

Cold war politics

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Cold War Politics – Critical Analysis

United States security policy has always been a subject of intense scrutiny due to its interventionist practices and active participation in international conflicts. American soldiers have fought in and for various countries while the American soil itself has been untouched by the spoils of war. The latter has been attributed to the vast ' sea distance and some errors in the planning of their otherwise prepared opponents' by General Marshall that he described in his 1945 address concerning common defense. (p. 210)

Following the end of the second Great War, General Marshall made some very profound and epiphanic comments regarding war and US security policy. Calling war a ' savage human behavior' the general reiterates the importance of establishing an effective security policy; a term that obviously cannot be used interchangeably with a ' war policy'. It should be noted that a security policy does not necessarily acts as a cause of war. In fact, war is decided by the quality of interaction between nations and their eagerness to reach an agreement. (p. 209)

General Marshall makes allusions to the World War II to elaborate upon this aspect however, the most interesting point remains that he describes the institution of war from the perspective of Germany and Japan only; the very nations that constituted the opposing side of the Second World War. He states that war is the doctrine of Japan and Germany; the people, who he believes have given a lot of thought to this. Though, his speech was meant to shed light on the lessons that United States learned as a result of the second World War however, comically enough the first half of the speech sounds more or less like an attack on the central powers; the side that not only suffered a humiliating defeat in the great war but were also heavily

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penalized. Though, the penalty is nothing compared to the number of lives that were lost but stigmatizing an entire nation does nothing to help either. General Marshall seeks to get approval to shape their military strategy and security policy as a mode of protecting America and its citizens from aggressive nations such as Germany and Japan. He makes several statements that not only implicate Japan and Germany as the sole perpetrators of war but also portrays America as a helpless nation. This aspect of Marshall's speech depicts that the history of war is in fact framed by its victors that largely portray themselves as the innocent party. Their domination over their opponent is depicted as divine providence that automatically delegates them the worldwide responsibility to uphold justice. Even just a superficial perusal of the General's speech, it is quite plain what he is trying to instill in the minds of his listeners. He misses one very strong point that the war was actually an automatic response to the deep-seated resentment instilled in the Germans as a result of the Treaty of Versailles. It was just a continuation of the first Great War due to the inability of the nations to resolve the existing conflicts that later exacerbated the issue and sparked another war. Although, it cannot be denied that Germany and Japan did come off the more aggressive of nations; with the systematic extermination of Jews and Japanese invasion of various territories, but this is definitely not an opportunity to ignite hatred or as an excuse to tighten security measures.

It is important to get civilians to contribute and enhance the manpower of the country to help the gain an upper-hand in a conflict. However, General Marshall holds a very erroneous belief that getting civilians to participate would make it any less of a savage affair. The notion of war is based on the <https://assignbuster.com/cold-war-politics/>

dictum of “ kill or be killed”, therefore its doctrine vastly rests upon legalized murder; the individual is not just combating for the sake of his country but also for his survival. Which is why, there can be no complete guarantee that power will not be misused during times of war even if the combatants are civilian-soldiers. However, nevertheless Marshall’s plan of providing military training to every American male can be very helpful in preparing the soldiers in helping them understand the gravity and brutality involved in wars.

General Marshall seeks to warn the Americans about the potential dangers that they might be exposed to in their future and some of his qualms were later backed by Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell address. His exit from the white house and tenure as president were summed up in his farewell speech as he highlights the lessons American society must learn from the events that transpired during his presidency. Unlike General Marshall’s biased and idealistic view on the subject, Eisenhower is more to the point in stating why America needs to have a strong security policy. Eisenhower deems the consolidation of American security as only a logical solution for a country with a number of adversaries that it acquired due to its participation in wars that has ensconced it in a very precarious position.

Hence, a security policy is essential in a world with a “ hostile ideology global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method” (p. 248). As America had just begun to open its doors to technological advances, both Eisenhower and Marshall demonstrated the same kind of fear that technology will replace manpower. It was a legitimate alarm as scientific and technological development was seen as a threat to democracy as it would have caused widespread demotivation due to lack of participation in the affairs of the nation. There was a great need to create a balance for it all

and not become too dependent upon it as the world had and is still witnessing the disastrous outcome of combining technology with warfare in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Eisenhower had played immense role in putting an end to several conflicts throughout the world and even in his farewell speech, he does not describe USA as a nation that is crippled without a security policy rather it is a logical step to safeguard its future. On the other hand, General Marshall puts forward an entirely different picture of American security as a necessity at the same, stigmatizing Japan and Germany that gives a one-sided view on the matter. Wars and Conflicts are as old as time itself that is why not one nation can be held responsible for devising it and involving citizens is no real assurance that warfare would be a less brutal or bloody event. However, a sound security policy is important nevertheless not only for international security but threats and terrorism on a domestic level also needs a proper policy to be successfully curbed.

Work Cited

Johnson, Michael P. "Reading the American Past". Bedford Publishers, 4th Edition. 2008.