

STATEMENT

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1968

We face once again a crucial test of survival in the nuclear age.

↳ We stand at another crossroads, where we must choose between the long, hard road to peace, or the road sloping downhill to nuclear war. And we must choose -- not next January -- but now.

↳ The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved yesterday a treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to countries that do not have them -- the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

↳ We now face the decision of whether or not this treaty will come before the full Senate -- and whether the Senate will consent to its ratification.

I strongly urge that the treaty be ratified, and ratified now.

↳ To delay ratification for partisan political reasons could set in motion a tragic chain reaction of doubt and rejection among nations who might otherwise agree to this treaty.

↳ Why is ratification so crucial?

Five nations now have nuclear weapons. That in itself is dangerous.

↳ The cause of world peace and our own security would only be jeopardized by dozens of nations' having the weapons which could plunge us all into World War III.

↳ On this, as on most issues, Mr. Nixon has been evasive -- he has refused to face the issue squarely.

↳ He says he is for the treaty, but against ratifying it now!

↳ He says he is for the treaty, but he has reservations about it.

↳ He says he is for the treaty, but he will not encourage
the Senate to ratify it. #

↳ Mr. Nixon is the leader of the Republican Party.

↳ It is within his power to ^{assure} ~~guarantee~~ ratification of
this treaty this year.

↳ A delay has already occurred, and already we have seen the
reaction from abroad.

↳ The American press on September 17, ~~for instance,~~
^{leading} reported the statement of a Japanese spokesman that Japan will
withhold its signature until the United States ratifies the treaty. o

↳ This is the chain reaction we must avoid at all costs.

↳ Let the American people understand clearly what Mr. Nixon
is saying -- and let them understand ~~clearly~~ that failure to act this
year could mean killing this treaty forever.

↳ It could mean the end of our long and patient efforts to hold back the flood of nuclear destructive power to nations around the globe.

— and effort we have been making since 1946 —

↳ I don't think we can afford to play political games with anything so serious as the spread of nuclear weapons.

↳ On this issue there is no safety in equivocation -- *this is* an invitation to disaster.

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↳ There are some who urge us to delay the ratification of the treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons -- and to delay talks to end the arms race in offensive and defensive missile systems -- because of the brutal Soviet repression of Czechoslovakia.

I say this to them: This treaty -- these talks -- do not condone any Soviet act: They do not sanction Soviet aggression.

We have & will continue to condemn this.

Indeed, this country and the world condemn the tragic action of the Soviets in crushing out liberty in Czechoslovakia.

↳ This treaty before the Senate is not between the United States and the Soviet Union. We both have nuclear weapons,

↳ This is a treaty which 80 countries have already signed -- it is a treaty developed among many nations and at the United Nations.

↳ It does not weaken our firm commitment to NATO.

↳ Nor should this treaty in any way lead the Soviet Union to believe that the provisions of the United Nations Charter can be used as a pretext for threatening the security of a NATO or other ally.

↳ We have a chance now -- through ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty -- to take the next and critical step away from the nuclear arms race and Nuclear War,

We have a chance to turn back the dangerous and costly nuclear arms race -- to begin putting to work billions of dollars for peaceful economic and social development.

We must not lose that chance.

↳ Nearly 50 years ago, the Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.

↳ In that rejection lay the seeds of war.

↳ In this age of mass destruction -- in this age of quick annihilation -- we cannot run that risk again.

The Senate must ratify the Nuclear Treaty now.

I call on all Americans of good will to support the Treaty and to make know their support now.

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