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THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP

Remarks by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey at the
Democratic State Convention, Lewiston, Maine
Friday, March 21, 1958

It is good to be up here with you in Maine -- in
a Democratic Maine.

You have given real meaning for Democrats everywhere to the old adage, "As Maine Goes, So Goes the Nation".

For the political turning of the tide exemplified
by your great Governor Muskie -- and your outstanding young
Congressman Frank Coffin -- has swept across the land with
ever-increasing force.

We are on the threshold of new Democratic victories
this fall -- in Maine, and elsewhere throughout the United
States. And it is becoming increasingly evident that the
burdens and responsibilities of guiding the nation's destiny
may well pass into Democratic hands in 1960.

As American citizens as well as political partisans,

1
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we must face the sobering responsibility of making sure we are adequately prepared to assume that mantle of leadership.

It is not enough to be critical of the weaknesses and failures of existing leadership. It is not enough to decry the collapse of our prestige abroad, and the wavering confidence in our economy at home, as necessary as it may be to alert the American people to the dangerous price we are paying for our failures.

Pericles, the great Greek statesman, once said:

"I am more worried about our own failures than the plans of our enemy".

We can well heed his advice today. For that is just another way of saying that what we Democrats need to do is to better prepare ourselves for the responsibility of leadership -- and find in our midst men sharing our convictions who are best qualified for leadership -- rather than just

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spending our time pointing out the shortcomings of Republicans.

Actually, the American people know those shortcomings without us having to constantly remind them.

They see those shortcomings almost daily in a foreign policy that is ever more based upon expediency and reaction, rather than on principle and positive goals.

They see those shortcomings daily also in an economy that is now in the throes of a recession.

They see those shortcomings in the failure to keep pace with the needs of our educational system, knowing the danger that such neglect entails for our entire future.

They hardly need us to remind them any more of the weaknesses of Republican leadership. However, the American people are never long satisfied with commiserating about mistakes of the past or the present. Rather, they are groping for leadership for the future.

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As Democrats, then, let us meet that challenge.

Let us talk about what we want to do -- and what we can do for our country.

Knite, Rockne, the famous Notre Dame coach, when he saw Army backs running for big gains through the center of the Notre Dame line, once turned to two substitutes on the bench and said, "Can you Stop them?" The substitute guards replied, "We will try!".

But that was not enough for Rockne. He gave this classical reply to the eager subs: "Go sit down. I have two boys in there now who are trying. What I want is two men who can do it!"

Now, what we Democrats need to do is not merely just try.

We need to design a program for America that will do the job that needs to be done -- and we must have the will

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and the majority, to carry it out.

We must start asserting positive leadership ourselves, and come forward with constructive alternatives to counteract the drift and indecision hamstringing our national leadership today.

We must be true to our American heritage in international relations, and walk boldly with heads high toward constructive objectives for the good of all humanity. We must act with pride in ourselves, and confidence in the rightfulness of our cause -- instead of timid and wavering reaction to increasing Communist initiative.

We must be willing to face the economic challenges now confronting us with the same boldness of determination, and the same faith in democracy's ability to put its house in order. We cannot retreat into timidity and hesitancy hiding behind a reluctance to face the facts, refusing to come to grips with reality.

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These are the challenges we face, and that all Americans face.

We as responsible Democrats can best meet them by asserting a constructive influence in our society, in every walk of life, as good citizens and as patriotic Americans.

You have exemplified that spirit in Maine, providing your state with responsible political leadership, We need you to share it with the nation.

I want to commend Governor Muskie for his great leadership in Maine -- for his outstanding example of positive, constructive leadership, serving and protecting the economic development of your state. His reputation and achievements have spread far beyond your boundaries. His reform and modernization of your state government during his two terms as Governor, his establishment of a Department of Economic

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Development and an Industrial Blding Authority, and the successful educational improvements instituted under his regime as your Governor are all examples of constructive, progressive, dedicated Democratic leadership.

Let me assure you tonight the Democratic Party throughout the nation has welcome with joy Governor Muskie's announcement as a candidate for the United States Senate and many of us are looking forward to the day when we shall have a better opportunity of working shoulder to shoulder with him in Washington.

You already have sent us a great example of the vigor of Maine's growing Democracy, in Congressman Frank Coffin. We are proud of him in Washington, and I know you share that pride. Already, he has gained a position of leadership, respect, and responsibility in the House of Representatives. He is known as a vigorous spokesman for

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independent small business enterprise, and I know how diligently he works in behalf of needed tax reforms and financing aid for the benefit of independent business, as well as his efforts toward financial aid for industrial development corporations. And just as he is a champion of small business, he also has proven himself a working Congressman in behalf of our family farmers. We need him on the job, not just to serve you, but to serve the nation.

These are the kind of new leaders the Democratic Party is producing throughout the nation -- and the kind of leadership we need. We must have more like them in the Congress, to adequately prepare ourselves, as a responsible political party, for assuming even greater burdens of responsibility in the years ahead.

More is at stake for all of us, than just personal political victories -- and I am sure your Governor and your

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Congressman would be the first to agree.

If we are to be true to ourselves and the political party in which we believe, we must dedicate our lives to winning more than elections, as important as they are. We must dedicate our lives, our energies, and yes, our fortunes, to winning for our country the all-out struggle which we face for the survival of freedom.

Vital to that struggle is immediately rebuilding our own economy to full productive capacity.

It is time we take off our blinders, and see what is happening. The Soviet Union's Sputniks, if nothing else, should have made us realize that we are facing a foreign power with tremendous scientific knowledge, productive capacity, and know-how.

We can no longer afford to remain complacent. In the past year alone, it is reported that the Soviet economy

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expanded by ten percent. If the present trend continues, the Soviet Union will match us in the entire economic field within a generation.

We cannot afford to permit this recession to continue to risk the very real threat of a depression, for a depression here can amount to a major Communist victory. It could be more important than winning the missile race.

We cannot let this recession undermine and weaken our position of world leadership, as it is already threatening to do. We cannot let it weaken our capacity to maintain a program of strength in the field of national security and foreign policy.

The American people want immediate leadership in halting this recession, before it is too late. They want preventive action now, rather than more costly cures later.

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They want action for the sake of our own jobless and financially

distressed; but they know even bigger stakes are involved.

We cannot have our economy faltering at a time it is on trial

before the world, in a competitive contest with Soviet state

capitalism.

Actually, we need to do more than just stop this

recession. We need to plan for economic growth, development,

and expansion -- because we have an expanding population,

and we have great world-wide commitments of long duration.

We are engaged in a struggle with worldwide

Communism that will not be over in a short period of time.

We are going to be tested for possibly decades to come.

Under such circumstances, we cannot long afford

the mammoth waste of our human and material resources going

unused as a result of this tragic recession.

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For a nation as wealthy as ours, in a world where countless millions live in utter poverty, not to be utilizing to the fullest its industrial facilities and trained work force is shameful. And yet the Administration continues to sit on its collective hands.

Time is rapidly running out for the Administration and the Congress to take actions to stem the business decline. The American people want and need more than 'chins up' statements, and assurances that action will be taken if and when necessary.

Is the Administration's planned shelf of programs to combat the recession a military secret? Is there some security reason why American people are being kept in the dark as to the Administration's program 0- or could it be that there is, in fact, no real shelf of projects ready to be used?

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Just as we do not wait until a fire breaks out

to start thinking about setting up a fire department, so we cannot wait until the recession spreads and fans out before we draw up the blueprints and get our machinery in order to get the economy back on the track.

Just what are the Administration's plans? We have a right to know, and if there are not real plans, we should know this too. To have a shelf of programs ready to use can certainly do no harm. If the economy does shortly right itself -- as the Republican leaders tell us it will -- no damage will have been caused by having a recession program set up. If the recession continues to gain momentum, however, we will then be in a position to move in quickly and in a coordinated and intelligent manner to deal with it.

Respectfully, I suggest that both the President and the Congress would do well to heed the advice of the editor of

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Business Week, that we "take the risk of doing more than

is needed than the chance of doing too little too late".

I am pleased that the President has met with the executive committee of the Governors' Conference to discuss supplementary unemployment compensation payments. Such a meeting is a step in the right direction.

Yet it is hardly enough. If we are to deal realistically with the recession, we need to have real teamwork at the Federal, State, and local levels. Such teamwork needs direction and leadership. There is only one place from which such leadership can come, and that is from the President himself.

Therefore, I propose that the President immediately call a conference of the Governors of all 48 states -- not merely a meeting of the executive committee, but a meeting of all the governors of all the 48 states -- for the purpose of finding out the problems, at the state level, which have

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arisen because of the recession, and ways in which the Federal Government may be of maximum assistance.

Such a conference of governors could be most helpful in giving guidance to the President, and to the Congress. It should be done while Congress is in session in Washington, so that the members of Congress and the executive branch can meet with the governors of the respective states and work together on a positive drive to reverse the business downturn.

The President needs to broaden his circle of advisors. It would be well for him to call in representatives of small business, of labor, and of the great farm organizations, to listen to their advice and counsel. It would be well for him to seek the guidance of responsible economists in our great universities.

Out of such conferences could be created a coordinating

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committee made up of officials representing federal, state, and local governments, to draw up recommendations for a coordinated program designed to utilize in the best possible ways the machinery of government at all levels to end the recession.

Whatever is done, timing is all important. If the Administration holds back while the recession picks up speed, even the most costly measures may prove insufficient to turn the tide.

These are not intended as words of alarm. I have faith in our country, and its economy. Yet that faith rests in the willingness of our people to do whatever is necessary, if they are given the kind of leadership they need.

That leadership will soon be given another severe test, as Congress faces extension of Reciprocal Trade Legislation.

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We need foreign trade, for our own economy's sake as well as for the sake of strengthening the free world.

In my opinion, it is absolutely essential that the Reciprocal Trade extension be passed without crippling amendments. If we present to the world a mutilated trade program, we will have taken a step to discourage free world unity at the very time when the Soviet Union is in the midst of a trade offensive, however phony it may be.

Obviously, the closer our economic relations with our allies the more stable our political and military ties will be; contrariwise, the weaker our economic relations, the less effective our political and military unity against Soviet imperialism.

I shall vote for extension of the reciprocal trade act, as I have in the past -- yet I shall also endeavor to see to it that American industry and workers and American

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-18-

communities that may suffer injury because of a national foreign trade policy be given protection and assistance.

There are compelling domestic reasons for a liberal trade policy, since American ingenuity in most fields easily competes in world markets.

However, there are certain selected and very limited industries which might be temporarily adversely affected by changes in our trade policy. It is my opinion that the federal government should assist industries, workers and communities so affected to readjust to more competitive lines. In past Congresses I have introduced a comprehensive trade adjustment program, for that purpose. I intend to offer the Trade Adjustment Program as an amendment to the reciprocal trade bill when it comes before the Senate for consideration. Together they will provide a strong, imaginative trade package which the Congress should endorse and the Administration

-19-
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should support in the interest of a strong free world and of a rising living standard for us all.

Our current domestic economic relapse renders the challenge in the field of foreign trade even more critical.

One way to keep American workers at work is to maintain our export markets abroad. Obviously since the United States exports far more than it imports, there are more workers employed in our export trade than could possibly be adversely affected by import competition.

One of the grandiose fallacies of the High Tariff - protectionist argument has always been that higher tariffs protected American jobs. For every possible job they ostensibly protect, two or three are lost through retaliatory tariff restrictions abroad against our exports. It is shocking indeed to realize that our good neighbor and best

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customer, Canada, has recently moved to boycott American goods because we have set up so many barriers to Canadian exports.

Not only will an expanded reciprocal trade program help America recover from the recession, but it is required by the International political facts of life. Trade is now a primary weapon in the arsenal of the Communist economic offensive. Trade missions from the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the satellite countries have been busy, especially in the uncommitted countries of Asia and the Middle East. The number of trade agreements negotiated between the Communist bloc and other countries has more than doubled since 1953.

In the face of common sense economics at home and the Communist offensive abroad, let us not respond
trade
with an inconsistent, ostrich-like policy of high tariffs

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and threats of higher ones. To help those American industries which have a legitimate grievance against low-cost foreign competition, the Trade Adjustment Act which I have sponsored in Congress would be an effective temporary cushion during the adjustment period. That Act would not be a permanent subsidy, but justifiable temporary assistance to help industries over the hump of accommodation to a new period of economic life.

Along with immediate action to combat the recession at home and a willingness to liberalize and broaden our foreign trade policies, it is time we recast our whole foreign aid program so that it goes to the people who need it most, and goes to increase liberty and strengthen the forces of freedom in crucial areas of the world.

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Let me give you ten suggestions to think about

for improving our foreign aid program:

1. Placing it on a continuous 'perhaps 10-year effort' toward positive goals, rather than a 'spastic year-to-year effort';
2. Placing the program under the direction of men aware they are dealing with a social revolution, men who know what reform is and how to get it, men infused with enthusiasm for practical working democracy;
3. Working in the closest cooperation with our NATO allies, endeavoring to enlist their support and agreement on joint efforts in the mutual security field;
4. Diverging military aid from our economic and technical assistance programs so that the latter are not overshadowed or adversely conditioned by the former;
5. Tying our aid program more closely to the work of the United Nations technical agencies, and increasing

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our participation in multi-lateral projects;

6. Expanding our foreign aid program as our own national income expands, with concentration on long-term, low-rate loans;

7. Emphasizing aid to free nations which are deliberately, successfully planning to increase the democratic life of their people;

8. Including measures to finance a certain amount of consumer credit, so that hungry people do not have to wait a lifetime before their lot is improved;

9. Extending the use of our food and fiber reserves under Public Law 480 for enlightened foreign policy objectives.

10. Making a special effort immediately to double the Administration's program for assistance to India by providing the extra \$250 million which India needs to

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insure the success of its second five-year plan. The loss of India could well mean the surrender of Asia to Communism.

Perhaps some will complain that suggestions I have advanced, whether for strengthening our domestic economy or strengthening the forces of freedom in the world, will tax our ability to pay.

Quite frankly, we better make up our minds about how much faith we have in democracy being able to successfully compete with any and every challenge the Soviet has to offer.

Much of what I have proposed is what we should be doing in any event, whether the Kremlin existed or not. Yet all of it is doubly imperative in the light of our world challenge.

Freedom is not free, nor cheap. Freedom must take priority over balanced budgets, and reduced expenditures.

It is time for America to realize that there are

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worse things in life than an unbalanced budget -- and one

of them is the loss of our fight against Soviet totalitarianism.



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