

**FOR THE SENATE:**

*Everett M. Dirksen  
of Illinois*

*Thomas H. Kuchel  
of California*

*Bourke B. Hickenlooper  
of Iowa*

*Margaret Chase Smith  
of Maine*

*George Murphy  
of California*

*Milton R. Young  
of North Dakota*

*Hugh Scott  
of Pennsylvania*

**PRESIDING:**

*The National Chairman  
Ray C. Bliss*

**THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP  
OF THE CONGRESS**

*Press Release*

Issued following a  
Leadership Meeting

July 18, 1968

**FOR THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

*Gerald R. Ford  
of Michigan*

*Leslie C. Arends  
of Illinois*

*Melvin R. Laird  
of Wisconsin*

*John J. Rhodes  
of Arizona*

*H. Allen Smith  
of California*

*Bob Wilson  
of California*

*Charles E. Goodell  
of New York*

*Richard H. Poff  
of Virginia*

*William C. Cramer  
of Florida*

REPRESENTATIVE FORD:

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The defense of the nation is the first duty of any Administration. In this, the Johnson-Humphrey Administration is failing the American people. Its short-sighted and wishful defense policies, unless promptly reversed, may expose our country to grave danger in the decade ahead.

Gen. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that "The growth of Soviet nuclear power and the trend of certain defense policies combine to make me anxious about the nation's future capacity for survival."

When Admiral Rickover, father of our nuclear submarine fleet, was asked by members of the Senate Armed Services Committee whether he would today more confidently command the American or the Soviet submarine force he answered instantly: "The Soviet submarine force."

Many professional military leaders believe our nation will eventually be imperilled by recent and present defense policies. In this era of increasingly sophisticated and complex technology, the lead time of most weapons systems exceeds the Constitutional limit on Presidential tenure. Thus, ironically, the far-sighted defense decisions of the Eisenhower Administration provide our margin of safety today. But where will we stand in the 1970's if we continue the Johnson-Humphrey Administration policies?

President Eisenhower sought peace through a defense posture second to none, the traditional American concept. He was able to bring peace to Korea and his successor was able to avert war in the Cuban missile crisis because the United States still had clear strategic superiority. But the Johnson-Humphrey Administration over the past five years has:

1. Curtailed expansion of our long-range strategic missile force;
2. Watched in bewilderment as the Russians have doubled the number of their intercontinental ballistic missiles in one year;

3. Ended big bomber production, reduced our existing force, refused to approve an advanced, manned strategic bomber, and wasted time and resources on development of the TFX aircraft, that, as experts predicted, proved totally unsuitable for Navy use.

4. Delayed the improvement of our nuclear Navy, permitted the Soviet Union rapidly to close the gap in nuclear-powered submarines and allowed the Russians to establish and expand their fleets in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

5. Half-heartedly, under heavy pressure from Republicans and concerned Democrats in the Congress, agreed to the deployment of a thin anti-ballistic missile defense for the protection of our people.

6. Weakened our ability to respond to emergency situations such as the seizure of the USS Pueblo by concentrating attention on Vietnam and spreading other available forces, at high risk, too thinly around the world. (This is the 178th day since the Pueblo's seizure.)

7. Allowed the American merchant marine to shrink into virtual insignificance and avoided adoption of a comprehensive maritime strategy and program at the very time the Soviets are stepping up theirs.

8. Diluted and dissipated the successful and prudent posture of seeking peace through strength, which had been bipartisan American policy since World War II, to the point where Soviet spokesmen are openly claiming strategic parity as the price of peace.

It is highly significant that Soviet Communist Party chief Brezhnev recently assailed the Republican Coordinating Committee's endorsement of the doctrine of strategic superiority for the United States. Brezhnev said the Soviet Union would "remain vigilant, increase its military preparedness and 'keep our powder dry'."

The next U.S. Administration must be equally diligent to keep America's powder dry, to ensure our long-range survival through adequate defense planning. The Johnson-Humphrey defense policies have demonstrably failed to face up to the realities of peace and security in a perilous world. They have left us with a genuine and growing strategic capability gap that must be closed quickly.

July 18, 1968

The defense of the nation is not alone a matter of military force. It depends also upon foreign policies realistic in concept and unflinching in spirit.

All around the globe we see our foreign policies in disarray.

In Western Europe there is growing distrust of the United States and dismay as to the future. NATO, freedom's shield on that continent, has been allowed virtually to disintegrate. In the Middle East indecision alienates our friends and heartens our enemies, and Russian diplomatic and military-- especially naval -- power has moved into the vacuum the Administration has permitted there.

In Latin America, the Administration's fumbling with the alleged "Alliance for Progress" proves it to be neither an alliance of promise nor one capable of progress in present hands.

The dangerously disturbed state of affairs almost everywhere alarms us with good reason, for we fail to see in this Administration's policies, practices and philosophy any hope of solution for it.

By way of vivid example, we have hoped for months for Administration support of the atomic desalinization plan placed before it long ago by Americans of unquestioned eminence and ability and enthusiastically endorsed by thousands of citizens around the world.

The Middle East is again a powder-keg immensely dangerous to world peace. Even so, the Administration continues to maintain that this extraordinary atomic project-for-peace, which promises to replace ancient hatreds with hope in the Eastern Mediterranean, is "not politically feasible".

This we cannot accept. The proposal is a thoughtful, practical initiative for peace without parallel in recent years. It might well restore stability in that tormented region. We strongly urge the adoption of that Eisenhower-Strauss proposal at the earliest possible moment.

The improved military capability of Arab nations with French and Soviet planes and weapons has created a power imbalance in the Middle East which is dangerous to peace. It can be corrected only if this nation will make available suitable and necessary weapons and F-4 Phantom jet planes to the Republic of Israel.

Mr. Dirksen

The defense of this nation is tied as surely to statesmanlike economic proposals such as this as it is to military hardware. We serve neither America nor mankind with sanity by ignoring them.

We repeat that the defense of our nation is the first duty of this Administration. It is clear and alarming that this primary responsibility is not being met.