

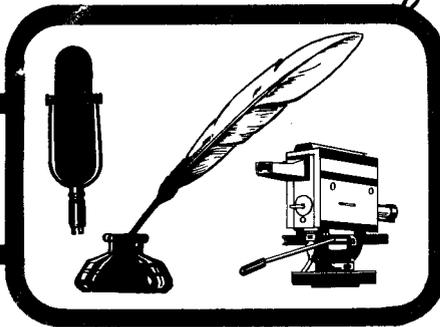
The original documents are located in Box D33, folder “DAV Chapter No. 2 Past Commanders' Banquet, Grand Rapids, MI, September 30, 1972” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 7 P.M. SATURDAY--
September 30, 1972

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford at the DAV Chapter No. 2 Past
Commanders' Banquet at Grand Rapids, Mich.

It is the first right of every American to be protected against foreign attack.

It is the first duty of our Government to keep our Nation alive.

Given the world situation, we must maintain a national defense which is capable of deterring potential aggressors.

At the same time, we must constantly seek peace, moving toward an East-West detente from a position of strength.

We cannot retreat our way into peace. That is the course of folly.

Yet today some Americans have become disciples of isolationism.

They actually believe that the way to achieve peace in the world is for the United States to simply abandon all of Southeast Asia to Communist rule.

They would do this despite the fact that our other allies are watching events in Southeast Asia as clues to our future behavior.

Let me ask this question. If we actually helped the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese take over South Vietnam, would the West Germans believe that we would ever defend Berlin?

Would our allies anywhere in the world have faith in our word as a Nation and a people?

The isolationists also have proposed a \$30 billion slash in our defense budget.

It is my firm opinion this would hinder, rather than help, our efforts to achieve world peace. It might even precipitate World War III.

This proposed \$30 billion defense cut would put the U. S. in the position of abandoning its commitments all over the world. It would signal to the world a drastic decline in America's will and ability to contribute to international security, to protect her interests and to fill an important role in the international arena.

The immediate effect of such a defense cut would be to force our allies to seek assistance elsewhere and possibly to make hasty and unwise alliances. This

(more)

would almost certainly dissolve the uneasy peace which now enwraps much of the world. It likely would also lead to expansion of the nuclear weapons club to include nations which currently take shelter under our nuclear umbrella.

What would be the impact of a \$30 billion cut on our defenses?

It would mean slashing our strategic bomber forces by 60 per cent (down to 200 aging B-52s and FB-111s) and cancelling the development of the new B-1 longrange bomber.

We would have to halt some of our missile programs, notably MIRV (the multiple reentry vehicle).

It would reduce our Air Force and Navy tactical air wings from 34 to 26, thus placing the skies in the hands of our enemies.

It would mean unilaterally cutting our forces in Europe by more than a half, thus jeopardizing the entire Atlantic Alliance.

It would reduce our aircraft carriers from 16 to 6--with deployment of only one in the Mediterranean, one in the Atlantic, and one in the Pacific, thus giving militant Nations in the Middle East a virtual go-ahead to resume hostilities.

It would mean cutting our armed forces by 40 per cent--cutting the Navy in half and the Air Force by more than half--without any similar force reductions by the Russians.

I personally believe a defense budget cut of \$30 billion would risk the safety of every man, woman and child in America. There is no question that such a slash in defense funds would make the United States militarily inferior to the Soviet Union.

The House of Representatives recently cut the proposed fiscal 1973 defense budget by \$4.3 billion, but this was accomplished without digging into our defense muscle and that is how defense budget cuts should be carried out.

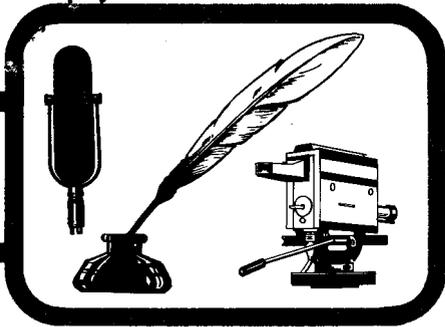
The present Administration has already accomplished the sharpest military reductions ever.

For the first time in history, real defense outlays and manpower have been cut below prewar levels. Since 1968, we have reduced military and civilian Defense Department employment by 1.4 million. We have also eliminated 1.3 million defense-related jobs through cuts in defense spending.

If we were to cut another \$30 billion from our defense budget, we would eliminate an additional 1.8 million jobs and leave ourselves with only two alternatives--surrender or nuclear war.

Let us instead make progress toward peace. And we can build peace only from a foundation of strength. It is only in that way that America will remain the land of the free and the home of the brave.

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