

MOBILIZATION FOR PEACE

(Excerpts from an Address by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
(D. Minn.) before National Convention of Young Democrats,
Reno Nevada, November 9, 1957)

Our nation faces a critical hour in its history.

The world is teetering between threatened annihilation, and the greatest era of new discovery and new progress mankind has yet known.

All of us share the sobering responsibility of guiding our destiny on its precarious course -- to avert the destructive disaster of war, and to achieve, instead, a far greater fulfillment of man's aspirations than history has yet recorded.

Those twin objectives are inseparable, each dependent upon the other.

In an age when war could mean annihilation, the maintenance of peace is our most urgent business. It is everybody's business, yours as well as mine.

Faced with the gravest dangers we have ever known, our foreign policy is in a state of confusion and disarray. We have relied too long upon a series of patched-up arrangements and improvised reactions to crisis after crisis.

Formosa, Indochina, Egypt, Suez, Syria -- and now Sputnik in the sky: each one has left our position more precarious, and our adversaries stronger.

Yet with our very national survival at stake, budget ceilings inspired by a business-as-usual mentality have seriously weakened our defense program. After four years and \$150 billion of President Eisenhower, our defensive power relative to our commitments and to the strength of the Soviet Union is weaker, rather than stronger.

Is it any wonder that there is a rising chorus of apprehension and criticism, both in the United States and among our friends abroad?

We must talk frankly -- and yes, even bluntly -- about the situation that confronts us.

The Administration has not been candid with the American people.

It has fed the public political tranquilizers. We are now undergoing a rude awakening -- with quite a hangover.

The last ten years have seen almost incredible changes in our world.

Atomic energy -- with all its shattering dangers and unlimited opportunities -- is intruding into our lives more each month. We have a bear by the tail, a locomotive that threatens to run away downhill with us. We have to tame this great power, before it enslaves us -- or destroys us.

The beep-beep-beep of the first Russian satellite told us that we have crossed another threshold -- into the age of space flight.

No longer is it idle speculation that man may some day reach the moon and the planets.

The new speeds of today -- of a revolutionary nature --- are destroying all our old ideas of space and distance, revolutionizing military strategy, revealing new concepts of communication and travel.

But the vast political changes in the world, in the relationship between nations, the breakup of the old colonial empires, the creation of a new Soviet empire headed by ruthless and tenacious leaders, the

birth of new nations and the rising tide of nationalism in Asia -- and Africa -- these political social changes in the world pose an equal challenge to American leadership.

They dramatize the imperative need to find, among our young people, not only brilliant research and technical workers, but also leaders for the next generation in every area of our social economic life.

If we needed more scientists and technicians ten years ago, we need them doubly now. If we needed then more people trained to work with the peoples of other nations, and to lead our own, we need them doubly now.

If we needed in 1947 to seek out and encourage the creative, industrious, intelligent men and women for every field of American effort, that need is more imperative, more desperate than ever before.

For the truth is that the backward peasant nation that was the Soviet Union even thirty years ago has raised itself -- (at what cost in human suffering and the loss of human dignity we can only estimate) -- to a high level of technological accomplishment.

Such a remarkable feat cannot help but attract the young nations of the world who are themselves now taking their first faltering steps out of their age-old poverty and domination by colonialism.

The Sputnik merely dramatizes the whole broad field of Soviet accomplishments.

It is not only Soviet missiles and rockets that face us.

There is indeed, a formidable Soviet military challenge, in the form of intercontinental ballistic missiles in a vast fleet of missile-equipped submarines, and in its huge standing army. We do face a shrewd and ruthless Soviet Leader, not at all adverse to the use of threats and of force, if need be. It is literally true that, through the most incredible kind of complacency, we have permitted the Soviet Union to leave us some months and perhaps years behind in rockets and missiles.

But make no mistake about it. It is not only Soviet missiles and rockets we face.

Nikita Khrushchev has thrown down the gauntlet across the board. He boasts that the Soviet will be supreme in nuclear power, in consumer goods production, in cultural activities, in agricultural production, in education.

It is time we realized that the Soviets are waging all-out war on us, without a shot being fired. It is economic warfare, political warfare, cultural warfare, educational warfare, and scientific and technological warfare.

They are challenging us in every field -- and the new nations of Asia and Africa, representing the great uncommitted weight of the world's manpower and resources, are watching intensely the onrushing Soviet drive.

We are locked in a struggle which will demand every resource of our intelligence and our spirit if we are to survive. We are in a one-game world series, and we cannot afford to lose any more innings.

Soviet Russia has shrewdly embarked on a campaign to conquer the world bit by bit -- rather than just blow it to bits.

That is the all-out challenge we face.

It must be met with faith and determination, not with fear and frustrations.

We must decide to compete -- and win -- in every area of challenge. We must compete all the way, not with one hand tied behind our backs. We must compete with the greatest mobilization of our resources, our talents, our national will that we have ever known.

The decision to meet Russia's challenge at every hand is a decision which must be taken by the President, specifically but ultimately it must be taken by us all, as a people, as a nation.

We have not yet fully faced up to the implications of this competition. We have not really assayed the costs in energy, in money, in worry, in sacrifice to compete effectively with the Soviet Union, across the board.

If we are to compete effectively, there must be a fundamental change in America toward the intellectuals and the scholars in our midst.

What America needs is more eggheads, and fewer fatheads.

We are paying a grim and tragic price for the wave of anti-intellectualism that has gripped our country in recent years.

Fear and distrust of thinking people is a disease we simply must stamp out. We cannot afford any more the luxury of laughing at "eggheads" as too often some have done, or of suggesting there is something treasonable about being an intellectual.

If we are really to mobilize for peace, the place to start is with our brainpower, our experience, our intellectuals.

Just as we are suddenly facing the necessity of mobilizing our scientists to compete with Russia, so to do we need immediately to mobilize our intellectuals in every field who have a contribution they can make toward meeting Russia's challenge in other fields.

And we cannot cast aside valuable resources of brains, experience, skills, and judgment just because of differing political convictions.

If we are to expect the nation to rally in a bipartisan spirit to meet with determination the challenges confronting us, than bipartisanship must consist of more than occasional consultation when the Administration is in trouble.

It must start with a sincere recognition of the vast unused resources available today for mobilization into our struggle, and a recognition that Republicanism has no priority on Americanism--and most certainly no exclusive cartel on knowledge and judgment.

At a time when we urgently need full mobilization of the nation's intelligence in the struggle for freedom's survival, why must an Adlai Stevenson be relegated to practicing law in Chicago -- instead of, for example, serving in the long-needed and yet-unfilled role of United States Ambassador to NATO?

If the President is sincere about wanting to strengthen NATO -- and that necessity is urgent -- here is an opportunity confronting him.

At a time when our prestige abroad is steadily faltering, why must a Chester Bowles be relegated to touring the country on private lectures -- instead of being called to duty to raise the calibre of America's representation abroad? Why isn't this great American who has won such confidence and respect in the world sent as a new Ambassador to Yugoslavia, for example, as a listening-post for Democracy in the explosive central European area, a man whose sympathetic understanding of human aspirations everywhere would inspire new hope in the hearts of captive peoples in Poland and Hungary -- and strengthen freedom's chances for an eventual breakthrough to independence for now satellite nations?

Why, if we are mobilizing our nation's resources, must George Kennan, perhaps the country's greatest authority on Soviet Russia, be ignored as a valued advisor to our government, and left lecturing in London? Why isn't he summoned to Washington to help design and guide our all-out competition with Soviet Russia so necessary to preserve freedom in the world?

Why isn't better use made of a Chip Bohlen, another great American with keen insight into Soviet machinations, than to have him farmed-out in Manila at a time when we need all the experts we can get on how to match wits with the Russians?

Why isn't there a role of useful public service for a man like former Senator William Benton, who on one trip through Russia learned more about the Soviet educational system in two months than we had otherwise accumulated in 20 years?

It will be difficult to convince the American people that any Administration really wants all-out bipartisan mobilization for peace if it neglects the available services of such great Americans -- and great Democrats -- just because they ARE Democrats.

Yet it will take the kind of dedicated service such men can and will give our country to win in the struggle we face.

All of us in the Democratic Party have a contribution to make toward winning the cold war. As Young Democrats, you have such opportunities, for you represent the spirit and idealism of democracy with a small 'd' that above all must prevail if our foreign policy has any hope of achieving our goals of a just peace.

As young Democrats and young Americans, you can and must help awaken the nation to the challenges we face---and to guide public understanding to the all-out nature of our struggle.

And, above all else, you can continue always to press vigorously toward a governmental policy at home and abroad designed to make sure we're presenting an image of America and Americans to the rest of the world as we really are --- not as the Soviets portray us to be.

The image of America which has been projected abroad for four years is a distorted image. In its changing and misshapen character, it is like a shadow leaping on the wall thrown by the light of a flickering candle. This is an image which has never in four years become stabilized -- which has expanded and shrunk, leaned this way and that, until the world does not really know what this nation is.

And it is vitally important that our enemies, as well as our friends, know what we are, what we intend, what we will do----we must make very clear our basic policies.

At the moment, I am afraid, both our friends and our enemies see us as a belligerent giant, threatening to set the world on fire with nuclear weapons. It sees us pressing forward with more and more thermonuclear tests. It hears open threats of "massive retaliation", "liberation of satellites". Yet in the next breath the world has seen us back down when the chips were down, after the powerful boasts and open threats we have uttered. We cannot build a world of security on bluff and backdown. Neither can we build it with dependence on the deterrent power of the nuclear weapon as our sole defense.

Our history, our heritage, our experience in self-government, yes, our own revolution, are in fact the sources of our strength.

Our foreign policy is weakened and limited, to the degree that we forget, or fail to apply, the yardstick of our own democratic experience to the complex and intricate problems of the world in which we live.

Nor we will not enhance freedom, by aping the enemies of freedom.

Democracy and free institutions are not made more secure by utilizing totalitarian techniques.

To be strong, we must be true to ourselves.

It is time that we walk confidently, with the full stature and strength of our history---and our present capacities as a people, if we will but fully use them.

In a world that is desperately in need of capital, we have the greatest capital resources of all.

In a world where people are anxious for the blessings of science and technology, we are richly endowed with these blessings.

In a world where the majority of people are ill-housed, ill-fed, and ill-clad, we are privileged to have an abundance of food and fiber and the knowledge of scientific progress for health and shelter.

In a world where tyranny and cynicism are widespread, we have faith and confidence in our democracy.

For too long, our foreign policy has been based on fear rather than hope; on re-action, rather than action.

We have been afraid of revolutions in Asia and Africa, when in actual point of fact we should have helped develop and harness these revolutions, and helped the new nations along the road to independent development.

The greatest hope we can hold out to millions of people in Asia and Africa is our own dramatic story of American independence.

This is our message to the world---the message of self-determination, liberation, faith in human dignity, and human ability.

It is this message of brotherhood and human equality that is our reservoir of good will.

We need to join with the spirit of independent nationalism that grips the underdeveloped and underprivileged countries and remind these people that we too are the children of self-determination of revolution, and of a will to freedom and independence.

We must make greater use, not less, of our economic strength to help other free nations develop themselves, and bring the blessings of freedom to their eager and impatient peoples.

This is a weapon of peace and plenty which the Soviet Union cannot match.

Yet we must not use our economic development funds to subvert the independence of other free countries by attaching military or political conditions humiliating to them, or by trying to shape them in the image of the United States.

We must remember that their independent development, in forms suitable to their people, their circumstances, and their resources, is in our interest as well as in theirs.

We should step up our own Point Four program, at the same time that we continue to work through the UN and help expand UN technical assistance. We should more actively constructively, and imaginatively use our blessings of food and fiber as a powerful force for freedom. A breakthrough in the conquest of hunger is more meaningful to millions of people today than the conquest of outer space.

We need to strengthen the United Nations, to use its facilities and champion its objectives. We need a dramatic expansion of student exchanges, along with the exchange of technicians, professional people, farmers, laborers, businessmen, journalists, and others engaged in public communications, -- yes, an exchange of students from Iron Curtain countries, too.

Even as we go forward with programs of international goodwill, we must remember that we still confront a formidable and implacable adversary---and we must keep our defenses strong.

We can only deal with the Soviet with strength. We cannot risk thinning our defenses to the danger point or---what is equally dangerous---leave ourselves with no effective force but "massive retaliation."

If we had no weapons but the ultimate weapons of total annihilation, for use only under the ultimate provocation, we can be sure our adversaries would construe this as a weakness and take advantage of it.

But all our military strength can buy is time---time to build in other ways toward the peace we seek.

While we maintain our armed strength, we must continue to explore all possibilities for agreements to control armaments. And we must manage to convey to the world the positive sincerity of our passion for peace, and for control of arms as a means of diminishing the danger of war.

Above all else we must keep ever foremost in our minds and hearts the knowledge that our strength is far more than military ---that it must be the strength that comes from the spirit of human equality, economic progress, political liberty, and social justice.

Ours is a nation more of compassion, than of cruelty.

Ours is a people more of generosity than of selfishness.

Our heritage befits us for the great challenges we face.

That challenge, to you and me and to all of us, is to show the world a way to eradicate the shame and scandal of poverty, of exploitation, of oppression, or of greed---without resort to social revolution and class struggle and dictatorship.

If we can place these material values in their proper subordinate place within the context of a mighty spiritual movement which will be revolutionary without being subversive, which will draw its substance from the riches of the Western tradition, then our faith will not have failed us. It will have sustained us through this present period of doubt and drift, and it will have led us on to the achievement of our goals of freedom, justice, and peace.

This is a weapon of peace and plenty which the Soviet Union cannot match.

Let us not use our economic development funds to support the independence of other free countries by attaching military or political conditions, but rather to help them, or by trying to help them in the image of the United States.

We must remember that their independent development, in terms available to their people, their circumstances, and their resources, is in our interest as well as in theirs.

We should step up our own Point Four program, at the same time that we continue to work through the UN and help expand UN technical assistance. We should more actively constructively, and imaginatively use our billions of food and fiber as a powerful force for freedom. A breakthrough in the conquest of hunger is more meaningful to millions of people today than the conquest of outer space.

We need to strengthen the United Nations, to use its facilities and champion its objectives. We need a dramatic expansion of student exchanges, along with the exchange of technicians, professional people, farmers, laborers, businessmen, journalists, and others engaged in public communications, -- yes, an exchange of students from our own countries, too.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org