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REMARKS

REMARKS GIVEN AT THE KURT WALDHEIM APPRECIATION DINNER

EDMUND S. MUSKIE

As I look around this room and see all these United States Senators here in Florida rather than in Washington, I am reassured about the good sense of those who run our government.

It's always a pleasure to come to Florida. But I must say it's better to come here as a former Secretary of State than as a candidate for national office.

Perhaps you will remember—at least I do—the 8.9% of the vote I received here as a Presidential candidate in your 1972 primary.

You might even remember as far back as 1968—at least I do—when Florida voted for someone else when I ran for vice-president with Hubert Humphrey.

That taught me a lesson. It taught me that the only thing that could be worse than losing the vice-presidency would be to win it. And if you remember—as I do—that Spiro Agnew was the winner that year, perhaps you will agree with me.

Whatever the setbacks and disappointments, I can tell you that after a long and rewarding career in government, I am more convinced than ever that the highest goal of nations must be the search for peace. And I see clearly that the goal is far too important to be entrusted solely to the hands of those who hold formal office. As much as peace is the hope of the world, so also must it be the work of individual citizens in everyday life.

You can see that hope expressed as thousands of people link arms across the lands of Europe affirming the dream of a world without nuclear weapons. And, although, Americans fear war no less than Europeans, the European continent runs with the blood of centuries of fighting. So they can never forget.

Five hundred years ago, the French and the British fought at Agincourt in an autumn field. As was the medieval custom, a herald looked down from a hilltop to name the battle and confirm the victor.

War today would permit no such distant witness. Nuclear war today would mean the end of winners, the end of names, and to the few who survived, all would be among the vanquished in a

burned world.

We know that. Yet, there is savagery in Central America and a war of attrition in Afghanistan. The Middle East remains a bomb with many fuses. Poland is in tears. All that—and, sadly, so much more—continues in the shadow of an arms race we know so well, because it has gone on so long.

Is it any wonder that around the world, fearful people are pleading to embrace the ancient Greek wisdom that says “[l]et persuasion check the fruit of foolish threats before they spread plague and disaster.”¹

That Greek plea is 2500 years old, yet it’s timely as the tables of Geneva where the way to disarmament is strewn with angry words and dark threats. But we must keep trying. We must never give up. One of my predecessors at the Department of State, Frank B. Kellogg, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1929, and he reminded us then of the need to keep trying. “There is no short and easy road,” he said, “no magic cure for those ills which have afflicted mankind from the dawn of history. It can only be accomplished by slowly building the bullwarks of peace.”²

And that is what we must continue to do. For my part, I do not share the belief in the homogenized ideas of those who preach the “one-world” gospel. I prefer the more diverse promise that can flow from a *safe world*. It must be a world where the spirits on all sides are large enough to accommodate the progressive ambition of the hopeful, and firm enough to contain the aims of the hateful.

No nation bears the sole credit for all that is right in the world any more than it can be blamed for all that is wrong. But some nations, by virtue of what they have been given, are bound to give more in return. That is no less true now than it was in the early 1930’s when a Norwegian professor observed that the United States, “wields greater power over war and peace than any other country on earth. All who yearn for a lasting peace must therefore look to America for help.”³

We cannot do it alone. But it will never be done without us.

Some in the world dispute that truth, seeing in the United States a mean and sinister force. If any are tempted to doubt our

1. AESCHYLUS, *THE ORESTEIAN TRILOGY* 175 (1968) (quotation from the speech of Athene).

2. F. Kellogg, Acceptance Speech for the 1929 Nobel Peace Prize, *reprinted in* 2 *PEACE* 79 (1972).

3. H. Koht, Remarks on Presenting the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize, *reprinted in* 2 *PEACE* 125 (1972).

motives, I would commend to them the words of the Frenchman, André Malraux, spoken in 1962 at the White House. "For the first time," Malraux told President Kennedy, "a country has become the world's leader without achieving this through conquest. And it is strange to think that for thousands of years one single country has found power while seeking only justice."⁴

Malraux was right about this nation. If he missed anything, it was this: What we are as a country is a larger image of what we believe ourselves to be as a people. And what we believe is that all of us are capable of making a worthy contribution as free people in a free land.

So, what you begin now in Florida by endowing a chair for International Law at Florida State, is a perceptive—indeed, essential—step in broadening the foundations on which to build a world at peace with itself.

For those of you who love Florida as your home, I would ask that you accept the idea that Florida has so much to offer a troubled world. You have the capacity, the talent, the resources, and the will to make this state a crossroads of world trade. Your state reaches into the Caribbean, and the work you can do to bring commerce to the southern hemisphere—a free and robust exchange of goods and services—can help set an example for people around the globe.

In 1890, the U.S. Census Bureau announced the closing of the American frontier. In the 1970's, Florida opened it up all over again. John Naisbitt, in his remarkable book *Megatrends*, calls Florida the "bellwether" state. Everywhere you look in this center of inventive thinking, you can find the evidence that proves him right.

Florida has modernized its state government. You have become a great banking center. You have been a magnet to business. In these and in so many other ways, Florida can truly be said to be a pathfinder on the road to the 21st century.

It is fitting, I think, to recall that 470 years ago this very month, Ponce de Leon came here in search of the fountain of youth. In this state, named for the Easter feast of flowers, you can renew the promise of youth, where one person can make a difference and everyone must try.

By endowing a chair at a great university, Floridians are making

4. A. Malraux, Remarks Responding to a Toast by President John Kennedy (May 1962), reprinted in A. MADSEN, MALRAUX 310 (1976).

the enlightened point that the roadway to peace must pass through the halls of learning.

You can pass on great lessons to all who come here. And the first of those is that peace cannot be found at the bottom of a national purse exhausted by military spending. In a world that commits hundreds of billions each year to the weapons of war, it is not much to ask that we pledge thousands to the hope of peace.

I come here today not as a fundraiser, but as one who would dare raise the standard from the issue of how divided people can *fight*, to how sincere people can *unite* in the search for peace.

As a United States Senator, and as Secretary of State, I was often involved in the annual debates over how much we should contribute to the United Nations. So often, so many asked: "Why should we continue to give when progress is so slow?"

We can find the answer in the words of another Nobel Peace Prize winner. In 1912, Georg Hagerup, speaking for the Institute of International Law, said: "Those who wish to take an active part to further human progress should not lose patience if the progress sometimes appears to be very slow or even sustain setbacks."⁵

We can expect the progress will be slow. But we must do all we can to make sure it remains steady. And, as much as it rests on the shoulders of governments, it rests also upon you to take an active part to "further that human progress."

I hope you will help sustain the work at Florida State. It is begun in the name of a persistent and dedicated leader. I know Kurt Waldheim as a peacemaker and as a friend. As we worked to free the Iranian hostages, he was willing to risk personal danger in the search for their release. He traveled frequently to the Middle-East, to Bangladesh, to Cyprus, to South Africa and to more than one hundred other nations to help stop conflict. As Secretary General of the U.N., he fought for disarmament. He fought to check the spread of terrorism, and to uphold the quest for human rights.

As a gifted jurist and honored diplomat, he searched the world and the hearts of humanity for the things that can heal. So Florida is the right place, international law the right course, and Kurt Waldheim the right man to help stretch further the dreams of mankind.

It is no small ambition. In fact, it is the highest ambition of all. But let me recall for you the words of a great American woman

5. G. Hagerup, Remarks Upon Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize entitled "The Work of the Institute of International Law," *reprinted in* 1 PEACE 73 (1972).

who overcame terrible handicaps to tell us that "imagination creates distances and horizons that reach to the end of the world. It is as easy for the mind to think in stars as in cobble-stones."⁶

The search for peace will demand imagination. It will mean we must be:

Bold enough to reach out;

Fair enough to reach down;

Strong enough to reach inside ourselves;

To find the best in us, and in all humanity. You in Florida are renewing that quest for the star of peace. I commend you for it, and others will salute you in years to come.

For what you have begun and what you must continue, I am privileged to present the namesake of your effort, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, the Honorable Kurt Waldheim.

6. H. Keller, *Impressions of the Empire State Building*, N.Y. Times, Jan. 17, 1932, reprinted in T. JAMES, JR., *THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING* 116 (1975).

