

Brainwashing: The Ultimate Weapon

Major William E. Mayer - U.S. Army

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Introductory Remarks:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Major William E. Mayer, noted Army psychiatrist attached to Brook Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, gave the following address to the officers and supervisors of the San Francisco Naval Shipyard in the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory on the 4th of October 1956. In his introduction, Major Mayer pointed out that during the past 40 years the Communists have gained absolute control over one person in three of the world's population, roughly 900 million people. This control has been gained, in part, by the well known devices of war, purges, Siberian work camps, mass executions, etc. However, more significant is the fact that for every person brought under the Russian banner by violence, many hundreds have been controlled without violence. And yet, this control has been absolute.

During this period, only two minor outbreaks against this control occurred, and to date, no sustained resistance has ever been organized. On these facts, it appears that Russia has a new weapon of control. What is this weapon? And how does it work? A Chinese newspaperman was the first to call this new control technique by the term "brainwashing." Many definitions have been applied to this term, but Major Mayer chooses to describe brainwashing as simply a well organized educational program. Major Mayer studied the record of over 4,000 returning prisoners of war from Korea in an attempt to better understand this new technique. He now continues his analysis of this new weapon.

Major Mayer:

Now this weapon has the same general characteristics of any other weapon, be it a nuclear device or be it a shotgun. In the first place, it can be dissected, analyzed,

taken apart, laid out on a table, understood. As long as you understand it's a weapon and go about it. And we've been attempting to do this even since before the first prisoner got back from Korea. Secondly, once we understand this or any other new weapon, we start contriving defenses. We have in the services something called the Code of Conduct, one of the most widely misunderstood, underrated documents in history. We have attempted other things in our training to serve as defenses against what we understand about the Communist's best weapon. Finally, we can usually come up with better weapons. And in this case we've got one already made.

When it comes to an ideological conflict, our ideology on its merit succeeds anything that anybody else has ever created. Certainly, it beats on every point anything the Communist world has to offer. But again, like any other weapon, even a shotgun, this weapon of our ideas and ideology and system and concern for the individual, and so on, this weapon is totally useless to you if you don't understand it, if you don't know how it works or what your duties are in relation to making it work, or if you put it aside temporarily when you go overseas, like some of us have done, or if you just allow it to fall into disuse.

And this idea was expressed by a great many returning prisoners from Korea, who said, you know, those Communists knew more about our country than we did. And they would tell us things which were obviously true and we couldn't refute it, even in our own minds. And we would say, well, do you think just a formal education in democracy would possibly have helped you? And the soldier would say, well, not necessarily. It's not exactly that simple. And it isn't that simple. It goes a lot farther than a course in civics. When these people first came back after being subjected to this excellent ideological weapon of the Communists, we started our study by making comparisons with what had

happened to other Americans in other prisoner of war situations in other wars.

We have our largest body of data, of course, from the prisoners of the Japanese and the Germans in World War II. We could do this for the simple reason that even though the conditions of captivity in Korea were extremely severe, particularly in the first six months – food, clothing and shelter were all inadequate, medical care was nonexistent – still, we could compare these people and their reactions and their behavior with other prisoners because such factors are constants. Such factors have obtained in every prison camp that we've ever studied, almost without exception.

And so, leaving those considerations which are definite and which are real, and which make it difficult for men to behave as they would like, still, we could compare behaviors. And in doing so we came up with some startling things. We found, for example, that the prisoners coming back from Korea were almost totally unable, or unwilling, to communicate with one another. They were willing to communicate with us, not with each other. They would sit on the ward in the Tokyo Army Hospital – 80 men. Eighty who'd spent three years of community captivity who knew each other intimately. You could walk on the ward any time of the day or night and it was silent. They just weren't talking to one another. And that was a very interesting thing.

So we started prying and trying to find out why it was. We found there was no buddy system among these people. None to compare with previous wars. We found there'd been no organized resistance of any significant kind. We found there'd been no organized escape committees. We found, in general, an abandonment of any system of internal organization or military justice even approaching in any remote way what had occurred among Americans in previous times of captivity. And so, we set to work to analyze how this had been accomplished.

We first utilized some documents which were intercepted which were written by Communists and which expressed the Communist point of view about this raw material with which they had to work – the average American, if there is such an average thing. And the Communist viewpoint was very clearly and categorically expressed to the effect that you and I, us average Americans, are, number one, materialistic and opportunistic. And of course you recognize this as being a common Communist complaint against the capitalist society. But he went further. He said the American will make a deal, always, he's got a price. You can buy this guy. Make it attractive enough and he'll do what you want. That was the first premise.

The second premise was, you can teach these people what you want because they're ignorant. The average American not only doesn't know anything about his own system, or about his enemy, he doesn't know anything about how his system works, what his position really is in it, what it guarantees him. He thinks the Bill of Rights guarantees freedom from fear and freedom from want, I think is the current version. He doesn't know the problems of other countries in the world, what they're fighting for. He's been fed a pap which has been a combination of the capitalist imperialist mouthings in the newspapers and the comic books which he prefers to read, so he's ignorant.

Number three said about Americans – the average American, you and I, are not loyal. Now, he wasn't talking about disloyalty from a patriotic standpoint. He was talking about loyalty as a human character trait. About loyalty as a value in your system of values. He says that loyalty was not a principle concern of our people – loyalty to each other, loyalty to organizations or ideas or communities or religions, or anything of that sort.

He had some other ideas. He expressed in glowing terms the attitude of the average American toward military

service. And in some ways, he hit the nail right on the head. He says that many American soldiers consider their military service to be an involuntary servitude to be escaped from as rapidly as possible after the least possible expenditure of energy.

Now all of this is quite an indictment. It's a Communist point of view. I don't subscribe to it. I'm sure you don't either. However, like any such analysis, there may be elements of truth or degrees of truth in it. And it would appear from our experiences with our people in Korea and how they responded to a Communist approach based upon these ideas, that to whatever degree any of these ideas is true about any of us, to that degree we expose a vulnerable area to this magnificent Communist weapon.

Now the weapon they used was deceptively simple. Before they could put it into effect, they had to segregate leaders – which they did very simply by putting them into what was reactionary camps. They put into the reactionary camps, reactionaries. People who tried to be leaders. People who showed what the Communists called “poisonous individualism.” If you had the temerity to try to organize anything, off you went to the reactionary camp, you were obviously hopeless. Other reactionaries were people with a higher education, who were considered automatically pretty reactionary unless they volunteered to cooperate – some did. Other reactionaries were overtly religious people. The Communists also felt that they couldn't do much with them. They segregated all these people in reactionary camps, and you know what percentage of the total group this was? Five. When they had taken five percent of the people away there were no leaders left. Now this is an interesting point to think about.

You and I both, although in different fields, are primarily concerned with technical achievement. We're concerned in training people, with training them to be technologically excellent. We assume, as Americans,

that leadership among us is the thing it has always been. It's the thing that has built most of the barns, for example, in the Western United States. Leadership underlies our entire industrial plant. It's something we talk about all the time. Everybody knows rules for being good leaders. And so why was it that it only took the segregation of five percent to deprive the entire rest of adequate leadership? It's one of the problems that I'm going to present to you today with no attempt at making a solution for you. While this may be in some ways intellectually indefensible, the fact is I don't think any one of us does have a solution, and that's why you're hearing this. We need a little help. A lot of help.

Once they had the leaders segregated, they invoked the techniques which have become universal throughout the Communist world. These techniques, psychologically, are of tremendous interest for the simple reason that they're all designed with one objective in mind. All of these things are directed at making members of a group stay with a group and yet feel that they are apart, that they are isolated in a very real emotional, or psychological, way from the other members of the group. Now that's a very important thing to achieve if you want to run a dictatorship. The Communist bugaboo is the counter revolution – meaning, the revolution. And revolutions begin with a conspiracy between two people. They inevitably have to begin that way. And the conspiracy enlarges and more and more people are enlisted, and finally the dictator is overthrown. And so if you can prevent the first conspiracy between the first two people, you have a kind of social control which you cannot possibly achieve by machine guns or slave camps or torture or anything else. And that's exactly what these devices are designed to do. Exactly the opposite of what we preach. Exactly the opposite of what we consider to be desirable.

They wanted to separate these men, to put them into solitary confinement cells of their own making, which were psychological in nature rather than steel and

concrete. And of course, you can just build and maintain so many steel and concrete solitary confinement cells. But if you can engender this kind of solitary confinement, there is no limit on what you can do. They did this, first of all, by cultivating the typical kind of informing which is absolutely characteristic in every Communist society on earth. I'm sure you've read accounts which you've probably dismissed as being pretty incredible, of even, in the Communist society reporting things that their parents have done and getting them in trouble with the authority. This isn't untrue at all. And it isn't dreamed up as a horror story to make you hate Communism. It is a simple reality of Communist social organization. Informing, in our culture, is the lowest form of human endeavor. The informer meets a horrible end in many cases. Even in childhood informing is looked down upon almost instinctively. The tattletale is the kid who just doesn't get along. But informing in the Communist society is a social and civic responsibility, and it's constantly, repeatedly painted as such. As long as you inform – not because you're angry with somebody and trying to get them into trouble – but because you recognize that his swiping of somebody's canteen cup or stealing a turnip and not sharing it or not using the head properly – as long as you recognize that this is ultimately disruptive to the welfare of the people, you see, and you report it in this vein, then you are promptly and tangibly rewarded for your services to the people.

And to the POW, he was rewarded not only with the material things so important to prisoners – cigarettes, candy, things that assume an incredible importance in captivity – he was also rewarded, more importantly, with approval, status, a false sense of security. Now, this kind of thing still wouldn't get very far among Americans, we don't think. Except for the other side of the coin which the Communists very cleverly employed. And that was that if you were informed upon, they didn't throw you in a hole in the ground or beat upon

soft areas of your anatomy or pull out your fingernails, or anything else. They simply took you aside into a hut, one man took you, a man not in a military uniform, a young Chinese ordinarily, who was or claimed to be, and evidently was, a graduate of an American university, a man who spoke no Pidgin English, he spoke your kind of English. Maybe he even knew about your home town, he'd been there. And he was a very friendly kind of a guy. And he talked to you in a moderately stern voice and told you that you'd done wrong and they knew it, and they wanted you to confess it. And don't be afraid to confess, he would say, you're not in the hands of capitalists now, you're in the hands of the people. And in our society, when you've made a mistake and you recognize it and confess it, recant, criticize your behavior, analyze it, and assert your determination not to repeat it, that's all we ask.

Well, so people did it. Didn't seem to be any harm in it. The Communists let you off the hook if you did it. Everybody seemed to profit by informing. Nobody seemed to get hurt very badly, at least at first. And the result was the informing system grew by leaps and bounds until the end of the first year of captivity. By that time, there was at least one American informer – that we can name – in every group of ten American prisoners. Now just look around a little bit. If you knew that among the people sitting here, one of out of ten, at least, was a consistent and reliable informer, what would you do? Well, you'd do exactly what the prisoners did. In most cases they simply backed off a little bit. They weren't sure who they could trust, so they didn't quite trust anybody. They retreated, withdrew, became a little isolated. You can't fight the whole world, so nobody fought about this, they just backed up.

Along with this went a process called self-criticism, which is done in the Kremlin, it's done in the cell of the Communist party, San Francisco branch. It's done all over the Communist world. Self-criticism is what your

preacher or your priest has said to you. He said, you've got to stop and take stock once in awhile. You've got to look at those things you've done you ought not to have done. And the things you've left undone you ought to've done. Parents tell this to children. Teachers tell this to their students. It's a common device which we think aids in maturity.

Well, Communists do exactly the same thing, and they present it in the same reasonable manner. It's just that, like everything else in the Communist society, it has to be collectivized. It's done in a group. You do it, this self-criticism, in front of other prisoners, in the case of Korea. These men would get up and they would criticize themselves, their own misbehavior. More importantly, they would criticize in themselves the thing that every supervisor on earth who's ever supervised more than one other person has encountered and has been perplexed over how to handle. And that's attitude. You know, you can't legislate against attitudes. You can see 'em come out. You can see 'em in a man who's being absolutely polite and responsive. In fact, some of our most polite and responsive soldiers who can stand there at attention and salute and say, yes, sir, – in fact, they repeat the sir usually more often than other soldiers – you can tell that what they're really saying is unprintable. But there's nothin' you can do about it.

But you see, in a self-criticism meeting you can talk about this in yourself because, after all, you've got a friendly audience that they other guy started to smile, it's all sort of a joke, it's sort of the kindergarten atmosphere of the heart to heart chat that you had the other day when somebody informed upon you – it's not very harmful, is it. So, everybody did it. And it didn't hurt. The first week. The second week things started to happen. The first thing that happened was that you ran out of superficial things to talk about and you began talking about you. Really you. About the prejudices. About the poor attitudes that all of us have in some degree. Ideas we have that we can't logically support,

but that emotionally we feel strongly – that we may not feel like talking about. You begin to notice, then, that the other guys are listening to you. And that's a very disconcerting thing. And then the soldiers describe the feeling of guilt and anxiety, a feeling that they had exposed themselves, that they were naked and vulnerable in front of other prisoners. And they couldn't put their finger on what they'd said that was too much, they just knew that they'd talked too much.

You've done this. You've done it sometimes when you've had to get something off your chest. You've complained about something, you've gone a little too far. And then you feel a little uncomfortable afterwards. You've exposed too much of yourself. Women, intuitively, are far better than men at handling this kind of a situation. It comes up at the bridge table. It comes up in the girlfriend situation. And the woman in our society at least is able to handle it almost automatically, unthinking. When she's said too much about herself, exposed too much of herself, given away too many secrets, she simply automatically goes about discovering an equivalent amount about the person who heard it. Well, of course then what happens is sort of an armed truce exists and everybody's safe. And this is exactly what happened in the self-criticism meeting. Everybody listened. Everybody stored up inconsequential, trivial kinds of stuff about each other. And everybody got a little more suspicious and a little more standoffish, and a little more incapable of communicating on a meaningful, interpersonal level outside the self-criticism group.

Another thing they did to isolate people was control their mail. We know that mail is of desperate importance to a prisoner, whether he's a prisoner in a penitentiary or in a POW camp. He needs some reassurance that he is loved in its most profound sense: that somebody cares about him. Here you've seen a process which tends to isolate men, who therefore cannot get this reassurance and love from other

prisoners. They could, however, get considerable from mail, particularly the kind of letter that says, “we love you, we’re waiting here for you at home, don’t worry about us, we’re okay, we know you’re going to be all right, we pray for you every night.” That kind of thing. This kind of mail can literally be the difference between surviving and not surviving. Not only in POW camps, but even in combat. And you’d just be amazed at some of the letters that are sent to men who are about to get shot. Some of them become suicidal, literally. Some of them become otherwise useless because of simple things that people unthinkingly send in their mail.

So the Communists undertook a brilliant selecting process for the mail. They didn’t censor it. They took out any photographs, because you know, you can get attached to a photograph. They didn’t censor it by cut outs or black marks, they simply sorted out and denied to the soldier any letter that was warm and loving and reassuring. But the “Dear John” letters – those got delivered. And the divorce subpoenas that managed to find their way to Korea – these got delivered. And notices from collection companies sometimes got delivered on the Yallo [phonetic] within weeks of the AP postmark San Francisco. A letter from a wife which – or, a girl who maybe had written 200 of those warm, loving, reassuring letters and finally let her hair down just once and said the kids’ noses are running and the allotment is awful hard to get along on, and the car’s not working very well, and the TV programs are so dull, and gee, I’d like to go out to a dance once in awhile, of course, you know I wouldn’t – this is the letter that the soldier got, living in a mud hut in North Korea. There is very little you can do about it. And nobody liked that kind of mail. And there developed a feeling of resentment, of rejection, of rebellion, towards those emotional ties which could otherwise have provided him a good deal of his emotional support.

So, here was the isolation project. Men, in a sense, were put in a kind of psychological or emotional vacuum.

And into this was introduced a training program of the highest order of excellence. A really fine training device. It was a 12 phase program with a printed curriculum which was handed out to all the students. Actually, long before the curriculum was handed out the indoctrination began. It began for many prisoners at the point of capture. When you consider our traditional American attitudes toward Oriental captivity based, in large part, upon the realities of captivities under the Japanese, but partly on the basis of legends, you can see the state of mind of the average American soldier in a bunker on the front lines of Korea, face to face with the Chinese. He felt sure that if he did get captured he’d probably be degraded, spat upon, kicked around, maybe the back of his head removed, possibly tortured, very probably wouldn’t survive. Instead of this, to his tremendous surprise and even consternation, he was met upon capture, in the majority of instances, by an English speaking Chinese who extended the hand of friendship and welcome and gave him a very strange little speech. It was quite formal, usually, and it went something like this: we welcome you, they would say, to the ranks of the people. We are happy to have the honor of having liberated you from the imperialist Wall Street warmongers. We’ve got nothing against you. We know you don’t want to be here anymore than we do. This isn’t our war or yours. We know you didn’t start it. We know you’re nothing but a helpless tool of these imperialist warmongers. We are not going to abuse you. We are not going to work you in slave camps or coal mines or road gangs. We’re going to treat you the best we can. You won’t eat well here, but you’ll eat as well as we do, and the best we can possibly afford. We ask of you only one thing, and that’s your physical cooperation. We ask you to try to be neutral, to listen. To hear our side of the story of what’s going on in the world today. And that’s American fair play, isn’t it? Listen to both sides.

Well, this is quite different from getting your fingernails pulled out, you've got to admit. And the average soldier was relieved, he was surprised, he was suspicious, but he began at that point his indoctrination. He began at that point to have a different outlook toward this captor-prisoner relationship than we have ever before seen. And, in this same vein, they gave him his education. Now a lot of these soldiers needed some education. You know we still, on every major Army post in the United States, maintain a school to teach all those Americans how to read and write who do not, upon being drafted, know how to read and write at a fourth grade level. Every major military post has such a school. So a lot of these people weren't too well educated. The average educational level was early ninth grade. But the Communists embarked with no preconceived ideas of the limitations on these people's intelligence, embarked on a program of education and economics and political science, sociology and history, which far exceeded anything these people had had before. It was a series of long lectures, in the mornings usually, four and five and six hour lectures, followed by guided discussion periods. Discussions in which everybody took part because – well, not because they beat on you to make you take part, but because if you didn't take part in your 12 man discussion group, the other 11 didn't get to go to supper until you did. And, of course, this has the effect of producing a certain group self policing. Also, it lent weight to what was being taught because it was Americans who wanted you to take part in the discussion, not Chinese.

And so you discussed. Everybody did. Didn't have to agree, either, just take part in the discussion. Of course, it's easier to agree – keeps the Chinese off your back. And that went on and on and on. They talked about successful Americans, about the Duponts and Fords and Rockefellers and Texas oil men, and how they got their money by exploiting us poor folks in the working masses and defrauding the government. They talked

about the U.N., it's charter. These people learned it for the first time there in Korea. Found out what they were there for. Found out how illegal it was, on the basis of the charter, to send the 7th Fleet to Formosa. They used to harp on that 7th Fleet practically constantly. They were well informed of the truce negotiations at Panmunjon. Blow by blow about how the capitalist imperialist kept this war going for profit. And just to prove that we were making profits, they had copies of the Wall Street Journal showing how the profits had improved during the Korean War, and proving, therefore, that we wage war for profit.

Well, this was the vein. It wasn't a Communist – a pure Communist kind of education at all. They didn't get up and say, we want you to be Communist. Anybody who tried to join them, in fact, was very thoroughly discouraged. They didn't get up and say, your country's no damn good. We're anti-American and we want you to be. You can't do that to Americans, they don't like it. They only attacked certain parts of our country. Certain tendencies. Certain trends among us that you see, you and I are really too ignorant to know anything about. Here's your chance to learn it. And that's all they're trying to do is show you the truth. And they kept saying, look fellas, all we ask of you, just keep cooperating and when we're through all we want is for you to go home to your own fine homes and fine families, as soon as these warmongers will allow this senseless slaughter to end. And when you go home all we want you to do is tell the people the truth as you understand the truth to be.

That was a real good program. With a version of American history people had never heard before. It talked about sweatshops and child labor. And murdering plant police hired to shoot down labor union organizers. We've had 'em, you know. Talked about, oh, killing off innocent settlers during the westward expansion of the railroad. It talked about how nice Andrew Carnegie was to build all those libraries, and then it talked about how he got the money to build the libraries, and that wasn't

as pretty at all. They talked about our allies, the British. They said the British fought a couple of wars with China to get China to buy opium which the British were having the Indians raise in India. Two wars, as a matter of fact. They weren't very big wars, really, but they did take place. And they were more complex than that. This was a big factor.

Well, it raised a lot of very serious doubts in a lot of people's minds. It made it very difficult to organize together for purposes of resistance against an enemy who might be morally more right than you are. It introduced some very interesting long term ideas that the Communists had in mind. Ideas expressed when we'd ask a soldier who came back – what do you think about Communism? Are you for it now? You've had a chance to study it. And the soldier would say, no, I'm no Communist. I don't like that system. I don't think it'd work in the U.S., anyway, because we're too rich. And then he'd lean forward and he'd say, but you know doc, it's a wonderful thing for China.

Now think that one over for a little while. That's quite an achievement. Wonderful thing for China. And for India. And the 600 million people in Indonesia. And the rest of the world that hasn't yet made up its mind. You sell that idea to enough people and we're just about licked. This is the kind of idea they were selling. They weren't trying to make Communists or spies or security risks or anything like that. They were simply trying to plant some of the ideas that in the long run are going to help 'em. And they were trying to pare down the character traits of individuals which are the severest road block toward the progress of Communism in any group.

Well, they had an athletic program along with this. Of course, if you want to play baseball in a Communist society you've got to understand something. You don't get educated a few hours a day and the rest of the time you go around developing your personality like we do in

our country. You get educated all the time. So, if you want to play baseball, you don't play because you are a good pitcher, you know. You play because you're a progressive and advanced student. You're developing a good sense of social responsibility. You're becoming a member of the people. You deserve to play. And to demonstrate your deserving qualities, you take part in the political rally before the ballgame starts – the rally during which you march around the field and carry banners and slogans and sing rousing old fashioned folk songs, the like the Communist Internationale, and then you get to play baseball. And after the game, another rally.

And let's say instead of being an athlete you're dramatically inclined. You can put on plays if you want. Just as long as they vilify some evil of the imperialist Western system or glorify some achievement of the People's Democracy. And this can apply to Uncle Tom's Cabin, properly presented, you know. And so it was presented. Or, let's say you're a journalist at heart and want to write articles for the newspaper. Fine. As long as they have some ideological meaning. As long as they're not just trivia. In other words, if you're like the soldier who wrote the following article, you get paid for it and you get approved. This was an article that came out that we saw not in the camp newspaper – that was called "Towards Truth and Peace." I think we saw this in the Shanghai Daily News, although it was reprinted and other articles like it reprinted in the New York Daily Worker and the China Monthly Review, The People's World, Pravda, a number of other Communist and semi-Communist organs. This was an article written by a PFC in the Army that said, in just not typical PFC language at all, it said: I wish to thank from the bottom of my heart the kind and benevolent members of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army in North Korea, for having taken the trouble and effort to teach me to read and write English. Because in the capitalist imperialist community of Pittsburgh from which I come, only the

sons of rich capitalists are allowed to read and write English. And then he signed it. And so, since he signed it, we waited for him to come home because we wanted to talk to him about this article and – and, uh, naturally we thought this is something they wrote, it's obvious Communist style language. And we asked him if he wrote it or did they just sign his name to it. And he said, no, I wrote it. He said, I wrote it myself as a matter of fact, and they published it. And we said, yes, we know. And we said, why did you do this? He said, well, everybody else was doing it. Everybody knows it's a lie, particularly the people from Pittsburgh, so what harm could it possibly do?

And, of course, the harm that it did was to the 900 million people who don't read anything else and don't have any way of knowing it's a lie. And the other 900 million who haven't yet made up their mind who don't know it's a lie, and to whom this is just one more small weapon in an ideological war which is going on right now, right here in your house and in your shop.

Well this was the education program. It was a beauty. It didn't include, for the great majority of prisoners, any of the things we'd come to expect. And again, now, I must make specific exceptions to this generalization. But for 99 percent of the prisoners, it didn't include the torture that we thought. There weren't any bamboo splinters used under people's fingernails, no toenails torn out. There weren't any narcotic drugs used to make men so dependent they'd do anything for the next shot. Now, there was marijuana smoked in Korea. This marijuana was cultivated in Korea, as a matter of fact, in very neat little patches. Weeded so it would grow to its proper height. Fertilized. When it was the right size it was picked and hung up to dry and when it was properly cured, fragmented fine, rolled in precious sheets of toilet tissue, smoked and sold in Korea. Not by Communists. This was done by freedom loving Americans. It was done by enterprising young, budding businessmen. The same ducktailed haircut businessmen that sell it on the

streets downtown. And so the Communists, always willing to put in an extra pitch in the indoctrination procedure, would drag one of these guys up in front of the rest of the soldiers and say, look, Americans, this is what we're trying to tell you. This is your system of free enterprise. This is the exploitation of other human beings. This is what you teach your people that makes it possible for one of your own members to grow this diabolical drug and sell it to other soldiers for a few lousy dollars. And you've got to admit, they had a point. At least a lot of the prisoners thought so.

Well, it didn't include magic. And by magic I include, emphatically, Dr. Pavlov's conditioned reflex. Which is not magic, nor is it adequate to communicate complicated sets of ideas or attitudes like dialectical materialism to a complicated human being. It is true, you can get dogs to produce saliva with it. You can train people certain industrial tasks using the conditioned reflex method. I walked into one laboratory where all you had to do was shut the door and every rat in the place jumped right straight up in the air. Very amusing spectacle; a conditioned reflex. This does not make human beings into Communists. The reason I labor the point is because the Communists themselves, and some of our own thinkers, have come up with this as an explanation for why it is, you see, that you and I can't resist Communism if we're really in their power. That like the salivating dog we are in the hands of an irresistible training device. And in pure scientific terminology, all I can say is, that is pure hogwash. They didn't use sex or sexual methods – and this is a question many people ask for the simple reason that we know, for example, in the University of Chicago in the 20s and 30s more, there were some groups of sort of alleged free love activities connected with the Young Communist League. And this was apparently experimented with at one time in Communist social evolution. However, it was not a method of Communist indoctrination among the Americans. Apparently, it has lost favor in the

Communist society. The only attention devoted to sex was an exhibition on how our behavior in the United States is a clear demonstration of just how decadent we've become.

It didn't do – this whole procedure – didn't do the things we thought it was going to do. Early in the repatriation there was a highly unscientific study made of exactly one case. And on the basis of this man's untypical experiences, unfortunately, generalizations were drawn, widely broadcast, and have colored the subsequent thinking and understanding of a great many Americans about this whole problem. This, plus the fact that if stories of abuse or stories of the Cardinal Menzetti treatment which are more dramatic, they sell more papers, they're the kind of thing that strikes our fancy. We read 'em, but they're not typical, nor are they our major problem today in facing Communist attempts to take over groups of people.

Well, the ideas that were put forth were that if you or I or any other American were subjected to brainwashing, one of these three things would inevitably take place. These experts said you would either go crazy as a result of the pressures, or you'd die trying to resist 'em, or you'd suffer sort of a moral decay and become a Communist. Well, we've now studied the entire group of survivors, and we've found that the incidence of insanity was not as high among the prisoners in Korea as it is in the city of San Francisco. Well, – or to be more fair about it, any place in the general population. It was no higher, there was no increase in serious mental disease over the incidents in any stateside military installation. We found that it doesn't drive you crazy. It gets up pretty upset to be locked up for two or three years, but it doesn't destroy your mind. Secondly – and I think it's important, incidentally, that people know that. And the more fearful you are of these horrible consequences, the more hopeless the situation becomes. And this, of course, is precisely what the Communists would like us to believe.

Secondly, we didn't find men dying trying to resist Communism. We found a lot of men died. As a matter of fact, out of every ten men captured, approximately four died in captivity. Four out of ten. Thirty-eight percent to be precise. That, ladies and gentleman, is the highest death rate of Americans in any kind of captivity in any prison in any war since the American Revolution. But they didn't die, as we thought, because of mass executions or systematic starvation. It's true, the diet wasn't good enough, the medical care was non-existent. These were contributing factors in every death in Korea. But the specific reasons why men died were disturbing ones. They died because of some failures and lack, relative to the development of character, the development of loyalties, the development of leadership that you and I, basically, are responsible for, not the Communists. And I'm not here to defend the Communists. I'm only here to point out that we can fit right in, if we're not careful, to exactly what they're trying to do. More about the deaths in a minute.

Finally, the great majority of men didn't become Communists, didn't suffer any kind of moral breakdown, no matter what the Communists did to them. The majority of Americans resisted successfully. Came back in reasonably good shape. Didn't buy the baloney. Enough did, however, and enough died, that we had to do something. So, a group of men were – was gotten together by the President, and they drew up a thing called the Code of Conduct. A very remarkable document. It consists of 247 common, familiar English words set into a series of half a dozen articles, each of which contains principles which are so obvious that everybody knows 'em, and it seems a little ridiculous that there seems to be a need now to put them down in some kind of a code.

But be not deceived. The principles in the Declaration of Independence – and I mean no irreverent comparison – are also very obvious and truthful ones. And these principles in the Code of Conduct which we've always

before we've assumed successfully, correctly assumed that Americans knew and used as a basis for behavior, were demonstrated point by point in Korea. This is what made the Code of Conduct to be deficient, to be inadequately understood or acted upon to the very serious detriment of our own people. Now, when the President announced this code – and it's a rare military document that's announced by the Commander in Chief, you know – when he announced the Code he said, this is not a plan for how to be a good prisoner. You know, we are not teaching people how to be prisoners of war. This is not our mission. He said, it is a code of standards of behavior for any fighting man fighting any kind of a battle. And please remember, we're in a battle right now. And then he went on to say, furthermore, it's a code of conduct for every American. It sets standards we must all live by or we are not going to live, in effect. So, let's examine these points in the Code which reflect the specific failures in Korea.

The first one says: I will never surrender. What do we mean? Give up? Yes. But not in the simple military sense. We don't any longer just teach men that it's against the law to surrender your troops. That's perfectly obvious. We saw another kind of surrender in Korea. We saw a kind of psychological surrender that was fatal. There was a disease there that killed hundreds of American troops, which the medical service had no name for. So the prisoners named it. They called it "Giveupitis." Doesn't sound like much. It was a disease of the passive, the dependent, the rather inadequate, the kid who was awfully insecure who couldn't tolerate this being isolated from other soldiers or from his unit. The kid who cried himself to sleep at night; he talked about his mother a lot. Who brooded. Who threw down the dirty bowl of food because even though it would keep you alive it was dirty and he didn't like it. And he'd crawl up into a corner by himself and pull his blanket over his head and in 48 hours he was dead. Dead. Not starved to death. No physical disease present. Just dead.

Hundreds of Americans died in this fashion. They were not psychotic. They were not insane. They knew what they were doing. They made the most profound of all human surrenders. And any physician has seen this. Among patients we've seen this; occasionally, among abandoned infants. We've never before see it among 18 to 22 year old adult males. Not on any scale like this. Never surrender. Well, aren't we trying to teach perseverance? Aren't we trying to teach fighting against odds and obstacles? And is the Army or the Navy really the place to teach this? Isn't this an old fashioned American characteristic? It's in the Code of Conduct because not enough of these people exercised it.

And the next point in the Code says: If I'm captured I'll continue to resist. This doesn't mean we want the people to knock out the teeth of the nearest guard, because you're gonna get a hole in the head if you do that. We want 'em to resist this way. We want 'em to be active, contriving methods of resistance, however small, all the time. From the standpoint of their mental health alone, this is absolutely essential. But also, here's a picture of two men in a conspiracy against an enemy. Two men who have come back buddies, closer. It was this that they were lacking. This is what we're trying to teach. It takes two or more. You can't be an individual hero. And it's the same way with escape. We tell them, now you must try to escape and you must help others to escape. Why? Because when escape came up for discussion in the POW camp – you know we're very democratic in the military now – everything got discussed and voted upon, including surrender sometimes. And when escape came up for discussion, people said, oh, don't mess around with that, they'll take it out on all of us. And yet, escape is the primary mission of a soldier who's captured, any kind of soldier, any branch of soldiering. And we found that this didn't succeed because men couldn't get together for purposes of organizing escape committees; they couldn't trust one another well enough, don't you see. There was quite a lot of informing, don't

you see, and it compromised the plan. There wasn't the internal organization you must have to escape. And in fact, of the four thousand Americans who survived the three years of captivity, in 12 separate camps guarded often by as few as one armed guard per hundred prisoners, never, not once in the course of the entire Korea conflict, did a single American successfully, permanently escape from any established POW camp. Some evaded near the time of capture. Some were recovered from initial collecting points. Never did a man succeed in an engineered and planned escape and stay away. That's never before happened in our history. We found camps guarded – camps holding as many as five or six hundred Americans – guarded by as few as six armed guards. This was astonishing. No machine gun towers, no guard dogs, no electric fences or search lights. And yet, nobody got out. Where were the other 594 Chinese that should have been guarding those Americans? At least 594? Why they were down on the 38th parallel shooting Americans. It's a much more efficient way to run a war.

In contrast to this, on Kojido [phonetic] and Chejido [phonetic] where we had a great number of Chinese, I admit, but still while we had 'em on islands from which there was no place to swim, really, surrounded by magnificent barbed wire complexes and all kinds of devices for controlling people, we committed an airborne regimental combat team, that's 5,000, armed to the teeth, automatic weapons, crack infantrymen, and then another regiment, and then another, just to control the Chinese that we'd already beaten. And where should that 15,000 or 18,000 combat troops should've been? They should've been up on the 38th Parallel shooting those 594 Chinese. Now, you multiply that nasty little business in Korea – which everybody knows was just a police action – you multiply that by a one hundred or hundred and fifty division general war, and you've got yourself quite a problem. So we tell 'em to try to escape. But we tell 'em you've got to do it with other

people. Individualism doesn't mean that as an individual MGM production-type hero you get out all by yourself. Escape is a military operation. You're a soldier.

The next point in the Code of Conduct gets completely away from military things, it doesn't even hardly pretend to be military. It's spoken in the language of the military. It says: If I'm captured by an enemy I will accept no favors and I will not give in my parole. Which means, my promise, of course, to be a good boy if he makes me a trustee. But you know, this is a principle you've tried to teach to your children. It's a principle in every basic religion on earth. It's a very simple, moral, but also very practical principle which, put into other terms, reduces itself to: you cannot compromise with evil, you can't make a deal with your enemy. You just can't do it. Any deal he makes with you when he's in the driver's seat is going to be for his benefit and not for yours. And if you have principles or a value system, you cannot compromise with what you believe to be wrong. But enough people thought they could make a deal that this principle now has to be in the Code of Conduct.

Now they gave all kinds of excuses. I know a Colonel who said to me, I ingratiated myself with the enemy and did what they wanted because I felt that by doing so I could get on their good side and then exercise a beneficial influence in behalf of the other prisoners. Well, I have no way to know – we psychiatrists have no special access to ultimate truth – I don't know whether this is just an excuse or whether he now believes it or whether this is why he undertook to collaborate with the enemy. But I do know it didn't work. It didn't work for anybody. It never has. And you know, American history, if you go back and read about Benedict Arnold, is one of the best examples of just how it never worked. He died in disgrace in England, the people he'd helped. This is the inevitable natural history of the guy who wants to make a deal.

Well, the next point in the Code of Conduct is equally an ethical principle. It says: You'll keep face with

fellow Americans. You won't do anything or say anything to hurt them. And why, why do we have to say this. Everybody knows you can't hurt other Americans, you get court martialled for it. Or arrested. Well, there were incidents in Korea, a number of them, in which somebody would kill somebody else, another prisoner. There was a case in New York last year, tried and convicted of murder, a man who'd thrown two other men out of a hut. Now the facts were that the hut was in the mountains in North Korea, they were prisoners. The two men had diarrhea, very severe dysentery, and were smelling up the hut. So the fellow threw them out. It was 30 degrees below zero outside the hut. And so the men died almost immediately. Well, we didn't put this point in the Code of Conduct to try to correct the behavior of that inhuman character who threw the two sick men out of the hut. We know no words are going to change him at all. Any large enough group of people contains some characters like that. What we're worried about is the 40 American soldiers who were in the hut at the time. Because when we asked them about this incident we would say, soldier did you see the man throw him out – throw these people out of the hut? Oh, yes, sir, they would say. Well, what were you doing at that time? Well, I was huddling together with the rest of the guys in there to try to keep warm; it's the only way you could keep warm. Oh, then you knew it would destroy these men to throw them out. Well, sure. Well, what were you doing about it? I wasn't doing anything, except trying to keep warm. Why didn't you do something about it, soldier? Because, the answer would come, it wasn't any of my business. Keep the faith with your fellow Americans. That's why it's in the Code. It happened more than one time.

Another point in the Code of Conduct says something about what we're doing with leadership. And it's the most blistering comment upon the quality of leadership among us. And I mean leadership at the foreman level, at the squad leader level, at the gun crew level, at the

supermarket level. Because now the Code of Conduct finds it necessary to say to Americans: Soldier, if you're captured by an enemy, and you're the senior man, take command. And if you're not the senior man, support and back up the man who is. Because, we tell 'em, your life depends upon it. And it literally does. In combat or in captivity. Under any kind of stress. And yet authority seems to be in disrepute and leadership is undertaken on the basis of popularity contests now. And whereas you might run it all right in the state side base by being popular with your men, or you might run a shop all right by being popular, by getting people to do what you want because you treat them right if they treat you right, we find it doesn't work when that same nice guy that everybody calls by his first name, tells the rest of his men that they're gonna charge up a hill and take a machine gun nest. 'Cause all the other fellas in his unit look at him and they figure, well, he's an awfully nice guy, but this is strictly his problem. He's not a leader. And this happened in Korea. We saw kids die, literally. Become ill and die because, specifically, they abandoned the principles of leadership and following adequate leadership, giving it support. Not in some blind, ultra militaristic fashion. But kids who asserted their individuality sometimes. Like the kid who was drinking rice paddy water. You know what they fertilize rice paddies with? Well, he was drinking the water. And the senior person came up to him – I don't remember whether he was a colonel or a sergeant, but something of equally high rank – and said to him, soldier don't drink that water, you've been told that ever since you left the states. It's got human waste in it, you'll catch diseases that'll make you sick; you could die. The soldier, who had been told this possibly a hundred times and who could smell the water for himself, simply finished drinking it, looked up at the sergeant or the colonel, or whatever he was, and said, buster you just run along, you're nothing but a damn prisoner like me, you can't tell me what to do. And ladies and gentlemen, this is a terrible mistake. As that kid found out. So,

something has to be done about leadership in the shop, in homes, in schools, in boy scouts. That's where it starts.

Then we have the point about name, rank and service number. A simple word about that, and that's simply the fact that in Korea it was demonstrated, as it has been in every war in our history, that for the overwhelming majority of prisoners, the best defense the soldier has is to behave like a soldier and give only his name, rank and service number. It's the man who talks that is singled out for interminable abuse. The men who talked the least got along the best. Now, if they're gonna single out an individual and torture him, we don't expect him to stand up to name, rank, service number; that's ridiculous. But in the initial sorting, in the initial picking out of who you're going to use, every intelligence agency on earth picks out the man who's anxious and they pick him out because his anxiety shows because he talks. So this we're trying to teach.

And finally we say to the soldier: don't do anything or say anything to hurt the United States of America. Why? We know people don't get up and spout off against the United States of America, but how about the kid who wrote the big lie about Pittsburgh. And how about the kids who recorded tape recordings so their mothers could hear their voices and know they were still all right when the price for this was belittling something about the Korea war, the slaughter of innocent civilians, something about the Chinese people's volunteers and how well they were being treated. That's quite a price to let your mommy hear your voice. It was a price that was fully used by the Communists, so things have been reproduced all over the world. So we have to say it in the Code of Conduct.

Now, these are our problems. We're trying to overcome them within the service using the Code of Conduct as a point of departure in other kinds of training. But we need a tremendous amount of help and we need the help

a long time before a man gets into military service. We know that the man who exercises discipline within the military establishment is the man who has the best chance of surviving in combat or in captivity. But discipline's a dirty word, it means drowning Marines in Ribbon Creek. Discipline is something a nasty old sergeant does to the helpless recruit, at least in the minds of a great many people. Discipline, somehow, has become synonymous with abandoning your own – your own self-respect. Abandoning your individualism and becoming a helpless machine, a part of the military machine. And that isn't discipline at all. The only kind of discipline that really exists and really works is an internalized system of values, a set of standards existing within the individual which characterize and guide his behavior whether there's a cop or a shore patrolman standing there or not. And it's this kind of discipline we have to seek from people. This is the kind of discipline that makes individuals able to join a team. Individuals able to respond to competent leadership. And individuals able to have the intestinal fortitude necessary to be leaders. To set limits to award punishment and reward. And that includes even to our children. And naturally, of course, this is where the problem mainly lies. Discipline is not taught when a kid is 18 years old. It's taught in homes, and Sunday schools sometimes, in churches. It's taught partly in the military. It's taught mainly in the family. It's taught from the cradle onward or it's not ever adequately taught at all. It's taught at parent's knees, and even possibly across parent's knees. It has to be taught throughout the educational process. And that educational process includes the training and indoctrination of people who work at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard. And who work in every one of our specialized, highly technical, scientific organizations. We even try to teach this to medical officers and dental officers who come into the Army. But it's awfully late at that point. We need a lot of help. We need a lot of thought about how to do this. We don't pretend to have the answers. We know that the Communist is one of the

most finely disciplined enemies we have ever encountered. He is not necessarily just blindly disciplined, either. He works at what he's working at with great intensity and sincerity. And the solution to – at least suggestions about the solutions would seem to be obvious. We found men with a real system of values who were committed in their thinking. Who had roots, who had loyalties, who actively thought about it, who resisted in some small but symbolic way. These were the men who survived in largest number, who came out almost unscathed from the experience. But the opportunist, the guy who's trying to look for the easy way, the person who doesn't believe in the value of work as something in itself, who doesn't believe in service unless there's something in it for me – this guy's a sitting duck. This was demonstrated over and over again. And so you can solve this problem, you who are parents or school teachers or managers, or supervisors. You can solve it little by little by little. It's the only way it ever will get solved.

I think the whole idea was best summed up, as I will now, with a statement made by a very adequate soldier named General Lemuel C. Shephard who was then Commandant of the Marine Corps when the prisoners got back. Who studied and evaluated this problem along with many others, was equally disturbed along with many others, and who summed up, in what might seem at first like a rather vague statement, but actually a very pointed one, what we can do about it. He said this. "In the struggle against Communism the war is no longer over when men are forced to yield. The prisoner of war stockade is only an extension of the battlefield. For they must be taught to carry on an unequal struggle with the only weapons remaining to them, faith and courage." And ladies and gentlemen, we don't issue those weapons in any military supply room on earth. They are issued in your house and your shop. The problem will not be solved by a magic formula. The only approach lies in an awakening of the consciousness of the nation and of the

individual to the need for a sense of conviction and dedication to our principles and our cause which exceeds that shown by our enemies toward their own. I thank you.

Citation:

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