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What the Dumbarton Oaks Peace Plan Means

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The experts framed a plan. Here we as citizens are challenged to understand it, discuss it—and do something about it

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THE STAKE of the American people in the maintenance of peace after this war could not be greater. We hate war. Yet twice in a generation we have been forced to fight to defend our freedom and our vital interests against powerful aggressors.

Our young men are giving their lives daily because we and other peace-loving nations did not succeed after the last war in organizing and maintaining peace. It is up to us to see that their sons—and ours—are not forced to give their lives in another great war 25 years from now.

In this war we were attacked last by the aggressors and we have been able to fight them far from our own soil. The range of the airplane and the new weapons already developed make certain that next time—if we permit a next time—the devastation of war will be brought to our own homes and our own soil. Next time—if we permit a next time—it is

likely that the United States will be attacked first, not last, by an aggressor nation.

After we have won this war we shall have only one alternative to preparing for the next war. That is to prevent the next war. It is imperative that we start now. We can do it only by planning and developing, in cooperation with the other peace-loving peoples of the world, an organized peace that will really work.

I

A sound peace plan must be based on the facts as they are and aimed at the realization of our ideals for a peaceful world. Both of these requirements, I think, are met by the proposals which were drafted last summer and fall at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China. I wish here to state what I believe to be the plan's animating spirit and its practical operating value.

These proposals did not spring from thin air. They were preceded by long and careful studies among many sorts of people in each of the four coun-

tries. In the United States advice was sought not only of technical experts in the Department of State but of political leaders of both parties in Congress, of qualified high officers of our Army and Navy, and of notable private citizens of varying views. The proposals are the outcome of patient research and of broad consultation. Every effort is now being made to submit them to the thoughts and suggestions of all the people of America.

There are four corners to the plan proposed at Dumbarton Oaks.

The first is this: peace can be maintained only if the peace-loving nations of the world band together for that purpose. In doing so, they must recognize the sovereign principle of the equality of all of them and, at the same time, the fact of the inequality of their power to prevent war.

The phrase "sovereign equality" is enshrined in Principle Number One of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals. It means that every peace-loving state, however small, has the same supreme authority over its own territory as any other state, however large. Each such state, irrespective of size, is an international individuality. Each, therefore, has both a right to a voice in the affairs of the family of nations and a responsibility to share in the task of creating a peaceful world order.

Conforming to this principle, the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals provide that membership in the new International Organization shall be open to all "peace-loving" states large and small. The proposals provide for a

General Assembly in which all member states will be represented on an equal footing. They also provide for a smaller body of 11 members — the Security Council — in which the five most powerful nations will be permanent members.

All members of the Organization undertake to settle their disputes peacefully and to fulfill the other obligations to maintain and strengthen peace which would be assumed by them under the proposed Charter of the Organization. Within the limits of these undertakings the representatives of the member nations will cast their votes on any international issue in the manner that their own countries may direct; and each of them will be chosen by his own country in any way that his own country may prefer. National sovereignty remains unimpaired.

The aim of the Organization is twofold. It is to prevent and suppress wars. It is also to make peace constantly stronger by developing closer, more friendly and mutually profitable relations among the member states.

The primary responsibility for the prevention and suppression of war rests with the Security Council. This is because it is a task that can be performed effectively only by a small body, which must include the five great powers as permanent members. In this function the Assembly also has an important secondary role to play.

The primary responsibility for creation of the international political, economic and social conditions favorable to peace rests with the Assembly.

This is a responsibility that can be carried out successfully only by continuing and developing agreement among all member nations, large and small.

II

This war has shown that small states in an era of mechanized warfare are unable to defend themselves against great aggressors. Only the great powers possess the industrial capacity and other military resources required by the United Nations to defeat the Axis aggressors. Similarly, wars can be prevented and suppressed in the future only if the great powers employ their dominant physical power justly and in unity of purpose to that end. Hence the place that the Dumbarton Oaks Plan gives to a Security Council. Hence, too, the position assigned to the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, France as permanent members of the Council. In addition, the Security Council is to have six non-permanent members, elected for two-year terms by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. The supreme duty of the Security Council is to "take any measures necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles" set down in the Charter of the new International Organization.

These measures constitute the second corner of the peace plan. They fall into two groups — those necessary to prevent wars and those necessary to suppress them.

All member states undertake the obligation to settle their disputes

peacefully, by means of their own choice. They may do so by negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation or judicial processes. Many local or regional differences can be settled by regional arrangements without reference to the Security Council.

If, however, means like these fail, then the nations are obligated to come to the Security Council, which also has the power, on its own initiative, to investigate any dispute and to recommend methods of adjustment. In this connection the General Assembly is empowered to consider any question relating to the maintenance of peace and security and to make recommendations on it, provided that the Security Council is not already actively engaged in dealing with it.

The Dumbarton Oaks Proposals also provide for an International Court of Justice to which any dispute that can be settled by rules of law shall be referred. Its statute — or Constitution — will be the same as that of the present Permanent Court of International Justice with minor necessary modifications, or based upon it. This Court will be the judicial organ of the new United Nations International Organization. The Security Council may seek its advice on all legal questions involved in international disputes.

It is only after all means for the peaceful prevention of war have been exhausted that the Security Council will then turn to forceful means for the prevention or suppression of war.

As the first of these further steps the Security Council may call upon all members of the new International

Organization to apply pressure to any offending state by such non-military means as "the severance of diplomatic and economic relations" and "complete or partial interruption of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio and other means of communication."

If these further means are not enough, the Security Council is empowered to take military action "by air, naval or land forces."

The members of the new International Organization would agree, in the Charter itself, that throughout these efforts the Security Council would be acting "on their behalf." They would also agree to assume the obligation to make "armed forces" and "facilities" and "assistance" available to the Security Council "on its call" and in accordance with special agreements previously concluded. To insure effective employment of these forces the Security Council is to be provided with a Military Staff Committee composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the permanent member nations of the Council or their representatives.

The Security Council is thus given powers which the Council of the League of Nations did not possess. The League's powers proved too weak. It is surely evident that stronger powers are necessary.

On the other hand, these stronger powers do not produce what some commentators have described as an "Irresponsible and Uncontrollable Great-Power Super-State." The Plan contains many checks to the contrary. For example:

(1) The Security Council cannot call

upon any state for armed forces except to an extent agreed upon beforehand by that state itself. Each state will determine its own international contribution of armed forces through a special agreement or agreements signed by itself and ratified by its own constitutional processes. That is, the Dumbarton Oaks Plan leaves each state free to set its own limit upon the quantity and quality of the armed forces and other military facilities and assistance that it will furnish to the Security Council. The Security Council cannot require it to go beyond that limit. The Security Council does not in any way become the arbitrary master of the world's military resources. (2) The great powers who are to be the five permanent members of the Security Council do not constitute a majority of the Council. Any decision of the Council would therefore require the affirmative votes of at least some of the six nonpermanent members. (3) In the General Assembly the smaller powers, with their overwhelming majority of the membership, may adopt a recommendation on a question of peace before that question rises for action in the Security Council. The General Assembly is to meet at least once a year. It may meet oftener. It is to receive annual and special reports from the Security Council and has the power to consider them and to express either its approval or dissent.

Agreement among the great powers is an essential condition of peace.

At the same time, the opportunity of the smaller powers, under the Dumbarton Oaks Plan, to stand sentinel over the behavior of the great powers is surely far greater than it ever could be in a world left unorganized and planlessly open to predatory aggression.

III

The third corner of the peace plan is the essential complement of the second. To prevent and suppress wars is not enough, just as winning this war will not of itself bring us lasting peace, we have to *build* peace. We have to build it stone by stone continuously over the years within the framework of such an Organization as that proposed at Dumbarton Oaks. We have to *make peace* with the same strong purpose and the same united effort which we have given to *making war*.

In this field the General Assembly of all the member states of the proposed United Nations International Organization will be the highest representative body in the world. It will represent the ideal of a common world humanity, and a common world purpose to promote international coöperation, extend the rule of law in international relations and advance the material and cultural welfare of all men.

The function of the Assembly as a free forum of all peace-loving nations and its wide powers of investigation and recommendation are in themselves powerful weapons for peace in an age when public opinion can be instantaneously mobilized by press and radio.

But the Assembly will also have at its command an effective instrument of continuous action in building peace. This is the Economic and Social Council to be created under the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals.

This arm of the General Assembly is provided for in recognition of a great fact which increasingly characterizes the international life of our times. It is the fact that the whole world is more and more one single area of interdependent technological inventions, industrial methods, marketing problems and their related social effects. This interdependence destroys any equilibrium that may ever have existed between so-called "advanced" countries and "backward" countries. It means either universal economic friction which will disrupt the world toward war or universal economic coöperation which will harmonize the world toward peace. Failure to recognize this fact after the last war was one of the reasons why this war got started.

The Economic and Social Council is to be elected, without help of the Security Council, by the General Assembly of all states. It is to consist of representatives of 18 states, holding their posts for three-year terms. It has no power of compulsion. By voluntary means it is, under the direction of the Assembly, to "facilitate solutions of international economic, social and other humanitarian problems" and to "promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

It will create commissions in all fields of economic and social activity that it may consider appropriate.

The members of these commissions will not be political or diplomatic delegates. They will be technical experts. They will furnish professional advice to the Economic and Social Council and to the Assembly. There will be a secretariat and research staff for all projects.

The Assembly and its Economic and Social Council will also provide a center for coordinating the numerous separate specialized international organizations now or hereafter operating for economic and social progressive purposes.

There is the International Labor Organization with its long record of successful service to sound labor causes. There is the proposed United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization with its heavy duty of service both to the food-producers of agricultural countries and to the food-consumers of all countries. There are the proposed International Monetary Fund and the proposed International Bank for Reconstruction and Development with their highly difficult and delicate responsibilities toward the world's currencies and the world's investment funds. Under discussion also are new international "specialized" organizations in aviation, in cartel control, in health, in education, in wire and wireless communications, in foreign trade, and in many individual agricultural and industrial commodities.

All these organizations, clearly, are but so many spokes to the international wheel. They need a hub. The Dumbarton Oaks Plan authorizes the Assembly to act as that hub with the Economic and Social Council as its

principal operating mechanism. It provides that all specialized international organizations shall be brought into relationship with the new general International Organization through agreements with the Economic and Social Council under the approval of the General Assembly. It provides further that the Economic and Social Council shall receive reports from the specialized international organizations and shall, under the General Assembly's authority, coordinate their policies and activities.

Here for the first time we see the possible emergence of an advisory Economic General Staff of the World.

It can be soundly hoped that the recommendations of the General Assembly and its Economic and Social Council, proceeding from what will be the concentrated headquarters of the world's economic and social thought, will promptly reach the form of widely ratified treaties and agreements making for fuller employment and higher standards of living in all countries. The attainment of these objectives is indispensable to building a peace that will last.

IV

I now come to the fourth corner of the square on which the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals would erect an edifice of peaceful international relations.

This is the progressive reduction of armaments, which in the modern world have become a crushing burden on the resources of all nations. If we, in this country, for example, could have used for productive peacetime pur-

poses only one half of what we have devoted to arms for this war, we would have advanced beyond measure the standard of living of the American people. And after this war is won, the rate of economic advancement for ourselves and for all peoples will be determined in important measure by the rate of armaments reduction that the nations of the world are able to achieve.

The General Assembly of the new International Organization is to "consider the general principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments." The Security Council is to go further. In order to achieve "the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments," it is to formulate "plans for the establishment of a system of regulation of armaments" and it is to submit those plans to all members of the new International Organization.

It is not proposed this time that the United States or any other members of the new International Organization shall disarm as an example. It is proposed that all members of the Organization shall travel the road together and at the fastest possible joint pace.

No nation, however, is likely to travel either fast or far on this road until it feels able to place full reliance for its security on the International Organization. The nations of the world will give up guns only in so far as they make the new Organization work, as they gradually build up a living body of international law, as they create and operate effective joint instrumentalities to keep the

peace, and as they develop strong and sure means of economic and social cooperation to their mutual benefit.

Thus the fourth corner of the peace plan is dependent upon the other three.

V

Such is the plan. I think it takes into account both the world's stubborn realities and the world's unquenchable aspirations. Nor is it deficient, I am certain, in what the authors of the Declaration of Independence rightly called "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind." No other peace plan in history has been so fully exposed to the impact of those opinions.

The proposals emerged from their Dumbarton Oaks stage on October 9 of last year. They were disseminated to the whole world. For months now they have been the subject of study by all governments, by the press and radio and by individuals and groups in all countries. They will go in due course to a conference of the nations which are fighting this war to build a world of freedom and peace. They will then go to their home countries for approval by their legislatures or other appropriate governmental bodies.

We seek a calm and considered and complete popular judgment upon this plan and then, if it is approved and ratified, a solid effective support for it not merely by governments but by *peoples*. In the end it is *they*, and only they, who by their determined purpose, their understanding and their continuing loyalty can bring to the world peace, security and progress.