

The original documents are located in Box 24, “2/28/76 - Remarks at Naturalization Proceedings for 1178 Permanent Resident Aliens, Miami, Florida” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

REMARKS AT

NATURALIZATION PROCEEDINGS

FEBRUARY 28, 1976

very + honored
-1-
I AM PROUD TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE

PROCEEDINGS WHICH TELL 1,178 ELOQUENT STORIES OF YOU ---

NEW AMERICANS OF MANY ORIGINS, WHO HAVE TODAY BECOME

CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA•

YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED, AS REQUIRED BY
OUR LAWS, THAT YOU ARE "ATTACHED TO THE PRINCIPLES
OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND WELL
DISPOSED TO THE GOOD ORDER AND HAPPINESS OF THE UNITED
STATES." AS PRESIDENT, I AM PROUD TO WELCOME
YOU AS AMERICANS WHO NOW SHARE OUR COMMON BOND --
AND OUR COMMON GLORY.

THESE PROCEEDINGS ARE SPECIAL AND UNIQUE

BECAUSE EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU IS GIVING THE UNITED

STATES OF AMERICA THE FINEST BICENTENNIAL GIFT THAT

YOU COULD POSSIBLY BESTOW. YOU OFFER US YOURSELVES,

YOUR LOVE, YOUR PATRIOTISM, YOUR COURAGE, YOUR

ENERGY, YOUR DETERMINATION AND YOUR ABILITY.

YOU ARE SHOWING THE WORLD - AND ALL
OF YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS - HOW MUCH YOU BELIEVE IN
AMERICA. YOU HAVE CHOSEN UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP IN
PREFERENCE TO THAT OF ANY OTHER NATION. YOU HAVE
CHOSEN WELL! I CONGRATULATE YOU.

JUST AS THERE WAS NO COURTROOM IN MIAMI

BIG ENOUGH TO ACCOMODATE YOU, THERE ARE NO WORDS

EXPRESSIVE ENOUGH TO TELL WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN

AMERICAN. AMERICA IS EASIER TO EXPERIENCE THAN TO

DESCRIBE. TOO MANY AMERICANS NOW TAKE OUR

NATIONAL TREASURES FOR GRANTED.

THESE TREASURES ARE NOT OUR GREAT CITIES AND MATERIAL
ACHIEVEMENTS BUT THE FREEDOM AND DIGNITY WHICH THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY ACCORDS TO EVERY CITIZEN.

ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE BEEN CITIZENS FOR ONLY

A FEW MINUTES, YOU CAN TEACH US MANY THINGS.

YOU CAN EXPLAIN THE REAL MEANING OF AMERICA TO THOSE

WHO SEE ONLY BAD IN OUR OWN NATION AND ONLY GOOD

IN NATIONS WITH OTHER SYSTEMS.

YOU CAN TELL THOSE WHO TAKE AMERICA FOR GRANTED

THAT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN OTHER LANDS, AS FAR AWAY

AS NINE THOUSAND MILES AND AS CLOSE AS 90 MILES,

WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO HAVE JUST A FRACTION OF OUR FREEDOM.

MANY OF YOU COME FROM PLACES WHERE
PEOPLE ARE DENIED THE RIGHT OF FREE CHOICE / ... FROM
PLACES WHERE CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES ARE OPEN,
BUT ONLY FOR TOURISTS / ... FROM PLACES WHERE FREE
ELECTIONS ARE PROMISED, BUT NEVER HELD / ... FROM
PLACES WHERE FREE SPEECH EXISTS ONLY AS A MEMORY•

LET THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NOW ABLE TO VOTE / JOIN FULLY

IN OUR SELF-GOVERNING SOCIETY• THE AMERICAN BALLOT

BOX IS NOT ONLY OUR RIGHT / BUT OUR RESPONSIBILITY•

TO QUALIFY FOR NATURALIZATION, YOU HAVE
SHOWN AN UNDERSTANDING, AS REQUIRED BY LAW, "OF
THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE HISTORY, AND OF THE PRINCIPLES
AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT, OF THE UNITED STATES." AFTER
200 YEARS, THERE IS STILL SOMETHING VERY WONDERFUL
ABOUT BEING AN AMERICAN. THIS CONTINUES TO BE THE
LAND OF MIRACLES.

WE CONTINUE TO CHANGE, TO GROW, TO

IMPROVE OURSELVES, TO SOLVE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND

EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS AND TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS

NO PROBLEM THAT AMERICANS CANNOT SOLVE.

is

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REMAINS THE ONE
NATION, WHICH MORE THAN ANY OTHER IN THE WORLD, SYMBOLIZES
MAN'S QUEST FOR POLITICAL FREEDOM, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,
AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

OUR 200-YEAR-OLD REPUBLIC IS KEPT FREE BY THE

MORAL STRENGTH AND FAITH OF OUR PEOPLE -- AND BY THE

INFUSION OF NEW STRENGTH AND NEW FAITH WHICH YOU,

OUR NEWEST CITIZENS, GIVE US TODAY.

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS, WE HAVE THRIVED ON CONSTANT
RENEWAL BY THE MANY PEOPLES WHO BRING US THEIR BEST•

AMERICA HAS GIVEN MILLIONS A HOME; BUT IN RETURN WE WE

WELCOME AND ARE ENRICHED BY THE MANY SPECIAL QUALITIES

THAT HAVE MADE OUR NATION UNIQUE•

I AM PROUD TO HAVE SUPPORTED THE LEGISLATION
THAT PERMITTED THE NATURALIZATION OF SOME 65,000 NEW
AMERICANS IN FLORIDA SINCE 1970. AND I AM PROUDER
STILL TO BE HERE ON THIS INSPIRING OCCASION WHEN SO
MANY PEOPLE FROM SO MANY LANDS ENTERED THIS AUDITORIUM
AS SO-CALLED "PETITIONERS FOR NATURALIZATION," BUT WILL
GO HOME AS CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

YOU WILL REALIZE, AS YOU WALK OUT OF YOUR
COURT SESSION, \ IN YOUR AUDITORIUM, \ ONTO YOUR STREETS
THAT YOUR PRESIDENT IS ACTUALLY YOUR EMPLOYEE.

IN AMERICA, EVERY CITIZEN - \ IN A VERY REAL WAY \ - IS
THE BOSS. WE HAVE 215 MILLION BOSSES BECAUSE THE
PRESIDENT HAS TO ANSWER TO EVERY CITIZEN.

TODAY I WANT TO ANSWER THE CONCERNS OF SOME
LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO ARE NOT YET CITIZENS, BUT WHO WANT
VERY MUCH TO BE. IT IS A FITTING BICENTENNIAL OBJECTIVE
TO HELP NEWCOMERS BECOME NATURALIZED. TOO OFTEN
THIS OBJECTIVE IS FRUSTRATED BY RED TAPE AND PROCEDURES THAT
CREATE A BACKLOG OF APPLICANTS WHEN THERE SHOULD BE MORE
FREQUENT CELEBRATIONS OF NEW CITIZENSHIP.

ACCORDINGLY, I AM DIRECTING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO

PLACE A HIGH PRIORITY ON REDUCING THIS BACKLOG. I

AM ASKING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TRANSFER TEN

ADDITIONAL IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

EXAMINERS TO MIAMI, WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, TO

DEAL WITH THIS PRIORITY SITUATION.

THERE ARE ABOUT 71,000 CUBAN REFUGEES,

35,000 OF THEM IN THIS IMMEDIATE AREA, WHO ARE TECHNICALLY

ELIGIBLE FOR PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIEN STATUS. BUT

THEY MUST WAIT TOO LONG FOR THEIR TURN UNDER THE

IMMIGRATION QUOTA SYSTEM.

I WILL SPEED UP THIS PROCESS.

I AM DIRECTING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE

ALL POSSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS AND, IF NECESSARY,

TO SEEK ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION TO ASSURE THAT CUBAN REFUGEES

CAN BE AWARDED PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS WITHOUT BEING

DELAYED BY THE IMMIGRATION QUOTA SYSTEM.

WE ARE DEALING WITH HUMAN LIVES WHICH

HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED ENOUGH DISRUPTION. AMERICA

WILL REMAIN TRUE TO OUR HERITAGE AS A SANCTUARY FOR

THE OPPRESSED.

JUST AS AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP INVOLVES
RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL AS RIGHTS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL,
THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD MUST LIVE UP TO THEIR INTERNATIONAL
RESPONSIBILITIES IF THEY WISH TO BE TREATED AS MEMBERS
OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY•

THE FIDEL CASTRO REGIME OF CUBA, BY SENDING AN

EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF 12,000 SOLDIERS TO INTERVENE IN A

CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA, IS ACTING AS AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLAW.

FIDEL CASTRO HAS COMMITTED A FLAGRANT ACT OF AGGRESSION.

WE ARE FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLES
OF NON-INTERVENTION AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGAINST
AGGRESSION IN THIS HEMISPHERE.

BY ITS AGGRESSION, THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN
CUBA, HAS VIOLATED A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF
INTERNATIONAL LAW -- A PRINCIPLE ENSHRINED IN
THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER•

MY ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE NOTHING TO DO

WITH THE CUBA OF FIDEL CASTRO•

IT IS A REGIME OF AGGRESSION•

AND I SOLEMNLY WARN FIDEL CASTRO AGAINST

ANY TEMPTATION TO ARMED INTERVENTION IN THE WESTERN

HEMISPHERE•

LET HIS REGIME, OR ANY LIKE-MINDED GOVERNMENT,

BE ASSURED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD TAKE THE

APPROPRIATE MEASURES.



WITH CONTINUED PEACE, THIS HEMISPHERE

FACES A NEW ERA OF OPPORTUNITY. THE SPIRIT OF

HEMISPHERIC FRIENDSHIP IS STRONG. I CAN FORESEE

NEW ECONOMIC PROGRESS, GREATER COOPERATION AND

EXPANDED TRADE. AS A GREAT GATEWAY TO LATIN

AMERICA, FLORIDA WILL REFLECT THIS GROWTH WITH MORE

JOBS AND MORE OPPORTUNITIES.

AS AMERICA ENTERS ITS THIRD CENTURY, WE LOOK

INWARD AS WELL AS OUTWARD•

TO BE STRONG EXTERNALLY,

WE MUST BE STRONG INTERNALLY•

OUR STRENGTH IS BASED UPON

THE FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL•

TO KEEP THE INDIVIDUAL FREE,

WE PLACE A PREMIUM ON CREATIVITY AND INDIVIDUALITY•

TOGETHER, WE CHALLENGE THE MASSIVE CONFORMITY OF THE MODERN
WORLD•

AMERICANS ARE DETERMINED TO CONTROL

INSTITUTIONS -- AND NOT BE CONTROLLED BY THEM. I BELIEVE

IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE PEOPLE RULE, AND THE GOVERNMENT

RESPONDS. I BELIEVE IN AMERICA.

AMERICA BUILDS UNITY FROM DIVERSITY -- AND
MAKES ADVANTAGE OUT OF ADVERSITY. THAT IS WHY TODAY'S
PROCEEDINGS ARE SO MUCH A PART OF THE FINEST AMERICAN
PROCESS. A REFUGEE CHILD WHO LANDED ON A FISHING BOAT
TEN YEARS AGO IS TODAY A MEDICAL STUDENT.

ANOTHER WHO FLED BECAUSE AUTHORITIES IN HIS HOMELAND

PERMITTED NO ARGUMENT, TODAY ARGUES CASES IN A MIAMI

COURT AS AN ATTORNEY. YET ANOTHER WHO ARRIVED WITH AN

EMPTY STOMACH NOW RUNS A FINE RESTAURANT.

SUCH EVENTS ARE A TRIBUTE NOT ONLY TO AMERICA,

BUT TO THE NEW AMERICANS WE HONOR TODAY. FOR YOU,

I SEE A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE. I AM DEDICATED TO THE

GOOD LIFE AVAILABLE TO ALL OF OUR PEOPLE UNDER A FREE

GOVERNMENT THAT CHECKS AND BALANCES ITS OWN EXCESSES.

I AM DEDICATED TO THE OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE SOUNDNESS
OF THE DOLLAR UNDER A FREE ECONOMIC SYSTEM THAT CORRECTS
ITS OWN ERRORS. AND I AM CONVINCED OF THE COURAGE,
THE CAPACITIES, AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION OF
FREE CITIZENS.

LET US CONTINUE TO BE A NATION OF HOPE.

AMERICANS BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE OF WHAT WE ACHIEVED

IN THE PAST.

OUR RESOURCES ARE RICH, OUR GENIUS

UNCHALLENGED, OUR FREEDOM UNEQUALLED, AND OUR OPPORTUNITIES

UNLIMITED.

OUR FATE IS IN OUR OWN HANDS -- AND I KNOW,

THEREFORE, THAT OUR FATE IS IN GOOD HANDS.

AMERICA REMAINS, IN THE WORDS OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, "THE LAST, BEST HOPE OF EARTH●"

THANK YOU VERY MUCH●

END OF TEXT