

The original documents are located in Box 33, “5/25/76 - Remarks at a Meeting of the Greater Los Angeles Press Club, Los Angeles, CA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

GREATER LOS ANGELES PRESS CLUB

TUESDAY - MAY 25, 1976

- THANK YOU, JOHN (MR SWEENEY INTRODUCES YOU)

- EY YOUNGER

- MAYOR BRADLEY

- BISHOP WARD

- MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE LOS ANGELES PRESS CLUB

I AM MOST GRATEFUL FOR YOUR KIND INVITATION.

I'M TOLD THAT THE GREATER LOS ANGELES PRESS CLUB WAS

FOUNDED ON FRIDAY THE 13TH OF JUNE, 1947, AND ONE YEAR

LATER, FOR THE CELEBRATION OF YOUR FIRST BIRTHDAY IN

1948, YOU TOOK OVER THE COCOANUT GROVE AND INVITED

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO BE YOUR GUEST.

✓
ALTHOUGH IT ISN'T QUITE YOUR 30th BIRTHDAY, I CONGRATULATE
YOU AND WISH YOU MANY HAPPY RETURNS. I HOPE YOU
WILL INVITE ME BACK TO HELP YOU CELEBRATE YOUR 31st
ANNIVERSARY, OR TO DEDICATE YOUR WEST COAST
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER.

THE MOST MEMORABLE QUOTE FROM PRESIDENT HARRY

TRUMAN'S APPEARANCE BEFORE THE PRESS CLUB HERE TWENTY

YEARS AGO WAS HIS OBSERVATION THAT " THE PRESIDENT OF

THE UNITED STATES IS BEHIND THE 8-BALL A GOOD DEAL OF THE

TIME."

I DON'T SEE THAT VERY MUCH HAS CHANGED.

BUT EXCITING AS PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S COMEBACK

TRAIL IN CALIFORNIA WAS DURING THAT CAMPAIGN, I WASN'T

PAYING TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO IT. I HAD A CAMPAIGN

OF MY OWN, TO WORRY ABOUT -- MY FIRST.

THE MAIN ISSUE IN MY CAMPAIGN WAS FOREIGN POLICY,
WHETHER THE UNITED STATES SHOULD EXERCISE ITS ROLE OF
LEADERSHIP IN THE POSTWAR WORLD OR WHETHER WE SHOULD
RETREAT INTO OLD-FASHIONED ISOLATIONISM; WHETHER
WE SHOULD DEMOBILIZE FURTHER AND REDUCE OUR DEFENSES
FOR DOMESTIC PROGRAMS OR WHETHER WE, WITH OUR ALLIES,
SHOULD BRACE OURSELVES TO BEAR THE LONG-RANGE COSTS
OF PRESERVING PEACE AND FREEDOM IN THE WORLD.

ALTHOUGH I DISAGREED WITH PRESIDENT TRUMAN ABOUT
MOST OF THE OTHER ISSUES IN THAT CAMPAIGN, AND
DENOUNCED THE WASHINGTON ESTABLISHMENT AT EVERY
OPPORTUNITY, I SUPPORTED HIM ON SUCH IMPORTANT
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AS THE REBUILDING OF WESTERN
EUROPE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATO AND RESISTANCE
TO THE RISING SOVIET THREAT.

LET ME TELL YOU HOW I REACHED THE CONVICTIONS

I STILL HOLD ABOUT AMERICA'S ROLE IN BUILDING A SAFER

AND SANER WORLD. IN 1934, AS HITLER BEGAN HIS RAPID

RISE TO POWER, I FINISHED THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

TORN BETWEEN MY LONG-STANDING AMBITION TO STUDY LAW

AND MAKING SOME MONEY PLAYING PRO-FOOTBALL.

THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW THE PACIFIC OCEAN
WAS WHEN I CAME TO CALIFORNIA TO PLAY IN THE EAST-WEST
SHRINE GAME ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1935. I GOT MY FIRST
LOOK AT THE ATLANTIC OCEAN A FEW MONTHS LATER WHEN I GOT
A JOB AS ASSISTANT COACH AT YALE. I FIGURED
I COULD GO TO YALE LAW SCHOOL IN MY SPARE TIME, BUT
THEY SAID THAT WAS UNHEARD OF, AND IT TOOK ME TWO
YEARS TO CONVINCING THEM TO LET ME TRY.

BETWEEN THE LAW LIBRARY AND THE LOCKER ROOM,
WE TALKED ABOUT THE WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS IN EUROPE
AND ASIA, AND SOME OF US BELIEVED WENDELL WILKIE'S
WARNING THAT AMERICA WAS PART OF ONE WORLD, AND SHOULD
STAND WITH THE FORCES OF FREEDOM AND DECENCY IF THEY
WERE TO SURVIVE.

I HAD JUST HUNG UP MY SHINGLE AND MY YALE LAW SCHOOL
DIPLOMA BACK HOME IN MICHIGAN WHEN THE STAGGERING
NEWS OF PEARL HARBOR TURNED ALL OF OUR ARGUMENTS INTO
ACTION. AS IT DID FOR SO MANY OTHER AMERICANS,
CALIFORNIA PROVIDED MY LAST LIBERTY ON THE WAY TO THE
PACIFIC AND CALIFORNIA WAS THE FIRST WELCOME SIGHT
OF HOME AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II.

MANY IN MY GENERATION DID NOT COME BACK,
BUT WE WHO DID WERE DETERMINED TO BUILD A PEACE IN THE
WORLD THAT WOULD ENDURE FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR
GRANDCHILDREN. WE KNEW IT WAS UP TO THE UNITED
STATES, BECAUSE ONLY THROUGH OUR SUSTAINED STRENGTH
MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND MORAL STRENGTH -- COULD THERE
BE A CHANCE OF LASTING PEACE.

SO I RAN FOR CONGRESS IN 1948 ON THAT POLICY

OF RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSEVERANCE AND STRENGTH FOR

PEACE AND I WON. AND I RUN FOR PRESIDENT IN 1976

ON THAT SAME POLICY, AND I INTEND TO WIN.

I KNOW YOU WANT TO HEAR SPECIFICS INSTEAD OF
GENERALITIES, AND FACTS INSTEAD OF FRUSTRATIONS.
THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF THIS COUNTRY, IN MY JUDGMENT,
OUGHT NOT TO BE CHARACTERIZED AS TRUMAN POLICIES
OR EISENHOWER POLICIES OR FORD POLICIES, CERTAINLY
NOT AS ACHESON POLICIES OR DULLES POLICIES OR KISSINGER
POLICIES, BUT AS THE POLICIES OF THE UNITED STATES
THAT REFLECT THE REAL PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
WHEN THEY FOLLOW THEIR FINEST INSTINCTS.

SINCE GEORGE WASHINGTON, WHO TOLD US TRULY
THAT THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE PEACE IS TO BE PREPARED
FOR WAR, THERE HAVE BEEN CONTINUOUS ELEMENTS IN OUR
FOREIGN POLICY AS WELL AS UNFORESEEN EVENTS AND
DISCOURAGING SETBACKS.

WE HAVE, BY AND LARGE, REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCIPLES
ON WHICH THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED 200 YEARS AGO;
SELF-DETERMINATION AND LOVE OF LIBERTY; THE OBLIGATION
OF THE STRONG TOWARDS THE WEAK AND OF THE PROSPEROUS
TOWARDS THE POOR. WE HAVE LEARNED THE HARD WAY
THAT WE CANNOT FORCE FREEDOM ON THE UNWILLING, THAT WE
CANNOT FILL EVERY OUTSTRETCHED HAND OR INVOLVE OURSELVES IN
EVERY FARAWAY FIGHT. BUT WE CAN BE AN IMMENSE
INFLUENCE FOR GOOD, FOR JUSTICE, FOR REASON AND FOR
PEACE IN THE WORLD.

LET ME CITE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF WHAT

I MEAN.

TAKE SALT II, THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE

SOVIET UNION TO LIMIT STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND

LAUNCHING SYSTEMS.

AS EVERYBODY KNOWS, BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE

SOVIETS HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH OF THESE TERRIBLE

WEAPONS TO DETER ANY ATTACK BY THE OTHER. BUT UNTIL

THERE IS A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT, FULLY

VERIFIABLE, NEITHER SIDE CAN PERMIT THE OTHER TO GAIN

STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY AND SO BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO

BUILD MORE AND MORE SYSTEMS AT A TREMENDOUS COST.

WHAT IS OUR UNITED STATES OBJECTIVE IN

SALT II? TO FURTHER REDUCE THE DANGER OF A RUNAWAY

THERMONUCLEAR ARMS RACE AND THE RISK OF AN UNTHINKABLE

HOLOCAUST.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO AGREE UPON WITH THE SOVIETS?

A CAP OR CEILING ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LAUNCHERS

AND BOMBERS EITHER SIDE CAN HAVE READY FOR USE AT

A GIVEN TIME. IF NEW ONES ARE ADDED, THE SAME

NUMBER OF EXISTING STRATEGIC SYSTEMS HAVE TO BE

SCRAPPED.

AT VLADIVOSTOK, FOR THE FIRST TIME,

WE AGREED TO EQUAL NUMBERS OF MISSILE LAUNCHERS

AND BOMBERS FOR US AND FOR THEM. FOR YEARS,

THE SOVIETS HAD HELD OUT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEIR

DEFENSE NEEDS DEMANDED THAT THEY HAVE MORE THAN WE.

FURTHERMORE, THE EQUAL NUMBERS WE AGREED
UPON WOULD COMPEL THE SOVIETS TO DESTROY SOME OF THEIR
EXISTING STRATEGIC SYSTEMS AND ALLOW THE UNITED STATES
TO COMPLETE OUR PRESENT PROGRAMS. ^{WHAT} ~~ALL THAT~~ REMAINS IS
FOR ~~THE TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON~~ BOTH SIDES TO FIND A WAY
TO DEAL WITH CERTAIN NEW SYSTEMS CAPABLE OF EITHER
STRATEGIC OR TACTICAL USE, MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TO
BOTH SIDES.

IF
~~WHEN~~ THIS IS RESOLVED TO OUR SATISFACTION, I WILL

SEND THE NEGOTIATED TREATY TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE

~~CONGRESS~~ FOR FULL SCRUTINY AND PUBLIC DEBATE.

THIS IS TRUE OF ALL OUR TREATY NEGOTIATIONS,
WITH SUPERPOWERS OR SMALLER NEIGHBORS. WE ARE
DOING NOTHING BEHIND THE BACKS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
OR CONTRARY TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHECKS AND BALANCES
ON THE PRESIDENTIAL POWER TO CONDUCT RELATIONS WITH
OTHER COUNTRIES.

AND THERE'S ONE THING MORE I CAN TELL YOU●

WHENEVER I GET A GOOD AGREEMENT THAT PROTECTS THE

INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND ADVANCES THE

PROSPECTS OF PERMANENT PEACE, I AM GOING TO SIGN

IT AND SEND IT TO THE SENATE WHETHER IT HELPS ME

OR HURTS ME IN THIS ELECTION, AND REGARDLESS OF WHAT

MY POLITICAL EXPERTS SAY OR MY POLITICAL COMPETITION

CHARGES●

IN PORTLAND THE OTHER NIGHT I TALKED

ABOUT AFRICA● I WILL ONLY REPEAT THAT THIS HUGE

CONTINENT COMMANDS THE SEALANES OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

AND THE INDIAN OCEAN AS WELL AS A WEALTH OF RAW

MATERIALS ON WHICH WE INCREASINGLY RELY●

THE SOVIET UNION RECENTLY DEMONSTRATED AN INTENSE
INTEREST IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF AFRICA AND OUR CONGRESS
DELIBERATELY LET STRATEGIC ANGOLA FALL UNDER THEIR
INFLUENCE●

I HAVE USED AND I SHALL CONTINUE TO USE DIPLOMATIC
COUNTERMEASURES AND WHATEVER MEANS MAY BE ESSENTIAL
TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, TO KEEP OPEN ALL OUR
STRATEGIC SEALANES, AND TO CHECK SOVIET INVOLVEMENT
AND CUBAN ADVENTURISM WHETHER IN AFRICA OR THE
AMERICAS. BUT I WILL TAKE THE PATH OF PEACEFUL
PERSUASION AND NEGOTIATION AS LONG AS IT IS OPEN.
I WILL NOT LET UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY BECOME
A POLITICAL FOOTBALL IF I CAN HELP IT.

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LET'S TURN TO THE MIDDLE EAST, ANOTHER
STRATEGIC AREA OF THE WORLD WHERE OUR PERSEVERANCE
FOR PEACE IS AT LAST PAYING DIVIDENDS●

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I AM VERY PROUD OF LAST SEPTEMBER'S
SINAI AGREEMENT AS A MILESTONE ON THE ROAD TO PEACE
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HER ARAB NEIGHBORS WHICH WOULD
HAVE BEEN INCONCEIVABLE A FEW YEARS AGO●

THE LEADERS OF BOTH EGYPT AND ISRAEL TRUSTED THE UNITED STATES SUFFICIENTLY TO TAKE THIS HISTORIC FIRST STEP AFTER DECADES OF DISTRUST AND FOUR COSTLY WARS, NOT ONLY BRINGING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO THEM BUT ALSO THREATENING A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN US AND THE SOVIET UNION●

BECAUSE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY WE HAVE
PURSUED OF FRIENDSHIP AND FAIRNESS TOWARDS THE
MODERATE ARAB STATES AND A CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO
THE SECURITY AND SURVIVAL OF ISRAEL, THE UNITED STATES
AND THE UNITED STATES ALONE CAN EXERCISE SUCH INFLUENCE
FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. OURS
IS NOT A POLICY OF THREATS OR BLUSTER BUT OF FIRMNESS,
PATIENT MEDIATION AND GROWING TRUST.

A STRONG ISRAEL IS ESSENTIAL TO A STABLE
PEACE IN THAT AREA, THE DISRUPTION OF WHICH IN 1973
BROUGHT ON THE OIL EMBARGO THAT NOT ONLY WEAKENED
OUR ECONOMY BUT ██████████ CRIPPLED WESTERN EUROPE'S.
OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL IS DEMONSTRATED BY ALMOST
FOUR BILLION DOLLARS IN THE TWO BUDGETS I HAVE
SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS, WHICH IS NOT ONLY IN ISRAEL'S
INTEREST BUT OUR OWN AND THE FREE WORLD'S.

BUT OUR STRENGTH AND OUR GOALS OF PEACE
AND FREEDOM WILL BE TO NO AVAIL IF WE LACK THE WILL,
THE UNITY AND THE STEADFASTNESS REQUIRED TO USE OUR
POWER TO SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS. IF THERE IS DOUBT,
IF THERE IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT OUR COHESIVENESS AND
CLARITY OF POLICY, OUR FRIENDS CANNOT BE PROTECTED
NOR OUR OPPONENTS DISSUADED FROM AGGRESSIVE ADVENTURES.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN, RECALLING THE WHISTLE
STOP CAMPAIGN THAT BROUGHT HIM BEHIND YOUR 8-BALL
in 1948, WROTE IN HIS MEMOIRS THAT THERE COULD HARDLY
HAVE BEEN A WORSE TIME FOR A POLITICAL ELECTION THAN
THAT SUMMER.

HE WAS TRYING TO PERSUADE THE RUSSIANS TO NEGOTIATE,
AND TO PREVENT WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHILE HE
WAS BATTLING THE DO-NOTHING CONGRESS, AS HE CALLED IT --
HE WAS ALSO BEING ASSAILED BY THE RIGHT WING OF HIS
OWN PARTY FOR BEING AN APPEASER AND BY ITS LEFT WING
FOR BEING A WARMONGER.

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WELL, AS MR. TRUMAN OFTEN SAID, IF YOU
CAN'T STAND THE HEAT YOU SHOULD STAY OUT OF THE
KITCHEN.

SO NOW, BEING IN THE SAME KITCHEN
BEHIND THE SAME 8-BALL, I'LL BE GLAD TO RESPOND TO
AS MANY OF YOUR QUESTIONS AS WE HAVE TIME FOR:

END OF TEXT