20th Anniversary of the Historic 1963 March on Washington

A CALL TO THE NATION



We Still Have A Dream! JOBS - PEACE - FREEDOM

August 27, 1983 ☆ Lincoln Memorial ☆ Washington, D.C.

Three critical conditions in our society—
insufferable unemployment; an escalating arms race;
and the denial of basic rights and programs which ensure freedom—
force the undersigned to call upon our fellow Americans
to March on Washington on August 27, 1983 on the occasion
of the Twentieth Anniversary of the historic March on Washington.

A CALL TO THE NATION

E, THE UNDERSIGNED CONVENERS, deemed it wise to call upon our fellow Americans to remember the full meaning of the American Dream, of liberty and justice for all, in a world of peace and freedom in which everyone can live with the hope of a better tomorrow for our children. But the American Dream is tarnished today as the tides of national self-doubt, aggressiveness and chauvinism of race, sex, class and nation are seriously undermining our national unity and sense of human solidarity.

We seek to bring together a "New Coalition of Conscience" for Jobs, Peace and Freedom on the Twentieth Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech—a treasured part of the legacy of all Americans. We seek in this way to help recapture a sense of noble and human spirit in which our domestic and foreign policies are consistent with the basic national purposes as articulated in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the United States Constitution.

We seek a New Coalition of Conscience that will be an expansion of the historic Coalition of the Civil Rights Movement, because we understand that the issues of Jobs, Peace and Freedom are inextricably linked that they are equally important. The New Coalition brings together these three issues based upon the concept of the "Beloved Community" of Dr. King—that all humans are "caught in an inescapable network of mutuality . . . whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." Our Coalition is not a collection of single-issue groups brought together for tactical advantage, rather it is a community and a movement brought together by a common dream and human values.

The New Coalition is open to all who truly ascribe to this document, and work in mutuality and trust with all other signatories. We do not aspire to unanimity in all details. However, we do believe that a powerful unity of spirit—to seek the solutions to our national problems through non-violent and democratic procedures—will provide a catalyst for powerful and much needed social changes in this nation.

We believe that the basic national agenda must be built around the challenges of JOBS, PEACE AND FREEDOM.

Millions of Americans are suffering from the disaster of double-digit unemployment, and the groups affected most are Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, the Disabled, Women and Youth. The shrinking availability of jobs in a depressed industrial economy, and the lack of training opportu-

nities to learn new skills, is undermining the moral and spiritual foundations of our communities and families. The military budget which involves pouring billions of dollars into defense spending denies our people scores of absolutely essential human resources and service programs. The farmers and small business people of our country are facing foreclosures and bankruptcies on a scale unequalled since the 1930s. Disabled Americans have lost vital services and programs that once helped them gain access to an education and a better job. This squandering of human resources is a human disgrace when so much needs to be done in both the public and private sectors. We call upon the American people to turn this nation around from its present course and to seek with all deliberate speed the full employment objectives of the Humphrey-Hawkins Act, which is now the law of the land. We call for a new social contract between labor, industry and government to assure all Americans socially useful and dignified employment with a just wage, to foster real economic growth, and to provide adequate education and training for all Americans.

PEACE:

that peace not be defined merely as the absence of war

or as a distant goal which is sought, but as a means by which a goal is achieved. The pursuit of peaceful ends through peaceful means must be continued. Based on the assumption that life is worth living and that humankind has a right to survive, an alternative to war and threats of war must be found.

The stockpiling and proliferation of nuclear weapons cast a dark shadow over the future of humanity. The very planet on which we live is threatened with nuclear destruction. Global military spending consumes vast resources needed to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless. The massive worldwide armament race has escaped control and all reason, and has restricted the ability of governments to promote the common welfare of all people. Armed with destructive weapons unparalleled in human history, we live in constant fear of annihilation. We call upon both super powers and their allies to radically reduce and ultimately eliminate their nuclear arsenals as well as conventional weapons; to act jointly to prevent the spread of such weapons to other nations; and to reduce the record levels of military expenditures. The pursuit of peace and justice throughout the world is of singular importance. Therefore, we call upon the American people to follow the leadership of the growing number of religious leaders and other leaders of conscience, who are seeking ways to resolve world conflicts through non-violent means, and ways to invest our wealth and energy, in peace. Ending

the disastrous arms race in the immediate months ahead must become public policy, not just an elusive goal. Moreover, we call upon the American public to turn the arms race into a "peace race" utilizing the existent and evolving movements in the United States as its foundation.

FREEDOM:

In light of the creeping fear that is sapping our confidence and trust in each other and setting group against group, we call for a national campaign throughout 1983 against hate and every form of class, racial, sexual, age, and religious prejudice. We call upon the American people to renew their commitment to the cause of human rights and to resist the rising tide of extremism reflected in the rebirth of bombings and increased brutalities by the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi groups, and in some places, by the enforcement agencies. We call for the New Coalition of Conscience to work vigorously to defeat anticivil rights legislation and to reverse recent governmental trends which have sought to roll back and weaken the enforcement of civil rights laws and policies. We call upon the nation to work for full and equal rights of women. We are committed to securing legal and economic equity for women in the workforce.

We urge the implementation of domestic and foreign policies that reflect the best values of the American people by promoting respect for and protection of human rights. We are opposed to repression of every sort—whether it be the economic, social and cultural rights that are denied, or civil and political rights that are abridged. We support the struggle of workers to organize in free trade unions everywhere. We oppose corporate America's partnership with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa and we condemn the policies of the current administration in expanding relations with South Africa. We oppose the militarization of internal conflicts, often abetted and even encouraged by massive U.S. arms exports, in areas of the world such as the Middle East and Central America, while their basic human problems are neglected. Further, we urge the American Government to eliminate its ideological and racial biases in our nation's refugee and asylum policies and practices.

To bring all these issues together, we will launch a year-long mobilization of a New Coalition of Conscience that will:

bring together a massive MARCH ON WASHINGTON, D.C. on August 27th, 1983 to reaffirm the Dream and continue activities on August 28th to unite as never before this New Coalition around specific goals and common objectives; and

develop a broad non-partisan coalition to press for basic legislation to turn this nation around in the areas of JOBS, PEACE AND FREEDOM; and

work for passage of legislation that would designate January 15th as a national public holiday in honor of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

work on the state and local level to implement the full agenda of the New Coalition of Conscience.

We are encouraged by the great outpouring of concern among the people of our country as evidenced in the "Solidarity Day Demonstration" in September 1981; the great "Peace Demonstration" held in New York last June 12th, which was the largest mass demonstration on any issue in the history of the United States; as well as hundreds of local actions organized on an unprecedented scale. We believe that this is the historic moment to bring together again a coalition of goodwill and conscience, that will address the welfare of the whole nation and not merely some of its parts; that will be unified by a common vision of the American Dream, and that can act as a power and as a leaven to help this nation live out its full meaning and move again toward that Dream.

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