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BY DAVID OVER.

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SPEECH OF HON. DANIEL S. DICKINSON.

AT ITHACA, N. Y., ON THE 7TH INST.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: That there should be a Free Government founded upon this continent wherein no kingcraft should bear sway, and where the people themselves should be sovereign, our fathers pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. They staked all upon a great issue, and stood the hazard of the die. They asserted the great, the simple, and the sublime truth that men were created free and equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; and that among their rights were life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.—After having evolved that great idea, so easily understood by all, they marched barefoot over frozen ground that they might establish and defend and maintain the liberty and freedom that they had asserted. Go back with me to the history of that great period—not merely in the history of this continent, but in the history of the world, such as man has never seen—and there we find that they laid the foundations of this Government broad and deep, and adorned it with all the learning and statesmanship of modern times, and especially taught that man is a sovereign being. They denied the impious divine right of kings; they alleged and maintained that every people should govern themselves. And, after having asserted this truth, they went forward upon the world's wide sea to establish the great experiment—it was an experiment and hope to them; it is realization and fruition to us. The great fact has been established, and it sped far beyond what they had anticipated or imagined. The little cloud gave the sound of abundance of rain. The sparse colonies that struggled along upon the Atlantic slope have grown to be more than thirty free and prosperous States, not by any means confined to the limits which even those great men and greater minds believed would be prescribed, leaped over the Mississippi, which had been established as a westerly boundary, seized the eagle from his crag on the Rocky Mountains, and have only passed where the Pacific's waves roll on the golden sands of California; on the north and east it stretches to the limits of monarchy, and has gone down to the south where tropical breezes breathe their gales of perpetual fragrance. Yes, this tree of Liberty, which was planted by our fathers, has shot up—its roots have struck deep, its trunk has reached high, and so wide-spread are its branches, that all the children of the earth may come and subsist on its fruits, or refresh themselves in its shade.

"Woodman, spare that tree!
Trench not a single bough,
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now."

[Cheers.] These institutions, established in such disinterested heroism, with a progress that has astonished the world, and wrung from it unwilling admiration, are now threatened. These institutions are now menaced with destruction. Is it by a foreign foe? No; it has stood the thunder-storm and defied the world in arms, and now it is to be destroyed, if destroyed it must be, by the insidious worm of ambition that is gnawing at its heart. Those who have been reared under this Government, who have been pampered at its treasury, upon whose brows have been wreathed the choicest laurels, are tearing its heart, corroding its very vitals. And we are told that they are brethren, and that there must not be any contention with them. Yes, they are our brethren. But shall we stand tamely by and see them bathe their hands in the blood of our venerated mother? No; she must be defended at all hazards from these murderous patriots.—And the crime is the greater and more heinous because they are brethren. If they were remorseless savages, or prowling Arabs, they might have a better apology to offer. But they are attempting to overthrow her who gave them existence, and nursed them on the lap of indulgence, and dandled them on the knee, and who nursed them and fostered them, and placed arms in their hands to defend her, with which they attempt to destroy her. Yes, they are our brethren. But they are not the first beings who have rebelled. [Cheers and laughter.] There was rebellion even in heaven—blind, heedless, haughty, dark ambition caused Satan to rebel there. For just about the same cause as this rebellion. [Laughter and cheers.] And the end of this rebellion will be the same. [Renewed laughter and cries of "Good!"] Those who instituted it will be hurled down to darkness and chains forever by an indignant and outraged people. When this rebellion reared its snaky head, [laughter], the whole American people trembled. We felt the earth throb and heave and beat as with the convulsion of a mighty volcano. I found it perhaps more difficult than any individual in the United States, if not in the world, so far as personal convenience or considerations were concerned, and personal and political friendships, and domestic relations, and kindred associations could influence, to take ground against this rebellion. Many years in the Senate of the United States, friendships had grown up, and the course of public affairs had clustered around me Southern sympathies which gave me a position in the Southern States that no other man in the North or South held. For myself, therefore, I found it more difficult for these reasons to sever these ties than any other one could have done; but, in a patriotic sense, I did not find it difficult at all. [Cheers.] With the very first booming of the gun that fired upon Sumter, I declared in a moment that I was in the field against the rebellion. [Cheers.] The first news told me that there would be a meeting in New York. I flew there as on the wings of the wind, to declare my principles,

that I might summon my friends to imitate my example. [Amens.] I believed then that I had the hissing, devilish, disunion serpent by the neck, and now I know I have. [Laughter and cheers.] When I see such an assemblage as this, it tells me more, it speaks to the heart more eloquently than all the tongues of preachers and speakers; then all the lessons the press can give—it tells me that the popular heart is sound to the core. [Cheers.] I see before me and all around me trembling old age leaning upon his staff—stalwart manhood, with strong muscles in his arm—youth, ready to bare his bosom in battle—woman, with her gentle and anxious face, pleading for her country—maiden, trembling, fearing that some great calamity awaits their happy family—and little children, with the cunning, inquiring eyes, wishing to know why this vast concourse, and why that old man with white hairs talks so earnestly on a subject in which they intuitively feel danger, but do not fully comprehend.—Ah! my fair-haired boy, it is that this Government may be saved to you; that its blessings of liberty may not be wrested from you, but that your little eyeballs may not be blasted, nor seared, nor your hearts wrung with this accursed destroyer, disunion!—that no evil shall come to blast these fair and fertile fields. I have the monster disunion, as the infant Hercules had the serpent, by the throat. Let it hiss on—let it strangle, with its convulsed folds! I have it. Let it writhe in deathlike contortions, if it can, from my grasp. I grasp it in the name of the people—in the name of liberty, and hope, and law—in the name of humanity; and I will strangle it forever, before I release it. [Great cheering.] What are all the miserable party ties of the day worth, compared to such a Government! Parties shoot up from the Government, Government does not shoot up from them. Party platforms, party ties, and all that relates to parties, are as the idle wind, unless you have a Government for them to stand upon. And when your Government stands fairly and firmly, then it is that parties may take their rise, and make their issues. And they are useful—useful to watch each other in a free Government—useful to purify the political atmosphere which they sometimes pollute—useful as a part of the machinery of a Government founded on an independent Constitution. I feel strong in the pride of my position, not of myself, but as your representative, and representative of the national sentiment. I have stood in the high places of the land, in senates and in forums, with the great and honored of the land—the Clays, the Websters, the Benton, and the Calhouns—and I feel that I stand on higher ground to-day, as a free American citizen, vindicating the integrity of our Government against traitors and their rebellion, than ever before. [Tremendous cheering, breaking forth into loud hurrahs.] Fanny politicians and bastard Democrats fear I am going to my political funeral. Well, I shall have, from presidential appearances, a pretty handsome procession, and don't want them for mourners. [Great laughter and cheering, and cries of "Good!"] You know perfectly well what have been my political antecedents. It is not material for the purposes of this question. I hold this question to have nothing to do with political affairs one way or another. And I know of no man—no Abolitionist so ultra, nor Republican so hostile, no American so bigoted, nor no Democrat so detestably faithless, but I will go with him to perform this great work, if he will go in good faith, as I would go to perform any other work involving the existence of my country. I lay aside my politics; I ask you to lay aside yours. I shall not go to you politically; I do not ask you to come to me, and any one who will attempt to manufacture politics out of this matter, or drag political parties into it, is no patriot—is a schemer, and little better than those who assail the country with arms. As to the administration, it was not the Administration of my choosing. I care nothing for that. Where it is right, I mean to sustain it; where it is not strong, I will help it to be stronger. And it is the duty of every good citizen to stay up the hands of the administration in order that it may do its whole and its perfect work. Suppose your village was on fire, your public edifices and your beautiful dwellings were on fire or were threatened with flames, and your fire department should come out endeavoring to arrest the conflagration. One says the engineer is not qualified; he is unfit and inefficient, the department incapable, and he will let the village burn. Are you a madman? Why, for Heaven's sake, let us help them. Hand along the buckets; take hold there and work the engine; raise the ladder and mount to the roof and try to arrest the destruction! But no; we hear that Mr. Lincoln and his Administration are not able to conduct the Government successfully. For Heaven's sake, then, let us take right hold and help it—not attempt to discourage it and put it down. And it is my position that every friend of the Administration should help, and that every opponent of the Administration should help them two fold—all should take hold and perform this great work, not as Democrats, not as Republicans, not as Americans, not as Abolitionists, nor any thing else, except as American citizens, having a destiny, a country, a heritage that concerns us all.—But there is an attempt to engraft political parties upon this disturbance!—sbme that it should be so. Look around and see what a Government we have, see what these upturned faces display; they tell that it is a land of refinement, of industry, independence, and of religion. Look upon these happy homes, those cultivated fields, upon those sunny slopes; look upon this silver lake, and those streams that sleep along the valley like molten silver.—Whence came these happy people; whence came these institutions of learning, and of religion; whence these spirits that point up to

Heaven, telling of the sentiments in which they were erected? Why is it that every one is protected in the rewards of his own industry? It is because of a good Government. And when we look upon it and see it menaced shall we not exclaim:

"Is this the land our fathers loved?
The freedom which they toiled to win?
Is this the soil on which they moved?
Are these the graves they slumber in?
Are we the sons on whom are borne
The mantles which the dead have worn?"

And if this is the land of our fathers—if we are wearing their mantles—in the name of Heaven let us preserve what they have in such generous patriotism bequeathed to us. How cowardly, how treacherous in us, if we were to dislocate or enable others to destroy this Government. Divide this Union! Commence by dividing and all is lost! Sever the human frame and then ask the head and the lower limbs to perform their functions as before.—Let a great rebellion succeed, you must let lesser rebellions from every quarter succeed—from State to State, from county to county, town to town, down to your very school district, until finally if you have a horse another wants he will go and take it. If you reward the great rebellion, you must the little one; you will find no good stopping place afterward. I do not mean to give personal offense to any one, and regret that I find myself differing from old and early and valued personal and political friends, arraigning those who have acted with me in former times. But it is no time for honeyed words or phrases—it is no time for sugar coated pills—you must give medicine that will take effect and operate pretty thoroughly, too. [Laughter.]

Mr. Lincoln has been much complained of that he has suspended the habeas corpus, and has interfered with private right, and has curtailed the liberty of the Press, and has done various other things of which they complain. Now, as his opponent, I sustain him most in the very acts they condemn. [Cheers.] His act that I approve of most is his suspending the habeas corpus; and I have said and repeat, if he had suspended the traitors it related to, in some cases, I would have been glad of it. I uphold him in arresting the voice of a traitorous press which was attempting to foster and encourage and stimulate treason. [Cheers.] I agree to his arresting and consigning to prison those villains who are acting as spies and are attempting to destroy our Government.—[Cheers, and cries of "Good, good."] I sustain him fully and cheerfully in it. He has ample authority for it. It is a war power, nothing more nor less. A wicked, treasonable rebellion fastens a terrible war on the Government, and then whines itself and gets others to whimper for it, that they are arrested, that their treason is blocked. Mr. Lincoln would have deserved impeachment if he had not exercised these powers. They were exercised by Gen. Jackson, and they have been exercised by every military commander who has had treachery and treason to deal with in the history of the world. What, pray, is the habeas corpus? It is a civil writ, and nothing more; it takes a man before a Judge to see if he is lawfully imprisoned; if he is unlawfully imprisoned he is set at liberty—if lawfully, he is sent back to prison. That is a civil writ, and a civil remedy. But there is a power that is called a war power, that does not rise up out of the Constitution. When a Government is erected it is presupposed that that Government has all the powers of self-preservation; like an individual, it has the right of self-defence.—The Government is not obliged to lie because it cannot find a clause in the Constitution to authorize it to preserve existence. It is the first instinct of a Government, as an individual, to seek self-preservation. When a man is assaulted, does he inquire what particular statute and section authorizes him to protect himself? No; he uses every means that God and nature have put into his hands for defence. And when a Government is assailed, it defends itself, and it does not defend itself it deserves to be overthrown. Now the war power of Government is as old as civilization. Smith, an early British Minister, on martial law, speaks thus of the power of war:

"Martial law is the law of war, that depends on the just but arbitrary power and pleasure of the King. For, though he doth not make any laws but by common consent in Parliament, yet in time of war, by reason of the necessity of it, to guard against dangers that often arise, he useth absolute power so that his word is a law."

Now, when treason is stalking abroad, when corruption is on every hand, when spies peep from every window, and lurk in every fence corner, what was Mr. Lincoln to do? Was he to pore through all the musty volumes and invite District Attorneys to the same work to enable him to arrest and keep a spy or to stop the dissemination of treason through a guilty press? No. If Mr. Lincoln had acted with greater vigor I would have commended him more. But I may say what is becoming from a fair and generous opponent, that when I criticize his shortcomings I find in the condition of affairs great apology for him—he came in when corruption was seething, when treason was rampant and all the departments teeming with rascality, when he did not know who to trust; when naval, military, civil, and other officers, were committing robbery and perjury, and he knew not who to confide in. But wherever he has laid his hand upon this wickedness he is entitled to the thanks of the whole people. And when the historian comes to write and he will be commended most where he has taken those rebels by the throat with the strong hand of a government power. [Cheers.] Every military commander has the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in emergencies, of which he is judge. He tells the one who comes to take the traitor and send him at liberty, Stand off—unless your tongue is considerably longer than my bayonet you

don't get this man. What about the liberty of the press? It is like a good many other liberties we enjoy, but has no right to commit treason. One has no more right to commit treason and destroy the Government by a press, than he has by any other mode.—The rights and liberty of the press is one of our greatest and most sacred blessings, to be guarded with watchful vigilance. But what does that mean? In time of peace, to discuss all measures of Government freely and fearlessly. But the one who has a press has no more right to overthrow a Government by reasonable means in war, than one has by writing treason without a press. There is no charm about printed treason which gives it impunity. It will do well enough to hang up a parrot in a cage, to say, "Liberty of the press!" "Liberty of the press!" and we have a parrot crying it now who needs caging, and some others who ought to be caged. Suppose I were to write to Mr. A, or B, and say, these Rebels are, after all, right; I hope they will succeed. I am glad they are fighting our armies; and I hope they will be successful; I hope the Administration will be overthrown, and I devise means and plans to aid rebellion. That would be treason in a private letter. I would be liable to be imprisoned, because it would be affording aid and comfort. And if in a private letter, how much more in an informal secession press, which sends its dragon teeth broadcast to poison the mind of the country and urge on the rebellion. How much more should they be arrested? I approve of every strong act of the President. I would approve of more if he would do them. Individual rights is a great right and a great blessing; and we have a right to come and go where we please, and enjoy our liberty as we please; but if instead of going about our lawful business, our social and domestic enjoyments, we go strolling from house to house, from camp to camp, as spies for the enemy, we are liable to be imprisoned, and deserve to be. The right to enjoy fire as an element of domestic comfort, to discharge the thousand offices, is a sacred right too, and an Administration that would interfere with that right would be tyrannical indeed. But suppose one takes his torch in the dark hour of midnight and pines it to every dwelling he can ignite, how long will he be allowed to enjoy that sacred right of fire? He will be arraigned and imprisoned and deprived of this liberty, which a lawful citizen might enjoy. And when you come to examine, you will find that the President has done no more than his duty in laying his hand upon these papers individually. *The Day Book* is one of them. It has had its day, like every dog, and gone to its account. *The Journal of Commerce*, which undertook to skin along under cover with disguised treason, has been obliged by public opinion to change editors and tack ship, and the treasonable *Daily News* exists yet as a daily nuisance, but its day is not far off. The war power is a dangerous power, but it exists from necessity, and its exercise shows the terrible dangers of war, and that it cannot be abolished with safety to national existence. These questions are coming to be understood. Let us see what this Convention says about this very matter.

Resolved, That while we admit the necessity of summary process and martial law among insurgent populations (the grammar is their own), and within the lines of military operations, we protest against the doctrine that any power except the representatives of the people can suspend the writ of habeas corpus for civil offenses. [How if these offenses are committed when Congress is not in session?] We protest against the assumption of the Executive power to establish a system of passports; against the right of the Federal Government to organize systems of State Police, against the assumption of the Federal Executive to repress the discussions of a free press by the refusal of mail facilities, or in any way except by the decisions of the civil tribunals; and that, finally, we protest against the doctrine of President Lincoln's message that the States derive their authority from the Federal Government [President Lincoln has never claimed anything of the kind, as subversive of the fundamental doctrine of American liberty.—*Rev. M. Y. Dem. Con.*]

Now I propose to compromise [laughter]—that President Lincoln has the right to suspend the habeas corpus as long as it takes to read that foggy resolution and understand it. [Great laughter.] As the school boy said, "It is pretty considerably difficult to understand ideas which one is not possessed of."—Notwithstanding, peradventure, undoubtedly may be so, I guess it is." Most certainly! [Laughter.] Now I have read President Lincoln's messages carefully—and he does not say, so far as I have seen, that the States derive their powers from the Federal Government. If he does, he is in error. That resolution is remarkable, at any rate, for its length and its foginess and obfuscation. It is as clear as mud! There can be no doubt that the rights of the Executive, and of the people, will be understood hereafter—no matter whether they were before. It is very well that that resolution came into the Convention as it did. The members were dry and parched for the lack of some stream of living doctrine, when this modern Moses smote the rock, and out gushed this refreshing, constitutional well-spring to gladden them as did the waters of old the wandering tribes of Israel. But all this death-bed repentance is too late.

You will remember a few years since, when Louis Philippe, with his stealthy usurpations, finally raged his guns so that they would bear on the city of Paris, and relied upon his military arm to sustain himself and his family as the house of Orleans through all times—of a sudden commotion one of those revolutionary surges and ground swells of the French people. It swayed here and it swayed there; and at last it appeared that the people were going to against their Government by revolution in earnest. He first flew to his army of defense, and his guns and guards. They failed him.—He then began to make concessions and apolo-

gies to the French people; but they cried out, "Too late! Too late!" and he was ignominiously driven from his kingdom. These men now come with these break-down resolutions; they are half and half. They are mermaid proportions, half woman and half fish [cheers and laughter], and all scales. [Laughter.] But the voice of the people of New York is like that of the French, "Too late! Too late!" [cheers.] The hand-writing was against the wall where they were sitting, like Belshazzar at his impious banquet, when his keens motto together, and he was pale and trembling.—They must fall, for their usurped and abused reign, like that of the Babylonian king, is divided and finished. A more corrupt and rotten regency than any that has ever existed, a combination which lives and breathes and has its being in the lobbies of legislation and office brokerage, which fosters at every pore, which is spotted and leprous in every feature and lineament, has been brought to the judgement of the people finally. It will be cursed by every American in the Union when known, and a whip be put in every honest hand, to lash the scoundrels naked through the land. I am for a great popular movement during the existence of the war, not made up of Republicans, Americans, Democrats, nor anything else except Union men from the people. I am for throwing off these shackles of worn-out organizations, and consigning them to the tomb of the Capulets, and letting a fresh Union party rise up to prosecute this war [cheers], for which I have enlisted [cries of "Good!" "Good!" and cheers.] It must not be hitched to any political organization, nor any organization to that; it must be made of true Union men and the only platform must be the Constitution and the Union, and a vigorous prosecution of the war until rebellion is put down and the supremacy of the Government, of the Union and the Stars and Stripes, are reestablished—with justice to rebels, and to loyal citizens and loyal States. This justice I will support, and it will be elected. I will follow you in its prosecution, or you may, or we will go along together. The day of party hacks is over. They have had their share and their day has come. Justice has been done, and nothing upon her seat; but she has finally waked up and they have been tried and condemned, and are now ready for execution, and away with them. [Cheers.] They have no principle, and never had. They are like the Vermont preacher I heard about. He had agreed to preach so many Sundays for so many households of rye; when he preached his first sermon he told them he would change and preach another doctrine that would suit them if that did not, for his rye. [Laughter.] Now, these men claim to be running the Democratic party of New York, and to be the voice of the people, and when they have been tried and condemned, and are now ready for execution, and away with them. [Cheers.] They have no principle, and never had. They are like the Vermont preacher I heard about. He had agreed to preach so many Sundays for so many households of rye; when he preached his first sermon he told them he would change and preach another doctrine that would suit them if that did not, for his rye. [Laughter.] Now, these men claim to be running the Democratic party of New York, and to be the voice of the people, and when they have been tried and condemned, and are now ready for execution, and away with them. 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