

~~SECRET~~-- SECURITY INFORMATION

DRAFT PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH ON ATOMIC ENERGY

When this Administration took office last January, we resolved to report to you from time to time on national problems and what we proposed to do about them. Of all these problems, the most serious continue to be those arising out of the National Security. This Age of Peril in which we live is an international political and military clime not of our choosing. We realize more and more the significance of John Curran's statement in 1790 in a speech upon "The Right of Election:"

"The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt."

This vigilance is not a responsibility exclusive to government. On the contrary, it applies to every citizen who cherishes his own freedom and his nation's independence. Yet, in spite of the truth of John Curran's observation, in spite of the lessons of history, our liberty and national security are too frequently taken for granted.

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We hear National Security too often stressed in terms of dollars,

airplanes, army divisions, taxes, warning techniques and devices.

This impersonality removes it from the immediate concern of each

American and seems to make it the sole concern of those in Washington

who necessarily worry about such matters. Never before in the history

of this great nation has there been so great a need as now exists for

partnership between the people and the people's government in this

business of continually winning, daily -- not just once and for all time --

our peace and freedom -- The Safety of the Republic.

This talk tonight inaugurates a series of television discussions to bring before you various aspects of national security. On succeeding programs during the coming weeks, Cabinet members and key officials will present to you items of special knowledge of international and domestic problems, bearing directly upon our safety as a nation.

You may recall that, last April, I spoke to the world, on behalf of our country, to proclaim our peaceful purposes; to assure all men of our readiness to enter into agreements for universal disarmament;

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and to cooperate with all others in eliminating war and the burdens of preparing against war. The only condition America imposes upon her readiness to confer and negotiate on these and all related matters is some evidence of good faith on the part of each participating nation; some proof that whatever agreements may be reached will be respected in spirit and in letter. We are now, as then and always, ready to devote our boundless productive capacity to the good rather than the damage of mankind. The olive branch will never be dropped from our hand so long as any cares to join us in its shelter.

If tonight my words sound somber, I trust you will not consider them despairing. We must resolutely face the facts of today, meet the challenge of our times, but we need not -- we must not -- ever lose faith that eventually man can be led to work for his own health, wealth, and happiness, rather than the destruction of his neighbors. Our purpose now is to be strong enough to preserve peace not weak enough to invite attack.

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Our national safety does not mean the protection of the White House, or Atlanta, or San Francisco, or the City of Detroit, or the Panama Canal. The safety to which I am referring is not even confined to the protection of the lives and property of the individual Americans who make this country what it is. It involves all these things -- but it involves as well the system of individual liberties and of government we so dearly cherish. Unless we think of national security in this broad, and in this specifically personalized, sense, we shall delude ourselves and fall victim to our lack of vigilance.

This opening program of the National Security television series is on the subject of atomic development.

Atomic is a general term; it includes progress that has been made in an ever-widening field of research and experimentation, for domestic as well as for military use. Moreover, as we have long known, knowledge of atomic matters has not stopped at the line marked by the Iron Curtain. Scientists in unfriendly as well as friendly countries have worked in this field. Enemy spies have aided others by passing on technical knowledge stolen from us.

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We know, of course, that the power resulting from nuclear fission or fusion follows a natural law, newly discovered by man. Like all other discoveries of this character, it is capable of employment both for good and for evil. The same applied, millenniums ago, to the discovery of fire, and later to the invention of gunpowder, and countless other inventions and discoveries of the ages. We are thus reminded that the decisive factors in the atomic age are, as they have always been, the understanding and the moral standards of the people of the world. When the average standard becomes sufficiently high that people want to use only for good purposes all our discoveries and research in the field of the atom, then there will open out before us the most brilliant and comprehensive opportunities for man's advancement that have occurred in centuries. But it remains likewise true that as long as any great nation desires to make aggressive use of the power that can be developed in this field, then we and all other nations are forced into the initiation and development of countermeasures.

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The American public needs information in formulating the decisions only the public can properly make. Undue secrecy must be thrown overboard, for in addition to fearing the known, it is unfair for the American public to be fearing unnecessarily the unknown. Much of the necessary kind of knowledge has come to you over the years in bits and pieces. Possibly very little of what I shall tell you is completely new to all of you. What I mean to do is to pull these facts together so that all of you can know all of it at the same time.

We need to speak plainly about our atomic strength and potential; about effects of atomic weapons and the means of delivering them; and about what we must do to protect ourselves against the contingency of atomic war being thrust upon us. We know that the mounting spiral of an atomic armaments race has a ^{current} profound effect upon our economy, our taxes, and our lives; and we must soberly calculate the possibilities of the future.

If the Soviet Government should plan to embrace all of Western Europe within its political tentacles, a logical first step would

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be to hit the United States first with a surprise atomic attack.

This, the enemy would do in the expectation of seriously crippling our

industrial output and power to retaliate. Success would mean that

Europe might then be conquered at leisure, lacking the military material

and support she would need from us.

A fact of critical importance to our national security today

is that the Soviet atomic stockpile has reached a point where, if

delivered by surprise on target in the United States -- I repeat, if

delivered on target -- it would injure this country gravely, both in

material damage and in loss of life. Moreover, the time is coming

within a very few years, when the Soviet supply will be sufficient --

again if delivered on target -- to hurt us to the extent that our ability

to carry on the war thus forced upon us would be substantially impaired.

And I should remark that once an enemy's stockpile has become

sufficiently large to accomplish such a destructive purpose, there is

little comfort in the knowledge that our own stockpile might be much

larger. It is logical to assume that the Soviet stock may now be

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counted in three figures: in a few years, the Soviet Union could have over a thousand bombs.

Of course, as of this moment, an atomic aggressor could drop some bombs on us; but until he can believe that such a blow would be truly crippling, we assume he would avoid the clash against our known superiority. We have at present to put our house in order; but we can never know how long this may be so.

Vast oceans to the East and West of this continent that gave the American population some comfort against the danger of attack during World War II are barriers no longer in the age in which we live, when the capability of delivery is even more important than the size of the enemy's stockpile. In the words of Admiral Strauss:

"In an atomic war where overwhelming advantage will rest with the aggressor because of the element of surprise, his capacity to destroy us just once offsets our capacity to destroy him fifty times over."

For all their great portent, certain facts can be simply stated:

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1. The whole world for the first time in its history is faced with the possibility of the havoc of global atomic war.

2. The history of war makes it clear that no nation -- no matter how wise its scientists or courageous its defenders -- can hope to build an infallible defense of land, sea, and sky that can completely halt a determined, prepared enemy short of his target, when he is prepared to strike by surprise.

3. Recovery from such an attack is now complicated by the fact that a few modern bombers or guided missiles can carry more destruction than the entire bomb tonnage dropped by British and United States Air Forces during all of World War II.

4. Additional danger stems from the fact that time from take-off to target has been sharply reduced owing to increased -- and increasing -- speeds of military aircraft.

5. It is America's determination to maintain superiority in atomic weapons, in the means to deliver them, and in the systems of defense as long as force rather than justice is the

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dominating factor in international affairs. An atomic aggressor must be given no logical hope that he could win a war against us.

6. Behind the machines of defense and the methods of defense must lie your will for defense. The heart and spirit of America may become the decisive margin between peace and war, or life and death.

Our atomic weapons grow in number and force. Without attempting accurate estimate as to the progress the Soviet Union may have attained in this respect, I give you now some details concerning our own position. These are impressive -- certainly no one could consider atomic aggression against us without fearing that he is thereby courting his own destruction.

In our stocks now there are bombs releasing the energy equivalent to _____ tons of TNT. This is X times the power of the Hiroshima bomb. This large bomb, if dropped on Washington, for example, or St. Louis, or any city of comparable size might destroy an area of _____ square miles and cause major damage

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in an area of _____ miles. In Washington, D. C., the devastated

area might be bounded by the area from _____ to _____.

In St. Louis, the region from _____ to _____

would be blasted.

Most terrible of all is the estimate of the loss of life.

Such a weapon might inflict total casualties of _____ on
an unprepared America.

Unfortunately for mankind, even these are not the limits
of atomic destructiveness. We can foresee no ceiling to the power of
atomic bombs either in terms of size or in variety or conditions of
employment.

Whatever their force, atomic weapons preserved in a
stockpile are ineffective in war unless they can be delivered on target.

Our own Air Force could, at this moment, wreak greater
destruction upon an enemy than he could reasonably expect to visit
upon us. As we approach the end of the first calendar year of this
Administration, I can say that the deliverable effective air power in

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the hands of the Air Force and of Navy Air is well above my original expectations.

Against this fact, we must remember that an aggressor fanatically dedicated to our destruction does not need aircraft or crews who must return safely to their home bases. If only 40%, or 30%, or 20% of what he sends forth in a surprise all-out attack should get through, he might conceivably achieve his first objectives.

It is probable that the Japanese war lords, planning the attack at Pearl Harbor, expected to recover very few of their airplanes -- but they considered the cost as cheap compared to the anticipated results.

Nor is the delivery of bombs limited to aircraft. Over the next decade or so, developments in guided missiles will extend and multiply the range and use of atomic weapons to the point at which long-range guided missiles launched from distant bases could reach the factories and homes in any part of our country.

And to these principal means of delivery must unfortunately be added the use of atomic weapons in sabotage -- the detonation of

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bombs in innocent appearing ships in our harbors, or the surreptitious planting of bombs at key centers by enemy agents.

So much for the black side of the problem. On the other side there are two elements -- first, continental defense; second -- retaliation. The two must be considered together in order to appraise their real impact on a potential aggressor.

We must accept the fact that a determined enemy, using the element of surprise, can always succeed in part. This does not mean that we are ignoring the development of continental defense. You have doubtless read in the news about various reports and projects, initiated on comprehensive surveys of enemy capabilities, which cover a wide range of measures of protection which can be undertaken. Based upon the resulting knowledge, the problem of continental defense has, and will continue to have, the highest priority. But I must remind you that we have to balance the more costly features of a continental defense system against maintaining the essential offensive capabilities of our armed forces. Each has claims upon funds,

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research effort, and planning priorities. To do all this and at the same time support the sound, functioning domestic economy that is the indispensable foundation of long-term security is a grave and complicated problem.

For example, to spend billions to defend the United States against the present 400-mile-an-hour Russian bomber, and to disregard the probability that shortly he will have an intercontinental bomber fleet capable of 600 miles an hour, would be short-sighted. It would be equally short-sighted to pin our entire hopes for defense against 600-mile-an-hour bombers when a few years from now the attack may be launched by much speedier guided missiles.

Therefore, the threat in the atomic age is not something finite with a fixed date or a maximum speed. As the danger moves forward, so must we move forward in planning and acting and spending.

Here I have a most hopeful word; a word that provides much of the reason for speaking to you tonight. It is this: the most vital part of civil defense costs next to nothing. It demands only

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knowledge, dedication, and energy on the part of all. It is the training of our population -- the local assurance that orderliness and planned reaction to attack will minimize both human and material loss.

At the beginning of this talk, I said national security had to be a personal responsibility or it would not be effective. I say this to you not as an idle exhortation, but for very practical reasons.

In this complicated labyrinth of the atomic age, there is only one thing on which the experts all agree -- and that is, that a prepared people -- people who are mentally, spiritually, and physically prepared -- will suffer not over half the casualties from a sneak attack that will be incurred by a people unprepared.

So when our Civil Defense authorities, Federal, State, or local, appeal for volunteers and make recommendations for national and for individual self-protection, they are not crying wolf.

When the Ground Observer Corps appeals for volunteer sky watchers, neither is it crying wolf. The Government's thousands of electronic eyes must be supplemented by human eyes to fill the

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inevitable gaps. This Age of Peril contains a new element never faced by this country before. We used to be able to ask our armed forces to do our fighting for us. Today, every Main Street in the land could become the front line of the battle.

Coordinated with the entire civil defense system will be the continental defenses of the Armed Forces. These are complicated organisms, and they are slowly but steadily developing. By land, sea, under the sea, and by air, we already have much more than the beginning of an efficient continental early-warning system, and weapons of defensive power. These will continue to grow.

Again let me say that our passive and active continental defense, and our ability to retaliate, must be considered together. The reason is that while increased continental defense proportionately increases enemy losses in an attack, it does not in itself constitute a conclusive deterrent to a fanatically determined aggressor.

But -- strong continental defense plus the knowledge that our retaliation would be swift and terrible could constitute a conclusive deterrent.

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Our atomic stockpile steadily grows. Our scientists and engineers have developed an array of atomic weapons for many purposes. We have atomic fire power suited for use against strong points and troops in the field, fleets at sea, and the factories and mills which supply the armed forces of the enemy.

You may well ask:

"Are we doomed to live forever in a state of atomic alert?"

If common humanity and common sense prevail in the councils of nations, the world need never blaze up in the holocaust of atomic war. And if the nations are freed from the threat of atomic war, they will find readily and rapidly within their reach a new science and a new technology that could bring about revolutionary advantages for all people of the earth.

In this country, while we have been forging atomic fire power to repel and punish attack, we have been also opening the door to the lofty room of human welfare for the atomic age. We could already have proceeded much further into this great new day had

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we been able to divert all our energies toward the peacetime development of the atom.

The Canadians, the British, and ourselves, have from the start made information on the peaceful uses of this new agent of human progress freely available to other countries, with only one single common-sense requirement -- namely, that the results of atomic development in the arts of peace should be published and the work open to the scientific community in general.

There have been published thus far over 80,000 pages of research on the peaceful products of atomic energy. This research has been listed with the United Nations. Where is there one single matching page contributed by the Soviet Union or its satellites?

At a time when we did have a monopoly on the atomic weapon, because we wished to share the benefits of the atomic era with a peaceful world, we proposed a formula to divest ourselves of this exclusive possession. In the United Nations, we presented a plan for international control of atomic energy to insure its use solely for

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peaceful purposes. That plan, rejected only by the Soviet Union and its satellites, still represents our fundamental and continuing policy. Developments over the last few years have inevitably altered details, but what has not altered is our desire to see this giant harnessed in all parts of the world for the purposes of construction rather than destruction.

On our side, there is not only hope -- there is willingness.

May it be matched on the other side.

We covet no empire -- political, geographical, economic.

Neither do our allies. This globe is big enough and rich enough for every single one of its 2-billion and more inhabitants to be fed, to be clothed, to be sheltered -- and above all, to be unafraid and to be free. Toward that great purpose we welcome all associates and allies.

Meanwhile, awaiting a sign, a clear unequivocal word from the other side, we must remain prepared.

My fellow countrymen, I should like to remind you that most of my life has been spent in studying and practicing war.

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My hours of greatest trial have come to me while waging war. The rest of my life will be spent in endeavoring, in every way consistent with the good conscience of mankind and the honor of our country, to prevent a more horrible war, an atomic war.

It was in this resolve that I spoke on April 16th last, reminding the nation of the dread cost of a world in arms. In that talk six months ago, I hoped only to voice the thoughts of all my fellow citizens in outlining the great tasks which must be achieved in securing the peace.



I then pledged that if progress were made on these great tasks, we would be prepared to "enter into the most solemn agreements for the reduction of the burden of armaments now weighing upon the world." That pledge included atomic weapons with all others.

Tonight, on your behalf, I repeat that promise to all the world.

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