

The original documents are located in Box D15, folder “Kent County Republican Picnic, June 8. 1961” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Gerald R. Ford, Jr., (R-Mich), in a statement at Kent County Republican Picnic said, "Any peril in international affairs that confronts America is not attributable to any military inferiority but can be directly laid to the inept conduct of American foreign relations and the ineffective formulation of diplomatic policy by the Administration. To date the new Administration offers new spending proposals as a substitute for affirmative and effective action."

Mr. Ford continued his statement as follows:

Since January 20, 1961, the present Administration has proposed increased spending totaling almost \$12 billion more than that recommended on January 16th by President Eisenhower. Most of this staggering increase has been for non-defense purposes and has necessitated a record peace-time increase in our debt ceiling to \$296 billion. In urging this added spending without recommending a cut-back in any existing programs, the Kennedy Administration has criticized virtually every aspect of our American way of life as being "neglected", "disturbing", "inadequate", or "in peril".

The President's consistent solution in meeting his cited problems has been to suggest spending today and perhaps paying tomorrow. Now we are told that it will probably be necessary to spend \$3 to \$5 billion more for defense purposes, again presumably without cutback in any of the non-defense proposals. Apparently the Federal Government is to have "bureaucracy as usual" on a growing scale at home while we are spending ever increasing billions for defense throughout the world.

There is no question that any defense effort that is necessary to our security should be made; and there is no question that expenditures required for National Defense can and should be met out of current revenues and the American people would willingly pay the price. The willingness and determination on the part of the American people are there; the only thing lacking is decisive leadership to delineate our problems and define our purposes. The President owes it to the American people to tell us how these somewhat conflicting and competing military and non-military programs will be simultaneously accomplished without destroying confidence in the value of the dollar, an event which would serve Mr. Khrushchev's purpose better than almost any other possible occurrence.

The President should tell the American people what has occurred in recent months that was not previously foreseen to require now that billions of dollars more be added to the \$43 billion already being spent for our security. The American people would also like to have these questions answered: Has the Kennedy campaign tactic of downgrading America to second class status been so convincing that Mr. Khrushchev has been encouraged to new boldness? Has our bungling in Cuba encouraged Mr. Khrushchev to think we will bungle in Berlin? Is the fact that Mr. Acheson is reported to be an influential Adviser-Without-Portfolio to the President on foreign affairs an encouragement to Mr. Khrushchev to think that America will return to a policy of appeasement? Does Mr. Khrushchev think that we will offer him a tractor deal too? Does Mr. Khrushchev plan to strike before Mr. Kennedy completes his on-the-job training in National and world leadership?

The time is urgently at hand for the Kennedy Administration to realize that the Red Imperialists will not stop their insidious scheming or their blustery belligerence because of an American threat of future spending. We cannot deal with a July 1961 crisis by demands on the Treasury to finance weapons to be available to us 3 years hence. Dollars contained in an appropriations bill this year will not solve the problem of Laos this Summer



or the crisis of Berlin this Fall. What we need is a demonstration by the Administration of steadfast purpose and confident determination to use the tools at hand to meet the crisis at hand.

The Democratic promise during the campaign to get America moving must not now be allowed to mean moving timidly away from Communist challenge or moving evasively away from our international commitments. The promise to get America moving cannot be fulfilled if the only place we are moving is through the front, back and side doors of the Treasury Department. The Administration must realize that the Free World will be confronted with disaster if America follows a foreign policy of "reaction only" that is restricted in direction to defensive maneuver in response to a relentless Communist initiative. Also, in evaluating urgent National needs the Administration must recognize that the only economic progress that will mean anything to the American people is progress accomplished within the framework of fiscal sanity.

The Kennedy Administration has an urgent obligation to deal frankly and forthrightly in informing the American people as to our military capability to meet the Communist threat anywhere in the world and our fiscal capability to finance simultaneously the New Frontier on the home front. If we cannot do both, we must recognize that fact and select the course that will responsibly provide for dealing with the most urgent task first.

