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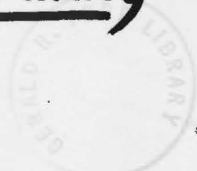
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AMERICAN LEGION STATE CONVENTION, CIVIC
AUDITORIUM, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN,
SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1973.

PEACE . . . PEACE FOR ALL THE
WORLD . . . IS A CONDITION THAT
AMERICANS MOST ARDENTLY DESIRE. WE ARE
NOW EMBARKED ON THE MOST SERIOUS QUEST
FOR PEACE IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY.

THE SIGNS THAT POINT TOWARD
PEACE ARE GENUINE AND REAL. THE
EFFERVESCENT AND MEANINGLESS SPIRIT OF
GLASSBORO HAS BEEN SUPPLANTED BY THE
SPIRIT OF MOSCOW AND THE SPIRIT OF
WASHINGTON, A DEFINITE MOVEMENT TOWARD
DETENTE WHICH HAS PRODUCED A FIRST SALT
AGREEMENT, SECOND SALT TALKS, A U.S.-SOVIET
AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR,
AND THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE ON


SALT
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MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS.

SINCE LAST YEAR, WE HAVE
OPENED THE IRON AND BAMBOO CURTAINS.
THE ASSIGNMENT OF A U.S. LIAISON OFFICER
TO RED CHINA AND THE RECENT VISIT OF
SOVIET LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV TO THE
UNITED STATES ARE MONUMENTAL MILESTONES
ALONG THE ROCKY ROAD TO PEACEFUL
CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.

THIS PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE HAS
PRODUCED A KIND OF EUPHORIA IN THE
UNITED STATES, A FEELING THAT THE DAY
OF ARMED AGGRESSION IS PAST. AND YET IT
COMES AT A TIME WHEN OUR PRISONERS OF
WAR HAVE ONLY RECENTLY COME HOME FROM
YEARS OF TORTURE IN NORTH VIETNAMESE
PRISON CAMPS -- AND SO THE SPIRIT
CONTRASTS VIOLENTLY WITH REALITY.



WE LIVE TODAY IN FRUSTRATING
TIMES. WE YEARN FOR PEACE, AND MANY
AMERICANS SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT BEATING
OUR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES IS THE WAY TO
ACHIEVE IT.

I WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THIS,
ALONG WITH THE PACIFISTS. BUT A LOOK AT
HISTORY SHOULD PUT ALL OF US ON GUARD
AGAINST THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT HUMANITY
HAS NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE THE
POSSIBILITY OF ARMED AGGRESSION CAN
SAFELY BE DISREGARDED.


THE SOBER TRUTH IS THAT ONLY THE
STRONG CAN EXPECT TO REMAIN FREE IN THIS
AGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONRY.

DESPITE ALL THE TALK OF DETENTE,
THE FACT REMAINS THAT SOVIET NUCLEAR
POWER HAS GROWN TREMENDOUSLY IN THE



PAST DECADE. THE SOVIETS HAVE ACHIEVED
WHAT IS OFTEN CALLED "ROUGH STRATEGIC
PARITY" WITH THE UNITED STATES.

AND THE DETENTE CLIMATE
NOTWITHSTANDING, THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT
REDUCED THE NUMBER OF ITS DIVISIONS IN
EUROPE. ON THE CONTRARY, SINCE 1967 THE
NUMBER OF SOVIET DIVISIONS STATIONED IN
EASTERN EUROPE HAS GROWN FROM 26 TO 31,
INCLUDING THE FIVE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS DURING THE LAST FEW
YEARS HAVE STEADILY IMPROVED THE QUALITY
OF THEIR WARMAKING POTENTIAL IN CENTRAL
EUROPE AND HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDED
THEIR NAVAL POWER AT THE FLANKS OF NATO.
THE SOVIET-WARSAW PACT FORCES CONTINUE
TO MODERNIZE. THIS REFLECTS THE ABIDING




SOVIET OBJECTIVE OF ESTABLISHING CLEAR
MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER THE UNITED STATES
AND THE WEST.

OTHER LONGTERM SOVIET
OBJECTIVES ARE TO ELIMINATE THE AMERICAN
MILITARY PRESENCE FROM EUROPE AND TO
REMOVE THE U.S. STRATEGIC NUCLEAR UMBRELLA
FROM THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE.

I FAVOR DETENTE, BUT WHETHER IT
IS POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE A PERMANENT
EAST-WEST DETENTE OR NOT, THIS NATION
CANNOT AFFORD TO LET ITSELF BE OUTMATCHED
MILITARILY.

WE ARE SEEKING LIMITATIONS ON
NUCLEAR ARMS AND A BALANCED MUTUAL
REDUCTION OF FORCES IN EUROPE -- AND PROPERLY
SO. WE ARE SEEKING THE RESOLUTION OF THE
GREAT EAST-WEST POLITICAL ISSUES -- AND WE
SHOULD. BUT WEAKNESS INVITES ATTACK.



WE MUST BE EVER VIGILANT.

WE MUST PROVIDE A SHIELD FOR
OUR ALLIES AGAINST OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS,
AND WE MUST FURNISH SUCH OTHER ASSISTANCE
AS IS APPROPRIATE. WE MUST NEVER
UNILATERALLY REDUCE OUR FORCES IN EUROPE.
INSTEAD, THERE SHOULD BE A REDUCTION IN
FORCES ON BOTH SIDES.

LET US NEGOTIATE RATHER THAN
CONFRONT, WHENEVER AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE.
BUT LET US NEGOTIATE FROM STRENGTH.

WE CANNOT BUILD THE STRUCTURE
OF WORLD PEACE SOLELY ON A WILLINGNESS
TO NEGOTIATE. WE MUST HAVE SOMETHING
TO BARGAIN WITH. WE MUST DEAL FROM
STRENGTH, JUST AS WE DID DURING THE CUBAN
MISSILE CRISIS IN 1962. AND WE MUST
STRENGTHEN OUR FRIENDS SO THAT THEY TOO
CAN SURVIVE.

THERE ARE TOO MANY AMERICANS TODAY WHO ARE WILLING, EVEN EAGER, TO TEAR DOWN OUR DEFENSES. THEY SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT PEACE LIES IN THAT DIRECTION. BUT THEY ARE WOEFULLY MISTAKEN. THEY LOOK UPON A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE AS AN UNDERLYING CAUSE OF WAR WHEN IT IS ACTUALLY THE GUARDIAN OF PEACE. IF THEY HAD THEIR WAY AND DECIMATED OUR DEFENSES, THEY WOULD BE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR ANOTHER MILITARY CATASTROPHE.

LET US BE SENSIBLE ABOUT OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE. IF WE CUT WE SHOULD KNOW WHAT WE ARE DOING. I APPLAUD RATIONAL, REASONABLE, SOUND EFFORTS TO REDUCE MILITARY SPENDING. AS A MEMBER



OF THE HOUSE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE, I PERSONALLY HAD A HAND IN
CUTTING DEFENSE BUDGETS BY A TOTAL OF
\$14.5 BILLION. BUT THE SUBCOMMITTEE MADE
THESE CUTS ONLY AFTER THE MOST CAREFUL
STUDY AND LENGTHY HEARINGS. THERE IS A
LIMIT TO DEFENSE CUTS. WE MUST NOT
SO WEAKEN OUR DEFENSES THAT WE ENCOURAGE
AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS BY POTENTIAL ENEMIES.

THE UNILATERAL DISARMERS CALL
FOR DEEP CUTS IN DEFENSE SPENDING UNDER
THE GUISE OF REORDERING OUR PRIORITIES.
THE FACTS ARE WE HAVE ALREADY REORDERED
OUR PRIORITIES AND ARE CONTINUING TO DO SO.
IN 1962, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPENT
48 PER CENT OF ITS BUDGET ON DEFENSE
AND ONLY 32 PER CENT ON HUMAN RESOURCES.
IN 1968 WE WERE STILL SPENDING 44 PER CENT

OF OUR BUDGET ON DEFENSE AND ONLY
34 PER CENT ON HUMAN RESOURCES. THESE
PRIORITIES HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY TURNED
AROUND BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION. THE
ADMINISTRATION BUDGET FOR FISCAL 1974
EARMARKS 49 PER CENT OF TOTAL FEDERAL
OUTLAYS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND ONLY
28.4 PER CENT FOR DEFENSE.

WHAT SHOULD OUR FOREIGN POLICY
BE FOR THE FUTURE? FIRST AND FOREMOST,
WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR MILITARY STRENGTH
AND LIVE UP TO OUR TREATY COMMITMENTS OR
WE WILL WITNESS THE COLLAPSE OF GOVERNMENTS
ALIGNED WITH THE WESTERN WORLD.

WE MUST NEVER SUCCUMB TO THE LURE
OF THE "FORTRESS AMERICA" DOCTRINE, THE
IDEA THAT WE CAN SIMPLY WITHDRAW FROM THE
REST OF THE WORLD. ISOLATIONIST SENTIMENT

COULD SWEEP US TOWARD A CATASTROPHE FROM
WHICH THERE WOULD BE NO QUICK OR EASY
RECOVERY.

COMMUNIST "WARS OF NATIONAL
LIBERATION" HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED
A LARGE PART OF THE WORLD THAT WE KNEW
BEFORE WORLD WAR II. IN THOSE DAYS OF
SELF-ENFORCED ISOLATIONISM, WE THOUGHT
WE WERE NOT THREATENED WHEN THE JAPANESE
INVADED CHINA, THE ITALIANS INVADED
ETHIOPIA, AND NAZI GERMANY SEIZED AUSTRIA
AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

TODAY WE KNOW BETTER. WE KNOW
THAT WE MUST NOT SHRINK FROM THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF WORLD LEADERSHIP OR
HISTORY MIGHT REPEAT ITSELF. WE KNOW
THAT DESPITE THE FINANCIAL BURDEN MILITARY
PREPAREDNESS IMPOSES ON THE TAXPAYER,

WE MUST MAINTAIN A DEFENSE CAPABILITY
ADEQUATE TO DISCOURAGE POTENTIAL
AGGRESSORS.

SOME SEE IN TODAY'S AMERICA AN
EROSION OF SPIRIT -- A SOFTNESS, A LOVE
OF CREATURE COMFORTS AND AN UNWILLINGNESS
TO SHOULDER THE BURDENS OF RESPONSIBLE
CITIZENSHIP. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS TRUE.
WE DO HAVE PROBLEMS -- BUT WE ALSO HAVE
FREEDOM, OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW AND PROSPER,
AND THE FINEST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT EVER
DEvised BY MAN. WE CAN IN THIS DECADE
OF THE SEVENTIES BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION
OF PROGRESS FOR OUR FUTURE AND PEACE FOR
A GENERATION AND BEYOND. ALL OF THIS WE
CAN HAVE . . . WITH THE KIND OF SPIRIT
DEMONSTRATED BY THE POW'S WHEN THEY CAME
HOME FROM VIETNAM.

ALMOST TO A MAN THEY EXPRESSED
THEIR GREAT LOVE FOR THIS COUNTRY.

ALMOST TO A MAN THEY TOLD OF
THE FAITH THAT SUSTAINED THEM -- FAITH
IN THE JUSTICE OF THE CAUSE FOR WHICH
THEY FOUGHT.

ALMOST TO A MAN THEY PRAISED
THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE AND THE
GOVERNMENT UNDER WHICH WE LIVE.

THIS IS AMERICA. THIS IS THE
AMERICA I LOVE. THIS IS THE COUNTRY WHICH
IS THE ENVY OF THE WORLD. LET US JOIN
THE FORMER POW'S IN EXPRESSING OUR OWN
FAITH IN AMERICA BY KEEPING IT STRONG
AND KEEPING IT THE GUIDING LIGHT THAT
IT HAS BEEN TO ALL OTHER NATIONS OVER THE
YEARS.

-- END --



REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE AMERICAN LEGION STATE CONVENTION
CIVIC AUDITORIUM
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1973

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

Peace...peace for all the world...is a condition that Americans most ardently desire. We are now embarked on the most serious quest for peace in all of human history.

The signs that point toward peace are genuine and real. The effervescent and meaningless Spirit of Glassboro has been supplanted by the Spirit of Moscow and the Spirit of Washington, a definite movement toward detente which has produced a First SALT Agreement, Second SALT Talks, a U.S.-Soviet Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the upcoming conference on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions.

Since last year, we have opened the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. The assignment of a U.S. liaison officer to Red China and the recent visit of Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev to the United States are monumental milestones along the rocky road to peaceful co-existence between East and West.

This progress toward peace has produced a kind of euphoria in the United States, a feeling that the day of armed aggression is past. And yet it comes at a time when our Prisoners of War have only recently come home from years of torture in North Vietnamese prison camps--and so the spirit contrasts violently with reality.

We live today in frustrating times. We yearn for peace, and many Americans sincerely believe that beating our swords into plowshares is the way to achieve it.

I would like to believe this, along with the pacifists. But a look at history should put all of us on guard against those who claim that humanity has now reached the point where the possibility of armed aggression can safely be disregarded.

The sober truth is that only the strong can expect to remain free in this age of nuclear weaponry.

(more)

Despite all the talk of detente, the fact remains that Soviet nuclear power has grown tremendously in the past decade. The Soviets have achieved what is often called "rough strategic parity" with the United States.

And the detente climate notwithstanding, the Soviet Union has not reduced the number of its divisions in Europe. On the contrary, since 1967 the number of Soviet divisions stationed in Eastern Europe has grown from 26 to 31, including the five in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the Soviets during the last few years have steadily improved the quality of their warmaking potential in Central Europe and have substantially expanded their naval power at the flanks of NATO. The Soviet-Warsaw Pact forces continue to modernize. This reflects the abiding Soviet objective of establishing clear military superiority over the United States and the West.

Other longterm Soviet objectives are to eliminate the American military presence from Europe and to remove the U.S. strategic nuclear umbrella from the defense of Europe.

I favor detente, but whether it is possible to negotiate a permanent East-West detente or not, this nation cannot afford to let itself be outmatched militarily.

We are seeking limitations on nuclear arms and a balanced mutual reduction of forces in Europe--and properly so. We are seeking the resolution of the great East-West political issues--and we should. But weakness invites attack. We must be ever vigilant.

We must provide a shield for our allies against other nuclear powers, and we must furnish such other assistance as is appropriate. We must never unilaterally reduce our forces in Europe. Instead, there should be a reduction in forces on both sides.

Let us negotiate rather than confront, whenever and wherever possible. But let us negotiate from strength.

We cannot build the structure of world peace solely on a willingness to negotiate. We must have something to bargain with. We must deal from strength, just as we did during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. And we must strengthen our friends so that they too can survive.

(more)

There are too many Americans today who are willing, even eager, to tear down our defenses. They sincerely believe that peace lies in that direction. But they are woefully mistaken. They look upon a strong national defense as an underlying cause of war when it is actually the guardian of peace. If they had their way and decimated our defenses, they would be laying the groundwork for another military catastrophe.

Let us be sensible about our national defense. If we cut we should know what we are doing. I applaud rational, reasonable, sound efforts to reduce military spending. As a member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I personally had a hand in cutting defense budgets by a total of \$14.5 billion. But the subcommittee made these cuts only after the most careful study and lengthy hearings. There is a limit to defense cuts. We must not so weaken our defenses that we encourage aggressive actions by potential enemies.

The unilateral disarmers call for deep cuts in defense spending under the guise of reordering our priorities. The facts are we have already reordered our priorities and are continuing to do so. In 1962, the Federal Government spent 48 per cent of its budget on defense and only 32 per cent on human resources. In 1968 we were still spending 44 per cent of our budget on defense and only 34 per cent on human resources. These priorities have been completely turned around by the Nixon Administration. The Administration budget for fiscal 1974 earmarks 49 per cent of total federal outlays for human resources and only 28.4 per cent for defense.

What should our foreign policy be for the future? First and foremost, we must maintain our military strength and live up to our treaty commitments or we will witness the collapse of governments aligned with the western world.

We must never succumb to the lure of the "Fortress America" doctrine, the idea that we can simply withdraw from the rest of the world. Isolationist sentiment could sweep us toward a catastrophe from which there would be no quick or easy recovery.

Communist "wars of national liberation" have successfully absorbed a large part of the world that we knew before World War II. In those days of self-enforced isolationism, we thought we were not threatened when the Japanese invaded China, the Italians invaded Ethiopia, and Nazi Germany seized Austria and Czechoslovakia.

(more)

Today we know better. We know that we must not shrink from the responsibility of world leadership or history might repeat itself. We know that despite the financial burden military preparedness imposes on the taxpayer, we must maintain a defense capability adequate to discourage potential aggressors.

Some see in today's America an erosion of spirit--a softness, a love of creature comforts and an unwillingness to shoulder the burdens of responsible citizenship. I don't believe this is true. We do have problems--but we also have freedom, opportunities to grow and prosper, and the finest system of government ever devised by man. We can in this decade of the Seventies build a solid foundation of progress for our future and peace for a generation and beyond. All of this we can have...with the kind of spirit demonstrated by the POW's when they came home from Vietnam.

Almost to a man they expressed their great love for this country.

Almost to a man they told of the faith that sustained them--faith in the justice of the cause for which they fought.

Almost to a man they praised the American way of life and the government under which we live.

This is America. This is the America I love. This is the country which is the envy of the world. Let us join the former POW's in expressing our own faith in America by keeping it strong and keeping it the guiding light that it has been to all other nations over the years.

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