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REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT FORD  
AT ADMIRAL ZUMWALT'S RETIREMENT  
ANNAPOLIS, JUNE 29, 1974

Admiral Mack, Secretary Schlesinger, Secretary Mittendorf,  
Admiral Moorer, Admiral Zumwalt, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a very great privilege and a very high honor for me to have the opportunity of participating in this ceremony today. After receiving the invitation to participate, naturally I made some inquiries concerning Admiral Zumwalt's earlier career. And I would liked to have been here for the achievements and accomplishments in recent years. I find as we so often do that a good many years ago careers had a characteristic of beginning in somewhat the same way. I found for example that Admiral Zumwalt began his Navy career in June of 1939 here at the Naval Academy. He graduated, was commissioned in June of 1942. Peculiarly enough, I came down here as a thirty-day wonder in March of 1942. And I got my commission thirty days later in April of 1942. We can come to one conclusion, I think. We both started as Ensigns, but Admiral Zumwalt obviously went much further. I wouldn't want to say, and I don't presume to say, that I learned as much in thirty days as Admiral Zumwalt did in three years.

But let me say this. It has been my privilege and pleasure over a period of twenty-five years in public service to know every Chief of Naval Operations. And I see one here that I knew very well -- Arleigh Burke. I had the privilege as a member of Congress of seeing the careers of these fine men who have served the Navy and their country so well, and I couldn't help but come to the conclusion that each and every one of you have made a particular contribution to the Navy and to our military establishment.

Of course, the records show that Admiral Zumwalt is the youngest rear admiral, youngest vice admiral, youngest Chief of Naval Operations. And those, of course, are achievements that we all recognize and admire, and we certainly congratulate him for that accomplishment. But sitting where I did in the Congress of the United States, I acquired some background through a committee assignment over a period of twelve years. We in this committee had to review the funding requests, the policies, the programs of the Department of the Navy. We came to understand to some extent the problems that various Chiefs of Naval Operations faced. I would say that Admiral Zumwalt's greatest accomplishment was the realization that the United States Navy was facing an ever-increasing block obsolescence as far as ships were concerned. I know that his predecessors were concerned about the fact that we built so many ships in World War II and built very few thereafter and that ships wear out. They have a certain life span. As I look at the four years of Admiral Zumwalt's outstanding career, I would say that his convincing of the civilian heads in the Department of Defense, his convincing of the several present, his convincing the Congress of the United States that something had to be done to get over block obsolescence, to initiate on a sizable and substantial basis a new shipbuilding program, will be the hallmark of Admiral Zumwalt's career. This program that he sold to the Congress, to the President, to his civilian superiors in the Defense Department will be a lasting accomplishment as our country faces the threats and the problems that we encounter in seeking to maintain peace and strength throughout the world.

So, it's a great honor and very high privilege, Admiral Zumwalt, for me to not only be here to say a few words but more particularly to give

to you on behalf of the President of the United States the Distinguished Service Award and to congratulate you in person on a great career and to wish you well in your years ahead. I also wish to thank your family and to thank the Navy for making it possible for a person of such outstanding quality and capability to serve with such distinction for a period of thirty-two years. If I may now, if the citation would be read---

(READING OF CITATION)

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