

Basis of Security

In his recent speeches in Texas and elsewhere, General Eisenhower has had a good deal to say on the subject of security. So lately have some other Americans of eminence and undoubted patriotism. Their utterances on a topic which seems increasingly to preoccupy a large segment of the population have carried a note of warning and criticism.

The security for which General Eisenhower has had some hard words is not the military security to which he has devoted his life. It is instead the illusory type of security which many look to the government to provide—an economic security based on pensions and doles, subsidies and handouts which have the public purse as their source. That is what Dr. Vannevar Bush, the eminent atomic scientist, calls "soft security."

Of this trend toward let-the-government-take-care-of-everybody security, General Eisenhower said in a speech shortly before his current trip to Texas: "Security, in the sense that we may live in slothful indolence and ease and stagnation, can never be achieved unless we do it as slaves of someone who directs us." And more pointedly in a speech last week at Galveston: "If all you want in life is security, why not commit some crime that will put you in prison? There you'll have enough to eat, a bed, and a roof over your head."

Now the desire for genuine security is not to be disparaged, and General Eisenhower, who had a leading role in preserving the physical security of the nation, would be the last to disparage it. The urge to attain security is, in fact, one of the strongest in human nature. As Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine recently said: "From the time we are born to the time we die, we constantly strive for security."

But there is a distinction between pseudo security and the real thing and General Eisenhower is performing a useful service to the American people in pointing to this distinction. He is saying that genuine security does not flow from any one source, but is the result of human effort on a dozen different fronts. Financial security for the individual is not to be achieved unless the country is secure physically, economically and morally.

Too much dependence upon the government to provide individual security could undermine the general economic security without which there can be no individual security. Too much dependence upon government handouts as a way of life can eat away the self-reliance of the citizens which is the basis of national strength. And a nation without economic and moral security has no strength to repel physical attack.

As General Eisenhower remarks, the old virtues of thrift and self-reliance are the best foundations upon which to build personal or national security.