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March 27, 1976

Draft of National Security Speech

My Fellow Americans:

In recent weeks, as the state of our Nation's economy has sharply improved, the focus of this year's political campaigns has begun to shift away from economic concerns. Suddenly the airwaves have been jammed with cries of alarm over the position of the United States in the world and the readiness of our defenses. Much of this, of course, is political talk that will last only to the election, but some of it is so misleading and harmful that it can weaken the United States.

I cannot -- as your President and Commander-in-Chief -- allow this process to continue unchallenged.

Today two conflicting notions are confusing and deceiving many people.

One is that we are spending far too much money for defense --

that social needs should be paid for first, then any money left over should be used for defense.

The second notion is the other way around. It holds that we are spending far too little for defense. It also asserts that the United States has slipped into military inferiority so that our international outlook is either terribly dangerous or hopeless. Apparently the solution is to launch huge, crash programs and then challenge the Soviet Union to a shoot-out at high noon.

Now, these two views cannot both be right. In fact, neither one is -- and both hurt our country. If we accept still more defense cuts, we will indeed become second rate militarily and we will become vulnerable to international blackmail. And yet, if the addicts of confrontations are allowed to shape our policies, we will wreck the stability so carefully achieved and plunge ourselves once again into the perils and tensions

of Cold War. Both of these notions would thus point us in the same direction: toward a disruption of peace and a world distraught with fear of war.

If we lived in a world free of danger, we could smile at such notions and let them go. But not in today's environment. Our policies must be solidly grounded in well-informed public opinion. This places a heavy duty on people who are seeking public office to contribute responsibly to public understanding. Slogans, half-truths and political exaggeration must not become a substitute for sound policies.

As a nation, we have to see the world as it actually is, not as we wish it were or as it might look through a political lens. Foreign policy must evolve from hard realities, not political fiction.

What, then, are those realities around us?

One stands out above all others -- the United States is still today the most powerful nation on earth.

Our economy is by far the largest and most productive, accounting for some _____% of the world's wealth.

Our living standards are the most advanced in all of man's history.

Our technology is still unmatched; even today it continues to run at least five years ahead of the Soviet Union's.

At a time when the number of democracies in the world has dwindled to less than two dozen, we remain the best hope and inspiration for all of mankind.

And contrary to those who poormouth the national defense, the military strength of this country remains unsurpassed by any other nation.

Of course it's true, and has long been true, as I have continually reminded the Congress, that the Soviets are numerically strong in some categories, equal in others, and behind us in others.

Because of such differences, critics play the numbers game to prove American weakness.

But it is dangerous and misleading to focus on one particular weapon, on numbers of soldiers, or on any other isolated index of strength, when measuring power among nations.

It is always true that the Soviets lead us in some areas, break even in others, and trail in others. For example:

The Soviets are Number One in the size and number of intercontinental ballistic missiles. That's been so for years.

On the other hand, the United States is Number One in the quality and sophistication of these missiles -- in their accuracy, for example -- and this too has long been true.

They lead us in the number of soldiers, and they always have.

We lead in the quality and equipment of soldiers -- and, fortunately, we need far fewer soldiers than the Soviets do.

They are ahead in numbers of ships. But we are far ahead in the power and size of ships and in professionalism at sea.

They lead in certain types of aircraft. We lead in others.

So it goes all across the board. What matters is over-all balance, not this or that item. What matters too is what our top military leaders think about it. They are agreed that, fitting the pieces all together, we have a "rough equivalency" today with the Soviet Union.

This means that those who shout we're behind either don't know what they are talking about -- which, let's face it, is not too unlikely -- or else they're not too concerned about what they say.

Most important of all is not where we are, right here, right now. The absolutely critical thing is where we are headed. It is the trend in the balance of power that outweighs everything.

That trend, fellow Americans, is unquestionably bad -- and it has been bad for a considerable time. Last year and again this year I have emphatically asked Congress to join with me in redressing that trend.

In the past 10 years, the Soviets have expanded their defense program by about a third. Ours is 14% smaller than in the early 1960's.

The number of Soviet military personnel are up by about a third over the last decade; ours are at the lowest level in a quarter of a century.

Since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Soviets have built more than 1,300 new ships. We have built 300, and our active fleet today is half its size 10 years ago.

Since 1968 the Soviets have sharply increased their tactical aircraft force and have built a production base half again as large as ours. In the meantime, our own number of active tactical aircraft has dropped by 40%.

This trend tells only part of the story. Another part has been written by a series of disturbing events in recent years, including:

-- The Middle East War of October, 1973 and the oil embargo of that fall and winter;

-- The Greek-Cypriot coup and Turkish invasion of the summer of 1974;

-- The military overrun of South Vietnam and the capture of Saigon in April of 1975;

-- The Communist effort to capture and control the revolution in Portugal during 1974 and 1975;

-- And weeks ago, the Soviet and Cuban-backed military take over in Angola, thousands of miles from their border.

These events give no support at all to the notion that Soviet intentions are benign and that we can let our defenses down. Instead, they suggest that the dictum of Lenin of years still prevails. "Push out like a bayonet, " he told his comrades. "If you strike fat, push harder. If you strike steel, pull back and await a better time."

So we just can't go on bleeding our defenses for other purposes. I am as determined as I know the vast majority of Americans are that we not let ourselves sink to an inferior status.

That is exactly why, for two years running, I have given Congress the largest defense budgets in all our peacetime history. It is why I flatly oppose any cut at all in the budget submitted last January, because we just have to have that budget to turn the corner on the sliding power ratio. It is why I have personally put many Members of Congress on notice that I intend to veto the defense appropriation -- unprecedented though that would be -- and go straight and hard to the country if Congress hands me a budget too low for the future safety of the American people.

I make this added point, and I say this very seriously: I greatly welcome the sudden preoccupation of various candidates with defense and foreign policy, even though one wonders if it is brought on by the collapsing of other issues rather than by celestial inspiration.

I welcome it because I do know these programs very intimately, having worked with them for many years; and I know that, if only they are fairly presented out across the country, they will help you give some of our chronic Congressional backsliders the spine to stand up at last for enough dollars for defense.

So if our professional worriers -- who, it seems, tripped over the Pentagon along the campaign trail -- will only join me in fighting for the defense money we need from Congress, we'll get along just fine. Let's hope all these political hopefuls won't chase off too soon after more seductive targets. Right now, more than they realize, they're about to do something right for America.

One other reality may be a saving grace for us all in this troubled time.

From my trips to the Soviet Union, to Europe, to Asia and elsewhere, it is abundantly clear to me that even as national governments sometimes glare at one another across huge arsenals, there is also an enormous yearning of their peoples for peace.

The people of Leningrad and Moscow are as sick of war as those of London, Paris, and Berlin. They all know the sorrows of losing their loved ones. They know the sufferings of those maimed in battle. Many have known the horrors of military siege. Millions of us, in all nations, have tasted the bitter fruits of war. None of us wants any of it again.

Thus, there is an enormous human yearning and drive impelling us all to deal with world problems in a rational way.

After reducing the complicated details of weapons and diplomacy, the essential fact emerges that our nation's policy toward the Soviet Union must proceed on two tracks simultaneously -- we must be tough but also conciliatory, we must spend enough to maintain a balance of power but not tip the balance toward war, and we must be willing to apply our strength where our real interests lie but reduce tensions whenever we can. In short, we must tirelessly pursue peace through strength.

That is my policy today.

This policy has many parts -- most critically, we must not simply have the power, but also be willing to act when adversaries move to ravage other lands. Recent Soviet and Cuban intrusions into Angola were flagrant and unconscionable. The United States would have forestalled this effort had the Congress not turned away. We must not let so shameful an experience be repeated elsewhere in the world.



Let us further recognize that an effective foreign policy, like effective military action, is impossible without a strong intelligence capability. I have recently proposed the most massive overhaul of our intelligence establishment in a quarter of a century. I intend to see that our intelligence forces keep us better informed about the world environment while at the same time they are strictly prevented from abusing the rights of American citizens.

Finally, a consistent and effective foreign policy requires that our Executive and Legislative branches work cooperatively. As a veteran of Congress, I appreciate the significant role of the legislative branch in the shaping of foreign and defense policies. But this function must not be carried to the point of crippling the nation's ability to act swiftly and decisively on the world stage. The Congress has neither the constitutional duty nor historically has it shown the capability to conduct American foreign policy. It is for the President to do that, and as long

as I am in this office, I intend to do all I can to see that the President remains effectively in charge of American policy.

Even as we are unyielding in defense of our national interests, we must be unyielding in our search for just and lasting peace. Untiring diplomacy can open many arenas for progress in strengthening the peace.

Trade, energy, aviation -- all offer fruitful areas for cooperation. But at the core of our negotiations is our concern over nuclear war.

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks initiated in 1969 clearly offer the best hope for sanity in world relations. Since the beginning of this process, those responsible for negotiations have faced pressures from all quarters -- both to speed up and to slow the negotiations. Instead, we have chosen to steer a steady, middle course based on a realistic perception of our strategic interests. Those interests do not lie in an uncontrolled arms race but in regulating the competition and in maintaining a balance at the lowest possible level. And as we stabilize the strategic balance, our resources

can be used in other areas such as regional defense and in sea power where imbalances can have serious consequences.

People who argue that the SALT talks penalize the United States are just dead wrong. Had it not been for the SALT I negotiations, we would have been forced to massive expenditures for the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems. In addition, those talks halted the momentum of the Soviet missile buildup for five years without sacrificing our own programs. Finally, in Vladivostok we began the negotiation of an agreement which -- if successfully completed -- will require equal ceilings on missiles, heavy bombers and multiwarhead missiles and would for the first time in history require the Soviets to dismantle many weapons -- again without sacrifices on our side.

There are still important issues to be resolved in the current SALT talks, but if we approach them in the same

steady manner that led to the previous agreements, we will succeed. Under no circumstances will we be stampeded by arbitrary deadlines, and as in the past, we will be guided solely by our own national interests.

I believe in the ability of the American people to gauge the national security issues which face our nation. I trust their judgment.

The election year is still young. There is time to return reason and perspective to our national debate on foreign policy. Those who seek our nation's highest office have an obligation to spell out the alternative directions they propose in foreign policy and National defense.

This is a great country. Whoever holds this office next year must work day and night to keep it so. We are blessed with abundant resources. We are the strongest military and economic power in the world's history. But our greatness comes from the spirit and creativity of our people.

We are a nation of immigrants joined in forging a great nation through exceptional unity of purpose. Our unity has stood the challenge of time and adversity. Despite a decade of more of severe testing -- despite assassination, war, domestic unrest and institutional crisis -- we still remain a united people.

I am convinced that the American people still accept the challenge of world leadership. If we summon the American spirit

and restore our dedication, we will have a decisive and positive impact on the millions of people in distant lands who continue to look to us for moral leadership.

Those with faith in America must speak the truth to the American people:

-- The truth that we are strong and at peace;

-- The truth that the answers to the problems we face are neither easy nor final;

-- The truth that we must conduct a long-term, responsible foreign policy, without escape or respite;

-- The truth that what is attainable at any one moment will inevitably fall short of the ideal;

-- The truth that the reach of our power has its limits;

--- The truth that we have the strength and determination to defend our interests and the conviction to uphold our values; and finally,

-- The truth that we have the opportunity to leave our children a more just and more peaceful world than we have known.

My friends, if the people of this country deserve anything at all from their government, it is that their leaders will not spare their efforts to preserve the secure peace which we now enjoy.

Our memories should not be so short as to forget the great damage of confrontation and war. It is such a rarity for us to experience a stable peace that some candidates fail to recognize the new opportunities for progress and growth.

The unprecedented challenge of maintaining this peace in which human potentials can flourish now faces us all. Meeting this challenge is my overriding objective as your President.

Our task is not to build an isolated fortress, America. It is to remind ourselves and the world that

we remain the last hope for human freedom and dignity everywhere.

I pledge to keep America strong -- militarily, economically, and otherwise -- not just so that we can survive in a world increasingly hostile to individual freedom, but so that this great experiment in human dignity conceived 200 years ago can be strengthened for the benefit of our fellowman. This wonderful legacy of freedom and progress which has been bestowed on each of us requires that we do no less.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jack -

Now we are on the
right track.

At least the π and
D/R are on the same
frequency. π is now
saying "rough equivalency"
and citing economic
power as part of the
equation that results
in our designation as
the "strongest power on
earth." The hard right

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

critics will, however, shoot through this definition and, in search of a direct response to the #1, equal, or #2 argument, will want to restrict the argument to the question, "Are we or are we not #1 militarily?"

In any event, some of the stubbornness is subsiding and we are moving in right direction.
Rus

MAR 29 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 28, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DICK CHENEY

FROM:

BRYCE HARLOW
DAVE GERGEN

SUBJECT:

National Security Speech

Here is a first cut at the speech that was requested. Don Rumsfeld and Larry Eagleburger have both reviewed and many of their comments are incorporated here, but both want to be sure that they have further cuts at it. (There are still some differences to resolve.) Brent Scowcroft had some very good changes which, unfortunately, came in just after this draft was completed; they can be incorporated in the next round.

We are providing copies of this draft to Rumsfeld, Eagleburger, Scowcroft and Marsh.

cc: Bob Hartmann



March 28, 1976

REVISED DRAFT: NATIONAL SECURITY SPEECH

My Fellow Americans:

In recent weeks, as the impressive gains in our economy have become more apparent, the focus of this year's political campaign has begun to shift away from economic concerns. Suddenly the airwaves have been jammed with cries of alarm over the position of the United States in the world and the readiness of our defenses. Much of this, of course, is political talk that will last only to the election, but some of it is so misleading and harmful that it can weaken the United States.

I cannot -- as your President and Commander-in-Chief -- allow this confusion to continue unchallenged.

Today two conflicting notions are deceiving many people.

One is that we are spending far too much money for defense -- that we have an excess of military power so that social programs should be paid for first, and then any money left over should be used for national security.

The second notion is the other way around. It holds that we are spending far too little for defense, and that the United States has slipped into military inferiority so that our international outlook is either terribly dangerous or hopeless.

Now, these two opposite views cannot both be right. In fact, neither one is -- and both can be harmful to our country. It is clear to me that if we continue to reduce our investments in national defense, we will indeed become second rate militarily, and we will become vulnerable to

international blackmail. And yet, if the apostles of confrontation are allowed to shape our policies, we will wreck the stability we have -- imperfect though it is -- and plunge ourselves into perils far worse than the Cold War. Thus, both of these extreme notions would point us in the same direction: toward a disruption of peace and a world distraught with fear of war.

If we lived in a world free of danger, we could smile at such notions and let them go. But not in today's environment. Our policies must be solidly grounded in well-informed public opinion. This places a heavy duty on people who are in high public office or seeking that office to contribute responsibly to public understanding. Slogans, half-truths and political exaggeration must not become a substitute for wisdom and sound policies.

As a nation, we have to see the world as it actually is, not as we wish it were or as it might look through the

lens of politics. Foreign policy must evolve from hard realities, not from political fictions.

What, then, are those realities around us?

One stands out above all others -- the United States in the broadest sense is still today the most powerful nation on earth.

Our economy is by far the largest and most productive, accounting for some ____% of the world's wealth.

Our living standards are the most advanced in all of man's history.

Our technology and its application are still unmatched; even today our technology continues to run at least five years ahead of the Soviet Union's.

At a time when the number of democracies in the world has dwindled to less than two dozen, we remain the best hope and inspiration for all of mankind.

And contrary to those who poormouth our capabilities, the military strength of this country remains unsurpassed by any other nation.

Of course it's true, and has long been true -- as I have continually reminded the Congress -- that the Soviets have surpassed us in some categories, are equal in others, and trail us in others.

Because of such differences, some critics play the numbers game to prove American weakness.

But in measuring power among nations it is misleading to focus on any single weapon, on numbers of soldiers, or on any other isolated index of strength.

For example, the Soviets have a clear lead in the size and number of intercontinental ballistic missiles. That's been so for years.

On the other hand, the United States excels in the quality and sophistication of these missiles -- in their

accuracy, for example -- and this, too, has long been true.

They lead us in the number of soldiers, and they always have.

But we lead in the quality and training of our soldiers and, because of the NATO alliance, we require fewer soldiers.

They are ahead in numbers of war ships. But we are ahead in the striking power of ships.

They lead in certain types of aircraft. We lead in others.

So it goes all across the board. What matters is the over-all balance, not this or that item. What matters, too, is what our top national security and military leaders think about it. They are agreed that, fitting the pieces all together, we have a "rough equivalency" today with the Soviet Union. This means that those who shout we're behind either don't know what they are talking about or else they're

more concerned with making political points than with addressing the true facts.

The fact is that the power of the United States today is unmatched by any other nation in the world. No amount of political rhetoric can alter that fundamental truth.

But the critics do make a valid point, and it is one that should be of concern to all Americans. It is a point that I have been making emphatically since becoming President, and I appreciate the help of others in drawing greater attention to it.

The point is that even though the United States is still first among the world's powers, the trend of military strength is pointing ominously in the wrong direction and has been doing so for a considerable time.

Over the past 10 years, the Soviets have expanded their defense efforts by about a third. Ours is smaller than it was in the early 1960's.

The number of Soviet military personnel are up by about a third over the last decade; ours are at the lowest level in a quarter of a century.

Since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the Soviets have built more than 1,300 new ships. We have built some 300 during the same period; our active fleet today is half the size of 10 years ago.

Since 1968 the Soviets have sharply increased their tactical aircraft force and have built a production base half again as large as ours. In the meantime, our own number of active tactical aircraft has dropped by 40%.

This trend tells only part of the story, for over these same years we have also seen clear examples of Soviet adventurism in Asia, in the Middle East, in Europe, and most recently in Southern Africa.

These events give no support at all to the notion that Soviet intentions are benign and that we can let our defenses down. Instead, they suggest that the dictum of Lenin of years still prevails. "Push out like a bayonet," he told his comrades. "If you strike fat, push harder. If you strike steel, pull back and await a better time."

So we just can't go on bleeding our country's defenses without paying the price in a reduced ability to withstand aggression. Our freedom and independence is very precious. I am determined -- as I know the vast majority of Americans are -- that we not let ourselves sink to an inferior status.

That is exactly why, for two years running, I have asked the Congress for the largest defense budgets in all our peacetime history. That is why I flatly oppose any cut at all in the budget submitted last January, because

we must have that budget if we are to reverse the trend and thereby remain the strongest nation in the world.

That is why I have personally put many Members of Congress on notice that I intend to veto the defense appropriation -- unprecedented though that would be -- and go straight and hard to the country, if the Congress hands me a budget too low for the future safety of the American people.

I make this added point, and I say this very seriously:

I greatly welcome the sudden preoccupation of various candidates with defense and foreign policy, even though one wonders if it is brought on by the collapsing of other issues rather than by celestial inspiration. I welcome it because I do know our defense programs very intimately, having worked with them for many years. I know that, if only the issues are fairly presented across the country, you will give some of our chronic Congressional backsliders the spine to stand up at last for enough dollars for defense.

So if some of our professional worriers -- who, it seems, tripped over the Pentagon along the campaign trail -- will only join me in fighting for the defense money we need from Congress, we'll get along just fine. Let's hope all these political hopefuls won't chase off too soon after more seductive targets. Right now, more than they realize, they're about to do something right for America.

One other reality may be a saving grace for us all.

From my trips to the Soviet Union, to Europe, to Asia and elsewhere, it is abundantly clear to me that even as national governments sometimes glare at one another across huge arsenals, there is also an enormous yearning of their peoples for peace.

The people of Leningrad and Moscow are as sick of war as those of London, Paris, Berlin and Chicago. They

all know the sorrows of losing loved ones. They know the horrors of military siege. Millions in all nations have tasted the bitter fruits of war. None of us wants any of it again.

Thus, there is an enormous human yearning and drive impelling us to deal with world problems in a rational way.

After weighing the complicated details of weapons and diplomacy, what emerges is this:

-- We must be tough-minded, vigilant and cautious toward the Soviet Union but we must also seek opportunities to reduce tensions;

-- We must be purposeful and spend enough to maintain our strength but we must not tip the balance toward war through either belligerence or a weakness of will;

-- And we must be willing to apply our strength where our real interests lie but cooperate where we can.

In short, we must tirelessly pursue peace through strength.

That is my policy.

This policy has many parts. Most critically, we must not simply have the power, but we must also be willing to act when adversaries move to ravage other lands. Recent Soviet and Cuban intrusions into Angola were flagrant and unconscionable. The United States would have forestalled this effort had the Congress not turned away. Freedom and independence will suffer badly if such shameful experiences are repeated elsewhere in the world.

Let us further recognize that an effective foreign policy, like effective military action, is impossible without a strong intelligence capability. I have recently proposed the most thorough overhaul of our intelligence establishment in a quarter of a century. I intend to see

that our intelligence forces keep us better informed about the world environment while at the same time they are strictly prevented from abusing the rights of American citizens.

Finally, a consistent and effective foreign policy requires that our Executive and Legislative branches work cooperatively. As a veteran of Congress, I appreciate the role of the legislative branch in foreign policy and national security matters. It is a crucial role, but it must not be carried to the point of crippling the nation's ability to act swiftly and decisively on the world stage. The Congress has neither the constitutional duty nor the capability to manage the day-to-day conduct of American foreign policy. Daily decisions about our national security cannot be effectively made by a committee of hundreds. It is for the President to do that, and as long as I am in this office,

I intend to do so.

Even as we are unyielding in defense of our national interests, we must be unyielding in our search for just and lasting peace. Effective diplomacy can open many arenas for progress in strengthening the peace.

Trade, energy, technology, aviation -- all offer fruitful areas for cooperation. But at the core of our negotiations is our desire for peace and stability in the world.

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks clearly offer the best hope for sanity in world relations. Since the beginning of this process eight years ago, those responsible for negotiations have faced pressures from all quarters -- both to speed up and to slow the negotiations. Instead, we have chosen to steer a steady, middle course based on a realistic appreciation of our vital strategic interests.

Those interests do not lie in an uncontrolled arms race but in maintaining an equitable balance at the lowest possible level. And as we seek to stabilize the strategic balance, our resources can be used in other areas such as regional defense and in sea power where imbalances can also have serious consequences.

People who argue that the SALT talks penalize the United States are just dead wrong. Had it not been for the SALT I negotiations, we would have been forced to massive expenditures for the deployment of an anti-ballistic missile system. In addition, those talks halted the momentum of the Soviet missile buildup for five years without sacrificing our own programs. Finally, in Vladivostok we began the negotiation of an agreement which -- if successfully completed -- will place equal ceilings on missiles, heavy bombers and multiwarhead missiles and would require the

Soviets to dismantle many weapons.

There are still important issues to be resolved in the current SALT talks, but if we approach them in the same steady manner, we may succeed. Under no circumstances will we be stampeded by arbitrary deadlines. We will be guided solely by our own national interests.

I believe in the ability of the American people to gauge the national security issues which face our nation.

I trust in their judgment.

This election year is still young. There is time to restore reason and perspective to our national debate on these matters. Those who seek our nation's highest office have an obligation to spell out the alternative directions they propose in foreign policy and our national security.

This is a great country. It is well worth our best efforts to keep it so. We are blessed with abundant resources. We are the strongest power in the world's history.

But our true greatness comes from the spirit and creativity of our people living together in freedom.

We are a nation of immigrants joined in forging a great nation through exceptional unity of purpose. Our unity has stood the challenge of time and adversity. Despite a decade and more of severe testing -- despite assassination, war, domestic unrest and institutional crisis -- we still remain a united people.

I am convinced that the American people still accept the challenge of world leadership. If we summon the American spirit and restore our dedication, we will have a decisive and positive impact on the millions of people in distant lands who continue to look to us for moral leadership.

Those with faith in America must speak the truth to the American people:

-- The truth that we are strong and at peace;

-- The truth that the answers to the problems we face are neither easy nor final;

-- The truth that we must be actively engaged in maintaining world peace, without escape or respite;

-- The truth that we have the strength and determination to defend our interests and the conviction to uphold our values;

-- The truth that even though we are the strongest nation on earth, we must not allow our national defense to be further weakened and cut; and finally,

-- The truth that we have the opportunity to leave our children a more just and more peaceful world than we have known.

My friends, if the people of this country deserve anything at all from their government, it is that their leaders will not spare their efforts to preserve the secure peace which we now enjoy.

Our memories should not be so short as to forget the great damage of confrontation and war. It is such a rarity for us to experience a stable peace that some fail to recognize the new opportunities for progress and growth.

The unprecedented challenge of maintaining this peace so that the human race can flourish now faces us all.

Meeting this challenge is my overriding objective as your President.

Our task is not to build an isolated fortress, America. It is to remind ourselves and the world that we remain the last hope for human freedom and dignity everywhere.

I pledge to keep America strong -- militarily and economically -- not just so that we can survive in a world increasingly hostile to individual freedom, but so that this great experiment in human dignity conceived 200 years ago can be strengthened for the benefit of our fellowman. This

wonderful legacy of freedom and progress which has been
bestowed on each of us requires that we do no less.

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MAR 31 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 30, 1976

NOTE TO JACK MARSH

SUBJECT: National Security

This is worth reading.

Dave Gergen

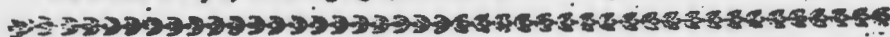
RAM *SLM*

55TH YEAR

The
Reader's Digest

APRIL 1976

An article a day of enduring significance, in condensed permanent booklet form



Can our democracy now face the harsh truth about the decline of U.S. power and prestige? asks the former Secretary of Defense. Or will the public listen only to the soothing voices of politicians?

The Continuing Challenge to America

BY JAMES R. SCHLESINGER

THIS Bicentennial Year is an appropriate time not only to review the remarkable accomplishments of the American Republic, but also for a stock-taking as

centuries to pre-eminence as the first power of the world—while maintaining national cohesion and purpose under free and democratic institutions—is an historical triumph.