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Address to the World Affairs Council

Geraldine Ferraro

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ADDRESS BY REPRESENTATIVE GERALDINE A. FERRARO

At the World Affairs Council, San Francisco, California

Draft #1, 7/9/84

Thank you, Max Thelen, for that very kind introduction. It is a great pleasure to join with you and Peter Tarnoff and the World Affairs Council of Northern California. I am honored that you have invited me to offer my reflections on the Democratic Party platform and my thoughts on the state and direction of American foreign policy.

Next week in this city, the Democratic Party will meet to nominate candidates for President and Vice President. And we will debate and approve a platform stating our Party's principles.

As chairwoman of the platform committee, I can tell you that no issue in this platform is more important to our Party and to our country than the security of America in a world of turbulence and change.

We are currently in the midst of an intense national debate

over foreign policy. The debate is over how we can best serve both the security interests of our country and the cause of world peace.

The essence of this national debate becomes clear if we consider President Reagan's pronouncement, in his 1984 State of the Union address, that "America is back, standing tall."

Surveying the current state of America's role in the world, and with the benefit of the thoughts offered to the Platform Committee by some of the best foreign policy minds in my Party, I must ask this question in response to the President's buoyant proclamation of national resurgence:

"What is America back to, and for what are we standing?"

I will not attempt to speculate on how President Reagan will answer that question over the next four months. I will, however, offer a Democratic answer.

A Democratic Administration would reaffirm the basic American values. We will stand for the principles of John Kennedy's long twilight struggle. A struggle against "the common enemies of man -- tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself."

We will resolutely oppose the tyranny of the Soviet Union. A state that strangles the people of Poland, carpet-bombs the villages and mountains of Afghanistan, and stifles the religious

freedom of its own people must be dealt only with great sureness and with a clear notion of what we hope, and expect, to achieve. But it must be dealt with. A Democratic President will revive the moribund prospects for arms control, by agreeing to negotiate in the tradition of past Presidents of both Parties in the nuclear age.

In the foreign policy area, the first responsibility of the next President will be to address the greatest failure of the current President.

The next President must be fully and personally committed to reducing the danger of nuclear war, that threatens the lives of every man, woman and child on this planet.

In our Democratic platform, we endorse a comprehensive, mutual, and verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of all nuclear weapons. The world does not get safer with new inventories of nuclear weapons and new technological schemes to hurl the arms race into space.

It is time to reverse course, and the way to start is by imposing mutual and verifiable moratoria on the most dangerous new nuclear weapons systems on the Reagan shopping list. It is not just the acceleration of the arms race that is troubling, it is that so many of the new weapons present grave problems for arms controllers. There is no practical way to verify whether a subma-

rine-launched cruise missile has a nuclear or a conventional tip.

An even more serious problem is posed by the MX. With its ten warheads, hard target kill capability, and based in vulnerable Minuteman silos, this Missile Experimental constitutes an invitation to the Soviets to attack first in time of crisis.

It's time to start talking and stop building. It is time to stop building nuclear bargaining chips, and start bargaining on a freeze and reductions of nuclear weapons.

This one issue -- to me -- makes the 1984 contest worth fighting. This one issue makes a Democratic victory imperative.

A foreign policy based on American values must stress peaceful approaches to resolving conflicts. Only in old Westerns do we shoot first and ask questions later. The world is not the old West.

In the Democratic platform, we declare our commitment to seek peace in Central America by political means, and not by escalating and widening the conflict. We will give moral and material support, and not just lip service, to the Contadora process.

In the Middle East, we will reaffirm that support for Israel is a moral issue. We will rescue Camp David from the scrap-heap, and we will substitute that quest for peace for the policy of

increasing arms shipments to the sworn enemies of our sole democratic ally in the region. To ship Stinger missiles to the terrorist-plagued Middle East is too close to throwing a lighted match into the world's gas tank.

The Democratic Party has learned from Beirut and Camp David that the proper U.S. role in the Middle East is a diplomatic role. The Marines are a military force, not a diplomatic corps. In both the Middle East and Central America, our Party's commitment is to peace, not to the travesty of undeclared wars for uncertain causes. Through his own personal involvement in the Camp David process, Walter Mondale has demonstrated the enormous opportunity that awaits leadership that is dedicated to true peace and lasting security.

A strong and ready military establishment is certainly key to a successful foreign policy. And the Democratic platform calls for strengthened conventional forces, improved readiness, and a prudent, balanced, and unquestioned nuclear deterrent force. To achieve maximum effectiveness, we would reorganize our military management and reform our military forces. The current four-year binge of waste, fraud, and conflicts of interest have sapped the very military capability that hard-earned tax-dollars and the sacrifice of hard-working Americans ought to provide.

The Democratic Platform acknowledges the sacrifices of U.S. tax payers, and asserts that America's strength today depends not

only on ourselves but on the collective power and purpose of our friendships and alliances around the world.

That is why our Democratic Platform insists that our allies must provide their own fair share of our collective defense, and that we, for our part, must use our power responsibly, consulting as partners with our allies.

A Democratic Administration will take full advantage of a network of alliances that is not available to the Soviet leaders, and that has been neglected by the Reagan Administration.

Finally, in all its endeavours, a Democratic Administration will be a force for democracy and human rights.

That is why, in our Democratic platform, we promise to stand up for Democratic solidarity: for the dissidents and refuseniks of the Soviet Union and the free trade unionists of Poland; for the freedom fighters of Afghanistan and the campesinos of Guatemala; for the democratic forces in Chile and the Phillipines. That is why we will terminate the Reagan Administration's policy of so-called "constructive engagement" with the repressive racist regime in South Africa.

This is a positive Democratic platform.

It will stand in stark contrast to the record of Ronald Reagan

and the future he promises.

Over the past three and one-half years, Ronald Reagan has presided over a major shift in American foreign policy.

He has replaced the quest for nuclear arms control as a key component of national security with a dangerous dash for nuclear superiority.

He has replaced the advancement of American values with support for right-wing dictators around the world.

He has replaced traditional American respect for international law with Presidential actions that flaunt the rule of law.

If he were successful, some would excuse his actions on the altar of "realpolitik" and expediency.

But the simple truth is that Ronald Reagan has not succeeded.

Ronald Reagan does not have a single foreign policy success to his name. Where is his Camp David accord; where is his Panama Canal Treaty; where is his nuclear arms control agreement?

Look around the world. Is the situation in Europe, in the Middle East and Africa, in Central America better than when he took office?

Are we really more secure? Except by the standard of an Administration that measures security solely in terms of the size of the defense budget, I would say we are not.

Three quarter of a trillion dollars of defense spending later, the readiness of many of our military units is less than in 1980. Three quarters of a trillion dollars later, there are thousands -- thousands! -- more Soviet nuclear warheads aimed at targets in America than when Ronald Reagan took office. Three quarters of a trillion dollars later, the military build-up that was supposed to force the Soviets to negotiate has achieved nothing toward that objective. No reduction in Soviet missiles has been achieved -- and remember, it is reductions that we have been promised for four long years.

The tragedy is that no President had such an opportunity to make this world a safer place. Elected with strong anti-Communist credentials, Ronald Reagan could have sought to reduce tensions around the world -- and he would have had the gratitude of generations of Americans. Elected with a national consensus for a strong defense, he could have prudently strengthened our forces where new strength was required -- backed by unity at home, and respect abroad.

But, unlike so many great Presidents, Ronald Reagan did not grow in office. Reagan remained "Reagan" -- prisoner of his past,

prisoner of his pre-conceptions.

To be sure, he has changed his tone from time to time -- and especially in this election year. Gone right now is talk of nuclear demonstration shots and "prevailing" in nuclear war. Muted -- but not entirely gone -- is talk of "evil empires."

The record, however, is unchanging. And puffed with the kind of political arrogance that would dare to honor an Anne Gorsuch Burford before re-election, this administration promises no hope for change in four more years.

That is why a new American foreign policy is so important.

The foreign policy of the greatest nation of earth ought to consist of something more than merely a President attempting to correct his own mistakes. Our standards ought to be higher and tougher.

Look at the last four years. This Administration has given us five arms control directors, four Middle East negotiators, three national security advisors, two Secretaries of State, -- and a "what- me worry?" President at the White House.

I think that a great nation deserves to have a policy with better managers at the watch. I think that the challenges we face in the decade to come will demand something more than smooth talk

and no thought or action.

I believe that America represents something more than narrow, national self-interest. I believe that our nation represents hope -- hope for economic progress in a world where more than half the population is consumed by the simple struggle to stay alive; hope for freedom and justice, -- a distant luxury to so many victims in so many nations -- hope for a world that is not increasingly threatened by weapons of mass destruction.

Human hope is a powerful ally. It is time to re-enlist it on our side. As Reverend Jesse Jackson has offered hope to the disenfranchised of America, our great nation can offer hope to the disenfranchised of the world.

I believe that America must have a strong defense.

It is preposterous that our party -- which built our nuclear deterrent, which constructed the greatest alliance, NATO, in peacetime history -- should allow Republicans to redefine national security and call it their own.

We can, we ought to, and we will make national security and military security an issue in this election. This does not mean merely carping over the President's bloated defense budget with its weapons that do not work and nine dollar wrenches bought for nine thousand dollars. This means positive recommendations to improve

our security, to get maximum military power and capability from our defense dollars.

It is not enough to define our defense policy by what we are against. We must state what we are for.

We are for stronger conventional forces. We are for improved military readiness. We are for reform of our military strategy and leadership. This has been a major contribution of my colleague in the Legislative Branch, Senator Gary Hart. We are for steady and sustainable improvements, so that our men and women in uniform can fight effectively and win -- if they are asked to do so in defense of our vital interests.

I believe we must be realistic about the Soviet Union. We will maintain our military strength as a deterrent to Soviet imperialism. But we recognize that our greatest advantage over the Soviets is our economic might and our commitment to improving the lives of people around the world.

We will recognize that the Soviets prey on poverty and sickness in the Third World and attempt to capture new client states by promising prosperity they are unable to deliver in their own country. Freedom and economic prosperity are American strengths, not Soviet ones. In the competition for the hearts and minds of the Third World, we can't help but succeed if we stop talking about the evils of communism and start talking about the evils of hunger

and disease.

Soviet leaders, time and again, demonstrate an unchanging fear of change, threatened by the power of freedoms too many in this country have come to take for granted. Their power is military, and militarily it must be deterred, but I happen to believe that we also ought to be confident in the full range of America's strengths. The console of American capabilities must consist of more than a military button. Together, with our allies, we have powers that the Soviet Union can never muster.

It is time to use them effectively to advance the interest of America.

For this reason, military power ought to be our own weapon of last resort. It will not solve the international debt crisis that threatens Americans' financial security at home as well as the political stability of nations we need as steady friends. It will not solve the pressing global economic, environmental, and development problems that threaten our long-term security as surely as Soviet divisions and cells of Cuban-sponsored subversives. Military power can defend the cause of freedom against aggression -- but in this nuclear age, unlike the Soviet Union, America has the tools to advance the cause of freedom without risking the survival of this planet.

We are confident in the immense political, economic, and

spiritual power at our disposal. These are the strengths that distinguish us from our adversaries. These are the strengths that give me confidence that the "American century" will not be cut short.

But nothing we do elsewhere in the world, or here at home, will be sufficient if we do not immediately begin to reduce the risk of nuclear war.

Confident in our power, no President should fear to meet with his Soviet counterpart to hammer out an agreement that serves both of our interests -- the survival of the planet. Confident in our power, we can negotiate to limit the threat of limitless destruction -- despite the behavior of the Soviet Union in other areas around the world. This is not a favor to the Soviet Union. It is cold, hard, national self-interest. We are talking about the survival of the United States and all humanity.

As a mother and a Democrat, as an American and a legislator, I would welcome an effort by this President to sit down with the Soviets and repair the damage of four lost years. But the record of this Administration reflects the life-long attitude of the President and the opposition of his top advisers to arms control. Under these conditions, it is hard to have confidence that today's willingness to negotiate, paraded across the nation's front pages, is more than a momentary lull before the arms race proceeds with vigor renewed.

The Democratic Platform offers a strategy for America that responds to the fundamental dreams of the American people. Their dream of a world safe from the rumblings of war and nightmares of Armageddon. Their dream of a foreign policy that commits us to the hope that marks our nation from all others. Their dream of peace-- the dream of which President Kennedy spoke so eloquently in his historic speech at American University:

"What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children -- not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women -- not merely peace in our time but peace for all time."