



I Trust to be Believed

Speeches
and
Reflections

by
Elmer L.
Andersen

introduction by
Eugene McCarthy

edited by
Lori Sturdevant



I spoke several times during the late 1960s, while the Vietnam War escalated, on the importance of the United Nations. What follows are excerpts from three such speeches. The first is taken from remarks on the occasion of the first flying of a United Nations flag over the Minneapolis City Hall:

❖ I am deeply honored and tremendously thrilled to be a member of this distinguished company on this occasion. Not only does this occasion mark the first flying of the United Nations flag by Minneapolis and Hennepin County, but the first such declaration and UN flag flying by any major community in the United States. Thus this becomes a deeply significant occasion in our nation's history. It represents a commitment to cooperation among nations for world peace, to belief in the common brotherhood of all men of all nations, and to aspirations for a world community of peace, freedom and justice under world law.

If one thinks in terms of narrow nationalism, it is perfectly clear that one nation can have objectives that are in opposition to another nation, and that lacking any other influence, differences can grow into disputes and disputes into war. It can become a patriotic purpose for the men of one nation to seek to kill the men of another nation. On the other hand, if people believe that all men are bound together in a common humanity and that the dignity of any man is greater than the difference created by man-made boundaries, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to wage war anywhere. It becomes as horrendous to kill anyone as one's own brother, for indeed, all men become brothers.

What is developing today is an ever-increasing body of opinion that holds that we must look upon all the peoples of the world as one community, and we must find a way to operate under a body of world law to preserve peace. Is the idea of a world community completely impractical?

Trygve Lie [first secretary general of the United Nations] didn't think so. In 1950, his tenth point in a twenty-year program for achieving peace through the United Nations read: "Active and systematic use of all the powers of the Charter and all the machinery

I Trust to be Believed

of the United Nations to speed up the development of international law, towards an eventual enforceable world law for a universal world society."

Dag Hammarskjöld [another U.N. secretary-general] said, "The dilemma of our age, with its infinite possibilities of self-destruction, is how to grow out of the world of armaments into a world of international security, based on law."

Dwight D. Eisenhower said: "We see as our goal not a superstate above nations, but a world community embracing them all, rooted in law and justice and enhancing the potentialities and common purposes of all peoples."

Arthur J. Goldberg, on assuming his post as chief of the United States mission to the United Nations, said: "There is simply no alternative in a nuclear age to world peace through the rule of law."

Pope John commented: "Today the universal common good poses problems...which cannot be adequately tackled or solved except by the efforts of public authorities which are in a position to operate in an effective manner on a worldwide basis."

If these bold statements frighten anyone, may I remind them of the words of Senator Arthur Vandenberg at the time of Senate ratification of the UN charter: "You may tell me that I have but to scan the present world with realistic eyes in order to see these fine phrases often contemptuously reduced to a contemporary shambles, that some of the signatories to this charter practice the precise opposite of what they preach even as they sign, that the aftermath of this war seems to threaten the utter disintegration of these ideals at the very moment they are born. I reply that the nearer right you may be in any such gloomy indictment, the greater is the need for the new pattern which promises at least to try to stem these evil tides."

I am proud to live where public authorities are courageously speaking out on behalf of an equal concern for all men everywhere, and in support of the concept of world citizenship in a world community of nations, living in peace under law.

(date is lost, but believed to be late 1968)

MAY 1, 1968
City Hall Neph