

**SPEECH OF MR. SOULE, OF
LOUISIANA, ON NON-INTERVENTION:
DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE
UNITED STATES, MARCH 22, 1852; PP.
3-43 (NOT COMPLETE)**

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PIERRE SOULÉ

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SPEECH
OF
MR. SOULE, OF LOUISIANA,
ON
NON-INTERVENTION,

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

MARCH 22, 1852.

"There is a rank due to the United States on a nation which will be withheld, if not entirely
lost, by the operation of weakness."—*Washington's Message of December 3, 1793.*

WASHINGTON:
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1852.

RESOLUTIONS.

Gen. CASS' amendment, designed as a substitute for Mr. CLARKE'S resolutions :

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That while the people of the United States sympathize with all nations who are striving to establish free Governments, yet they recognize the great principle of the law of nations which assures to each of them the right to manage its own internal affairs in its own way, and to establish, alter, or abolish its Government at pleasure, without the interference of any other Power; and they have not seen, nor could they again see, without deep concern, the violation of this principle of national independence.

Mr. CLARKE'S last resolution :

Resolved, That although we adhere to these essential principles of non-intervention as forming the true and lasting foundation of our prosperity and happiness, yet whenever a provident foresight shall warn us that our own liberties and institutions are threatened, then a just regard to our own safety will require us to advance to the conflict rather than await the approach of the foes of our constitutional freedom and of human liberty.

MR. SOULE'S SPEECH.

Mr. CLARKE'S resolutions, and the amendments moved to the same by Mr. SEWARD, of New York, and General CASS, of Michigan, being under consideration—

Mr. SOULE, of Louisiana, rose and said :

I am appalled, Mr. President, by the vast and imposing assemblage which I see congregated in this hall. I fear much, sir, that the announcement, so flatteringly made by some newspapers, of the part which it was presumed I would take in this contest, has raised expectations which it will not be in my power to gratify ; and the anxiety, the distrust, and torment, which such an apprehension is so well calculated to engender, are not a little augmented by the awful magnitude and the difficulties of the subject before me. However, sir, I have no wish to avoid the task. It were too late for me now to disown its claims or to repudiate its exigencies. I will proceed with it, tremblingly, yet with some faint hope that I may still be able to bear its burden in a manner not altogether unbecoming the dignity of an American Senator.

Whatever be the fate that awaits the resolutions upon your table, Mr. President, the debate which has grown out of them will have its influence and bear its fruits. I rejoice that it has afforded us a fit opportunity for proclaiming to the world our abiding faith in the rectitude and ultimate triumph of those great principles on which rest the hopes and the destinies of man-

kind. We are heard at a great distance when we speak from the high places which we occupy here. What of hope and encouragement, what of interest and sympathy we express for down-trodden and oppressed nations is echoed throughout the remotest regions of the world; and while we give utterance to the thought, it runs swiftly on the magic wire, until it moves to congenial and harmonious vibration every fibre of the human heart.

I have no conception that there is so glaring a discrepancy in the sentiments entertained by those Senators who first moved in this debate. What of disagreement I have been able to discern among them, would seem to arise, rather from a misconstruction of the object aimed at by each respectively, than from any real antipathy in their opinions as to what principles we should assert and vindicate here. Though the original resolutions may have been intended (as I have no doubt they were) as a sort of political breakwater, thrown up to compress and still those surges of the popular sentiment to which I took occasion some time ago to allude—though they seem to advocate impassiveness, absolute impassiveness, as the only policy under which we can grow and prosper—yet a discerning eye will not fail to detect that feverish and restless anxiety, the offspring of a keen and unerring foresight, which betrays itself through the dubious, misty, timid, I had almost said bashful admission contained in the last of them, of a possible contingency on the occasion of which “a just regard to our own safety *will require us to advance to the conflict rather than await the approach of the foes of constitutional freedom and of human liberty.*”

The policy so solemnly commended, and so skillfully developed in the remarkable speech by which the Sena-

tor from Rhode Island (Mr. CLARKE) opened this debate, is here held under check by the express reservation and protest that it may come to its last day, and be superseded by another that *will require us to advance*—mark the word!—*to advance to the conflict, and to fight for constitutional freedom and for human liberty.*

But, much to my wonder, and still more to my deep concern, that contingency, so strikingly pointed at in the resolutions, was entirely overlooked in the speech, where it is not even alluded to. Sir, I had determined that it should not remain unheeded, and I now plead its implied concessions in vindication of the views which I propose to lay before the Senate.

I am decidedly against this country being pent up within the narrow circle drawn around it by the advocates of the policy of impassiveness. Escorted though it comes to us by the authority and imposing names of men deservedly honored in our history, that policy has no claims to my sympathies—it is set forth in antagonism to the policy by which the statesmen of the progressive school attempt to initiate, as it is said, a system of interference with the affairs of other nations; the first finds security in inertness; the second, in action. One, under that infatuation which a long series of successes is so apt to produce, points to the past, and credits them all to a system of measures which but prefaced their history; the other invokes the very state of things which those successes have brought about, and, obeying the dictates of new exigencies, strives to turn to profit the solemn warning "*non iisdem artibus, retinentur quibus comparantur.*" I am for the last; and, while vindicating its expediency, I shall attempt to show that the opposed policy cannot claim the support which it so freely borrows from the doctrines and teachings of the