

Strange, Revealing Words Spoken by President Kennedy

By GEORGE J. MARDER
United Press International
Washington - (UPI) - "I am haunted by the feeling..."
Strange words for a president of the United States to say.

Strange but revealing. When spoken by President Kennedy at a recent press conference, they proved a rare and dramatic insight to the troubled thoughts of a world leader struggling with the awesome problems of the nuclear age.

The question from a reporter had been a simple one: What hope was there in still trying for a nuclear test ban agreement with Russia after a decade of failure?

Asks Himself Questions
As the President started his answer it was obvious he has asked himself the question many times before. And in the loneliness of the White House, he had arrived at but one answer: hope or not, he must keep trying.

Why? Why go on? What was his motivation in the face of successive and frustrating failures.

The answers lie in that haunted feeling; the troubled thoughts which brought furrows to the President's brow. The feeling that unless he succeeds, he will leave a heritage of even greater global nuclear danger to some future president.

"Personally," he told newsmen, "I am haunted by the feeling that by 1970, unless we are successful, there may be 10 nuclear powers instead of four, and by 1975, 15 or 20."

The President's words tumbled out in turbulent confusion of his inner turmoil.

More War Than Peace
"With all of the history of war - and the human race's history unfortunately has been a good deal more war than peace - with nuclear weapons distributed all through the world, and available, and the strong reluctance of any people to accept defeat, I see the possibility of the President of the United States having to face a world in which 15 or 20 or 25 nations may have these weapons."

And that is what the President regards as "the greatest possible danger and hazard."

He discussed only the hazards of failure, not his hopes of success.

Those hopes, humanity's well as his, for an end to the nuclear arms race are gossamer, kept aloft as if in the fluttering wings of a butterfly. The hopes are faint; they are based on even more fragile expectations.

The facts of cold war life

dictate failure in negotiations for a test ban agreement between the big three atomic powers - the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom.

But even should they agree, the odds are overwhelming against a halt to the spread of nuclear weaponry.

The pact under discussion at Geneva is limited to the big three. There is nothing in it except moral suasion which could force other nations to stop testing. Nothing to keep France and Red China, for example, from developing their own nuclear weapons, which France is now doing over Kennedy's objections.

It is estimated that 11 nations now have the industrial and economic potential to develop their own nuclear arms - if they want to. Some, and perhaps all, may feel impelled to do so unless the nuclear arms race is stopped.

The President's hope is that a big three test ban treaty would encourage most of those nations to join in, nations like West Germany and East Germany and Japan and Israel. Those nations would have a self-interest in seeing to it that the race doesn't spread to powers which might endanger their security. There also would be the matter of world opinion which would be expected to support wholeheartedly a test ban treaty and frown on any nation which threatened to disrupt the truce.

The proposed treaty contains a provision giving each one of the big three the right to back out if it felt its security was being threatened by nuclear testing of any nation outside the treaty. That would mean France and Red China would assume the responsibility of risking resumption of an all-out nuclear race if they continued testing after the big-three arranged a truce.

Officials Have No Hope
Nevertheless, there is no hope among disarmament officials that France and Red China would be willing to join now.

French President Charles de Gaulle, miffed because France was excluded from U.S. and British atomic know-how, is determined to develop his own nuclear force.

Red China thinks war is the only way to impose communism on the world. Hence, officials see no chance that she would respond to world opinion.

But the President keeps trying - on the slim hope of keeping the nuclear club to 5 instead of 15 members. Otherwise, he gets that haunted feeling.

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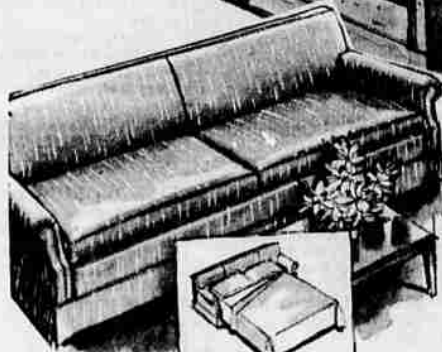
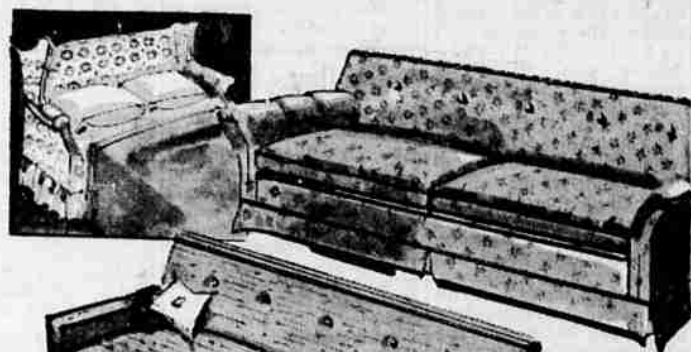
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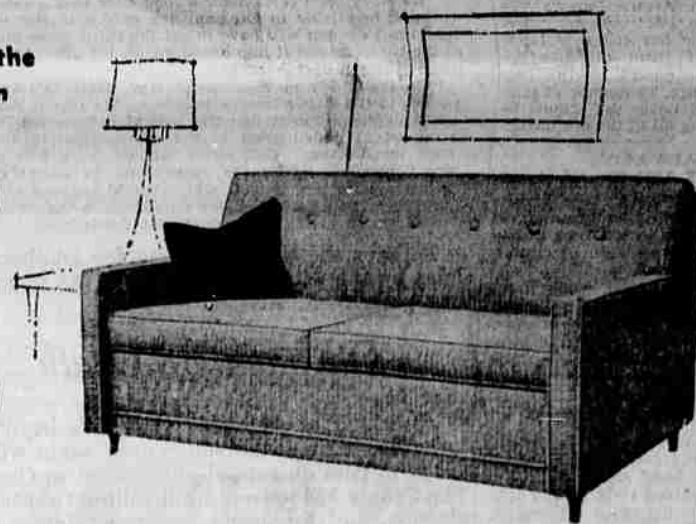
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