

DRAFT OF REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT'S APPEARANCE
AT GRIDIRON CLUB

~~I must admit that~~ until very recently I had always been puzzled
about the Gridiron Club ~~each time I have attended one of your~~
~~annual dinners~~ *and these fancy dinners* ~~I have been extremely~~ *I am always* impressed by the affluence
all about me: ~~the expensive cut of cloth, the gilt-edge dining halls,~~
~~the remains of connoisseurs' wine and gourmet food that lingered~~
~~on your tables.~~ And I have always wondered to myself: "Where
does all this opulence come from?"

But I wonder no longer. Before coming over here tonight I
got an apologetic sort of a phone call from ~~Richard~~ *Dick* Helms -- and I
found out I wouldn't be confronting the private sector tonight, after
~~all.~~

Now that it is all in the family, I feel a good more at ease
sharing with you tonight some of the trials and tribulations of the *vice*
Presidency.

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For most Democratic Presidents, [^] as you know, the major source of criticism has come from the business community. Not so for me. Why, just the other day, I was talking with two outstanding leaders in the business world -- wealthy, aggressive, hard-driving Texans, deeply concerned about the status of free enterprise in America. We had a long talk, and I could hardly believe my ears -- these tough businessmen agreed with almost every point I made. When they left ~~the oval office~~ I sighed with relief and told my secretary, "Those are good men; make a note of their names -- Bill Moyers and Jack Valenti." !

Bill, the major criticism ~~of my Presidency~~ ^{today} comes not from businessmen but from intellectuals, and as I was talking my tong just the other day, that is a situation that must be rectified. The

intellectuals, I pointed out, are interdicting our lines of communication,

they are terrorizing our spokesmen, ~~they are making us lose our~~

~~cool and we must do something about it.~~ We thought of all the

standard remedies: a task force on intellectuals, a commission on

intellectuals, a special department headed by a secretary of

intellectuals, an ambassador to the intellectuals, an embassy for

the intellectuals - ~~but nothing seemed to solve the problem.~~ We *even*

thought of asking Arthur Schlesinger to become Secretary of State

and letting Dean Rusk write the books. *We* thought of having the book

publishers come down and have ~~Hubert~~ *Hubert* Humphrey walk out -- but

nothing really seemed to hit the spot.

~~I will tell you this though. I have given it a great deal of~~
at the President's request,
 thought. I have studied all the reports from all the sources, I have

spoken to the experts, I ~~took~~ *took* a trip to New York to analyze

the intellectuals at first hand, to talk to those for the intellectuals and to those against the intellectuals. But I have been studying a

new political technique from ~~the west~~ ^{Michigan, etc}, and I will say this, and

I'll say it as firmly as I can, and put it on the record tonight forcefully

and vigorously before all of you: ~~we~~ ^{we} don't have a position about

intellectuals, but ~~I~~ ^{we} do hope to have one before November, 1968.

Until then, ~~I~~ ^{we} think it is unfair of the press to try to get ~~me~~ ^{we}

to take a position on the intellectuals.

I know you all want to hear tonight about ~~my~~ ^{President's} feud with Senator

Robert Kennedy. As I have analyzed it, ~~I really feel I have a just~~ ^{the President does have a just}

cause for grievance. I'll give you an example. Just last Thursday ~~the President~~ ^{the President}

~~he~~ had a normal day scheduled at the White House: two speeches,

six appointment announcements, a short press conference, a long-

awaited letter from Prime Minister Kosygin -- and it was on that

very day that Senator Kennedy picked to make his speech, totally

obscuring our news from the front page.

But that is really only a little thing. You know that what really concerns me deep down is Senator Kennedy's future role in politics. As I look to the future, and as I remember Senator Kennedy's past political history, I can visualize a titanic struggle for an extremely high political office. This struggle will occur in the very near future between Senator Kennedy and a man who is here tonight -- who I must admit has handled his present political office in flawless fashion. I can see it all now -- and I shudder at the thought of the confrontation -- in 1970 in Sacramento.

Before finishing, I do want to welcome Governor Reagan to Washington tonight. You know, Governor, it's a city very much like New York: a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live here.

I understand that Governor Reagan is really here to learn a bit more about the Republican shadow-government, particularly in the poverty program. The Republicans have an O. E. O. of

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~~their own: it stands for the Office of Equal Opportunism.~~

Joking aside, you know tonight what it is that really bothers me, and it is certainly not Republicans or businessmen or intellectuals or the press.

There are no jokes to be told his evening about Vietnam. There are tears and trouble there this evening and suffering and gallantry.

I tell you tonight, with the deepest sincerity that I possess, that I would do any honorable thing to end that conflict now. I am sustained in the belief that there is not a man in this room who would not like to see that same result. I pray -- but I cannot promise -- that when we gather for next year's Gridiron Club Dinner we may meet in peace and tell jokes about what is happening

at that time in a free Vietnam -- and I hope we will be able to
look back at this time and amuse ourselves over such differences
in policy we may have had in our common zeal toward peace.
In the meanwhile, I appreciate your support in a difficult time
and I pray along with you that the conflict will be resolved sooner
and not later.

~~But how a sermon word -~~

~~Saturday, March 11, 1967~~

This is the 20th anniversary of the Truman Doctrine.

~~Our business in the world is peace.~~

Peace means many things:

-- Preventing conflict if possible;

-- Assuring that aggression does not succeed

We still hold ^{today}

to the historic words of President Truman, spoken ^{these} twenty years ago: "I

believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples

who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside

pressures."

The Truman Doctrine was formulated to save the peace.

-- Peace also means helping nations build the strength and

confidence ~~and prosperity for their people~~ which makes them invulnerable

to aggression; and

-- It means trying with every resource of mind, ~~and~~ heart and

imagination to translate a conflict on the battlefield into a negotiation and

an honorable ~~peace~~ *settlement.*

I have spent most of today talking with our President, and what we talked about was all these dimensions of peace.

~~Above all, the war in Viet Nam is on his mind.~~

On his desk was a letter which said this:

"Americans are in Vietnam because we have determined that

this country must not fall under Communist domination. Ever since

Vietnam was divided, the Vietnamese have fought valiantly to maintain

~~their independence in the face of the continuing threat from the North.~~

.. "By 1961 it became apparent that the troubles in Laos and the troubles in Vietnam could easily expand. It is also apparent that the Communist attempt to take over Vietnam is only part of a larger plan for bringing the entire area of Southeast Asia under their domination.

"Though it is only a small part of the area geographically, Vietnam is now the most crucial. If Vietnam should fall, it will indicate to the people of Southeast Asia that complete Communist domination of their part of the world is almost inevitable."

This letter was written by the President of the United States to the sister of a man who gave his life for his country in Viet Nam. It was signed in March 1963 by President Kennedy. His words still represent the policy of this nation. But our policy in Viet Nam is peace -- not war. And I can tell you that if there is the slightest indication of a willingness to end this war on the other side, our President will seize it.

Every diplomatic seismograph is turned on in every part of the world and we are ready to start talking in public or in private, conditionally or unconditionally, to start on a long road to settlement or to make a settlement tomorrow.

Just about this time a week from now the President and his senior advisers will be on their way to Guam. They will be conferring there with Ambassador Lodge, General Westmoreland and the finest military and diplomatic team this nation has ever developed to carry forward the struggle against aggression to seek an honorable peace, and to build the kind of

nation the people of South Viet Nam want for themselves and for their children.

I am sure that he will carry from you -- as he will carry from me -- prayers and good wishes.

Finally, I give you these words of President Eisenhower -- a Man of arms who was also a man of peace:

~~insat~~

TO TED VAN DYK

File
Madison Club



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