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SPEECH BY SENATOR PAUL TSONGAS (D - Mass.)
TO THE UAW LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
JANUARY 14, 1979

IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME TO SPEAK TO YOU THIS EVENING.

AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE JUST MOVED FROM THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CAPITOL TO THE NORTH SIDE. THOSE FIVE HUNDRED FEET OF CORRIDOR REPRESENT AN ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE TO ME. A SIX YEAR TERM WILL ENABLE ME TO THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN AND THE NATION, ABOUT THE LONG-RANGE CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY TO A GENERATION RATHER THAN NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION.

ENTERING THE SENATE AS ONE OF THE CLASS OF '79 IS A LONELY EXPERIENCE, UNLIKE MY ARRIVAL FOUR YEARS AGO AS A MEMBER OF THE SO-CALLED "WATERGATE CLASS". ON MY FIRST DAY AS A SENATOR A GUARD REMARKED THAT I LOOK TOO YOUNG TO BE A SENATOR. WHEN THE FRESHMAN CLASS ARRIVED IN JANUARY 1975, THERE WERE AT LEAST 60 OF US WHO LOOKED "TOO YOUNG" TO BE THERE. THAT FRESHMAN CLASS HAD COMMON GOALS AND A COMMON OUTLOOK. WE HAD COME OF AGE IN THE 1960'S. WE CAME TO WASHINGTON TO MAKE GOVERNMENT OPEN, TO PROVE POLITICIANS COULD BE HONEST, AND TO INSURE THAT AMERICAN TROOPS NEVER FOUGHT ANOTHER VIETNAM WAR.

TODAY, THE CLIMATE IS DIFFERENT, AND SO ARE MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES. WHEN I TAKE THE OATH OF OFFICE TOMORROW, THERE MAY BE FOUR KINDRED SPIRITS BESIDE ME WHO SHARE MY CONCERN, AND I AM SURE YOUR CONCERN, ABOUT A DRIFT TO THE RIGHT IN THIS COUNTRY.

IF WHAT WE ARE HEARING OUT OF WASHINGTON TODAY AND FROM CALIFORNIA IS THE TIDE OF THIS CONGRESS, THEN WE ARE IN REAL TROUBLE.

(more)

THERE ARE NO QUICKIE SOLUTIONS TO OUR COMPLEX ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, BANDAIDS WON'T DO FOR AN ENERGY POLICY, AND A COLD SHOULDER TO THE HUMAN PROBLEMS FACING US AS WE MOVE INTO A NEW DECADE IS UNACCEPTABLE.

OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, I WILL NEED YOUR HELP IN MAKING MY VOICE STRONG WHEN I SPEAK FOR A SALT AGREEMENT, A NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM, FOR LABOR LAW REFORM, FOR MASS TRANSPORTATION, FOR AID TO OUR CITIES. YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR NATION FACING THE CHALLENGES, AND THE HARD REALITIES OF THE 1980'S, OR STANDING STILL, OR WORSE YET, MOVING BACKWARDS.

THOSE SOUNDINGS OUT OF WASHINGTON AND CALIFORNIA ARE ESPECIALLY TROUBLESOME TO THOSE OF US FROM THE NORTHEAST. THERE IS NO WAY THE OLDER COMMUNITIES OF THE NORTHEAST CAN SUSTAIN THE KINDS OF CUTBACKS IN FUNDING PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER.

LAST WEEK, WHEN I WAS IN BOSTON, I WARNED THAT IF THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO TURN HIS BACK ON THE CITIES AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE CITIES, HE IS GOING TO HAVE A FIGHT ON HIS HANDS. A FEW DAYS LATER, A BOSTON GLOBE EDITORIAL RECALLED A CAMPAIGN CHARGE MADE AGAINST ME, THE CHARGE THAT, ONCE ELECTED, I WOULD BECOME A TOOL OF PRESIDENT CARTER. THE EDITORIAL WENT ON TO SAY: "IF TSONGAS IS A CARTER TOOL, THEN THE TOOL IS A BUZZ SAW AND THE PRESIDENT HAD BETTER WATCH HIS FINGERS."

PRESIDENT CARTER AND I SHARE A LOT OF COMMON GROUND. BUT ON THE SUBJECT OF OUR CITIES AND THEIR FUTURE, MY FEELINGS RUN DEEP.

I GREW UP IN LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS, A MILL TOWN YOU MAY KNOW ABOUT. WHEN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY UP AND LEFT US FOR SUNNIER SKIES SOME 50 YEARS AGO, THE CITY DIDN'T LOOSE HER SOUL, BUT SHE CERTAINLY LOST HER SELF ESTEEM. INSTEAD OF MONUMENTS TO THE WORKING MEN AND WOMEN WHO BEGAN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION THERE, THE MAGNIFICENT MILLS AND CANALS OF LOWELL BECAME EYESORES TO THE PEOPLE, PAINFUL REMINDERS THAT WE WERE LOOSERS.

(MORE)

IF THE CITY HAD NOT BEEN SO POOR AND DISCOUNTED, THESE ^{IRREPLACEABLE} RELICS WOULD HAVE BEEN TORN DOWN AND REPLACED BY BLACKTOP AND CEMENT. LOWELL IS STILL MY HOME. MY ROOTS ARE WITH THE WORKING PEOPLE OF LOWELL, THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED MOST FROM HER ECONOMIC DEVASTATION.

SO WHEN PRESIDENT CARTER SAYS THAT "AUSTERITY" IS THE CURE FOR OUR URBAN ILLS IN THESE INFLATIONARY TIMES, I CHAFE.[?] IF IT IS MY FATE TO ACCEPT THE BLAME FOR HELPING THE CITIES, THEN I WILL GLADLY ACCEPT THAT FATE.

IS THE PRESIDENT -- ARE YOU AND I -- PREPARED FOR A RERUN OF WATTS, OF THE DETROIT AND WASHINGTON RIOTS OF THE 60'S. ARE WE PREPARED TO ABANDON OUR CITIES, LEAVING THEM TO IGNITE AT ANY MOMENT? DO WE WANT TO RELIVE THAT SHAMEFUL NIGHTMARE?

YOU AND I KNOW FROM FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE WHAT THIRTY YEARS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY HAS DONE TO DRIVE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, PEOPLE AND JOBS, OUT OF THE CITIES AND INTO THE SUBURBS. YOU KNOW WHY ONLY ONE ^{AUTOMOBILE} ASSEMBLY PLANT IS LEFT IN DETROIT; WHY CLEVELAND, LIKE NEW YORK, IS ON THE BRINK OF DEFAULT. HERE ARE MORE DISTURBING FACTS:

- * BETWEEN 1970 and 1977, THE POPULATION IN OUR CITIES DECLINED BY FIVE PERCENT WHILE THE SUBURBAN POPULATION CLIMBED 12 PERCENT.
- * AS A RESULT OF MIGRATION OUT OF OUR CITIES IN 1976, \$18 BILLION LESS INCOME WAS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES LIVING IN OUR CITIES THAT YEAR.
- * THE POVERTY RATE IN OUR CITIES WAS HIGHER IN 1976 THAN IN 1969.
- * THE INCOME OF FAMILIES MOVING OUT OF OUR CITIES IS HIGHER THAN FAMILIES MOVING IN.
- * TWO TIMES AS MANY WOMEN HEAD HOUSEHOLDS IN OUR CITIES THAN IN OUR SUBURBS.

(more)

YOU AND I KNOW THAT UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE CONDITION OF OUR CITIES IS INEXORABLY LINKED. THE LATEST FIGURES OUT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR SHOW THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IS CREEPING UP AGAIN. IT MAY REACH SEVEN PERCENT BY THE END OF THE YEAR. AND THOSE WHO SUFFER THE MOST FROM JOBLESSNESS, BLACKS AND YOUTH, LIVE IN OUR CITIES.

DESPITE THOSE HARSH REALITIES, I AM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT OUR CITIES. THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. URBAN REVITALIZATION IN MASSACHUSETTS AND CITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY HAS BECOME A MOVEMENT. NEW FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACTION GRANT PROGRAMS, AND COUNTER CYCLICAL AID HAVE PRODUCED RESULTS.

IN ITS FIRST TEN MONTHS, HUD'S ACTION GRANT PROGRAM CREATED MORE THAN 100,000 NEW JOBS; 45,000 NEW JOBS WERE RETAINED, AND ALMOST 60,000 CONSTRUCTION JOBS WERE CREATED. ACTION GRANTS ARE THE KIND OF CREATIVE REVITALIZATION PROJECTS I LIKE, THEY MAXIMIZE FEDERAL DOLLARS AND USE THEM AS A LEVER FOR SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN ECONOMICALLY-DISTRESSED CITIES. UNDER THE PROGRAM SO FAR, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS SPENT \$400 MILLION AND LEVERAGED SIX TIMES THAT AMOUNT IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

WE HAVE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW THE PROGRAM CAN WORK IF LOCAL BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT COOPERATES IN LAUNCHING NEW APPROACHES. THE CITY OF LOWELL AND LOCAL BANKS FORMED AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO MAKE LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR BUSINESS INVESTMENT. LAST FALL, THE CORPORATION RECEIVED \$^A5 MILLION ACTION GRANT FROM HUD. THE \$5 MILLION WAS LOANED TO A COMPUTER COMPANY WHICH WAS READY TO MOVE TO THE SUBURBS AND BUILD A NEW PLANT THERE. BECAUSE OF THE ENTICINGLY LOW INTEREST RATE OFFERED BY THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, THE FIRM DECIDED TO STAY IN THE CITY. (more)

IT INVESTED \$15 MILLION OF ITS OWN MONEY TO EXPAND ITS PLANT AND CREATED 4,000 NEW JOBS FOR AREA RESIDENTS.

THAT'S NOT THE END OF IT. AS THE MONEY IS PAID BACK, THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WILL RECYCLE IT COUNTLESS TIMES, LOANING MONEY TO OTHER BUSINESSES.

I DON'T BELIEVE WE NEED TO LEGISLATE NEW PROGRAMS. WHAT WE MUST DO, HOWEVER, IS CONTINUE FEDERAL SUPPORT OF EXISTING PROGRAMS. WE HAVE TO LURE BUSINESS AND PEOPLE BACK INTO OUR CITIES. EVEN IN A TIME OF TIGHT RESOURCES, A FEDERAL COMMITMENT CAN CHANGE A CITY'S ATTITUDE ABOUT ITSELF. THAT CHANGE IN ATTITUDE -- MORE THAN MONEY -- WILL PROMOTE PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND WITH CREATIVE PLANNING, TRANSFORM OUR CITIES.

LET ME GIVE YOU A FEW EXAMPLES OF WHY ATTITUDE IS SO IMPORTANT. WHEN BOSTON WAS TRYING TO FINANCE A MAJOR REHABILITATION OF SOME OLD INNER CITY MARKETS BY THE WATERFRONT TEN YEARS AGO, TO TURN THEM INTO A COMMERCIAL CENTER, LOCAL BANKS COULDN'T COME UP WITH THE MONEY. THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE CITY COULDN'T SEE THAT THE HISTORIC MARKET AREA WAS AN ASSET THAT COULD BECOME A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS. BOSTON HAD TO GO TO NEW YORK TO GET THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

THAT PROJECT -- QUINCY MARKET -- IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL RETAIL OPERATION IN THE COUNTRY -- PERHAPS IN THE WORLD. IT HAS BROUGHT \$6 MILLION IN REVENUE TO THE STATE AND ATTRACTS MORE PEOPLE PER DAY THAN DISNEY WORLD.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: CONGRESS RECENTLY PASSED LEGISLATION MAKING LOWELL THE FIRST NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK IN A CITY IN THE NATION. SO FAR NOT ONE DOLLAR OF FEDERAL PARK MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT THERE. WHAT THE PARK HAS DONE IS CONVINCE THE PEOPLE THAT WHAT THEY HAVE IN LOWELL IS WORTHY OF REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

(more)

NINETY PERCENT OF THE RESTORATION OF LOWELL'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS HAS BEEN DONE WITH PRIVATE FUNDS.

IF YOU GO TO LOWELL TODAY, YOU WILL SEE THAT THE CITY IS A MODEL FOR OTHER CITIES THAT A CITY CAN COME BACK. BUT IT IS ALSO A SYMBOL OF THE INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT TASK OF CONVINCING A CITY TO BELIEVE IN ITSELF ONCE ITS SELF ESTEEM IS GONE. TO MY MIND, THE WORST THING CONFRONTING REVITALIZATION EFFORTS IS NOT MONEY NOR LACK OF TALENT OR EVEN VIABLE BUSINESSES. IT IS THE ATTITUDE THAT A COMMUNITY CANNOT COME BACK.

THAT ATTITUDAL CHANGE NECESSITATES FEDERAL SUPPORT. LOOK AT NEWARK. COUNTER_CYCLICAL AID BEGAN TO DEAL WITH NEWARK'S UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS. WHEN THE AID CEASED, THE PROGRESS BEGAN TO BACKSLIDE. THE MOMENTUM THAT THE TIDE HAS TURNED IN THE CITIES' FAVOR IS EXTREMELY TENUOUS. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WATCH OUR CITIES SLIP BACKWARDS.

IF OUR CITIES GO, THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY THE PRESIDENT IS SEEKING WILL BE A JOKE. IF OUR CITIES DON'T SURVIVE, WE WON'T SURVIVE. AS WE MOVE INTO THE 1980'S, OUR CITIES HOLD THE PROMISE OF A VIABLE ECONOMY IN AN AGE WHEN FUEL SHORTAGES ARE RAMPANT; OF JOBS; OF ACCESSIBLE RECREATION. THE CITIES ARE NOT OBSOLETE. THE CULTURAL LIFE AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE REMINDERS OF WHO WE ARE AT A TIME WHEN CHANGE IS ACCELERATING AT SUCH A PACE WE OFTEN WONDER.

IF AND WHEN THE CUTBACKS COME, I HOPE YOU WILL STAND WITH ME AND FIGHT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.