

THE INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY ON NATIONAL STRENGTH

5 December 1963

COLONEL BUEHLER: General Stoughton, Gentlemen, Visitors:

Geography has been called the mother of science and the pivot of history. It has also been said that, just as history provides the unifying element of time, so geography provides the unifying element of space.

To speak to us on this subject of geography and its relevance to national strength, we have an eminent geographer, Professor Preston Everett James of Syracuse University.

Professor James.

DR. JAMES: This talk on physical resources would have been a little easier if I had given it in 1936 instead of 1963, because in 1936 people could list the physical resources of a country, including the installed capacity to manufacture things, and on the basis of this weigh and predict the military capabilities of that country. Military strength was equated really with industrial capacity.

Now this situation, for better or for worse, is entirely changed. You have to keep up with some of the fundamental concepts involved in the interpretation of the meaning of resources. I would suggest the following concept as guiding your thinking about the significance of resources and of the physical habitat in which countries are imbedded.