

FOR RELEASE AT 6:00 P.M. CDT FRIDAY MARCH 8, 1974

Advance summary of address of Harold E. Stassen on the occasion of being awarded the "Distinguished Citizen Award" at the Founders Day banquet of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity at the Radisson-South Hotel, Bloomington, Minn. 7:00 P.M. CDT March 8, 1974

"FORGIVENESS FOR PRESIDENT NIXON"

May I begin my address this evening with a direct word of appreciation for your "Distinguished Citizen Award". Naturally, I do take some pride that the basic measures we introduced in my years as Governor of Minnesota, not only received the approval of the people in those years, but also have stood the test of time in the subsequent decades.

May I add that one of my vivid recollections of my years as Governor, is of visiting the Federal Cartridge Plant with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and hearing your first recipient of the Distinguished Citizen Award - Charles L. Horn convince the President of his need for more brass in order to step up the production of his plant!

In responding tonight, I know that you do wish me to comment on the present critical period for our country. The views that I will express are quite different from those which you hear and read from day to day. As background for these views let me state that having started so young, I worked in various ways, in war and peace, with six Presidents of our country beginning with President Herbert Hoover. As a further definition of my credentials, let me add that I have not been any part of President Nixon's administration, and have not been any part of any special group of President Nixon's friends or associates. Further, as you may know, I have never been a conscientious objector, but on the contrary resigned as Governor to go on active duty in World War II, and served in extensive combat as Assistant Chief of Staff to Admiral Halsey in the Pacific.

Let me also emphasize that I have no personal knowledge as to whether or not President Nixon only made a mistake in appointing some men who directly or indirectly are responsible for the events labelled "Watergate"; or whether or not he had some further personal involvement. Furthermore, I do not attempt to predict or advocate what the Congress may do in the months ahead.

But I do have a very deep feeling that, for the good of America,
we should all forgive President Nixon now for Watergate, and help
him now make a new beginning and fulfill his Presidency.

Our nation and our President must turn their major attention
and concentration to the tasks and opportunities of the future. This
is the way to solve our problems and make progress. This is the
best road for future world peace.

It is wrong to say that we must first get to the absolute bottom of Watergate before we can go forward. Neither this nation, nor any nation can ever get to the absolute bottom of a situation such as Watergate; or Pearl Harbor; or the Bay of Pigs; or the beginning of American combat and bombing in Vietnam; or the assassination of President Kennedy; or the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Any nation; that for too long preoccupies itself with trying to
get to the bottom of past events; itself slides down, down, down,
as it fails to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.
We need urgently a period marked by a spirit of forgiveness and of
amnesty and of new beginning.

This new beginning should include amnesty for the young men who
went to Canada and Sweden, and for those who went to jail as
conscientious objectors.

We can learn lessons from these experiences of the past decade. New laws and new measures and new reforms are needed, and should be enacted. In a real sense our nation is still suffering from the intense traumatic effects of the tragic assassination of President Kennedy.

Even the most extreme critics agree that President Nixon has accomplished many good things during his years in office.

I call upon all leaders of public thought to consider carefully and thoroughly my appeal for this spirit of forgiveness and amnesty and new beginning.

I call upon the media: newspapers and magazines, television and radio; to reexamine their responsibility and their practices in this critical time for our nation.

I call upon the clergy: ministers, priests, and rabbis; to reflect upon this need for forgiveness and to recognize the appropriateness of forgiveness in this crisis of our Presidency.

I call upon each of the millions of our citizens to consider becoming, in their own thoughts and conversations, a part of this new spirit of forgiveness, this new beginning, this new day for the good of America.

Finally, I call upon each of the members of our fraternity, to think through their own individual reaction and role in this critical time for our country.

I speak thus as a citizen to my fellow citizens, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

This is the response I feel moved to make to your gracious award as "Distinguished Citizen".

SECOND DRAFT

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Statement of Harold E. Stassen

I have a deep feeling that, for the good of America, we should all forgive President Nixon for Watergate and help him make a new beginning and fulfill his Presidency.

Therefore, I am starting out to organize a National movement for this purpose.

The organization will be named the National Movement to Forgive President Nixon, with the objective, for the good of America, to help him fulfill his Presidency.

Every citizen, Democrat, Republican, or Independent, is invited to join in this movement.

Our nation and our President must turn their major attention and concentration to the tasks and opportunities of the future. This is ~~the~~ way to solve our problems and make progress. This is the best road for future world peace.

It is wrong to say that we must first get to the absolute bottom of Watergate before we can go forward. Neither this nation, nor any nation can ever get to the absolute bottom of a situation such as Watergate; or Pearl Harbor; or the Bay of Pigs; or the beginning of American combat and bombing

in Vietnam; or the assassination of President Kennedy; or the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Any nation that for too long preoccupies itself with trying to get to the bottom of past events, itself slides down, down, down, as it fails to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

An atmosphere on Watergate has been developed which is too much like a lynch mob psychology.

We need instead a period marked by a spirit of forgiveness and of amnesty and of new beginning.

We can learn lessons from these experiences. New laws and new measures and new reforms are needed, and should be enacted.

But even the extreme critics agree that President Nixon has accomplished many good things during his years in office.

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I call upon each of the millions of our citizens to consider becoming, in their own thoughts and conversations, a part of this new spirit of forgiveness, this new beginning, this new day for the good of America.

Statement of Harold E. Stassen

As everyone realizes, this is a critical period for our country. More than any other factor, we, as a nation, are still suffering through the traumatic intense after-effects of the tragic assassination of President Kennedy.

Let me emphasize that I have no personal knowledge as to whether or not President Nixon only made a mistake in appointing some men who directly or indirectly are responsible for the events labelled "Watergate"; or whether or not he had some further personal involvement.

But I do have a deep feeling that, for the good of America, we should all forgive President Nixon now for Watergate and help him make a new beginning and fulfill his Presidency.

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This new beginning should include amnesty for the young men who went to Canada and Sweden, and for those who went to jail as conscientious objectors.

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I call upon each of the millions of our citizens to consider becoming, in their own thoughts and conversations, a part of this new spirit of forgiveness, this new beginning, this new day for the good of America.

For the Good of America

I join in the

National Movement for Forgiveness to President Nixon

and to

help him make a new beginning and to fulfill his Presidency

Signature

Please Print your name and address

Please check one or more of the following:

- ☐ I will speak to friends and associates to encourage this spirit of Forgiveness
- ☐ I will write to my newspaper and television and radio station for this purpose
- ☐ I will contribute \$ _____ to further the objective of this Forgiveness
- ☐ I will write to my Congressman and Senator in support of this purpose

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Every citizen, Democrat, Republican, or Independent, is invited to join in this movement.

Our nation and our President must turn its major attention and concentration to the tasks and opportunities of the future. This is the way to solve our problems and make progress. This is the best road for future peace.

It is wrong to say that we must first get to the absolute bottom of Watergate before we can go forward. Neither this notion, nor any notion can ever get to the absolute bottom of a situation such as Watergate, or Pearl Harbor, or the Bay of Pigs, or the beginning of American Combat and bombing in Viet Nam, or the assassination of President Kennedy or Martin Luther King.

Any nation that for too long preoccupies itself with trying to get to the bottom of past events, itself slides down as it fails to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

We have built up an atmosphere too much like a lynch mob psychology.

We need instead a period marked by a spirit of forgiveness and of amnesty and of new beginning.

We can learn lessons from these experiences. New laws and new measures and new reforms are needed and should be enacted.

Even the extreme critics agree that President Nixon has accomplished many good things during his years in office.

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STATEMENT OF HAROLD E. STASSEN

August 9, 1974

Our American people should now have a time of forgiveness and of appreciation and of unity. Forgiveness should be extended to Richard Nixon. Appreciation should be expressed for his major accomplishments for peace. Unity should be assembled behind President Gerald Ford as he leads in a difficult new beginning.

All of the media now have a very special responsibility as we together move from this day of crisis forward to solutions of serious problems and to sound progress in our national well being.

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file: Forgiveness for
President Nixon

HAROLD E. STASSEN

The Word

In today's emotional and sensitive atmosphere the people of the nation seem to have fallen into three rigid groups concerning their attitude about the President.

The first group are the anti-Nixon liberals and their new companions, those citizens of all political leanings who believe that the President is guilty-as-hell and have closed their mind off from any but a lynch mob appeal.

Second, the conservatives and other supporters of Nixon who grew exasperated by the unending hounding of the media, a means by which the President has been found guilty before he has been tried.

The third group we can overlook, the apolitical, those who care little about the events in any level of government above the precinct level.

We can simply recognize the existence of the third group and, for the purpose of this discussion, forget them.

But if you were to ask the first and second groups the question, "Should we forgive the President?" you'd get two different answers.

Group #1 would say, "No, he's too guilty to forgive."

Group #2 would ask, "What is he guilty of?".

(During the previous two days this question was tried on several persons whose political convictions were known, and with no variation, these were the replies.)

We might conclude that the spirit to forgive exists among many, but the use of the word "forgive", since it implies previous guilt, is a stumbling block.

However, since we are writing, the word transcends the spirit, and the word should be removed for a substitute, such as:

Exonerate	Justify	Champion
Vindicate	Relieve	Back
Exculpate	Uphold	Stand - with, by, beside
Clear	Defend	

Column #1 might imply that wrong has been done, especially if he is to be cleared -- but not wrong necessarily committed by him, but wrong of which he has been accused.

Column #2 implies that he is under an attack against which his friends must rally to defend him.

Column #3 simply calls on for support on a "stand beside him", "champion his cause" basis.



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