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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS TO BE DELIVERED
BY THE PRESIDENT AT
NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION
MARCH 17, 1975

The Fighting Irish of Notre Dame have become a symbol of the tenacity and determination of the American people.

But Notre Dame believes not only in might on the football field but in a spiritual response to humanity's struggle for a decent life.

I have been told that many of you chose to go without a normal dinner, eating only a bowl of rice, because of your conviction that the money saved might help feed the world's hungry. It is heart-warming to know that students are concerned about others abroad at a time when many here at home are finding it difficult to afford an education or to get a job. Although life is hard for many Americans, I am proud that we continue to share with others. That is the measure of genuine compassion.

And I am proud to be on a campus that looks up to God and out to humanity at a time when some are tempted to turn inward and away from the problems of the world. Notre Dame's great spokesman, Father Hesburgh, is known in Washington as a non-conformist. I must admit that I do not share all of the Father's views. But he is following one non-conformist viewpoint to which I fully subscribe: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

To conform to apathy and pessimism is to drop out and cop out. In that sense, I reject conformity. In that sense, I am a non-conformist who continues to be proud of America's partnership with other nations -- and who makes no apology for the United States of America. American goodness and American greatness speak for themselves. I believe in this Nation and in our capacity to resolve our difficulties at home without turning our back on the rest of the world.

Let me share my own experience. I was elected to the Congress in the aftermath of World War Two. A non-partisan foreign policy was emerging. America realized that politics must stop at the water's edge. Our fate was linked to the well-being of other free nations. We became the first nation to provide others with economic assistance as a national policy. Foreign aid was an American invention of which we can be justifiably proud.

Today, as I look back, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the United States Government during the third quarter of the 20th century. These past 25 years, while not perfect, were incomparably better for humanity than either of the two previous quarters of this century. There was no world war or global depression. Major nations achieved detente. Many new nations obtained independence. There has been an explosion of hope, freedom, and human progress at home and abroad. And America's role, considered in fair context, was as catalyst for change and growth.

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The Marshall Plan, unprecedented in world history, restored a war-ravaged Europe. Even earlier, United States relief and rehabilitation activities during World War Two and assistance to Greece and Turkey after the war had provided precedents and experience in American overseas assistance.

In the same year I came to the Congress, 1949, President Truman advanced "Point IV," an innovative concept providing technical assistance to developing countries. It brought new American ideas and technology to people hitherto unable to benefit from advances made in health, agriculture and education.

The Food for Peace Act, designed to use America's agricultural abundance to assist others, was a product of the Eisenhower Administration. It was adopted in 1954. In the late 50's, we created the Development Loan program to help others help themselves. In 1961, the Congress established the Agency for International Development to consolidate and administer the various activities and agencies.

Programs to help people in the developing countries are an expression of American compassion. But such aid also is part of the continuing effort to achieve an enduring structure of world peace. It is no longer a question of just the "Third World." I am deeply concerned by the problems of the "fourth world" -- the very poorest nations -- where:

- From 400 million to 800 million people suffer from malnutrition.
- Average per capita income is under \$275 per year.
- Life expectancy is twenty years less than in the developed countries.
- More than 40 percent of the children will never reach the age of 5.
- More than half the population has never been to school.

Despite these problems, the economies of developing countries have grown at an encouraging rate in the past ten years, thanks in part to American assistance. Manufacturing output increased 100 percent. Food production rose by over one-third. Enrollment in elementary schools doubled. Enrollment in secondary schools and colleges quadrupled.

But population growth and increased demand collided with inflation and energy shortages. Gains have been wiped out. At the very time when our policy seeks to build peace with nations of different philosophies, there remains too much violence and too many threats to peace.

The Congress defined the role of foreign aid this way: "The freedom, security, and prosperity of the United States are best sustained in a community of free, secure and prospering nations. Ignorance, want and despair breed the extremism and violence which lead to aggression and subversion."

If nations are to develop within this definition, they must be able to defend themselves. They must have assurance that America can be counted upon to provide the means of security as well as the means of sustenance. I am convinced that people with an affirmative vision of the future will not resort to violence. While we pursue a peaceful world in which there is unity in diversity, we must continue to support security against aggression and subversion. To do otherwise, would invite greater violence.

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The United States cannot avoid partnership with nations trying to improve the kind of world the children of today will face tomorrow. Recent events have demonstrated the interdependence of all people who live on this planet.

The 1973 war in the Middle East showed that war confined to a limited region nevertheless had an economic impact not only in South Bend but in every corner of the world. Developing and developed countries are all part of a single interdependent economic system.

This audience includes students from over 60 foreign countries. Let this demonstrate to all Americans that other people place a high valuation on what America has to offer. Let it demonstrate that the University of Notre Dame rejects the new isolationism.

When the World Food Conference met in Rome, I was faced with a perplexing problem. Food prices in America were over one-fifth higher than in the previous year. Food reserves were dwindling. The corn crop and other crops were disappointing. There were concerns about hunger among our own people.

Against this background, I was presented with several alternative estimates on how much we should spend for Food for Peace. At the Rome Conference, American spokesmen pledged that we would try to increase our food contribution despite our own crop problems. As crop reports improved, I designated a sum even higher than the highest option recommended to me at the time of the conference. A factor in my decision was your own Father Hesburgh, whose strong support of the expanded program provided a reminder of America's moral commitment.

Food for Peace was increased from about \$980 million to \$1.6 billion. This will provide about 5.5 million tons of commodities, up from 3.3 million tons last year. Most of the commodities will be wheat and rice. Also desperately required -- and also increased -- are blended foods used in nutritional programs for mothers and infants.

The United States is no longer the only country aiding others. But we continue to lead in providing food assistance. In 20 years of Food for Peace, we shipped over 245 million tons of wheat, rice and other grains valued at \$23 billion. I am very proud of that record, and so should every American be proud.

While food helps, only by technical assistance can emerging nations meet their own needs. It has been said that if a hungry man is given a fish, he can eat for one day. But if he is taught to fish, he can eat every day.

The greatest opportunity lies in expanding production in areas where this production will be consumed. The world is farming only about half the potential crop-land. Yet there are insufficient farmer incentives in many countries shortages of fertilizer, high fuel costs and inadequate storage and distribution systems.

The answers to the world food problem are to be found in interdependence. We can and will help other nations. But simplistic paternalism may do more harm than good. Our help must take the form of helping every nation to help itself.

I am particularly concerned about the problem of fair distribution. America believes in equality of opportunity. This Nation provides a showcase of change in providing better nutrition, education, health care to more and more people -- including those who can least afford it. Some nations have excellent use of our assistance to develop their own capacities. Other governments are still struggling with the issue of equality of opportunity and fair distribution of life's necessities.

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Good world citizenship requires more than moralizing about the role others should take. It requires each nation to put its own house in order. Good American citizenship requires more than moralizations about what is wrong with the United States. It requires personal involvement and action to bring about change. It requires voting -- and organizing -- and challenging -- and changing -- within the flexible and dynamic American political process. Our system works.

The developing nations of the world are increasingly successful in bringing prosperity to larger numbers of their own people. In fact, the assistance we have provided these nations is not just a one-way street. Thirty percent of U.S. exports are purchased by these developing countries -- thereby contributing to a better life for their people and jobs for ours.

In cases where countries have the means, let them join in sharing with others. Some have helped. Others have not. We led the way and we will not shirk from future burdens. But all nations must cooperate in developing the world's resources. We extend the hand of partnership and friendship.

Another challenge facing the developing nations -- as well as other nations -- is to realize the need for peaceful accommodation with neighbors. An interdependent world cannot solve disputes by threats or force. People depend on each other more than they realize. For example, we import between fifty and one hundred percent of such essential minerals as cobalt, bauxite, tin, nickel, manganese, mercury and others.

The challenge, as I see it, is for America and all other nations to take responsibility for themselves while building cooperation with each other. And the challenge is also the preservation of the freedom and dignity of the human individual throughout the world.

Just as the world's nations can no longer "go it alone," neither can the American people. Woodrow Wilson said that "what we should seek to impart in our colleges is not so much learning itself as the spirit of learning." Great universities that pursue truth face the challenge that confronts the entire American people. It is whether we will learn nothing from the past and return to the introversion of the 1930's, to the dangerous notion that our fate is unrelated to the fate of others.

I am convinced that Americans, however tempted to resign from the world, know that it cannot be done. The spirit of learning is too deeply ingrained. We know that wherever the bell tolls for freedom, it tolls for us.

The American people have responded by supplying help to needy nations. Programs could not have been and cannot be enacted without popular support. Many voluntary agencies supplement government programs. CARE and Catholic Relief Services, pioneers in Food for Peace programs, are feeding over 28 million people around the world. Protestant, Jewish, and other groups are similarly involved.

At universities throughout the Nation, researchers seek answers to world problems. Right here in Indiana, at Purdue University, scientists have made discoveries in high-protein aspects of sorghum, a basic food of more than 300 million people in Asia and Africa.

Not only the scientists at Purdue, but people throughout America, realize that no structure of world peace can endure unless the poverty question is answered. There is no safety for any nation in a hungry, ill-educated and desperate world.

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In a time of recession, inflation, and unemployment at home, it is argued that we can no longer afford foreign assistance. There are two basic reasons why Americans cannot adopt this view:

First -- foreign aid is part of the price we must pay to achieve the kind of world we want to live in. Let's be frank about it: foreign aid bolsters our diplomatic efforts for peace and security.

Second -- even with recession we remain the world's most affluent country. And the sharing of our resources is the right, humane, and decent thing to do.

Just as we seek to build bridges to other nations, we must unite at home. This Administration wants better communication with the academic world -- not just in search of new technology but for the human and spiritual qualities that enrich American life.

In the future, fewer people must produce more. We must, therefore, unleash intellectual capacities to anticipate and solve our problems. The academic world must join in the revival of fundamental American values. Let us build a new sense of pride in being an American.

You can make America what you want it to be.

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