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ANNOUNCEMENT BY  
SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN (D.-SO. DAK.)

Caucus Room  
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Since the death of Senator Kennedy, there has been speculation that as South Dakota's favorite son Presidential candidate, I might serve as a rallying point for his supporters. Although that discussion is a high compliment, I make no claim to wear the Kennedy mantle.

Robert Kennedy -- the most talented and passionate political leader of this generation -- would, in my opinion, have won the nomination, been elected, and become one of our truly great Presidents.

But that is not to be; nor is there anyone else to play his role in American political life.

I have not sought the endorsement of those best able to speak for the late Senator Kennedy -- his courageous widow, Ethel, or his gallant brother, Senator Edward Kennedy. They are entitled to a moment away from the political pressures of 1968, and I would not anticipate anything other than their quiet understanding of what it is I seek to do.

But I believe deeply in the twin goals for which Robert Kennedy gave his life -- an end to the war in Vietnam and a passionate commitment to heal the divisions in our own society.

I share with countless other Americans a profound sense that the untimely deaths of John and Robert Kennedy, as well as Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King, have left a painful void of unfulfilled dreams that we must all try to restore.

Senator McCarthy has, with dignity and nobility, given us a new hope for peace in Vietnam; while Vice President Humphrey has long championed the cause of social justice and a progressive America.

If either of these men wins the Democratic Presidential nomination, he will have my active support -- not only for their own considerable merit, but because there is nothing in Mr. Nixon's past record to indicate that he is a man of either peace or compassion. I have heard the talk about the "new Nixon". But the Bible warned us long ago about the danger of putting new wine into an old bottle.

As a candidate for the Presidential nomination, or if that is denied, as a United States Senator from South Dakota, I hope to serve this Nation that so urgently needs a commitment of passion and purpose from each one of us. Perhaps from the all-too-great sacrifice of Robert Kennedy, we can resolve to serve the end he so eagerly sought for us all -- "to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of the world."

Whether or not I secure the nomination at Chicago, my candidacy and my words may strengthen both our platform and our leadership in those inseparable aspirations of peace abroad and social justice in our own troubled land.

As a United States Congressman, as director of the Food for Peace Program under President Kennedy, as a Senator from South Dakota these past five and a half years, I have spoken out on the hard issues. If I have any special asset for national leadership, it is, I believe, a sense of history -- an understanding of the forces that have brought this country to a position of power and influence in the world and an appreciation of what is important in our own time.

For five years I have warned against our deepening involvement in Vietnam -- the most disastrous political and military blunder in our national experience. That war must be ended now -- not next year, or the year following -- but now.

There will be no meaningful negotiations until the bombing of North Vietnam is stopped. It should end this very moment. It has failed in all of its stated purposes from the very beginning, and it now blocks the path that might end the war.

The senseless "search and destroy" operations, which kill the innocent with the combatant, should also cease now.

The loss of American youth and the slaughter of the Vietnamese should stop now. The next President of the United States, if he has the will to do so, can soon end this war on terms fully acceptable to the American people.



As Democrats, we bear a special burden to the voters, because four years ago, we sought their confidence on a platform of peace. "We seek no wider war" was the pledge of 1964. Now, 25,000 young American lives and \$100 billion later, it is our responsibility to take to the American people a platform and a leadership determined to reverse this grievous error -- not to rationalize it.

I hope that in Chicago we shall go on record for a foreign policy of restraint and peace; not one that would make us the world's policeman, banker, and judge.

Beyond this, I have long advocated a systematic reduction of our overgrown military-industrial complex about which former President Eisenhower warned us 8 years ago. It is imperative that we scale down the waste in our military establishment beyond what is needed for our defense so that those excess resources may be diverted to long-neglected areas of our national life -- the reconstruction of our cities and the strengthening of rural America.

We should end the draft of our young men now and replace that unfair and wasteful system with a voluntary program in which those who serve the Nation are reimbursed sufficiently to attract a competent volunteer force.

Finally, we need to harness the full spiritual and political resources of this Nation to put an end to the shameful remnants of racism and poverty that still afflict our land. Just as brotherhood is the condition of survival in a nuclear world, so is it the condition of peace in America.

What I have spelled out here in broad outline calls for an active, compassionate President, wholly devoted to the restoration of peace abroad and the redemption of our own beloved country. It also calls for a direct personal commitment to the politics of this Nation by each citizen, neighborhood, and community across the land.

It is for these purposes that I declare myself a candidate for the Presidential nomination.

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