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Draft Speech
Prepared by: Kevin Hopkins
January 29, 1980

In his State of the Union message in January, Jimmy Carter told the American people that a Soviet attempt to take control of the Persian Gulf region "will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

Just three years ago, the need for the U. S. to send its troops, air power, and naval power to protect the Middle East oil lanes was a remote possibility, of importance only in military planners' war games. Today, it has become America's number one policy option -- virtually our last line of defense. And the mere threat that we will "do something" if the Soviets take control of the oil flow is supposed to hold the Russians at bay. But Mr. Carter's threat ignores reality in the Persian Gulf.

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At best, the U. S. might regain control only after a protracted battle and with substantial loss of life. At worst, our military might arrive to find Soviet control a fait accompli, irreversible even with a concerted counterattack. And in any case, the spectre of nuclear confrontation would become more frightening than perhaps at any time in history. President Carter may have been right when he said that the implications of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan posed "the most serious threat to world peace since the Second World War."

Listening to Jimmy Carter's speech, though, one gets the impression that someone else must have been President while the trouble was brewing over the past three years. Our embassy in Iran was overrun for a time several months before it was actually captured and our people taken hostage, but Jimmy Carter did nothing to either fortify our embassy or remove our diplomats. Malcolm Toon, the former U. S. ambassador to Moscow, warned all last year that the Soviets were preparing their invasion of Afghanistan, but Mr. Carter did nothing to stop them.

Yet now, President Carter says that he has had a change of heart -- that after three years he has finally learned that the rulers in the Kremlin are not the nice men eager for peace that he thought they were. And he tells us that he is the man to lead us through the crisis.

I suggest that Mr. Carter has had his chance. His policies have

helped bring us to our lowest point -- both militarily and economically -- in our recent history. The very future of our country and our people may be at stake, and I don't think we can afford the risk of four more years of Jimmy Carter. It is time for President Carter to be replaced.

If there has been one theme to Jimmy Carter's presidency, it is that you can defeat your problems by growling at them. Jimmy Carter's philosophy has been to "speak loudly and carry a small stick." And though he says he has changed his view of the world, has he really learned his lesson?

Mr. Carter began his term by cancelling, postponing, or sharply cutting back the B-1 bomber program, the MX missile, the cruise missile, the navy shipbuilding program, the Minuteman III missile, the Trident submarine, and the neutron warhead. Yet his supposedly tough new defense budget provides no acceleration of most of our major strategic programs.

When our diplomats were taken hostage last November, President Carter waited for days and weeks to take actions that should have come in the first 24 hours. Now, the only hope he offers is that, with the Soviets perched on their border, the Iranians will somehow look more kindly toward the U. S.

Mr. Carter said that the U. S. will "help Pakistan preserve its independence and integrity." But when he drew the line in his State of the Union message to denote the "vital interests of the United States," Pakistan was excluded.

And after the Soviets had solidified their control of Afghanistan, Mr. Carter asked the Senate to hold up ratification of SALT II. Yet he made sure that both the Senate and the Soviets understood that he hadn't said "no" -- he'd said "maybe." If the treaty is ratified a little later on, when Mr. Carter has regained his trust in the Soviets -- perhaps

after the November elections -- that presumably will do. In fact, the President took the initiative to tell Moscow that we will follow the limits of both SALT I, which has expired, and SALT II, which has not even been ratified, if the Russians will. Apparently, Mr. Carter still believes the Soviets can be trusted.

Likewise, President Carter knew when he was elected that the U. S. was dangerously dependent on foreign oil. Yet his so-called national energy policies have been the moral equivalent of surrender. He has done almost nothing to increase domestic energy production. In fact, he closed off lands in Alaska which could be used to triple Alaskan oil production, and he has done little to reverse his error.

His one positive step was decontrolling oil prices, but then he cancelled that effect by imposing his windfall profits tax. Now it may be politically popular to punish the oil companies, but it surely does not increase energy production.

Mr. Carter's \$227 billion tax doesn't even have anything to do with profits -- it is a sales tax on every barrel of oil produced, and will reduce U. S. oil production by up to 840,000 barrels per day. That's enough energy to fuel more than 17 million cars, yet Mr. Carter says that the solution to the energy crisis is for all of us to drive less. In fact, a couple of congressional researchers studied the tax, and concluded that the U. S. will be worse off with Mr. Carter's energy plan than we would have been had he done nothing at all.

Our economy's performance has been even worse. Under President Carter, we have achieved the highest inflation rates since 1946, the highest interest rates since the War Between The States, and the lowest value of the dollar against gold in history.

Because we have the world's largest economy, these harmful effects

spill over into other countries, worsening our relations with them. In particular, our sinking dollar has forced the oil producing countries to continually raise their oil prices, because the dollars we are paying them with are worth less and less. Now, the Arab producers are talking about dumping the dollar as their standard of payment. And should the Soviets approach the Persian Gulf, we might find the oil producing nations turning more toward them, and away from the United States.

Indeed, our faltering economy has added to the Soviets' perception of our weakness. President Carter's ineffective response to our domestic inflation may have helped convince the men in the Kremlin that his response to an invasion of Afghanistan would be just as ineffective.

The fact is, President Carter has no economic policy. He says he wants to eliminate the federal deficit, but he has accumulated the largest total budget deficit of any President in history, and he is increasing federal spending next year by 16% over his original budget for this year. He says he wants to reduce the size of government, yet he has created two new cabinet departments, together costing well over \$20 billion each year. And he says he wants to increase productivity, but he has only worsened the regulatory burden on Americans, and has doubled taxes since 1976.

Instead of attacking the causes of these problems, President Carter has adopted a moralistic approach. We have inflation, he says, because Americans "worship consumption and self-indulgence." But is it self-indulgence to struggle to earn enough just to make ends meet, or to try to improve one's standard of living? Apparently Mr. Carter thinks that it is, because his only solution is for us to lower our wages, lower our prices, and learn to "live with less."

We have energy shortages, he says, because we waste too much

energy. Mr. Carter should spend a day with an American family. He would find what the rest of us already know: that Americans have cut back, but that for most, driving a car to work and heating one's home are a necessity, not an extravagance. Yet Mr. Carter's only hope for 1980 is to make it another "year of conservation."

Mr. Carter's moralistic view of America is that in order to have strength, freedom, and peace, "you will have to sacrifice your comfort and your ease," but that "this national commitment will be an exciting enterprise that will unify our people." It is time to tell Mr. Carter that we don't think it's exciting to see inflation reduce our standard of living year after year. We don't think it's exciting to see taxes take even more of our paycheck every time we get a cost-of-living raise. We don't think it's exciting to wait in gasoline lines for an hour to pay \$1.20 or more per gallon.

And we don't think a President who has presided over the most destructive inflation, the biggest government, the most punitive tax rates and regulations, and the greatest centralization of power in Washington, D. C., in our nation's history has any right to tell the rest of us that we have to sacrifice to make things better.

Yes, we must improve our defensive capability; I advocated a stronger defense even before Jimmy Carter became President. We must increase our presence in the Middle East and Pakistan; I have made specific proposals, and we're still waiting for President Carter to do so. And we must send the proper signals to the Soviets; simply refusing to sell grain and saying we ~~won't~~ play games with them are not enough.

But the key to our foreign strength is our domestic strength. If we are weak at home, our capability to respond to foreign aggression is weakened as well. At the same time, we increase the possibility that that

very aggression will take place.

We must act immediately to strengthen our domestic economy and increase our domestic energy supplies. No longer can we tolerate an administration which hides behind foreign crises, in large part of its own making, and refuses to confront the tough economic and energy challenges all of us face at home.

The key to revitalizing our economy is to increase economic growth. The "small is beautiful" philosophy simply won't do. Only a growing economy can provide the new jobs to increase opportunity for all Americans, the increased production that will help halt inflation, and the added tax revenue to pay for a stronger defense.

We should adopt a bold program of economic growth, starting with an across-the-board reduction in tax rates to increase incentive and productivity. Jimmy Carter thinks the only way to whip inflation is to wring it out of the economy with a recession and sky-high interest rates. Don't you believe it. We reduced tax rates in the 1920s and the early 1960s, and we created more jobs and lowered inflation at the same time.

We should also place strict limits on federal spending. Mr. Carter's own Justice Department says that as much as one-tenth of all federal tax dollars are spent fraudulently -- and even more than that is surely wasted. This President has no right to tell the rest of us to "live with less" when he won't cut such obvious fat out of the federal budget.

Finally, we must undertake those policies necessary to strengthen the dollar. A weak dollar only projects a weak United States.

Also, we have to embark on a program to dramatically increase our domestic energy production. Our first step should be to immediately eliminate all energy price controls and allocation formulas, and to

repeal the new tax on energy production. Not only would this significantly reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but in so doing, it would help prevent the OPEC countries from continually raising their oil prices to us.

Second, we must open vast new areas of land for oil and gas exploration -- especially in Alaska and on the Outer Continental Shelf. Alaska has perhaps as much oil as Saudi Arabia, and there is more oil on the Outer Continental Shelf alone waiting to be drilled as has been discovered in our entire history.

Finally, we need to greatly increase production of coal and nuclear power, within strict safety standards, of course. These two sources could replace a significant amount of the oil we now have to import.

It is time to tell Jimmy Carter that this is the kind of future we want -- one of hope and opportunity, not one of shortages and sacrifice.

It is time to tell him that the only way we can regain respect in the world is to first regain strength at home.

It is time to tell him that economic strength results when workers and businessmen are allowed to produce, rather than forced to follow unnecessary, stifling regulations and pay punitive taxes.

And it is time to tell him that we have to produce more energy in America. Not only does perpetual sacrifice fail to solve our problems, but federal bureaucrats have no right to tell Americans which days they may drive their cars, and which days they may go to work, as Jimmy Carter's Energy Department now wants to do.

President Carter said a few nights ago that "we will never abandon our struggle for a just and decent society at home." But

arbitrary sacrifice forced upon our people is both unjust and indecent when it is not needed and when other, more effective alternatives are available. By placing us on the road to a reduced standard of living and rationing of energy, President Carter has already abandoned that struggle for a just and decent society in a fundamental way.

Our message for the 1980s must be that we can defend our nation's interests; that we can find adequate domestic energy supplies; and that we can restore economic growth and opportunity. It does not require single-minded, government-mandated sacrifice; it only requires an inspired leadership with a vision of hope for the future to send that message. And that is a message I very much want to send.

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energy. Mr. Carter should spend a day with an American family. He would find what the rest of us already know: that Americans have cut back, but that for most, driving a car to work and heating one's home are a necessity, not an extravagance. Yet Mr. Carter's only hope for 1980 is to make it another "year of conservation."

Mr. Carter's moralistic view of America is that in order to have strength, freedom, and peace, "you will have to sacrifice your comfort and your ease," but that "this national commitment will be an exciting enterprise that will unify our people." It is time to tell Mr. Carter that we don't think it's exciting to see inflation reduce our standard of living year after year. We don't think it's exciting to see taxes take even more of our paycheck every time we get a cost-of-living raise. We don't think it's exciting to wait in gasoline lines for an hour to pay \$1.20 or more per gallon.

And we don't think a President who has presided over the most destructive inflation, the biggest government, the most punitive tax rates and regulations, and the greatest centralization of power in Washington, D. C., in our nation's history has any right to tell the rest of us that we have to sacrifice to make things better.

But sacrifice and "living with less" have been President Carter's answers across-the-board. Now he has even found a way to punish Americans -- to make them sacrifice -- as his solution to the Afghanistan crisis.

The President could have ordered the immediate reinstatement of the weapons systems he cancelled or postponed, but he chose not to.

The President could have sent the SALT I and SALT II treaties back to the Soviets and told them that as long as their troops were in Afghanistan, we would not be bound by the treaties' limits, but he

chose not to.

The President could have immediately opened high-level negotiations with Israel, Egypt, Oman, Somalia, and Pakistan to establish the United States' right to use basing facilities in those countries, but he chose not to.

Or the President could have imposed a naval blockade of Cuba, and told Moscow that nothing would enter or leave Cuba by sea until the Soviet troops were out of Afghanistan, but he chose not to.

No, President Carter's bold new initiative was to reinstate draft registration. As such, this is a meaningless gesture, unlikely to cause a single Soviet leader to tremble in his boots. But there is little doubt in the minds of many Americans that the President is resuming registration for only one reason: to use it as a first step toward reimposing the draft.

Now in the areas of inflation and energy, we could at least tolerate -- if painfully -- Mr. Carter's inept policies which have led us down the paths of economic weakness and greater dependence on foreign oil. But when a President threatens to unnecessarily endanger the very livelihood of 16 million of our young men -- and, yes, our young women, too -- then he has lost his moral claim to leadership. We must not allow our nation's young men and women to become another tool in Mr. Carter's latest exercise of political symbolism.

Drafting citizens for military service is not just another political "option." Conscripting people -- forcing them to give up two years of their lives -- is a very serious matter and should be undertaken only in the most serious of circumstances. We should never resort to the draft unless our national security absolutely requires it.

Now, I supported strong armed forces long before Mr. Carter even

thought of running for President, and I believe a strong military is even more essential today. But a strong peacetime military does not require a draft or draft registration. At best, registration would only cut a few days off the time required for mobilization. Thus, it provides our country with a false promise. Registration does not enhance our military security. In fact, by reviving the draft controversy of the Vietnam era, registration could divert national attention away from our real needs in rebuilding our military strength.

The only effective way to improve our armed forces is to do so directly, so that they are fully prepared should we need to deploy them. This is a fundamental question which Mr. Carter has not even bothered to address. Given the Soviets' ability to strike quickly, we might not be able to wait six months to respond at full capacity.

Yet six months is the minimum time required to train draftees. Instead of relying on this symbolic gesture, we should adopt a program to ensure that our armed forces are at full strength and combat-ready now -- not six months after we need them.

In forging this military preparedness, we should build upon our volunteer forces. The all-volunteer army has served us well. Since 1973, the military services have remained within 1.5% of Congressional targets, and have even increased their retention rates.

The recent shortfalls in our active forces, however, have come about because Congress violated its pledge to keep pay and benefits for servicemen and servicewomen comparable to those in the private sector. Congress has allowed the base pay for a recruit to fall to 17% below the federal minimum wage. The average salary for all enlisted personnel, including all allowances, is \$9,900, which is less than the government-defined minimum income necessary for even a low standard of

living for a family of four. This means that more than 100,000 military families have incomes so low that they are eligible for food stamps.

This is a disgrace. The men and women who volunteer to lay their lives on the line for our country should be at least as well paid as the average American worker. We should restore pay parity for the men and women in our armed forces. In the last session of Congress, in fact, an amendment was introduced, but did not pass, to grant military personnel the full 10.4% pay increase necessary to give their families a fighting chance against inflation. Yet the amendment would have cost only \$470 million, well within the defense spending ceiling.

I am convinced that adequate pay will reinvigorate enlistment to preserve the strength of our military. I believe that there are thousands of patriotic young men and women in our country who would gladly volunteer for the military if only they would be paid a decent wage.

Likewise, we should build up our reserves, by providing meaningful training opportunities, adequate pay for their part-time work, and other effective incentives. By strengthening our reserves, we can greatly reduce the need to resort to the draft even in the event of a conflict.

There are those, however, who think that young men and women have a duty to give up two years of their lives in service to our country, regardless of whether our national security requires a draft. I know that such people are sincere in their beliefs, but I cannot endorse the view that any person owes his service to the state as a matter of course.

Most recently, 50,000 Americans -- most of them draftees -- died in Vietnam. Now it may be true that Vietnam was the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. But it is time we vowed that as a nation, never again will we allow the immorality of asking our young men to

fight and die in a war our government is afraid to let them win.

And it is also time we discarded the notion that our young people owe the government two years of their lives even when our nation is not at war. Many, if not most, of our young men and women are working to earn a living and are paying taxes just like the rest of us. Most of the remainder are studying in school, so that they can eventually provide a good life for their families, and use their acquired skills to help keep our economy growing.

When the time comes that our national security demands a draft, I am sure that our young people will have no quarrel. But until that time, it is both unnecessary and unfair for government to demand a special sacrifice from 18- to 26-year-olds. Even the act of registration itself imposes a punitive uncertainty on the lives of our young men and women, an uncertainty which they neither need nor deserve.

We should tell Mr. Carter that whether it be our country's defense, our energy supplies, or our economy, "sacrifice" is not an answer, but only an added burden. Neither is "sacrifice" the wave of the future; it is a decadent remnant of some desperate past.

We should tell Mr. Carter that we want a President who recognizes this -- one who has confidence in trust in the American people, not one who thinks that they have to be forced to do what is right.

We should tell Mr. Carter that we want an economic policy based upon economic growth and increased opportunity for all our people, not upon make-work jobs and federal deficits.

We should tell him that we want an energy policy based upon increased production here at home, not one based upon rationing, higher prices, higher taxes, and greater dependence on foreign oil.

And we should tell him that we want a national security policy

based upon true strength and military flexibility, not upon symbolic gestures, abandonment of our allies, and a peacetime draft.

President Carter said a few nights ago that "we will never abandon our struggle for a just and decent society at home." But arbitrary sacrifice, especially draft registration and forcible conscription, are both unjust and indecent when they are not needed and when other, more effective, alternatives are available. By placing us back on the road to a lower standard of living, fuel rationing, and a peacetime draft, Mr. Carter has already abandoned that struggle for a just and decent society in a fundamental way.

Our message for the 1980s must be that we can defend our nation's interests; that we can find adequate domestic energy supplies; and that we can restore economic growth and opportunity. It does not require single-minded sacrifice; it only requires an inspired leadership with a vision of hope for the future to send that message. And that is a message which I very much want to send.

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