

We cannot stand in the way of a steam roller; we cannot dam the tide of history. We cannot let the Russians make Pan-Arabism their vehicle, serve their unholy purposes. We must come to terms with Arab Nationalism, and that quickly, or we lose everything. It is not too late, but time is running out on us.

Now there is another crisis—Quemoy. My friend, Marguerite Higgins, summed it up nicely this morning when she remarked that people who live on a volcano should not be surprised if it occasionally erupts. We ARE living on a volcano. We have been for 13 years. We may for the next 50 to 75 years. I seriously doubt that our children or our children's children will ever know what you and I used to think of as peace.

I was on Quemoy and Matsu earlier this year. I believe the Nationalists can hold. Their defenses are unbelievably strong. Their morale and willingness to fight is superb.

But if the Chicom's force us to intervene—and they could—let us make this crystal clear to them: It will be no Korea.

We fought in Korea with both hands tied behind our backs. We gave the Commies privileged sanctuary behind the Yalu. And when, in spite of all these odds, we had them reeling, we were snookered into a phony armistice deal that spared them the licking they had so richly earned.

To the Commies, Korea is the worst they can expect from us. And that is dangerous. Let Washington tell them: It won't happen again that way, Buster.

The Chicom's are not ready for war. They don't want it, they don't expect it. But we must give it to them, no matter what Comrade K. says in Moscow. I suspect, in his secret heart, he would be pleased to see us cut Comrade Mao Tse-Tung down to size. Mao has been getting mighty big for his britches lately. There will be no privileged sanctuary this time, Mr. Mao.

This has not been a very happy report, but then I would not want to leave you with the impression that I come to you in any sense of disillusion and despair. My faith in the future of this country is as strong as your faith in this great organization.

This is a life and death struggle between our way of life and that of the Russians and eventually, maybe not in our lifetime, one side or the other is going to take this tired old world and make it the kind of world which I believe is going to be our kind of world eventually. This will apply only so long as we consider the struggle worth the making.

If we ever want to accept a philosophy of defeat and surrender, the philosophy expressed by some, that we should surrender to the Communist cause because to fight them would imply obliteration while to surrender would at least promise existence, if not life—if we ever accept that philosophy, then the Communists will take it and they will make it their kind of world.

I can only speak for myself—but then I think that I can also speak for everyone in this great hall, that if the Communists make this their kind of world, then, brother, they can have it, because I would not want to live in it.

REPORT OF JOHN S. GLEASON, JR.

National Commander of The American Legion

In order that you might have an opportunity to study fully and carefully . . . at your own convenience . . . my report to this Fortieth Annual National Convention of The American Legion, that report has been prepared and distributed to each

of you delegates and alternates as a printed publication.

It is, of course, an accounting of my stewardship as national commander . . . a balance sheet summary of the programs, policies and problems of The American Legion during the past year. But beyond this, it is a blueprint for the future . . . a suggestion as to where we go from here . . . and how we can best get there. For, it can be said of us, as Patrick Henry so eloquently said of himself:

"The only lamp by which my feet may be guided is the lamp of experience."

Expressing this same thought is the inscription on the National Archives Building in Washington, D. C., which reads: "The Past is Prologue."

In case you wondered what that means, you're not alone. I did too, until one day I asked a cab driver in our nation's capital to explain the inscription. "That simply means," he replied, "brother, you ain't seen nothing yet!"

We ain't seen nothing yet in this American Legion of ours. Despite a membership slightly smaller than a year ago, I say to you today: The American Legion at this moment stands at the threshold of a new era of record-breaking membership and unprecedented service and accomplishment for God and Country.

These are not mere words. They represent a deep, abiding personal conviction that grew stronger and more confident with each mile I traveled . . . with each department and post I visited . . . with each Legionnaire I was privileged to meet this year.

These accomplishments won't just happen, of course. They will be hard won. But they'll be worth winning, too. For every program we carry out, every eligible veteran we enlist in our ranks and in our cause of service to God and Country helps to strengthen America and insure our continued existence as a land of opportunity and of freedom under God.

I am proud and grateful that this past year has been distinguished by a growing pride among Legionnaires everywhere in their posts. There is in every department a resurgence of confidence in the future greatness of The American Legion. Most important, there is a feeling . . . indeed a conviction among Legionnaires everywhere . . . that despite all of The American Legion's past achievements, despite 40 years of unselfish, unceasing service on behalf of all of our people, there is greater cause for the existence of The American Legion today than at any time in our history.

Only so long as you believe this, will The American Legion exist. For it is this conviction that gives The American Legion a purpose for being. Without this purpose to inspire him, without the certain knowledge that his own contributions and those of his post to the welfare of his fellow citizens and his community, state and nation are needed and worthwhile, a Legionnaire would quickly lose all interest in our organization.

Comradeship and good fellowship are important values of American Legion membership. But they will never be enough, of and by themselves, to hold us together. The moment our posts become nothing more than a clubhouse hangout for a handful of individuals who like to get together occasionally over a cold beer, that moment, I submit, they will start down the road to certain oblivion. And, if our posts fail, The American Legion will die.

You're not going to permit this to happen because you have pride in your posts and pride in yourselves as Legionnaires. And you have a sense

of responsibility, too . . . a deep, and abiding belief that as Americans and veterans you have an obligation to serve our nation and our people as effectively and unselfishly in time of peace as you did in time of war.

Your American Legion post is the instrument . . . the means, if you will . . . through which you realize your desire and need to serve your fellowman.

Individually, your post is The American Legion in your community. You personalize and make meaningful for your friends and neighbors and fellow citizens our principal programs of service for God and Country. Veterans Rehabilitation is no abstract, highly technical activity. It's as simple and necessary as helping a sick and disabled veteran in your community obtain needed hospital and medical care . . . or taking care of his widow and orphan.

Similarly, Child Welfare is not a program involving legislation, social studies and other national efforts. It is, rather, in your community, the unselfish action of your post in providing food and shelter and clothes for destitute children, or financing vital medical treatment for a helpless child.

Americanism is not a broad, patriotic philosophy or program practiced by The American Legion. It's as understandable and worthwhile in the minds of your fellow citizens back home as your post's sponsorship of a Boy Scout troop . . . or fielding of a Junior Legion baseball team . . . or conducting an annual oratorical contest in the local high school . . . or sending the most deserving high school students to The American Legion's Boys' State.

Even The American Legion's National Security program has a special community significance as far as your post is concerned. It could be your support of the local National Guard and Reserve unit . . . or your hospitality toward and cooperation with military personnel stationed at an armed forces installation in or near your community. It could be your personal participation in the Guard and Reserve training programs.

In this, as in all of The American Legion's principal programs of service for God and Country, public knowledge and acceptance of our efforts to help disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors, to assist needy children, to give young Americans a greater knowledge and love of our country and our heritage of freedom, and to keep America strong so that we may remain free . . . public awareness and approval of these unselfish programs, I repeat, depend directly upon your post.

The American Legion's national programs of Veterans Rehabilitation, Child Welfare, Americanism and National Security are but the sum total of the essential, successful efforts of your post and 17,200 other American Legion posts throughout the nation. The activities I have reviewed in my printed report to this convention reflect the interest and support given our principal programs by each of your posts during the past year.

By the same token, the work and accomplishments of the various divisions of The American Legion national headquarters, during this past year, which I have also reviewed in my report, were made possible only by the informed, willing support of 2,700,000 Legionnaires.

You and the members of your posts gave the national organization our objectives and programs for this past year. The resolutions adopted at our last national convention or approved by the National Executive Committee following appropriate

action by your post and department, together with directives of previous conventions and NEC meetings still having force and validity, both authorized and defined our national programs during the past year.

Without repeating the summaries, analyses or conclusions contained in my report, may I emphasize at this time that, in my opinion, your national organization this past year has carried out faithfully and well the duties and programs you entrusted to it.

If we can take satisfaction in our successes of these past 12 months . . . if we can be certain that we gave the best that was in us to The American Legion and its programs which command our devotion and support, we cannot be complacent. Nor can we pause, even for a moment, in our service to God and Country.

The year ahead promises new challenges that will test severely our dedication and demand our continued interest and effort. Indeed, they may even strain the great strength of The American Legion.

The heart and hand of every Legionnaire are needed to carry out our mission of service to God and Country. When, through death or disinterest, we lose even a single member, we are made that much weaker. Stopping this fatal attrition must be our common concern and cause this coming year.

I am confident we will succeed because we have the desire to do so and, now, the means as well. The low-cost group life insurance program inaugurated by The American Legion earlier this year can help us first to stabilize our membership and, secondly, to strengthen the foundation for increased membership in the future.

Frankly, the response to date to this new benefit of American Legion membership has been disappointing. At least to me. However, I'm not discouraged. I believe sincerely that if a concerted, planned effort is made by each post this fall to rekindle interest in the insurance program in conjunction with its 1959 membership drive, the Legion's group life insurance program will be one of the most successful projects in our history. And if its potential and promise are realized, not only will individual Legionnaire policy holders benefit, but so will The American Legion itself. For we will have put a floor under our membership and raised the ceiling for future growth.

Now, in conclusion, permit me a sincere but totally inadequate word of thanks.

To you Legionnaires in every department who extended to me every possible personal courtesy and consideration this past year, and who gave me as generous and effective cooperation as any national commander has ever known, I express my deep appreciation. I shall remember gratefully and always your many kindnesses and invaluable help.

To the department commanders, national executive committeemen and national officers with whom I was privileged to serve this year, I offer my special thanks and commendation for a job well done. I could never have begun to carry out the great responsibilities of the office I will soon relinquish without your understanding and support.

To the dedicated, hard-working members of the national headquarters staff, headed by our distinguished national adjutant, E. A. "Blackie" Blackmore, I extend my heartfelt thanks for their loyalty, their counsel and their capable conduct of demanding and difficult duties.

To my fellow Illinois Legionnaires and all those whose support and encouragement made it possible

for me to know the greatest experience and highest honor of my life, I offer sincere and unending appreciation. Without your guidance, understanding and help I could never have dreamed to aspire to the office of national commander. I pray only that I have justified your confidence and faith in me.

To my dear friend and valued partner this year, Mrs. J. "Pat" Mildred Kelly, national president of the American Legion Auxiliary, and to all of the nearly million members of the Auxiliary, I extend my deepest thanks. Their cooperation and unflinching support made my task easier and contributed to whatever success I have known this year.

Finally, to my wife, Mary Jane, and our six sons . . . Jack, Dan, Dick, Tom, Dave and Marty . . . I offer a heart overflowing with gratitude for their understanding, patience and encouragement. If the welcome mat is still out for me when this convention is over, I promise that I'll come home to stay for a long, long time.

And now, let's get on with the important work of this great convention. Let's get on with The American Legion's unfinished and unending service for God and Country.

**PRESENTATION OF THE AMERICAN
LEGION'S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL**
By National Commander John S. Gleason, Jr.

In the history of The American Legion, there have only been 47 recipients of our Distinguished Service Medal—the highest honor that we can confer upon any individual. The record shows that we have honored ourselves in recognizing the contribution of Presidents, soldiers, statesmen and men of God, to the welfare and security of our nation.

This year we have added new luster and prestige to the award we have prized so highly, for we have chosen as its recipient an American who is renowned, respected and revered.

It would be impossible to single out any special accomplishment or particular service which has merited for this great and good man the esteem and gratitude of his fellow Americans.

He has spent more than half a century in giving of his wisdom, his experience and his patriotism for the security and future of his country and ours.

In World War I he was the symbolic and dynamic leader of America's defense mobilization effort. During the uneasy years of unrest and unbridled lust for power between the two world wars he was America's valued and courageous champion of adequate military security. This unselfish dedication to preparedness won for him, as it did for The American Legion, little following and even less thanks. World War II proved how right and how prophetic he was. This global conflict also denied him the earned right to rest and relaxation for his seeming inexhaustible strength and increasingly wise counsel were enlisted without hesitation or reservation in the cause of victory and a just and lasting peace.

Victory won, he returned home to perpetuate and make known to future generations his philosophy of life, his deep devotion to America and our destiny as a land of freedom under God.

To be privileged to be able to award him The American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal is one of the highest honors that I shall ever know and to have him accept this recognition is also one of the greatest honors that The American Legion shall ever know.

On this auspicious occasion, there is but one brief note of disappointment. America's most beloved and distinguished elder statesman cannot be here personally to accept our award for, on Sunday he suffered an attack and his doctors decided that his health would not permit him to be with us.

We would have been thrilled, of course, to have him come and sit on a park bench, which is and will forever remain his trademark. However, we are proud indeed that he personally selected as his representative one of The American Legion's most distinguished members, a former Secretary of Defense of the United States and a past national commander, Louis Johnson.

It is with deep pride and pleasure, Colonel Johnson, that I present to you The American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal to America's elder statesman, advisor to Presidents and architect of our nation's security and national economic solvency—the Honorable Bernard M. Baruch.

Colonel, I hope that you will be good enough to not only present the medal to Mr. Baruch, but also the Certificate of Award in connection with this distinguished medal.

**PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
LOUIS JOHNSON:** When Mr. Baruch asked that I substitute for him today on account of illness, I felt that no greater honor had ever come to me in my life—that no greater citizen had been honored by The American Legion than Bernard Baruch and I agreed to do it provided that he would, if his doctors permitted, pen a short note to this convention.

I would now like to read to you what Mr. Baruch wrote and what came in by air mail, special delivery, a short time ago:

**RESPONSE TO PRESENTATION
OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL**

By Louis Johnson
Past National Commander
Representing Bernard M. Baruch

I am profoundly moved by the decision of The American Legion to award its Distinguished Service Medal to me. I am equally disappointed that I am prevented from accepting this great honor personally and thanking you for it face to face. My doctors enjoy overruling my plans to travel to Chicago. They are a greater trial to me than my years, but they give the orders; I obey them.

To have earned the approbation of The American Legion, one of the great organizations of this country, must make any man proud. To have shared the same causes, fought in the same fights with the Legion is also a source of pride to me.

I recall with great satisfaction my close association with The American Legion in the years between the two World Wars, when it was not the vogue to be concerned about preparedness. Those were the years when a handful of us, including The American Legion leadership, were concerned to keep America strong to prevent war. We also urged a mobilization program which, in the event of war, would enable us to wage it effectively while at the same time preventing economic inequities, dislocations and profiteering. I have always thought it immoral to permit those who remain at home to profit unduly while others are fighting. There should be self-discipline and sacri-