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## PARTIAL TEXT OF KENNEDY'S SPEECH

## News Restraint Held Vital

Following is a partial text of President Kennedy's speech last night before the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association in New York:

I want to talk about our common responsibilities in the face of a common challenge. The events of recent weeks may have helped to illumine that challenge for some; but the dimensions of its threat have long loomed this large on our horizon.

This deadly challenge imposes upon our society two requirements of direct concern to both the press and the President—two requirements that may seem almost contradictory in tone, but which must be reconciled and fulfilled if we are to meet this national peril. I refer, first, to the need for far greater public information; and second, to the need for far greater official secrecy.

### Question of Restraint

The very word "secrecy" is repugnant in a free and open republic; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings. We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it. Even today, there is little value in opposing the threat of a closed society by imitating its arbitrary restrictions. Even today, there is little value in insuring the survival of our Nation if our traditions do not survive with it. And there is very grave danger that an announced need for increased security will be seized upon by those anxious to expand its meaning to the very limits of official censorship and concealment.

That I do not intend to permit. And no official of my administration, whether his rank is high or low, civilian or military, should interpret my words here tonight as an excuse to censor the news, to stifle dissent, to cover up our mistakes or to withhold from the press and the people the facts they deserve to know.

### Security Supersedes Rights

But I do ask every publisher, every editor, and every newspaperman in the Nation to re-examine his own standards, and to recognize the nature of our country's peril. In time of war, the Government and the press have customarily joined in an effort, based largely on self-discipline, to prevent unauthorized disclosures to the enemy. In time of "clear and present danger," the courts have held that even the privileged rights of the First Amendment must yield to the public's need for national security.

Today no war has been declared—and however fierce the struggle, it may never be declared in traditional fashion. Our way of life is under attack. Those who make themselves our enemy are advancing around the globe. The survival of our friends is in danger. And yet no war has been declared, no borders have been crossed, no missiles have been fired.

### A Change in Tactics

If the press is awaiting a declaration of war before it imposes the self-discipline of combat conditions, then I can only say that no war ever posed a greater threat to our security. If you are awaiting a finding of "clear and present danger," then I can only say that the danger has never been more

clear and its presence has never been more imminent.

It requires a change in outlook, a change in tactics, a change in missions—by the Government, by the people, by every businessman, union leader and newspaper. For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means of expanding its sphere of influence—on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day.

Every democracy recognizes the necessary restraints of national security—and the question remains whether those restraints need to be more strictly observed if we are to oppose this kind of attack as well as outright invasion.

### Our News Aids Enemy

For the facts of the matter are that this Nation's foes have openly boasted of acquiring through our newspapers information they would otherwise hire agents to acquire through theft, bribery or espionage; that details of this Nation's covert preparations to counter the enemy's covert operations have been available to every newspaper reader, friend and foe alike; that the size, the strength, the location and the nature of our forces and weapons, and our plans and strategy for their use, have all been pin-pointed in the press and other news media to a degree sufficient to satisfy any foreign power; and that, in at least one case, the publication of details concerning a secret mechanism in our possession required its alteration at the expense of considerable time and money.

### Security As A News Test

In the absence of open warfare, they recognized only the tests of journalism and not the tests of national security. And my question tonight is whether additional tests should not now be adopted.

That question is for you alone to answer. No public official should answer it for you. No Government plan should impose its restraining against your will. But I would be failing in my duty to the Nation if I did not commend this problem to your attention, and urge its thoughtful consideration.

On many earlier occasions, I have said—and your newspapers have said—that these are times that appeal to every citizen's sense of sacrifice and self-discipline. They call out to every citizen to weigh his rights and comforts against his obligations to the national good. I cannot now believe that those citizens who serve in the newspaper business consider themselves exempt from that appeal.

### Is It in National Interest?

I have no intention of establishing a new office of war information to govern the flow of news. I am not suggesting any new forms of censorship or new types of security classification. I have no easy answer to the dilemma I have posed, and would not seek to impose it if I had one. But I am asking the members of the newspaper profession and industry in this country to re-examine their own obligations—to consider the degree and the nature of the present danger—and to heed the duty of self-restraint which that danger imposes upon us all.

Every newspaper now asks it-

... with respect to every story.  
 ... it news?" All I suggest is  
 that you add the question: "Is  
 it in the national interest?"  
 And I hope that every group in  
 America, unions and business-  
 men and public officials at  
 every level—will ask the same  
 question of their endeavors,  
 and subject their actions to this  
 same exacting test.

And should the press of  
 America consider and recom-  
 mend the voluntary assumption  
 of specific new steps or ma-  
 chinery, I can assure you that  
 this administration will co-  
 operate wholeheartedly with  
 those recommendations.

Perhaps there will be no rec-  
 ommendations. Perhaps there  
 is no answer to the dilemma  
 faced by a free and open society  
 in a cold and secret war.

## II.

### Duty to Inform and Alert

It is the unprecedented nature  
 of this challenge that also gives  
 rise to your second obligation—  
 an obligation which I share.  
 And that is our obligation to  
 inform and alert the American  
 people—to make certain they  
 possess all the facts they need,  
 and understand them as well—  
 the perils, the prospects, the  
 purposes of our program and  
 the choices we face.

No President should fear  
 public scrutiny of his program.  
 For from that scrutiny comes  
 understanding; and from that  
 understanding comes support.  
 I am not asking your news-  
 papers to support me at all  
 times on the editorial page—  
 this is not Utopia yet.

But I am asking your help in  
 the tremendous task of in-  
 forming and alerting the  
 American people. For I have  
 complete confidence in the  
 response and dedication of our  
 citizens whenever they are  
 fully informed.

I not only could not stifle  
 controversy among your  
 readers—I welcome it. This  
 administration intends to be  
 candid about its errors; for, as  
 a wise man once said "An  
 error doesn't become a mistake  
 until you refuse to correct it."  
 We intend to accept full  
 responsibility for our errors;  
 and we expect you to point  
 them out when we miss them.

### The Purpose of the Press

Without debate, without  
 criticism, no administration can  
 succeed—and no republic can  
 survive. That is why the  
 Athenian lawmaker Solon de-  
 creed it a crime for the citizen  
 to shrink from controversy.  
 And that is why our press was  
 protected by the First Amend-  
 ment—the only business in  
 America specifically protected  
 by the Constitution—not pri-  
 marily to amuse and entertain,  
 not to emphasize the trivial  
 and the sentimental, not simply  
 to "give the public what it  
 wants"—but to inform, to  
 arouse, to reflect, to state our  
 dangers and our opportunities,  
 to indicate our crisis and our  
 choices, to lead, mold, educate  
 and sometimes even anger  
 public opinion.

This means greater coverage  
 and analysis of international  
 news—for it is no longer far  
 away and foreign, but close at  
 hand and local. It means  
 greater attention to improved  
 understanding of the news as  
 well as improved transmission.  
 And it means, finally, that Gov-  
 ernment at all levels, must meet  
 its obligation to provide you  
 with the fullest possible infor-  
 mation outside the very narrow  
 limits previously mentioned—  
 and this administration intends  
 to meet that obligation to a  
 degree never before approach-  
 ed by any nation in the world.