

## GENERAL WALTER BEDELL SMITH MEETS THE PRESS

*As Chief of Staff to General Eisenhower during the Second World War, and later as our Ambassador to Russia, Lieutenant-General Walter Bedell Smith has achieved an enviable reputation as a distinguished military man and diplomat. His views on world affairs are of special significance, for he has dealt with the men in the Kremlin and can speak about any possible conflict in the future with the authority of one who has had extensive experience on the highest levels of military leadership. His remarks (slightly cut) on a broadcast of Meet the Press, presented by the Mutual Broadcasting System in cooperation with the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, merit the attention of every American.*

THE participants in the broadcast, aside from General Smith, were John Hightower of the Associated Press, William H. Lawrence of the New York Times, Marquis Childs of United Features, and Lawrence E. Spivak, editor of the MERCURY. Albert Warner, the Mutual commentator, presided.

LAWRENCE: General Smith, we've signed the Atlantic Pact on the basis of a calculated risk: that the Russian reaction would be only verbal or diplomatic. Do you think there's any possibility that the Pact will bring on conflict?

SMITH: Mr. Lawrence, I'm going to answer you by quoting a statement made by Lord Palmerston a long time ago, but which is just as applicable today as it was when he made it. He said: "The policy and

practice of the Russian government have always been to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as the apathy or want of firmness of other governments would allow, but always to stop and retire when it met decided resistance, then to wait for the next favorable opportunity to spring on its victim."

CHILDS: A question related to that, General Smith, is — do you think Stalin and the men in the Politburo believe that war with the West is inevitable?

SMITH: One of the cardinal tenets of Soviet political philosophy is that the two systems cannot exist side by side for long in the same world without conflict. But I don't think that the Soviet government puts a definite time limit on this period of co-existence.

CHILDS: You mean that they believe eventually we must come to an armed conflict?

SMITH: Apparently they so believe. After you read Lenin you arrive at the conclusion that that is their belief.

HIGHTOWER: General, Secretary Acheson said that we're approaching the time when we can deal with equal strength with those who oppose us. Do you think this means we're beginning a sort of final showdown period?

SMITH: It's difficult to answer that categorically. A final showdown period might extend over a very long period of time. I don't put a limit of five, or ten, or even fifty, years on it. The important thing is that we have established a definite foreign policy. If we follow that foreign policy vigorously, and consistently, I think the results will be as the Secretary of State has indicated.

SPIVAK: General, what do you think would be the effect on the Russian government if the Senate failed to approve the Pact?

SMITH: I think it would give the Russian government the greatest possible encouragement.

SPIVAK: Well, General, suppose we approve the Pact but refuse to implement it by helping to arm Western Europe. What do you think the effect of that would be?

SMITH: The result would simply be a Pact without any force behind it. You'd have nothing but a paper

document which wouldn't be worth a great deal.

SPIVAK: You think the implementation of the Pact, then, is just as important as the signing of the Pact itself?

SMITH: I think it's even more important. We've got to help Western Europe. I don't believe that it would be wise to pour a great deal of money into Western Europe for economic rehabilitation without providing also the sinews necessary to defend it.

SPIVAK: You think, then, that it would be wiser to give them some of our own armament money if we couldn't add to our present military budget?

SMITH: I think we have to strike a balance between the two.

CHILDS: The whole line of propaganda attack from Russia is that the Western powers intend to wage aggressive war against the Soviet Union. Do the Russian leaders put any credence in that, General Smith?

SMITH: I can't take that line seriously at all. Nor do I believe that the gentlemen in the Kremlin really believe that.

CHILDS: You think that's purely propaganda?

SMITH: Our whole history is a negation of a statement of that kind.

LAWRENCE: Well, General, there were stories current during the campaign that the Politburo itself was very narrowly divided on the issue of immediate war; that there might

be just one or two votes preventing armed conflict in the immediate future.

SMITH: Mr. Lawrence, I don't think anybody can answer that question except a member of the Politburo. I have a feeling, however, that the vital question of war versus peace is constantly under examination in the Soviet Union, as in other dictatorships.

LAWRENCE: But do you feel that there are two forces working there? Did you feel in your contact with the Russian government that there was one segment which seemed to be more cooperative than another segment? That there were some people who had the Western view, and others who saw nothing good in the West, and no possibilities of cooperation?

SMITH: I did have such a feeling, but there are no facts that I could produce to support that feeling.

SPIVAK: General, do you agree with those who maintain that the Russians can take Europe in two, three, or four weeks?

SMITH: I do not, Mr. Spivak. The supply problem is a vital one, and while the Russian Army is a magnificent organization, the difficulties of supplying it in a long and rapid advance are enormous.

SPIVAK: You think, then, that the expenditure of money to help the West would not be lost quickly?

SMITH: I do indeed think so. It would not be lost.

HIGHTOWER: I wonder if you'd ex-

pand a little bit, sir, on your opinion of the Russian Army. How well would its people fight in a war outside their own country, a war which they might consider aggressive?

SMITH: It's difficult to assess that except from the lessons of history. The Russian soldier has always fought magnificently when he was fighting in defense of Mother Russia. The Russian Army has not itself been an aggressive army. Nevertheless, I should like to point out one thing, which I'm taking from Bertram D. Wolfe's very interesting book, *Three Who Made a Revolution*. Wolfe develops the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, one European in seven was a Russian. At the beginning of the twentieth, one European in four was a Russian. The ratio is still changing in Russia's favor, and if we include all the newly annexed territory and all areas under the domination of the Russian Army or under the control of puppet governments, at the present time about one European in two is under the control of the Kremlin.

CHILDS: General, as a military man, do you think if this calamity of a war between the two great powers came — would it be a short war ended by atomic bombing within a few months, or a long war?

SMITH: I can't imagine it would be a short war, Mr. Childs. I feel this way about it. It's often been said

that a civil war is the most terrible of all wars, because that's the only war in which fighting men on both sides have a pretty good idea of what they're fighting for. A war with Russia would be a civil war of humanity, and I can't think that it would be anything but a prolonged, protracted, disastrous war, which nobody could win. Nobody wins a modern war, anyway.

CHILDS: Some estimates have said twenty years. Do you think it might be that long?

SMITH: That's something that could only be answered after a prolonged study; a shotgun answer would be of no value at all.

SPIVAK: General, do you agree with Mr. Churchill that the atomic bomb saved all of Europe from being overrun by the Russians?

SMITH: It's difficult for me to answer that question, Mr. Spivak. It certainly had considerable effect, but whether or not it saved Europe from being overrun by Russia is something I don't know. At the present time, I don't think that Russia has the intention of overrunning Europe.

SPIVAK: You don't think the Russians have the bomb yet?

SMITH: I don't think they have the bomb in quantity production, although I'm quite sure that Soviet science, being what it is — and it's as good as any science in the world — has solved the problem of atomic fission in the laboratories and notebooks.

SPIVAK: General, if you think, from your studies of Lenin, that the Russians believe war to be inevitable, you must also believe that they're going to pick the time that is most satisfactory to them to start a war. Don't you?

SMITH: I think that if they feel that the time has come when war is imminent, they will act. Yes. The gentlemen in the Kremlin are not gamblers.

WARNER: I take it you don't foresee a time, General, when we can say to the Russians, let's sit down and talk things over and see whether we can come to a basic understanding. Is there no hope of that in the future at all?

SMITH: Certainly there's hope. If there weren't hope of that then life wouldn't be worth living. I don't foresee it, but I hope for it.

HIGHTOWER: General, do you think that such a settlement might have to begin on a basis of spheres of influence — at least as a starting point of discussion?

SMITH: The United States is not prepared to discuss spheres of influence. We don't believe that's the way to live in this world. I think that if we were prepared to discuss spheres of influence, we might strike a receptive note with the Russians. But we don't believe in that.

HIGHTOWER: Do you think that the Russians might be prepared to conduct discussions on some other basis?

SMITH: I don't know, Mr. Hightower.

CHILDS: Do you think Stalin is a very sick man? And who will get his job when he goes?

SMITH: I don't think that Generalissimo Stalin is a very sick man. It's rumored in Moscow that he's had one or two mild heart attacks, but he's rugged and looks well. Georgians have notoriously long lives, and there's no reason to believe that Generalissimo Stalin won't live and exercise his present enormous influence for a long time to come.

CHILDS: Did you have a final interview with him before you left, General?

SMITH: Not a final interview. I talked with him about two or three months before I left.

CHILDS: Was he cordial or not?

SMITH: He's always cordial. I must say that the representatives of the Soviet government are eminently correct when you talk to them.

LAWRENCE: What's the significance, as you see it, of the shift in the Politburo, the change in the Foreign Ministry, the elimination of Voznesensky, and the other changes which have taken place in Russia recently?

SMITH: There's one missing link, and until we know about that it'll be difficult to assess the significance of the changes. That is the work which will be carried on by Mr. Molotov, who has now ceased to be Foreign Minister. My own opinion is that it is a return to the

situation which existed before 1928. At that time — do you want me to continue?

WARNER: Go ahead.

SMITH: At that time, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Foreign Trade were directed by technicians. Then the Soviet government realized that it might be profitable to conduct negotiations on a diplomatic level with some of its neighbors, notably with Germany. And so Mr. Molotov became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Now his departure from the Foreign Office, and the departure of Mr. Mikoyan from the Ministry of Foreign Trade, would seem to mean a return of those two agencies of the Soviet government to the control of technicians. It would indicate to me that they don't expect to accomplish very much in the immediate future *via* diplomatic channels or *via* foreign trade outside their own satellite area.

LAWRENCE: You say there is one missing link, which is what Mr. Molotov will do. Has there been any news at all of any important activities by Mr. Molotov since he left?

SMITH: None that I'm aware of. One can only speculate. My own guess is that he will be much more intimately concerned with the operation of the Cominform, and particularly with the pressure that's being placed on Yugoslavia and other states.

CHILDS: I take it, then, General

Smith, that you do not expect any new peace offensive which might coincide with the lifting of the Berlin blockade?

SMITH: I *would* expect a peace offensive.

CHILDS: You'd expect a peace offensive?

SMITH: That's one of the interesting phenomena of Communist tactics. They conduct a peace offensive and a war scare simultaneously.

SPIVAK: General, is the Voice of America getting through to the Russians, and is it playing an important part, in your judgment?

SMITH: It is getting through. Definitely. About two years ago, when the existence of the Voice of America was threatened, and I returned to help defend it, I estimated that there were about a million-and-a-half radio receivers in the Soviet Union capable of getting Voice of America broadcasts. That was a gross underestimation. There are many more than that, and we hear from many sources of the increasing size of the radio audience, both for the Voice of America and for the British Broadcasting Company.

HIGHTOWER: That brings up the question of how much the Russian people really believe what they're told by their own radio, and what they read in their own papers.

SMITH: Mr. Hightower, I will describe to you an interesting phenomenon in connection with the mass of the Russian people, a people who be-

came literate, the majority of them, after reaching maturity. In my opinion, the Russian people have an almost religious veneration for the printed word and for the officially spoken word. The American people tend to discount any official pronouncement of their own government. The Russian people accept it completely and wholly. But they also accept official statements from other governments. So they are as inclined to believe the official broadcasts of the Voice of America, in my opinion, as they are the broadcasts over their own radio. And that puts the Russian listener in a quandary: he gets two different stories from what he considers to be two authentic sources.

WARNER: General Smith, do an ambassador and his staff in Moscow have any opportunity to get in contact with ordinary Russian people? Or are you pretty well isolated?

SMITH: One is isolated — yes.

LAWRENCE: May I ask a companion question on that? As Chief of Staff to General Eisenhower at SHAEF, you must have become acquainted with a number of Russians; perhaps you even became friendly with some of them. How much opportunity did you have to see them after you got to Moscow?

SMITH: Almost none, Mr. Lawrence.

LAWRENCE: Did you see them at all?

SMITH: I called, for instance, on Marshal Zhukov after I arrived in Moscow. Marshal Zhukov received me in the War Office in the pres-

ence of another general officer, and we had a short, informal and unimportant conversation.

LAWRENCE: But the intimate relation of Berlin was gone?

SMITH: Absolutely gone.

CHILDS: General Smith, what about the so-called peace conference at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, and the other one in Paris? Do you think they're subsidized by Moscow? And if so, what motive would Moscow have?

SMITH: I don't know whether they're subsidized by Moscow at all. I doubt that they are. They're encouraged by Moscow because, like all front organizations, they aid in deluding a number of well-intentioned, well-meaning people.

CHILDS: You mean Moscow would like to delude people over here so that we'd pull back on the armament program and the rest of it?

SMITH: Yes. I'm quite sure of that.

SPIVAK: General, do you think we made any mistakes in dealing with the Germans? Are you satisfied today with what we've done since 1945?

SMITH: Mr. Spivak, it's impossible to handle a situation like that without making mistakes. But I have the most profound admiration for General Clay and the way he's conducted affairs in Germany; I don't know of anybody who could have done as well. He was handicapped initially by a certain lack of coordination in this country. That's been ironed out now, and while we

have made mistakes, we are now getting back to the policies that were recommended by General Eisenhower before he gave up the command in Germany.

SPIVAK: Do you think we made serious mistakes in dealing with the Russians?

SMITH: Initially I think we did. I think it's perfectly excusable. We completely overlooked the great obstacle of Communist doctrine and Communist mentality.

SPIVAK: You feel that we're now well on the road, though, to overcoming most of those mistakes . . .

SMITH: I do.

SPIVAK: . . . through the North Atlantic Pact?

SMITH: It seems that everyone has to learn about the Soviet Union the hard way. We've learned the hard way, but I think we *have* learned. I know that the people who are directing the destinies of this country, and the American people themselves, are thoroughly alive to the situation.

CHILDS: Talking of the past, could our troops have occupied Berlin and Prague, General?

SMITH: I'm confident they could have. We decided not to occupy Berlin because Berlin, at the time, had no political significance to us; and because we had another job to do, which was to cut the German Army off from its last redoubt in the Bavarian Alps.

WARNER: I'm sorry, General Smith; our time is up.



# FIRST AID

## for Summer Emergencies



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Knowing First Aid, including what to do until the doctor comes, may prevent complications and save someone's life. The chart on the opposite page will help you meet such emergencies. In case of a serious accident, however, it is always wise to call a doctor at once.

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 <p>Minor burns</p>	<p>To relieve pain, apply burn ointment or petroleum jelly, and cover with sterile dressing.</p>
 <p>Sunburn</p>	<p>Treat like any minor burn. If sunburn is severe, call a doctor.</p>
 <p>Sunstroke</p>	<p>Lay patient on his back in cool, shady place, apply ice bag or cold cloths to head. Do not give stimulants.</p>
 <p>Drowning or when breathing stops</p>	<p>Start artificial respiration <i>immediately</i>. Keep victim warm. Send for a doctor.</p>
 <p>Sprained joints</p>	<p>Keep injured joint raised and apply cold cloths or ice packs for several hours.</p>
 <p>Strained muscles</p>	<p>Rest the affected muscle. Apply mild heat if needed to relieve pain. If pain persists, call a doctor.</p>
 <p>Ivy, Oak, and Sumac poisoning</p>	<p>Wash with soap and water immediately after exposure. If redness and blisters appear, apply calamine lotion or use compresses soaked in cold baking soda or epsom salts.</p>

If you would like to learn First Aid techniques, ask your local Red Cross about their classes. In addition, Metropolitan has prepared a booklet which describes methods of handling many injuries. Mail the coupon at the right for your copy.

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# THE PROMISE

A STORY

BY RAMONA STEWART

LOUISE put her glass down on the coffee table and the clink broke the dreaming silence of the California afternoon.

"Ann, honey," she said. "I'm afraid we're going to have to tell your father after all."

Ann looked up at her quickly. "Oh, mother," she said.

Louise's soft pretty face grew troubled. "I'm no good at hiding things, baby."

"You're not hiding anything," Ann said.

She was a thin, pale girl of thirteen who still looked young and unfinished, like a bud that might open to any color. She watched her mother, her dark eyes quick and cautious.

"I don't see the harm in just telling him about it," Louise pressed gently.

"You can't. You promised," Ann said. "He'll argue and shout and you'll change your mind."

"I give you my word," Louise began.

"He'll talk you out of it. He always does."

"Now, darling, please don't get ex-

cited," Louise said. "Try to see my side of it. There are some things you just don't understand yet. Mac is your father and he's got a right to know."

"Why should he?" Ann said. "A lot he cared about me or his rights when he wanted to marry somebody else."

As soon as the words were out she realized she'd made a mistake. Louise frowned thoughtfully and lit another cigarette. Her large blue eyes were hazy with reflection and she ran long white fingers through her loosely waved black hair. She was really beautiful, Ann thought; she was glad there had been a divorce because with Mac gone Louise came to depend on her more.

"Annie, dear," Louise said. "I don't know how to explain about the divorce — there were so many things that went wrong between Mac and me. It wasn't your father's fault particularly. We just weren't suited to each other."

"It was *her* fault," Ann said doggedly.

"That was later, honey. We were

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RAMONA STEWART is the author of *Desert Town*, a novel published by William Morrow, and of many short stories. She was a student at the University of Southern California.