very little understanding of how dangerous that is until there is in sight a strong agricultural base.

I think in all the times that I have talked with visitors from foreign countries since the war and, indeed, during the war, everyone who has come into my office starts out with, "We would like a steel mill." Well, they want a steel mill in every single country in the world. It makes no difference whether they have ore or coal or anything else. The steel mill is the mark of civilization, and that is what they want.

Now, it's not a question of pouring vast sums of money and vast numbers of technicians into these areas. It couldn't be done if we wanted to do it. Sometimes I have been in meetings where people talk about billions of dollars or hundreds of thousands of technicians being poured all over the world. Those people never stop to think of where the technicians are going to sleep and what

they are going to do. The mere question of housing of the missions which are already being sent out is a serious one in parts of the world where there aren't many houses. This thing has got to be done sensibly.

Adjusting to Internal Situations in Foreign Countries

Now, without going on further into a theoretical discussion, let me speak of one or two actual situations to show what can be done and what should not be done.

The first real necessity for success is that what you offer to do or what you're doing is something which the country wants. Now, often it's very hard to bring that about because the country doesn't know what it wants. But if the country does know what it wants and if what it wants is the right thing for it, then what you should do is to get in behind that and help with all your power and not say, "Oh, well, I wouldn't do it just this way, I would do it that way." If they have a good idea and one that is an effective one, get behind it and help them.

That is the situation in India. There the program is one which the Indians have worked out themselves. True they have worked it out with the help of American technicians, but they sought the technicians. We didn't force the technicians on them. They came out themselves with their own money. They employed these technicians. And they went to India and they developed an Indian governmental program which was started. So that when we came into the picture we could throw our help into something which had been developed by India with our people merely training the Indians who are training their comrades how to carry on this program. Immediately the thing caught hold like a prairie fire and the Government has now organized with us the Indo-American Fund, a joint undertaking, something which they started, something which they believe in. And we put all our effort and funds into that.

Starting with a small group where boys from these villages were taught the fundamentals of what they should do to increase food production and have better public health. Starting with that training school, boys, young men go back to their villages and persuade the elders of the village to adopt this rather revolutionary idea. This spreads on from there to other villages which have heard about this. They in turn come in to look at it and find everybody with two or three times as much food as they had before. The newcomers say, "We want that." Thus you finally get a program where the propulsive force comes from the country itself, and we are going along to help it.

Now, you find other situations where the country not only doesn't know what it wants but

isn't equipped to play any part in getting it. And there a great mistake would be made if we went in and said, "This is what you want, here are a lot of Americans, we will do this. We will undertake to train your people." What you have got to do is to start at the very beginning.

There was a situation such as that in one country which we are helping. There, as in almost all these places, the great need was for an increase in the food supply. When we got to the country we found that the only people dealing with agriculture was the thing called a "bureau," which was made up of six people with a budget of \$6,000 a year. Six people in the entire country dealing with agriculture! Well, you couldn't get anywhere until the country itself was better organized to be a partner in this effort. And, therefore, the first job was to show them how to develop the proper bureaus to carry on agricultural extension work in their country. That was done. Then programs were developed in conjunction with this new governmental outfit.

The other day I had a visit from some people in a very small country and they had come up to say, "Go easy. Take it easy. We are being overwhelmed by good will." They had at the same time six international organizations—the United States organization and four private ones—descend on them. And they said there were almost more "good-willers" in the country than there were citizens in the country. The country was simply bewildered. It didn't know what to do. People were starting projects and deciding they weren't any good and, the happy phrase, "cutting their losses," didn't carry much conviction to the population.

So finally we said, "Now, let's all get together here and let's all sit down and work out some coordinated plan, get the people and the government of the country in agreement with this and then go ahead a little more slowly."

You must adjust what you're doing to the absorptive capacity of the country and the willingness of the country to have you carry on the program. Money isn't the right way to go at it. Money is essential, money is necessary. Sometimes a lot of money is necessary, as in the Indian program where in order to carry out and reach the goals within the time which is allotted we must move much faster than the pure theory of technical assistance would permit.

Exportation of the American Idea

Those are some of the ideas which can be developed much more fully with others in your panel discussions this morning. But what I should like to leave with you are the points which I have just made.

First of all, that Point Four is one among many points. It is not the whole foreign policy. It cannot succeed unless the whole foreign policy succeeds.

Second, it must be adjusted. The work that we do must be adjusted to the condition, the situation in the country. It must be infinitely flexible.

Third, and it follows from the second, do not be doctrinaire about Point Four. Do not be like the Socialist Party where you have the pure doctrine and then 50 splinter doctrines coming off it. Do not say, "This is with Point Four and this is without Point Four." That sort of rigid thinking, I believe, gets us nowhere. Point Four must mean that we are primarily engaged in helping to teach these people how to help themselves.

Now, what is necessary to bring that about in a particular country depends on that country. And, therefore, do not be rigid. Do not have purely doctrinaire ideas.

And, finally, one last thought. We have said over and over again that this is exporting the American idea, the American Revolution, or the American dream. It is very true, but if that is true let us be sure, and be terribly sure, that we are preserving the American dream, the American idea, in America.

Do not let us be smug and believe that merely because you can read in the books that America was like this, or that Abraham Lincoln said it was like this, it will be like that without our constant effort and our constant fighting to make our country what we want it to be and what we believe it has been and will be in the future.

Current Legislation on Foreign Policy

- Joint Economic Report. Report of the Joint Committee on the January 1952 Economic Report of the President with Supplemental and Minority Views and Materials Prepared by the Staff on National Defense and the Economic Outlook for the Fiscal Year 1953. S. Rept. 1295, 82d Cong., 2d sess. 134 p.
- Revision of Immigration and Nationality Laws. Minority Views. S. Rept. 1137, Part 2. 82d Cong., 2d sess. [To accompany S. 2550] 11 pp.
- Amending Section 3 (A) of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as Amended. S. Rept. 1319, 82d Cong., 2d sess. [To accompany S. 2611] 3 pp.
- Amending Section 32 of the Trading With the Enemy Act. S. Rept. 1235, 82d Cong., 2d sess. [To accompany S. 2544] 4 pp.
- Extension of Rubber Act of 1948. H. Rept. 1513, 82d Cong., 2d sess. [To accompany H. R. 6787] 7 pp.
- Investigating the Administration of the Trading With the Enemy Act Since December 18, 1941. S. Rept. 1294, 82d Cong., 2d sess. [To accompany S. Res. 245] 2 pp.
- Assist in Preventing Aliens From Entering or Remaining in the United States Illegally. H. Rept. 1505, 82d Cong., 2d sess. [To accompany S. 1851] 3 pp.
- Supplementary Extradition Convention With Canada. Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations on Executive G. S. Exec. Rept. 5, 82d Cong., 2d sess. 18 pp.
- Continuance of the Mutual Security Program. Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Recommendations for the Continuance of the Mutual Security Program for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1953. H. Doc. 382, 82d Cong., 2d sess. 14 pp.