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YOUNG AND OLD FOGEYS

Remarks Prepared for Delivery
By

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I take particular pleasure in addressing this national convention of Young Democrats, for as far as I'm concerned, what America needs most today is to regain its youth.

America is showing distressing signs of middle age.

And there's a very simple reason for it: The Republican Administration in Washington today is made up of old men.

As a matter of fact, some of us have been thinking of rechristening the Cabinet the Ten Old Men.

Now when I say old, I don't necessarily mean old in years. I mean old in spirit. All of us know men who are old at thirty -- and we also know lots of men who are still young at seventy-five.

A great former President we all love has more youth in him at seventy-five than this whole Administration put together -- yes, I mean our own special Young Democrat, Harry S. Truman.

When I say that America and this Republican Administration are showing signs of middle age, this is what I have in mind:

It's a sign of middle age when the obstacles loom larger than the challenge of overcoming them.

It's a sign of middle age when you can think only of reasons for not doing things, instead of discovering ways to do them.

But that, unhappily, is the spirit of '59 in Washington today. And when that is the spirit in Washington -- in the White House, if you will -- it spreads through the country like an epidemic.

I find it sad to think of America, the richest nation in the world, making excuses to the world and to her own people that she can't afford to help other nations build their economies and can't afford to build proper schools for her children or proper

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houses for her slum dwellers.

Incidentally, you may have heard a lot of talk about the anti-intellectual atmosphere in Washington. But you shouldn't believe everything you hear. It's no longer considered subversive to have an idea in Washington -- so long as it doesn't cost any money.

I am ashamed when I think of the millions of people throughout the world, barely staying off starvation, while America complains of the burden and cost of storing huge surpluses of wheat and corn and cotton.

I am embarrassed to think that America, the nation that led the technological revolution, the nation that produced the atomic bomb in a brief five years, has been surpassed not just once but many times by a nation that forty years ago had no science, had no technology, and had virtually no industry.

What has happened to America? What's happened to our muscle? What's happened to our will to achieve, to create, to progress?

What has happened, I ask, to the America of the 1930's -- an America beset with problems that make today's difficulties pale by comparison.

Today, Washington worries about a balanced budget. Twenty-five years ago, Washington worried about an entire national economy out of balance, about ten to thirteen million people without jobs, about dust bowls and bread lines.

That was a time that cried out for leadership -- and the leadership was there in the person of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

That was a time that cried out for new ideas -- answers to problems new and old. And the answers were found.

And why? Because there was a will to find them, a will to sweep aside obstacles and move on to get the job done.

Do you remember the CCC -- the Civilian Conservation Corps? In the 1930's, America needed the CCC and America got it, and thousands of young men went into our forests and parks and went to work conserving some of our greatest natural resources.

Well, America needs another CCC -- and that's one of the things I've worked to get passed this year. But what does this Republican Administration say to that? They say it costs too much. They say it will unbalance the budget.

Of course, this Administration doesn't seem to mind giving billions to bankers by raising interest rates. That sort of spending it can afford. But it can't afford to spend a few million dollars to build human and natural resources through a Youth Conservation Corps.

The era of the 1930's, the era of the New Deal, was an era of youthfulness for America. We were challenged, and we rose to meet the challenge.

Today again we are challenged, but the youthfulness of our response is gone. This

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Republican Administration is so beset by worries about bankrupting the country that it cannot even make the prudent investments that will add to the nation's wealth. It is so beset by its concern over subversion at home -- a left-over from the McCarthy days -- that it throws a cloak of conformity over America and discourages new ideas.

The Republican party has always been known as a party of Old Fogeys.

But this, we are told, is the era of Modern Republicanism. The Madison Avenue boys would like us to believe that the Old Guard is on the wane and that the Young Turks are in the saddle.

Of course, all they're really saying is that the Old Fogeys have been replaced by Young Fogeys.

And there are some Republicans who are sounding these days more like Democrats than anything else. But let's not be taken in. It is still the party of the fogeys, and if the GOP bosses pick someone who looks liberal, because they know it will take a liberal to win, they're not fooling anyone. You'll still have an Administration of Republican Fogeys -- the Republican party will see to that.

My friends, we are not going to send rockets to the moon as long as we are led by a bunch of Fogeys -- Old or Young.

And we're not going to close the science gap or the space gap or the missile gap with the Russians as long as we're led by Fogeys -- Young or Old.

Nor are we going to occupy the position of world leadership that is going to fall either to us or to the Russians, as long as we're led by a bunch of Fogeys.

I have met Mr. Khrushchev face to face, and I can tell you that whatever else he may be, he is young in spirit. No challenge is too great for him -- whether it be the challenge of the Free World or the challenge of his colleagues in the Kremlin for supremacy in the Soviet Union.

I shudder at the ruthlessness of the methods he uses to meet those challenges, and I do not propose for a moment that we imitate them.

I merely ask that we recognize that we are up against an adversary who is bound and determined to meet challenges and surmount obstacles and solve problems.

We can't meet Khrushchev's youthful spirit with America's middle age.

America had better begin thinking less about how we can't do this and can't afford that, and begin thinking more about how we can use our full powers and energy using the methods of free people, in the cause of freedom.

So I think America's hope lies in its young people. And I think the Democratic Party's hope lies in its young people, too -- in every one of you Young Democrats at this convention.

You know, a party can suffer from middle age, just as a nation can. And I sometimes

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wonder if our party hasn't lost some of the scrap and youthfulness that once characterized it.

Now I am not one to pick a fight solely for partisan advantage. No one gains from such a fight. The country suffers; our party suffers.

But I deeply believe that the Democratic Party has not only a right but a duty to draw the issues. Our party is one of youth and controversy. Out of both we draw the vigor and the issues to go to the people and win elections.

Our job in the Democratic Party is to fight bad public policy wherever we see it, no matter how popular the man behind the policy; to fight for good public policy -- for the people if you will -- whenever we have a chance to do so; and to write a record, a Democratic record, that every voter in the country can recognize, that has the stamp "Made by the Democratic Party" clearly written on it, for all to see.

For only on the basis of such a clear-cut record can we give the voters a clear-cut choice next year -- a chance to express themselves so clearly that neither the next President of the United States, nor the 1961 Congress of the United States, can mistake the mandate.



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