

# TALK BY GARDNER BARRED IN ILLINOIS

Parley Refuses to Hear Him  
Deplore War and Charge  
Nation 'Disintegrates'  
MAY 14 1970

Excerpts from the prepared  
speech are on Page 22.

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 13 —

The Illinois Constitutional Convention refused today to let John W. Gardner deliver a scheduled speech in which he had planned to say that no advantage gained by force in Southeast Asia could compare with the damage that the war was inflicting at home.

The prepared text of the former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare also said that "ill-considered statements from those in high places" could be as destructive as violence.

Mr. Gardner said in response to a question at a news conference that Vice President Agnew was one of those he had in mind.

In his text, Mr. Gardner said that "virtually all of us have failed in our duty as Americans," falling easily into the pattern of blaming others while

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the nation "disintegrates."

"I use that word soberly," he said. "The nation disintegrates."

The speech, an unusually hard-hitting one for Mr. Gardner, a Republican who is chairman of the National Urban Coalition, dealt with what many feel is the crisis of confidence and the disisiveness that afflict the nation.

Convention delegates, who have been meeting for several months in Springfield, Ill., to write a new state constitution, have been arguing about the American invasion of Cambodia and the protests on the college campuses.

## Convention Rift Feared

Samuel Witwer, also a Republican and president of the convention, issued a statement saying that the Gardner speech "might well have jeopardized the future work of the convention and placed the Illinois Constitutional Convention in a position of appearing to have taken sides on issues which are in no sense before it."

Mr. Gardner said, "I do believe Mr. Witwer underestimated the resilience and maturity of the delegates."

Some delegates, leaders of the convention said, were so opposed to the speech that they were expected to stage a noisy demonstration against it. Others said they were opposed to any appearance that might prove embarrassing to President Nixon.

The speech was to have been delivered this morning. Advance copies were delivered to convention leaders last night. Mr. Gardner was informed of the decision to bar the speech at 1 A.M., when he arrived in Chicago on his way to Springfield.

Told that he could withdraw the speech and rewrite it to make it "germaine to the work of the convention," Mr. Gardner returned to Washington and delivered excerpts of it to a news conference in the Statler Hilton Hotel.

Appearing tired and shaken by the experience, Mr. Gardner said the manager of the convention, Richard Carlson, had agreed on Monday that it would be all right for Mr. Gardner to speak on general matters rather than those pertaining to the work of the convention.

With the country in turmoil, Mr. Gardner said, he did not feel he could confine himself

to his standard "urban affairs talk." He said he had planned to speak as an individual, not as chairman of the coalition, and he consequently paid for his own transportation to Illinois.

Mr. Gardner, author, educator and former president of the Carnegie Foundation, served as H.E.W. Secretary under the Johnson Administration. When he resigned early in 1968, he privately expressed distress that resources needed for domestic programs were going to the Vietnam war. He is considered an expert on American institutions.

Almost a year ago, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence warned that the greatest threat to American survival was not from without but within. Mr. Gardner made a similar point, saying that the internal rifts were being made worse by the inflammatory statements of high government leaders.

"Matching the violent deeds, we have had provocative and ill-considered statements from those in high places," he said. "Official statements and policies which feed the fires of regional suspicion or racial antagonism or the tensions between young and old may be as destructive as a bomb tossed through an open window."

Does this mean Vice President Agnew?

"Mr. Agnew more than any other member of the Administration has indulged in remarks I consider divisive," Mr. Gardner replied.

Does it include President Nixon?

"I do not believe, over the whole period of his Presidency, he can be justly accused of this," Mr. Gardner said.

But he came down strongly against Nixon policies.

"Nothing we are doing to help or harm our friends or foes in Southeast Asia can compare to what we are doing to ourselves as a nation," he said.

"The erosion of spirit that we have experienced is beyond calculation. Weighted against that erosion, any possible geopolitical advantages in the war must be seen as pitifully small."

He called for withdrawal of all American forces from Cambodia now, the avoidance of further escalation of the war in any form, and an "orderly termination of our presence in Vietnam within one year."