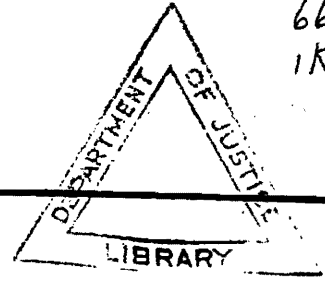




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ADDRESS

BY

HONORABLE ROBERT F. KENNEDY
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

LINN COUNTY VETERANS' COUNCIL
VETERANS' DAY PROGRAM

Elks Lodge

Albany, Oregon

November 12, 1962

I would like to thank you not only for inviting me to observe Veteran's Day with you tonight, but also for the warmth of your hospitality to me.

This extremely kind reception should come as no surprise for I know Oregonians as particularly open, friendly -- and patient with Easterners.

In fact, there is only one subject I have ever known you to be impatient about and that is the pronunciation of the name of the Beaver State.

Sometimes I think every resident of your State is a self-appointed Missionary to convert misguided Easterners who say Ore-gonn.

Perhaps the best job ever done along this line was by L. H. Gregory, the widely known sports editor of the Oregonian. Some years ago, he told a Texas audience that he, too, greatly appreciated their hospitality to him, but that if they persisted in pronouncing Oregon with the accent on the last syllable, he would have to start accenting Texas in the same way.

I am especially proud to be with you here tonight because the program undertaken by the Linn County Veteran's Council puts the correct accent on an important realization: That the obligation and service of veterans to our country did not stop with our discharge from military duty in time of war.

We must also serve our Nation in time of peace. I want to congratulate you on the outstanding work that you are doing to inspire greater patriotism among veterans and non-veterans alike.

Veterans organizations throughout our history have stood for a secure national defense and a strong America.

I need say very little to this audience about the character of the cold war and the Communist threat. This Nation now faces a time of testing as decisive as any in its history.

Abraham Lincoln told Congress in 1862:

"We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth."

These words apply equally to us today. Lincoln knew, as we know, that the struggle is not only one of words. He spoke of powerful deeds and our deeds must be powerful now.

Over the last twenty-two months this Government has taken many steps to strengthen our country in every way. Our objective has not been to make war but to maintain the peace on honorable terms and to protect freedom at home and abroad.

That we face a long and hard struggle is evident but I believe the forces of freedom have regained the initiative. I believe we have the strength and ability to out-last and out-perform anyone who seeks to destroy individual liberty or to threaten the safety of our Nation and our Allies.

At this time our only immediate guarantee of national safety lies in the adequacy of our military strength--from nuclear weapons to guerilla capability.

This is strength which, as events of the last few weeks have demonstrated, makes military action by the Communists unattractive and irrational.

On that cold day in January, 1961, when we came into responsibility, the President instructed the Secretary of Defense to build the force we need to defend the vital interests of the United States.

I am here to tell you tonight that the President's instructions are being followed effectively and vigorously.

In order to counter and deter the Soviet nuclear power, we have concentrated on building a nuclear force that is hardened, dispersed and concealed -- that is, in short, invulnerable to enemy attack.

To this end:

--We are increasing the number of Polaris submarines so that by 1964 we shall have one-half again as many as had originally been planned for;

--We have increased by fifty percent the number of our strategic bombers on 15-minute ground alert;

--We are procuring more hardened and dispersed Minuteman Missiles, and we have doubled our Minuteman production capacity.

We are committed to maintaining a nuclear force strong enough and impregnable enough to ride out any conceivable nuclear attack and retain enough striking power to annihilate any conceivable attacker.

We have such a force today, and we are budgeting some \$1.5 billion over the level proposed in January 1961 to see to it that we keep it that way.

Our strategic nuclear forces today include nearly 1,700 intercontinental bombers including 630 B-52s, 55 B-58s and 1,000 B-47s.

We have 96 Polaris missiles in nuclear-powered submarines now operational beneath the ocean's surface. We have dozens of operational intercontinental missiles in place across the United States.

We have increased our combat-ready Army and Marine divisions from fourteen to nineteen. We are increasing their firepower with fifty percent more non-nuclear armament and we are spending thirty percent more on air and sea lift so that we can move battle teams all over the world on very short notice.

We mean to lead the world in the exploration of space. We are determined to see that space is filled with instruments of knowledge and understanding -- not weapons of war and mass destruction.

We will be constantly alert against the hostile misuse of space as we stand today firmly against the hostile misuse of the land, sea or air. But it is our purpose to explore space without adding fuel to the fire of war.

We mean to go to the moon and we mean to do so in this decade. Telstar is transmitting television pictures around half the globe, and Commander Schirra's recent flight is notable not only for his incredible individual effort but for the accuracy and competence of Project Mercury.

In some aspects of the space program, we are behind. But we do not intend to stay behind. We intend to move ahead and we are making the effort to do so.

We have increased the fiscal outlays for space by two hundred percent and during Fiscal 1963 our expenditures for space will be greater than the combined total of all space budgets from Fiscal 1954 through Fiscal 1961.

At the same time, this Administration has reacted strongly to the problem of Communist subversion through guerilla warfare.

I would guess many of you were infantrymen in the Second World War or Korea. You probably had time to reflect, ruefully, on those experts who said, when you were recruits, that foot soldiers would not be needed; that the fighting would be done by men in planes and tanks.

Thus, I am sure you understand better than most the conditions in which several thousand of our fellow Americans are serving in the undeclared war in South Viet Nam.

They are there because last November a comprehensive program was initiated calling for many forms of American aid to reverse the trend in South Viet Nam.

This included military assistance to the friendly forces combatting the Communists, economic assistance to the villagers who were the Communists' principal target, and administrative and technical assistance to the Viet Nam Government.

The courageous effort under way in South Viet Nam is not the only Governmental response to the threat of guerilla warfare. In Washington, a special group of senior officials -- reporting directly to the President -- supervises the development and use of all defense assets which can play a role in counter-insurgency.

One example of the activities of this special group has been the overhaul of instruction programs in the Departments of State and Defense, and

the other agencies which participate in counter-insurgency programs.

By next June, some 57,000 Governmental officials, many of high rank and long experience, will have attended courses dealing with counter-insurgency.

Many of you know what is involved in this effort. In Malaya the Communist guerilla war lasted from 1946 to 1957. It involved four hundred thousand armed men and caused nearly sixteen thousand casualties.

In Greece the period of conflict was from 1945 to 1950. Three hundred thousand men were involved and one hundred thirty thousand casualties were inflicted.

You know that this kind of warfare can be long and costly, but if Communism is to be stopped, it is necessary. And we mean to see this job through to the finish.

The substantial increase in our military power, shifting from primary reliance on atomic weapons and massive retaliation to a force which can deal with all forms of aggression, is one fulfillment of the President's pledge to meet our commitments around the globe.

None of the crises we faced in January, 1961 have been resolved but the momentum of Khrushchey's offensive has slowed noticeably and it is we and our Allies who have begun to move.

Concerning Laos, the President made clear that American troops would intervene if the Communists tried to exploit their advantage on the ground -- and we have converted a war that was being lost into a tenuous and still dangerous but much better peace.

In Viet Nam the situation is far more hopeful than it was six months ago. The road ahead there appears long and difficult but Communist guerillas are meeting increasingly strong resistance and in the end we shall win.

Although the Congo problem is not settled, the danger that the Communists would establish a political and guerilla war base which would tear apart Central Africa has receded. We are backing the efforts of the United Nations to help the Congolese create a unified, independent, and viable nation.

The President's success in Cuba demonstrating a firm readiness to use our strength, illustrates the importance of our military buildup. It also shows how initiative, imagination and patience can resolve a difficult situation without actual fighting.

Our efforts to require the withdrawal of offensive weapons from Cuba appear to be succeeding. Obviously this doesn't mean that we can relax our vigilance; we intend to see that the agreement for removal of the weapons is carried out.

Even so, Cuba will continue to be a problem. And there are other dangerous problems and difficulties in such areas as Berlin, Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

Khrushchev must know without any doubt that we are prepared to defend our vital interests in Berlin -- and those of the West -- with all the force at our command.

Last September Mayor Willy Brandt of West Berlin was in Washington. That articulate, courageous man who is so dedicated to freedom told a group of us:

"I must make one thing clear. I did not come here to ask for guarantees from you to defend West Berlin. I know I don't have to ask for them."

It is still possible that we will face a great crisis in Berlin in the weeks just ahead. But American military strength has increased and so much has been done by men like General Clay that the determination and unity of this country to maintain our position in West Berlin is apparent.

We will face that possible crisis with confidence.

Every American can take legitimate pride in the record and performance of our country.

As we have gathered our strength, we have learned to live with the threat of nuclear war -- and to do so with courage, cool nerves, and unshakeable purpose. That purpose is a society committed to freedom, founded on the Declaration of Independence and The Bill of Rights, and dedicated to the Rule of Law in which the State is the servant of the individual and not the individual the servant of the State.

And that purpose serves as an ideal not only for ourselves, but for peoples around the world.

Therefore, what we do to control Communist subversion here at home or to combat guerilla warfare or to maintain our military strength, or to be first in outer space will, in the last analysis, not add up to much unless we remain true to our ideals -- unless we are dedicated to the proposition that liberty and law are inseparable and we truly believe that social progress strengthens and enlarges freedom.

The challenge to the future requires not panic but power, not doubt but deeds.

During the Korean War a young American was called out of the ranks by his Chinese captors and they said to him, "What do you think of General George C. Marshall?"

He said, "I think General Marshall is a great American."

The Chinese knocked him to the ground with the butt of a rifle. They picked him up and said, "What do you think of General George C. Marshall now?"

He said, "I think General Marshall is a great American."

This time there was no rifle butt because in their own way they had classified him as brave.

Today, all of us have been called out of the ranks to be questioned and, in the months ahead, we too must give the affirmative answer. I have no doubt that we will.