

May 5, 1965

PRAYER BREAKFAST

No prepared text

Thank you very much my friend and colleague Senator Frank Carlson; Reverend Clergy; and your Excellency Mr. Ambassador; and members of the Diplomatic Corps; my fellow citizens; and I hope you won't mind if I just single out one gentleman here at the head table ~~that~~ whose presence brings me considerable joy because I haven't seen him for so long and that is of course the Right Reverend Monsignor Laguti who is here with us (applause) whom I have known for many years (prolonged applause).

Mr. Logan, I do thank you for the courtesies that have been extended to me, permitting me to come here this noon. Sometimes I've wondered ~~what~~ the duties of a Vice President are, and I find that one of the privileges if not duties is to attend luncheons (laughter). And there is something to the fact that Vice Presidents are to be seen but not heard -- too often. And I do want to say to my friend, Senator Carlson, that if I were to select any one Senator that I would trust at a podium, anyone that I've ever known or anyone that I ever hope to know and never worry that he was going to take too long and always be sure he was going to say something

meaningful and right, I would select the Senator from Kansas, Senator Carlson (applause).

This has been a remarkable and wonderful day for me. The Prayer Breakfast -- the President Prayer Breakfast -- is not only inspiring, but it was exciting. In fact, my friends we live in a very exciting age. It may not always be comfortable. It may not always be certain, but it is exciting, and it is challenging and it requires, I think, a great sense of confidence and optimism. I don't come here today to preach any doctrine of gloom and doom. Nor do I come here today to tell you that all will be lost. I hope that I can say something that will lift our sights, that will make us stand just a little taller and yet with a little more humility. Because I am a person that believes in advocacy. I do believe that what the world longs for today more than possibly any time in human history is a hope of a better day. And those that speak up or preach the doctrine of hope are truly those that help mankind. And what greater privilege is there than to serve. The reward of public life can only be in service. And those of us who are in public life need to be reminded that time after time it is our duty and responsibility to serve. The power if one has it is not for self, but for the common good. Authority if one is vested with it is not to enrich one's self

but to enrich humanity. And it is in that philosophy and spirit that I want to talk to you today. I'm not here to make foreign policy. The President of the United States is our chief spokesman in foreign policy and national defense. I'm here as a citizen. Yes, I'm here as a Christian. I'm here as a human being.

And it's a rare honor to speak to such a distinguished audience and to know that I am addressing the representatives of great nations and many people. Those of us who believe in the Christian faith remember that it was said "In my Father's house there are many mansions." Likewise in this world there are many people, many cultures, many ways of living, many systems, and they are in one house.

The late Wendell Wilkie, a great American, a candidate for the high office of President in 1940, at the time the world was divided, at the time it appeared that the world might even be destroyed, reminded us that this was one world. And he spoke of it in the fullness of that knowledge. And even in political defeat he rose to heights of greatness that shows, it seems to me, that vision that determines the stature of the man. Just as our program says that righteousness exalthe nation.

So I'd like to speak in the moments that are allotted me on a subject of deep concern to all of us. Senator Carlson has honored me greatly by saying that I've been long interested in the works of peace. Aren't we all? Of course we should be. And I want

to speak of peace. It is my view that the most courageous man is the one that courageously keeps peace. Those passages of scripture tell us that blessed are the peacemakers, this blessedness doesn't come to cowards; it comes to strong men. And the only nations that really can lead the peace are the strong ones and the rich and the mighty. And those of us that are vested with great power have greater responsibility. But lest I be misunderstood, everyone has a responsibility for peace. There are none to be left out. Peace is the business of every nation, of every culture, of every human being.

Last night in this very hotel in the next room, the President of the United States gave a remarkable address. I hope that all of you will find it in the pages of our press and read it. And he spoke first of all of some of the programs being undertaken in our America here to bring the benefits of modern science and technology to more and more people and above all to fulfill the ~~admonition~~ admonition of the ancient prophets to social justice. Let me say that a society without social justice has missed its calling. Justice: Let it roll like the waters of a mighty river.

And the President spoke to us of our war -- and we are engaged in one. And every American should enlist, he ought not to wait for selective service, because everyone is needed. We are waging a war, and it has been declared, on the ancient enemies of mankind in our own midst and in

other parts of the world too. The ancient enemies of prejudice and bigotry of intolerance and discrimination. And we're going to win that war. We're going to win it, because it's morally right, politically right, and even economically right. We're waging a war against illiteracy because no modern nation can afford ignorance. And what is more, the mind of man was given to man to be developed and not to be denied. And therefore we shall wage relentlessly without worry as to cost or kind the war against ignorance and illiteracy. Because every generation has the duty to emancipate itself from its fears and its doubts, from its failures. So we wage this war against illiteracy. And we wage the war against disease because now within our hands in this world and much of it here in our own America we have the healing arts, the knowledge of healing and the knowledge of disease that permits us to do great things.

I remember, I believe it was the disciple-- one of the favorites of Jesus -- John who reminded us in his writing of the Lord having said, "Greater things than I have done, ye shall do also." And we can heal. We can do these miracles. And we can do them by the thousands. Not by one or two, everyday, if we but will it. More and more we have it within our power to banish hunger, to remove the curse of ignorance and illiteracy, to kill disease, to heal the sick, to teach the illiterate, to lead the blind, to clothe the naked, to feed yes, and to help.

This is what we mean, my fellow Americans, by the war on poverty, not to be won tomorrow, maybe not in the decade, but to be won. Beginning it. Starting it, is the sign of strength not weakness. Only the strong can confess their weakness. Only those who are strong are willing to admit their failures, and it is in this strength and my admission of some weakness, some limitation, some failure, that we grow and that we mature.

Yes, this is the war that you can't lose. And it's the war in which everyone can participate and not a life will be lost and many can be saved.

But then the President went on to say, as he turned to the broader horizon of the world. His concluding remarks which should be of special interest and attention to this group, he said, and I quote him: "But the success of all that we undertake, the fulfillment of all we aspire to achieve rests finally on one condition, the condition of peace among men. That's why I say peace is every body's business. No one has a monopoly on how to achieve it and surely if there ever was a time when there ought to be a dialogue amongst men of good will it is now.

If we fail to keep the ~~peace~~ peace abroad, our achievements here at home -- this great America that we love so much and that we're so proud of -- if we fail to keep that peace abroad in this nuclear age, then our home will be ashes in our hands. This is true of other countries

too. Remember this, my friends, no one can escape the folly of one man in this day and age -- or one nation. No longer can you separate yourself from the stream of humanity. We're all in it together. One world. And miscalculation, or the error, or the folly or the madness of one can destroy all. Possibly then maybe this terrible power that has been unleashed, our nuclear power, can become the hope of mankind and the blessing. Because in the recognition of its awesomeness and its power, we may very well settle down to think how we can live together rather than die together.

We rejoice that the claims of international peace and social justice demand growing support around the world. And this is a fact. I know there is a lot of trouble in the world, and trouble gains headlines. But more and more people are lifting their eyes to a better day. More and more people aspire to a better day. And might I say to our fellow Americans that as people aspire to that better day, sometimes they do it noisily, sometimes with disorder, sometimes even with trouble. But so did we. We need to be understanding. The interdependence between rich nations and poor, between so-called "developed" continents and "underdeveloped" is increasingly recognized. In fact, the recognition of the importance of interdependence is the first guarantee of independence. The international machinery for ~~handling~~ channeling assistance to people and countries is being perfected.

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The agencies of the United Nations are bringing health facilities, technical assistance, education to added millions in every land. New programs to feed the hungry and train the unskilled have been launched. Here in our own country the United States Food For Peace program and the Peace Corps served humanitarian objectives, recognized by all. And these objectives will be further served to the extent that other nations, as many as possible, participate in their food for peace programs, in their peace corps type of activity and many do, my fellow Americans. We have no monopoly on this. We tend to center upon ourselves. But many others are doing good things. But all of these endeavors will bear fruit only if peace is preserved and nuclear war avoided.

Now, in this nuclear age the deliberate initiation of fullscale war as an instrument of national policy has become utter folly -- madness. Originally a means to protect national interest, war today can assure the destruction of a nation, the death of a continent, the annihilation of unbelievable millions. But this goal of peace as President Johnson has stated it will not be finally grasped in a day or a year or a decade in 120 nations or more, not perhaps in a lifetime. But to achieve this goal, we must begin. "The longest journey," said our President last night, "~~being~~ begins with a single step."

The beinning, to climb, the single step is the act of maturity. Peace is not a wish or even a hope. And it's not instant. There is no instant peace. Peace, may I say, is like a beautiful cathedral, not to be built in a day but the work of generations. When I visited in Europe I have seen these magnificent cathedrals and the guide has told us how it took centuries to build them. These places of meditation and worship and music, of culture and art, the cathedral of peace will take time. But each generation must build. Each generation must add. Stone by stone. Block by block. Arch by arch. Tower by tower. Build the cathedral of peace. Peace is a process. It is a journey. And above all, peace as we know it and must know it is dynamic. Not static. Not something to be written, but something to be li~~ve~~ved. And today, in the year 1965, our vision of the folly of war and the necessity of peace is enlarged because some world leaders have had the vision and have had the courage to take that single step on that long road and journey. It is my considered judgment that the 20th century will not be remembered for its wars, or even may I say most respect~~ful~~ly only for its great generals -- and many of them are great -- and this morning I heard one that was just thrilled with the love of peace as any man I ever heard in my life. But the 20th century will be remembered as the century of the peacemakers. I say that because if that is not true, I doubt there'll be a 21st.

In 1963 that great and good man, Pope John XXIII, gave the world his vision of the path to peace in that encyclical of his *Pacem in Terris*. I consider that "must" reading for every person that longs for peace. He launched the ecumenical movement ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ our time, to bring people together, not to divide but to unite, not to foster bitterness but understanding, and it was later in that very same year of 1963 that the late President John F. Kennedy responded to this call and launched the initiative which culminated in a nuclear test ban treaty. That memorable speech of President Kennedy at American University on June 10, 1963 will go down in history as one of the great state papers of all time. Yes, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was a single step in the journey ~~in/through~~ of peace. Now since that single step in 1963 I am happy to say others have followed, through the United Nations and may it be preserved and may it grow and may it live. We have agreed to prohibit the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in space. We have agreed to join in areas of peaceful exploration of space. We have in a sense sought to make space the laboratory for human development and knowledge rather than a battlefield for human destruction, and chaos. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union have agreed to slow down the race for larger nuclear

stockpiles by cutting back the production of fissionable materials. And to avoid miscalculation which might lead to nuclear war we have established what we call "hot lines" to Washington and Moscow. Many nations today of different cultures, systems, are engaged in cultural exchanges. How good! In travel and in trade. All good. We either will know one another or destroy one another. We'll either learn how to live together or we'll be buried together, and I think those are the alternatives. And very frankly I ~~am~~ have never been a big advocate of dying. I believe in living.

And we should continue to pursue the additional steps along this road for peace. What a blessing it would be if nations and the leaders of nations could and would cast aside the harsh and speak with moderation and forbearance, wouldn't it be good to hear the soft voice rather than the shrill and the loud. Is this asking too much of civilized human beings. I think not.

President Johnson has made it clear that he will travel anywhere and that he will meet with anyone if this will enhance the pursuit of peace. Peace with justice and peace with freedom. And last evening he told us of some possibility of those leaders of other lands to travel here and of our President to travel there. I am hopeful that the leaders of the world will respond to this invitation and that we may have not merely cultural exchange, but exchange of leaders to know and to learn.

It has been my long belief that that which God has created no man has the right to destroy. I'm a conservationist. We must in our time seek to turn this arms race, which by the race is not just a race between big powers but it gets to be a habit for ~~to~~ others, -- the arms race into a peace race.

Our task is the conservation and the development of human resources by using all resources. Since that day when man exploded the atom and acquired the power to obliterate himself from the face of the earth, ~~the~~ war has worn a new face and the vision of its ~~de~~ destructiveness has sobered all men and demanded of them a keener perception of our mutual interest, a higher order of responsibility. ^{For} ~~The~~ two thousands years we've been exhorted by the scriptures to pursue peace -- pursue it, work for it and today our common humanity and our common interests in the nuclear age require that we heed the Biblical injunction as never before.

Yes, we must spare no effort to build a world where peace is more than a pause between wars. This is the common task of all nations and all people throughout the world. Pursue peace -- courageously, persistantly, knowingly and pursue it in godd works and not just godd words. In building peace and not in destroying it. And we will pursue peace, when we do it in trust and not in suspicion. When we do it in faith and not in cynicism. When we do it in confidence and not doubt. And when we do it in brotherhood and not prejudice. And when we do it in love and not hatred.

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