

**The original documents are located in Box 11, folder “Foreign Policy Address (1)” of the Ron Nessen Papers 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. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections.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.

(1,100)  
Most of the telegrams in opposition [REDACTED] just said "no more troops to Vietnam" or "no more money for Vietnam."

Those telegrams that carried a comment usually said that [REDACTED] it was OK to appropriate money for humanitarian aid but no more military aid.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 8, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DONALD RUMSFELD

VIA: JIM CONNOR

FROM: RED CAVANEY *MJM*

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE  
JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS  
U. S. Capitol  
Thursday, April 10, 1975

Attached at TAB A is the proposed schedule for the Address to the Joint Session of Congress.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ DISAPPROVE \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST FAMILY ATTENDANCE

For guidance, which members of the First Family will attend the Address?

YES NO

Mrs. Ford \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Jack Ford \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Susan Ford \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

EXECUTIVE GALLERY SEATING

As tradition dictates, the President receives seventeen (17) seats in the Executive Gallery for First Family, staff, and guests. All White House staff members of Cabinet rank will be seated on the House Floor with the Cabinet. Ron Nessen will also be provided a seat on the House Floor.

Attached at TAB B are two proposed seating plans indicating the seats available for White House use.

NOTE: Only the seven seats in the first row are permanent; an aisle seat, literally, involves waiting outside until the First Lady is seated and then sitting on a step. Typically, if guests are invited, they are seated in the first row seats and staff utilizes the aisle seats. It is customary for Cabinet rank staff wives to be seated in the front row with the First Family.

OPTION 1 includes all wives of Cabinet and Cabinet rank with no guests.

OPTION 2 includes only Cabinet wives with 5 seats available for guests.

SEATING PLAN:

APPROVE

DISAPPROVE

OPTION 1 \_\_\_\_\_

OPTION 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Does the President desire to invite any guests?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



4/8/75  
1:00 pm

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO THE CAPITOL FOR THE  
ADDRESS TO THE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

U. S. Capitol  
Thursday, April 10, 1975

- 8:25 pm      The Vice President arrives at the Capitol.  
The Vice President proceeds to the Senate  
Chamber to convene the Senate.
- 8:40 pm      The President, Mrs. Ford, Jack and Susan Ford  
board motorcade on South Grounds.
- MOTORCADE DEPARTS South Grounds en route  
U. S. Capitol.
- [Driving time: 10 minutes]
- 8:42 pm      The Vice President and the Senate depart  
the Senate Chamber and proceed to the  
House Chamber.
- 8:45 pm      The Vice President and the Senate enter  
the House Chamber.
- 8:50 pm      Diplomatic Corps proceeds to House Chamber  
Floor.
- 8:50 pm      MOTORCADE ARRIVES South Door of the Capitol  
(House Wing).
- The President, Mrs. Ford, Jack and Susan  
Ford will be met by:  
Mr. Ken R. Harding, House Sergeant-at-Arms  
Mr. George White, Architect of the Capitol
- NOTE: Six official Congressional photographers  
will be on hand.
- The President, Mrs. Ford, Jack and Susan Ford  
proceed inside the South Door entrance en route the  
Holding Room (H-210), escorted by Mr. Harding.

- 8:51 pm Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan Ford will be escorted to their seats in the Executive Gallery by Mr. Jim Rohan.
- 8:52 pm The President arrives Holding Room (H-210).
- 8:54 pm The Cabinet proceeds from H-210 to the House Chamber Floor.
- 8:56 pm Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan Ford arrive their seats in the Executive Gallery.
- 8:57 pm The Escort Committee arrives outside the Holding Room. Escort Committee is as follows:  
Senator James O. Eastland (D-Miss)  
Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Mont)  
Senator Hugh Scott (R-Pa)  
Senator Robert Byrd (D-W. Va)  
Congressman Thomas O'Neill, Jr. (D-Mass)  
Congressman John Rhodes (R-Ariz)  
Congressman John McFall (D-Ca)  
Congressman Bob Michel (R-Ill)
- 8:58 pm The President departs Holding Room en route House Chamber, escorted by Mr. Ken Harding and Mr. Bill Wannell (Senate Sgt-at-Arms) and the Escort Committee.
- 8:59 pm The President arrives center door of the House Chamber.
- 9:00 pm Announcement by Jim Molloy, the Doorkeeper.
- 9:01 pm The President proceeds down center aisle, escorted by Jim Molloy and the Escort Committee, to the Clerk's Desk (middle level).
- LIVE NATIONWIDE TELEVISION
- 9:02 pm The President arrives Clerk's Desk and remains standing.

9:02 pm        The Speaker calls the Joint Session to order and formally presents the President.

9:03 pm        Presidential Address.

LIVE NATIONWIDE TELEVISION

9:30 pm        Address concludes.

The President departs House Chamber via the entrance route, escorted by the two Sgts-at-Arms and the Escort Committee, and proceeds to motorcade for boarding.

9:31 pm        Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan Ford depart their gallery seats en route motorcade.

9:32 pm        The Vice President leads the Senate back to the Senate Chamber.

9:34 pm        The President is joined by Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan Ford in the hallway and proceeds outside South Entrance to board motorcade.

9:35 pm        MOTORCADE DEPARTS The Capitol en route South Lawn.  
[Driving time: 10 minutes]

9:45 pm        MOTORCADE ARRIVES South Lawn.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

*file*

April 8, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DON RUMSFELD

FROM:

RON NESSEN

RE:

Thursday Night Speech

Here is my proposed draft for the Thursday night speech. It is based on the following beliefs:

- 1) The speech should be devoted entirely to resolving the Indochina situation, with a promise to deliver the broader foreign policy speech soon, after the President has had time to formulate his own foreign policy based on the resolution in Indochina.
- 2) If the President requests more aid for Vietnam and Cambodia, Congress almost certainly will not give it. Thus, the President will be dragged out of the war against his will, while Congress will be seen as leading America out of the war, as the vast majority of Americans wish. It will be difficult for the President to regain the leadership role in foreign policy.
- 3) This is an opportunity to do in the foreign policy field what the President did in the domestic area with his energy-economy speeches: demonstrate his strong knowledge and leadership, break with the policies of the past, and put his own imprint on the government. Otherwise, he will be seen as blindly and weakly following the policies of past Presidents, unable to formulate a dramatic new initiative of his own. Until now it is not "Ford's war." But it will be if he requests more aid to keep the war going.
- 4) The previous four Presidents have not been able to either withdraw from the war or win the war. Their reputations have suffered because of this. There is no evidence that President Ford will be able to win the war by any acceptable means. Therefore, his choice is to withdraw from the war, for which he will be overwhelmingly praised by the American people.

DRAFT OF PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH TO CONGRESS

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, my former colleagues in Congress, my fellow Americans.

I intended to speak to you tonight about the whole range of American foreign policy. I intended to share with you my ideas on what America's role in the world should be in the last quarter of the 20th Century. But there is one over-riding issue facing America and the world which needs our immediate attention, because until it is resolved, we cannot move into a new era of peace and partnership. That is the great tragedy of Indochina.

And so I have decided to talk to you tonight only about how to bring that tragedy to a conclusion. I will request an opportunity to give you my views and explain my policies on other international matters in the near future.

When I assumed the Presidency, I said our great domestic political nightmare was over. Now it is time to end the nightmare that has gone on too long in Indochina.

Five Presidents have provided American help to the people of Indochina, to give them every chance to preserve their independence and turn back invading armies. The American people have made an enormous sacrifice in blood and treasure. Millions of American men served there. Thousands died. Many were wounded, imprisoned or

lost. Over \$150 billion was appropriated by the Congress of the United States.

And yet, this 20 years of unselfish effort has not succeeded and there is no realistic expectation that it will succeed in the foreseeable future. The South Vietnamese and Cambodians have fought bravely and long, until their spirit and supplies are nearly exhausted.

This long war has ravaged the once-beautiful countries of  
*and*  
Vietnam, Cambodia ~~and~~. Hundreds of thousands of people --  
caught in a war they never wanted -- have died. Millions are homeless. Their economies are wrecked. Their villages and towns have been blown off the face of the earth.

Last Saturday night in San Francisco I held in my arms two tiny babies, orphans, innocent victims of the horror of Indochina.

The debate over this war has torn our own social fabric. Now, our country again is being divided by strong feelings, by well-intentioned Americans, on both sides of this debate. But America needs unity, not division.

Therefore, I have decided it is time to put the divisions and the horrors of this war behind us and to lead this nation and the world in a new direction. God willing, it will bring peace at last and stop ~~agony~~ the ~~war~~ in the tortured lands of Indochina.

Let there be no mistake: if the North Vietnamese had lived up to the terms of the Paris Accords we signed in 1973, in good faith, there would be no war in Vietnam. But from the moment they signed that agreement, the North Vietnamese have systematically violated the ceasefire and the other provisions. They have flagrantly disregarded the ban on infiltration of troops into the South and have built up their forces to the unprecedented level of 350,000. In direct violation of the agreement, the North Vietnamese sent in the most modern equipment, in massive amounts. And in recent weeks the North Vietnamese have launched an all-out attack to take over South Vietnam against its will.

The Saigon government, uncertain of further American assistance, hastily ordered a strategic withdrawal into more defensible enclaves. This extremely difficult maneuver, decided upon without consultations, was badly managed and led to panic. The results are painfully obvious and profoundly moving.

Clearly, the United States is not responsible for the rapid deterioration that has taken place in recent weeks. The South Vietnamese forces have shown serious shortcomings. And, of course, none of this would have happened if North Vietnam had lived up to its solemn commitment given in the Paris Accords.

I sent General Weyand to Vietnam to survey the situation and recommend what more the United States might be able to do to help South Vietnam. He recommended that we provide South Vietnam with \$722 million in military assistance by May 1 of this year in hopes of rebuilding the South Vietnamese army.

However, none of my advisers was able to assure me that this additional money would enable South Vietnam to stabilize the military situation and continue the fight.

When the outcome is so doubtful, I cannot in good conscience, ask the American people to bear a further burden after they have given so much. We have done our best for many, many years. To continue along this same course would merely prolong the agony of the Vietnamese people who already have suffered far too much. Given the realities of the situation, it would be <sup>w</sup>rong for America to contribute further to the killing.

We must now devote all our efforts to the healing, both in Vietnam and here at home. Therefore, I have decided to take the following actions:

- 1) I am sending diplomatic notes to all members of the Paris Conference, including the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, asking them to arrange an immediate ceasefire in Vietnam and Cambodia and the orderly establishment of new governments consistent with the present realities.

2) I believe that we have an obligation to remove those Vietnamese and Cambodians who feel their lives or welfare would be endangered under a new government. I, therefore, ask that the Congress authorize the use of United States military personnel to help evacuate those Vietnamese and Cambodian citizens who wish to leave.

3) Fundamental decency requires that we do everything in our power to ease the misery and pain of the monumental crisis which has befallen the people of Indochina. Therefore, I pledge, in the name of the American people, that the United States will make a humanitarian effort to help care for and feed the victims of this war. I ask the Congress at this time to appropriate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for humanitarian aid.

I believe that these decisions I have made represent the will of the majority of the American people and their representatives in Congress, and, after all, we are a democracy, where government must reflect the will of the majority.

This is a moment of tragedy for us and for Indochina. But it is also a time for a new beginning.

It is a chance for the Vietnamese and Cambodians to live their lives without the war and without the suffering they have known for decades. It is a chance for them to rebuild their torn countries and to join as good neighbors in the international community of nations.

We hope and trust the new governments will rule wisely and benevolently. The people there deserve it.

For Americans, this is a moment to leave behind the bitter divisions which have torn our country for so long. Let us not look for scapegoats. Let us not succumb to the divisiveness of recrimination.

We have nothing to be ashamed of. What we did was not in vain. Over the years, we have behaved bravely and honorably, from the purist of motives: to help others defend themselves as long as there was a chance for success. But now there is a higher motive we must pursue: to stop a tragedy which has gone on too long.

The true test of a nation is how it reacts to adversity and how well it learns from the lessons of the past. So let us draw wisdom from this chapter of our history. Let us not compound the tragedy with self-inflicted wounds. Let us remember that our national unity is our most priceless asset.

A great challenge awaits us: to move into the future as a world leader with new wisdom, new confidence, new strength.

God bless us and the people of Indochina.

4/9/75

# Ford's Thursday Speech Is Expected To Be Conciliatory Toward Congress

By LESLIE H. GELB  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 8—President Ford's foreign policy address on Thursday is expected to be conciliatory toward Congress and more optimistic than his recent appraisals of the world situation, according to officials familiar with the current draft of the speech.

If Mr. Ford gives final approval to this approach, the speech will stand in contrast to two months of confrontation with Congress and gloomy statements about the United States position in the world.

"The more we advertised our weaknesses," one official said, "the worse we made the situation."

On the Middle East, the draft notes that a policy reassessment is under way, but does not hint at the maneuvering between the State Department and the Pentagon on how far to push this review.

### Indochina a Theme

The basic themes of the speech thus far, the officials said, are the avoidance of domestic recriminations over policy on Indochina and the Middle East and the restoration of world confidence in American foreign policy.

The draft does not restate the domino theory, which holds that Congressional failure to provide emergency aid to Saigon will lead to the collapse of the American position around the world. This language had been used in recent weeks by Mr. Ford, Secretary of State Kissinger and Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger.

The current version of the speech asks for humanitarian relief for Saigon. There is a blank space in the draft for the cost of this effort. One official said the cost had not been determined, and even when it is determined, it may not be included in the speech.

### Repeats Aid Request

The draft also repeats the request for \$300-million in emergency military aid for the Saigon Government. Also under consideration, some officials related, is the recommendation by Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, the Army Chief of Staff, for \$200-million additional.

The intention to restate the aid request, the officials said, is causing a problem for the speech writers: How can the President make the strongest possible case for what he believes is right without seeming to confront Congress unduly?

The exact tone and nuance pose a problem that is still unsettled as the drafters contemplate addressing the issues on which the Congress and the President must work together. On most of these specifics—the ban on military aid to Turkey, foreign aid in general, and restrictions on credits and trading status for the Soviet Union—the gap between the President and the Congressional majority is wide.

On the Middle East, the draft does not blame Israel for the breakdown of Mr. Kissinger's last mediation effort.

The officials said the review of Middle East policy would not be completed until the end of this month, but that preliminary parts were being sent to the President.

Interviews with Pentagon and State Department officials indicate that the two departments are leaning in different directions. The State Department now seems to be more pro-Israeli than the Pentagon.

Officials in both departments said they felt that Israel was to blame for the recent breakdown of the Kissinger mission and that the definition of American interests had to strike more of a balance between Israel and the Arab states.

One high Pentagon official said:

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the civilians here will not fight against a basic reorientation of our policy in the Middle East."

He stressed that he was not speaking for Mr. Schlesinger and that he was not saying that the United States should abandon the security of Israel.

Officials in the State Department talk more in terms of the need to devise a strategy to avoid a diplomatic void, to keep the two sides talking, and to prevent another polarization of Middle East nations between Moscow and Washington.

On Indochina, the speech

draft underlines the point that there is plenty of blame to go around. Until last week, senior officials and the President had singled out Congressional failure to approve emergency funds as the main cause for the collapsing situations in South Vietnam and Cambodia.

Some officials said that the review of Indochina policy would not be completed in time for the President's speech on Thursday. The military side of the review did not begin until yesterday. Until then, the report filed by Gen. Frederick C. Weyand on his recent fact-finding trip to South Vietnam had not been made available beyond the highest policy-making levels.

Mr. Kissinger said in a news conference in Palm Springs on Saturday that President Ford would discuss the Indochina policy review in his foreign-affairs speech.

All of those interviewed said that there was no disposition in either the Pentagon or the State Department to back away from the request for \$300-million in aid for Saigon.

Indeed, some said that there was an inclination in some quarters to ask for more in accordance with General Weyand's recommendation. The officials stressed that the President had not made a decision on the proposal.

Two officials said Mr. Kissinger was blaming President Nguyen Van Thieu most of all for the current collapse in South Vietnam. One of the officials quoted Mr. Kissinger as having said that President Thieu

should have made the North Vietnamese "bleed" during the withdrawal from the northern part of the country that Mr. Thieu ordered.

The officials also related that Mr. Kissinger considered initiating diplomatic contacts with Hanoi in recent weeks, but decided against them on the ground that Mr. Thieu would reject all initiatives.

There is still time before President Ford steps before Congress on Thursday for him to make final choices and change the direction of the speech. But in the meantime, the usual routine for a foreign affairs address is being followed.

Winston Lord, the director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, is doing the basic drafts in consultation with two Kissinger aides, Lawrence S. Eagleburger of the State Department and Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft of the National Security Council's staff.

Mr. Ford and Mr. Kissinger are reshaping the drafts, and at one point, Mr. Kissinger will sit down and work a new draft through. At about the same time, Mr. Ford's principal speech writers on foreign affairs—Robert T. Hartman and his aide, Milton Friedman—will begin putting the substance into the President's language and cadence.

The only others who would then be included are the President's senior assistants—Donald L. Rumsfeld, John O. Marsh Jr., and Max L. Friedersdorf. Mr. Schlesinger is not expected to see a draft until the very end, if at all.

4055

d c zzwyf

Mrs. Ford-Birthday 280  
Wirephoto WXY

WASHINGTON AP - President Ford dropped out at the last minute, but his wife went on to a theater party and celebrated her 57th birthday with singer Pearl Bailey and a Kennedy Center audience of 2,200.

With Pearl leading the way Tuesday night, they all stood and sang "Happy Birthday, Betty," to the First Lady.

The Fords had 14 long-time friends as guests to a buffet birthday dinner at the White House and they were all to go on to the show.

But the President decided at the last moment that he had better work on a foreign policy speech he will deliver Thursday to a joint session of Congress.

So the birthday celebrators went off without him for the two-hour performance by Miss Bailey.

"I hope my show made you happy," the singer told the First Lady as she reached the end of her one-woman show.

Miss Bailey had prepared for the President's being there, too. She sat on the piano to deliver a rendition of the "Varsity," song of the President's alma mater, the University of Michigan. And she had a football to give to Ford, which she inscribed instead "to dearest Betty Ford."

From the stage, Miss Bailey saluted the First Lady and from the presidential box Mrs. Ford waived and saluted the singer, who only recently had been a guest at a White House state dinner.

After the show Miss Bailey came up to the box for champagne and birthday cake.

Back at the White House, a presidential spokesman reported that Ford had put in almost three hours of work on his speech with aides in his Oval Office while his wife was out celebrating her birthday.

0622aED 04-09

Ron -

Terry says only Rumsfeld  
met with the President ~~Monday~~ last  
night, not "aides."

Just

A024

R A

FORD 4-9

DAY LD

BY HELEN THOMAS

UPI WHITE HOUSE REPORTER

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- PRESIDENT FORD IS NEARING A DECISION ON WHETHER TO TRY TO SALVAGE THE RAPIDLY DETERIORATING SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM BY SEEKING MORE AID FROM CONGRESS.

FORD SUMMONED HIS TOP DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY ADVISERS TO A NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WHERE HE WILL CONSIDER ALL HIS OPTIONS. PRIVATELY, HIS AIDES SAY THEY DO NOT BELIEVE SOUTH VIETNAM CAN REMAIN IN THE NON-COMMUNIST CAMP FOR LONG.

THE PRESIDENT IS CONSIDERING A REPORT BY ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GEN. FREDERICK WEYAND, WHO BELIEVES SOUTH VIETNAM CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WEYAND RETURNED FROM A FACT-FINDING TRIP TO SAIGON LAST FRIDAY.

WHITE HOUSE AIDES SAID THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY SAIGON WILL FALL THROUGH POLITICAL DEFEAT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU RATHER THAN A MILITARY ASSAULT.

THEY SAID FORD WAS PREPARING CONTINGENCY PLANS TO EVACUATE 100,000 TO 150,000 SOUTH VIETNAMESE WHO MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO COMMUNIST REPRISALS IF THEY REMAINED IN CONQUERED TERRITORY. AMONG THEM ARE THE PROVINCIAL CHIEFS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THE COMMUNIST DEFECTORS WHO WENT OVER TO THE SAIGON SIDE.

THE PRESIDENT WILL ADDRESS A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS AT 9 P.M. EDT THURSDAY IN WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS "A BROAD FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW" COVERING U.S. INVOLVEMENT OF ALL AREAS OF THE WORLD PARTICULARLY INDOCHINA AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

HE HAS BEEN POLISHING THE FIRST DRAFT OF HIS SPEECH, HIS FIRST MAJOR ADDRESS ON FOREIGN POLICY AND WAS EXPECTED TO GO OVER MANY MORE DRAFTS BEFORE HE COMES UP WITH A FINAL VERSION.

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER HUGH SCOTT SAID THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN CONSULTING WITH PROMINENT PERSONS WHO PLAYED ROLES IN MAKING VIETNAM POLICY IN PAST ADMINISTRATIONS, INCLUDING FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERT McNAMARA AND UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE GEORGE BALL.

SCOTT SAID HE AND OTHER CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS WANT A PREVIEW OF FORD'S PROPOSALS AND TIME TO STUDY THEM BEFORE THE PRESIDENT GOES ON TELEVISION.

"I DON'T JUST WANT TO REACT TO WHAT I'VE HEARD," SAID SCOTT.

UPI 04-09 02:57 AED

Ron - You'll probably be asked to confirm this -

*gwts*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS TO THE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

U. S. Capitol

Thursday - April 10, 1975

Departure: 8:40 P.M.

From: Terry O'Donnell *TOD*

BACKGROUND:

This is your fourth Presidential address to a Joint Session of Congress, the others occurring on August 15, 1974, following your inauguration; October 8, 1974, on the economy; and January 15, 1975 on the State of the Union.

In addition to Members of Congress and the First Family (Mrs. Ford, Susan and Jack), representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, the Cabinet, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Cabinet Members' wives, wives of the Supreme Court Justices, and special guests will attend.

The Address will be carried "live" by the television networks.

SEQUENCE:

8:40 p.m. You, Mrs. Ford, Jack and Susan board the limousine on South Grounds and depart en route U.S. Capitol.

NOTE: The Vice President will have proceeded to the Senate Chamber at 8:25 p.m. to convene the Senate.

8:50 p.m. Arrive South Door of the Capitol (House Wing) where you will be met by Mr. Ken R. Harding, House Sergeant-at-Arms and Mr. George White, Architect of the Capitol.

OFFICIAL PHOTO

You proceed inside the South Door entrance en route the Holding Room (H-210), escorted by Mr. Ken Harding.

Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan will be escorted to their seats in the Executive Gallery by Mr. Jim Rohan.

8:25 p.m. Arrive Holding Room (H-210) and join the Cabinet.

8:54 p.m. The Cabinet proceeds from H-210 to the House Chamber Floor.

8:56 p.m. Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan arrive their seats in the Executive Gallery.

8:57 p.m. The Escort Committee arrives outside the Holding Room:

Senator James O. Eastland (D-Miss)

Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Mont)

Senator Hugh Scott (R-Pa)

Senator Robert Byrd (D-W.Va)

Congressman Thomas O'Neill, Jr. (D-Mass)

Congressman John Rhodes (R-Ariz)

Congressman John McFall (D-Ca)

Congressman Bob Michel (R-Ill)

8:58 p.m. Depart Holding Room en route House Chamber, escorted by Mr. Ken Harding and Mr. Bill Wannell (Senate Sergeant at-Arms) and the Escort Committee en route center door of the House Chamber where you will pause.

9:00 p.m. Announcement by Jim Molloy, the Doorkeeper.

9:01 p.m. Proceed down center aisle, escorted by Jim Molloy and the Escort Committee, then around to your left to the Clerk's Desk (middle level) where you will remain standing. You will give a copy of the Address to both the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tem of the Senate.

3.

9:02 p.m. The Speaker calls the Joint Session to order and formally presents you.

9:03 p.m. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

LIVE NATIONWIDE TELEVISION

9:30 p.m. Address concludes. You depart House Chamber via the entrance route, escorted by the two Sergeants-at-Arms and the Escort Committee, and proceed to motorcade for boarding.

9:31 p.m. Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan depart their gallery seats en route motorcade.

9:34 p.m. You are joined by Mrs. Ford and Jack and Susan in the hallway and proceed outside South Entrance, board the motorcade, and depart en route South Lawn.

9:45 p.m. Arrive South Lawn.

# # # # #

This Copy For \_\_\_\_\_

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

---

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH HENRY A. KISSINGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

7:15 P.M. EDT

APRIL 10, 1975

THURSDAY

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I thought that the most useful thing that I could do is to explain what those who were discussing the speech, and above all the President, had in mind, what problems they were considering and what they were trying to achieve with this speech. Then we can answer specific questions on the meaning of the speech.

There obviously are two parts to the speech. There is the tragic problem of Vietnam, and there is the conduct of foreign policy in the face of the difficulties and, indeed, the disasters that have been encountered in Vietnam.

Those of us who are concerned with the conduct of foreign policy and the President feel that we have two problems: One is to manage the existing situation in Vietnam, but secondly, to keep in mind that the purposes of the Nation go forward, that the long-term interests of the country have to be preserved, and that our foreign policy has to be carried out with design and with conviction and with purpose and, therefore, we are trying to say that whatever happens in Vietnam, there is a design in our foreign policy that will become more difficult as a result of what has happened in Vietnam, but that as a united people, we can carry forward and whose essential objectives can be realized, and we will do our utmost to realize. This is the basic thing.

Now, let me turn to Vietnam. You have to remember that in talking about Vietnam at this moment we face many audiences, and what we say can produce its own consequences. We have a domestic audience, we have a Vietnamese audience, and we have an international audience, and each of them have their own requirements and their own consequences.

MORE

It is quite possible -- in fact, it is very likely -- that what we say charts not only a policy but produces immediate consequences. We know, for example, we are aware of the public opinion polls with respect to military assistance to Vietnam, but there is also the fact that if the President tonight announces certain conclusions that reflect these convictions of that majority, that this would produce immediate consequences in South Vietnam that in turn would lead to results that I would seriously question that majority could live with because we are dealing in Vietnam at this very moment also with the lives of 6000 Americans.

Also, there is the problem of the international perception of the United States, how it comports itself in the face of an undoubted disaster.

I am not asking you to agree with our conclusions. I am telling you that these were complex considerations that were as prayerfully considered as any Presidential speech that I have seen in the six years that I have been associated with this level of the government.

Let us take the situation in Vietnam. If the United States were to announce what many Congressmen have recommended, that we would stop all military assistance, there are foreigners here who will be able to judge on their own what the foreign perception of this problem would be, but there is no question what the result in Vietnam would be.

It would lead to an immediate collapse of the situation under the most chaotic conditions imaginable.

What the President is attempting to say in this speech is not rested on legal obligations by themselves; even less does it rest on alleged secret commitments that nobody ever claimed, nobody ever tried to implement as a commitment.

The attempt is raised on the basis that when the United States has been engaged for over a decade with a people, whatever the judgment may be of the original decision, there are literally tens of thousands of these people now whose physical existence, as well as that of their families, is tied up with us and, therefore, as we examined our choices, it became clear that whatever we did, whatever conviction one has about the ultimate outcome of the struggle in Vietnam, unless we were going to do nothing, the conclusions that we could reach were not really all as varied as might appear.

MORE

Whatever our convictions may be about the American obligation towards the Americans in the country and towards the Vietnamese who have been associated with us or towards the possibilities of a political solution, a degree of stabilization of the military situation is an essential prerequisite.

The Administration is as capable of counting up the number of North Vietnamese divisions against a maximum number of South Vietnamese divisions as anybody else, and it is highly probable that the South Vietnamese will also do this counting, but for the immediate problem that we face, a degree of stabilization of the military situation seemed to us an objective that we had no right to reject.

MORE

Now, then, a one-step basic decision had been made. Once it had been decided that we would not do anything, we were in the position that there was no sensible figure short of the figure that had been given to us by the mission sent by General Weyand.

Any one of you or any one of us could invent any other figure and it would have the status of a guess. It was the President's conviction that if he put forward any figure, it would be a figure on behalf of which he could testify before the Congress or his senior advisers could testify before the Congress.

Whether there is enough time to implement this entire program; whether this figure will in fact be enough, can be shown only by events, but if he is to level with the American people, then he had to give the figure for which there was some objective basis.

It is a figure, moreover, which I would like to stress that is important, regardless of what your estimate is of the probable outcome of military operations because it permits a discussion with the government of South Vietnam with respect to some of the contingencies that could arise since no outcome of any battle is ever for a day.

And this was the basis at which the particular figure was achieved.

Let me make two other points. The first is, it seemed imperative to the President, and to all of us, that this debate not be infinitely protracted -- one, because the situation in Vietnam does not permit it; and secondly, because the requirements of American national security do not permit it, either.

We believed that it was extremely important that we state our case, that we put it before the Congress and that we then get a clear decision as to the Congressional and public will. So, that we can then turn one way or the other to the essential agenda which, in any case, remains and which, in any case, must be carried out and which, in any event, will be carried out.

I want to say on behalf of the President that it is not the intention of the Administration to look for scapegoats, that once the decision is made, it will not be used to start a national debate on who lost or who was responsible, but precisely because we do not wish to do this and precisely because we owe it to the rest of the world to continue our international responsibilities as a united people.

MORE

Precisely for this reason, must we now be honest and state what we think is needed to have a chance to stabilize the situation, to save the lives that can be saved, to permit an orderly negotiation and to conduct ourselves in this tragic moment with dignity and purpose.

Now, this is what we attempted to do in this speech and I would point out again that we have no intention, whatever happens, of letting Vietnam paralyze the basic obligation of the United States which in the entire postwar period, has preserved the global peace and has attempted to lead other countries towards common objectives.

This, we will continue, but how we conduct ourselves in this tragedy will play an important role in it. This is the purpose of the speech. This is what was uppermost on our mind.

There were many possibilities. I can give you, for example, one possibility that was very seriously considered. The figure of \$300 million that was put forward as necessary under conditions in January would have been an absurdity to put forward under current conditions and would have had almost the same effect in Saigon as to put forward nothing at all. But we did consider the proposition of putting forward the figure of \$300 million and warning the Congress that if that helped we would come in with another figure in a few weeks.

The President's judgment was that the country should not have an endless debate every four weeks on the same basic set of facts and on the same fundamental issues and he, therefore, decided to take the route of asking for the amount which he considered the minimum amount that could achieve the objective that he had described, but we are prepared to discuss with the Congress other methods and we are not approaching the Congress with an attitude of finding scapegoats. We are approaching the Congress with an attitude that we absolutely must find national unity now in the face of the other problems that are ahead of us.

Now, this is what was the thinking behind the speech. I will be glad now to answer questions.

Q Mr. Secretary, when you speak of negotiations to South Vietnam, you are in fact talking about surrender, aren't you?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am not talking about surrender. I am talking about what the negotiations will produce depends very importantly on the military situation that exists and the terms that can be achieved in negotiations will depend importantly on our own actions. But obviously, the terms are not brilliant.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, when you come to the Congress with a \$722 million aid request when they, in turn, had rejected, in effect, the \$300 million, aren't you actually putting the monkey on the Congress' back despite all of your disclaimers about not looking for scapegoats or not engaging in the recriminations?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Peter, whether they reject \$300 million or \$722 million does not change that basic principle. Whether we are going to put the money on anybody's back depends on what we will do after the decision has been taken. We strongly urge this as being in the national interest under the current conditions that we face.

I believe that when the Congress addressed the question of the \$300 million, it faced totally different circumstances, it did not have to confront the question of the possible evacuation of maybe tens of thousands of people, and it was then dealing with what seemed like a totally different set of facts.

Q How do you want the law revised to take care of those Vietnamese that have become associated with us and are endangered if worst comes to worst?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: There are two legal issues. One has to do with the extraction of Americans and the other has to do with the extraction of Vietnamese.

Under a literal reading of that Indochina amendment, some lawyers argue that we do not have the right to use American military forces in any hostile action for any purposes in Indochina or in any situation where hostile action may result.

Other lawyers hold the point of view that the President has the residual constitutional right to protect American lives and that overrides a literal reading of existing legislation.

We would like the Congress to clarify this constitutional point, and frankly, we have no question that the Congress will support the constitutional point that the President does have the residual powers to use American forces to evacuate Americans. We consider this a relatively simple point.

The second question is that under the Indochina resolution, there is no doubt that we do not have the right to use American military forces under conditions in which they could become involved in hostilities for purposes of evacuating South Vietnamese or third country nationals which could also arise.

MORE

In this case, if the Congress went along with us, we would have to be given explicit authority for perhaps a limited period of time, and clearly defined purposes to do this.

So, we need two kinds of Congressional action. The first one we can probably do without, but given the situation and the sensitivities, we would prefer to happen. The second one is, if there is to be an evacuation, we must get --

Q Mr. Secretary, you referred several times to negotiations.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Yes.

Q As far as we know, there are no negotiations going on.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No.

Q The PRG says they will not negotiate as long as Thieu is in power. Do you expect him to remain in power?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't think it is for me to speculate what the political evolution in South Vietnam may be. I believe that under the conditions that now obtain, some sort of negotiation is probable and that the terms of this negotiation can be importantly affected by the military situation.

Q What sort of negotiations?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would rather not go into that at this point.

Q Mr. Secretary, are you conditioning that on getting the \$722 million when you say some sort of negotiation is probable?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We have seen in Cambodia what happens when one side achieves total predominance and the other side is deprived of the most elementary physical means, and it appeared, of course, in Cambodia that even the departure of Lon Nol did not produce a negotiation.

Based on my own experience with the North Vietnamese, any negotiation with them will reflect the existing balance of forces to a considerable extent and, therefore, it is difficult to predict what the negotiation will be in the abstract.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, if I understand you correctly, and I realize there are some problems of subtlety, and perhaps deliberate ambiguity here. If I understand it correctly, you are not really saying give us the \$722 million and we are promising it will save South Vietnam.

What you are saying is it will give us stability and a chance to get out in a somewhat orderly fashion. Is that a correct understanding?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am saying the judgment of General Weyand seems to be that the \$722 million could stabilize the situation perhaps on a permanent basis. I am saying that even if this is not correct -- and, after all, not every military judgment in the Vietnam war has invariably been exactly on the mark, but not every diplomatic judgment, either, not every journalistic judgment (Laughter) -- but even if this is not achievable, I would say the other purposes that America has would still be best served by the granting of this sum, and in that sense you have correctly summarized my views.

Q Mr. Secretary, the last sentence on page 2 of the President's speech deals, I believe, with a very basic premise. What evidence is there to support the statement that there was universal consensus in the United States in 1973 that the United States would continue to provide adequate materials to support South Vietnam,-- an impliedly open-ended basis.

Q I can add to that the Democratic platform in 1972 specifically called for the end to all military aid, and that certainly is a part of the national debate.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Yes, it is also true that they only got 38 percent of the votes.

I think this is subject to research. The general impression that many of the critics of the war in Vietnam left was that their major objection was to the endless involvement of American combat forces in the region which sooner or later would have to stand on its own feet, and the impression that was widespread was that if the United States could withdraw from the war and reclaim its prisoners, that it would be prepared to assume the same responsibilities or at least with respect to material help toward Indochina that it did toward South Korea, for example, in similar circumstances.

We have never claimed a legal obligation. We have always stated that we thought it was a moral obligation. I have stated at press conferences, and I repeat it now, that we told the South Vietnamese that we believed that the Congress and the American people, in gratitude for being relieved of the nightmare of the prisoners and the loss of life, would be generous in its assistance.

MORE

We do not claim this is a legal obligation, and we do not claim there were secret commitments, nor have we ever claimed it, nor have we ever invoked it to oppose any particular legislation.

Q Mr. Secretary, do you suppose 6000 Americans are in danger of losing their lives in Vietnam? Could they not get out on Pan American in nine days by the time this bill is considered?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We are going to make an effort to reduce the number of Americans in Vietnam. We have to consider that if the United States precipitously pulls out of Saigon, it will also produce the very consequences, with respect to all its other concerns, that it is attempting to avoid. But, we are reducing the numbers of Americans to the minimum that is considered necessary to perform the functions that remain.

Q Are they in grave peril, as the President says?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Whether they are in grave peril or not depends on possible evolutions that can be foreseen. If there is a collapse produced by despair and a sense of abandonment, you have one situation.

If you have a relatively, even temporarily, stabilized military situation and a government that appreciates that fact, you have another situation. If you have a negotiation, you have yet another situation. So, the exact status of both the Americans and the endangered Vietnamese cannot be stated in the abstract, it depends on a whole set of circumstances.

Q Mr. Secretary, you have said several times tonight that what is important now is that we make this decision on the \$722 million, and then what is important is what we do after that decision is made.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: That is correct.

Q From all indications, Congress has shown no inclination to pass \$300 million, and you perhaps agree that it is not reasonable to expect them to pass the \$722 million either, so my question is twofold. Number one, do you agree with that assessment; and number two, what will we do if they reject this additional aid request?

MORE

Q Question?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The question is, that since Congress in effect, rejected \$300 million, it is almost certain to reject the larger figure. Do I agree with this assessment and what shall we do if this assessment turns out to be correct? Is that a fair statement of your question?

The \$300 million were put forward as a supplemental appropriation under conditions that were totally different from the circumstances that we face today, both within Vietnam and in terms of our international consequences.

We did not ask the Congressional leadership yesterday about any particular figures because we did not think it was fair to them nor did the President think it was fair to him to get into a debate about a figure in which he felt he had to make the preliminary decision of what was necessary.

I had the impression, however, from the leadership that they were approaching this issue in a prayerful and serious manner and not in a contentious manner. And if the Congress looks at this not in terms of an old debate, but in terms of something of a transition to a new period of cooperation, then I would not make a pre-judgment of what they will vote and I believe that something can be worked out with them.

Now, if it turns out that they will not vote it, I have stated that the Administration will do its absolute utmost to prevent an orgy of recrimination and will attempt to focus the American people on the duties and obligations we now have which have not ended.

We have been the central power in preserving the peace and many of the initiatives of the postwar period have been due to our leadership. That is what we must maintain under now more difficult circumstances, but we can attempt to do it with a united people.

Q Mr. Secretary, is the President planning a conference in the Pacific with the leaders of our --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, all of these leaders that I mentioned will be coming to Washington.

Q The NATO?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, we are now talking about the Asian leaders. All of those have been scheduled to come to Washington.

MORE

Q In the near future?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Over the next three months, beginning in the near future.

On the NATO meeting, no precise date has been set and the surest way to keep a precise date from being set would be for me to try to interfere with the prerogatives of the permanent representatives of the NATO Council, but I think it is a reasonable assumption that it will take place -- if you speculate on that on your own -- sometime between the end of May and the end of June, and more in the earlier part than in the later part of the period. But it really has not been set.

Q The President refers to \$722 million as being for very specific purposes. Can you tell us what those specific purposes are?

Secondly, can you tell us how many Vietnamese are contemplated in the description of those whose lives may be dependent upon us?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: On the first question, there is a very precise list which we looked over in San Clemente -- in Palm Springs, and which will have to be -- (Laughter)

Q Will you stand on that statement, please?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Will you put that on the record, Murray?

-- which we looked over in Palm Springs and which I do not have with me, but I am sure the Defense Department witnesses before various committees can testify to that.

With respect to the second question, we have tried to make as careful an analysis as we could. If you make a list of all of those whose lives could be endangered, you come up with horrendous figures because in Vietnam, the whole family is involved, it is never a question of just saving an individual. There is always the question of his entire family.

The figure of those that are endangered that we could put together amounts to something like 1.5 million. The figure of those that are endangered, we have some obligation to, but this is beyond our capabilities. The figure that we think we have a special obligation to is between 150,000 and 200,000, but that is a massive logistic effort whose feasibility depends entirely on the conditions in which it will have to be executed and therefore, an important concern of ours is to provide conditions in which we can at least think about it.

MORE

Q How many Americans might be required to evacuate 150,000 to 200,000 South Vietnamese?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: You will have to get this from the Defense Department, but it is not an insignificant figure.

On the other hand, it is not a very extended operation, either.

Q When you get these Vietnamese out, don't you have to negotiate either with the South Vietnamese regime or the Communists?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Or both.

Q What circumstances do you envisage? The South Vietnamese, so far, have indicated they would not allow this to happen.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We are not talking under conditions now. We are not saying this will happen. We are saying we have an obligation to consider the worst contingency and we are trying to create circumstances where we can talk with a South Vietnamese government about the worst contingencies.

Barry?

Q Excuse me. Just a technical point, maybe. It is not clear to me.

Is there a remaining aid request for Cambodia? What is it or are you just abandoning any hope now?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It is very probable, as the President has indicated, that the fate of Cambodia will be decided in the next few days and that therefore we are not, tonight, in a position to make a plausible request to the Congress.

But if that should turn out to be wrong, we will then do it but we do not want in Vietnam a similar situation to arise in which there is an endless debate while there is a constant deterioration of a situation over which we lose progressively any capacity to exert influence.

Q Dr. Kissinger, is the use of American air power considered in any way in your proposals?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The President has pointed out that this contingency, that the introduction of American combat forces was a theoretical possibility which is, one, proscribed by law, and secondly, will not be requested by the President except for the limited purpose of refugee evacuation.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, what about troops on the ground?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It depends, really, entirely on the situation under which this takes place and the degree of cooperation and indeed, whether it is feasible at all.

Q Did you get a range of figures?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We had a very rough guess, but we have not made a detailed study of this.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, to take that point a little further, do you contemplate the need to put in enough American troops to draw a protective ring around Saigon if that becomes necessary to evacuate?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Right. I hope you ladies and gentlemen realize we are now talking about the absolutely worst contingency which has, if you analyze it, many nightmarish aspects to it and, therefore, depends to a very important degree on the degree of cooperation that is achieved by the South Vietnamese government, the kind of negotiation that might be going on at this moment, the kind of cooperation that could be achieved from the North Vietnamese.

Therefore, it is very difficult -- and also the degree to which it is possible -- to assemble ahead of time those whose lives might be most endangered. All of these are factors on which I think it would be dangerous to speculate, but they are being considered.

Yes, sir.

Q Mr. Secretary, some of us were told today that the tone of the President's speech this evening would be optimistic, yet you presented anything but that. Can you cite something optimistic in the outlook for U.S. foreign policy?

In the President's speech we were also told that the President was sounding a conciliatory note in this -- Carl Albert, Speaker of the House. I was wondering if you would cite what is conciliatory in the President's speech?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think the President considered it his duty to present the situation as he saw it, and I do not think the President should be asked to be optimistic or pessimistic.

The President should be asked to explain the situation as he sees it to the best of his ability.

Secondly, what is conciliatory in the speech is his repeated expression that this is not an attempt to begin a period of recrimination, that at his repeated insistence that the duties before America remain constant, whatever setbacks we may suffer in Vietnam, and that he will work with the Congress and with the public to try to achieve a united approach to this.

This is his attitude. He did point out those things that have to be remedied in order to get the forward momentum, but the spirit of this speech and the spirit of the man is conciliatory, it is not vindictive. It is not bitter, and it is not accusatory.

MORE

It is also serious because it is a serious situation which we cannot escape by pretending that it is not serious or by pretending that it does not affect international affairs. We can master them, but we cannot explain them away.

Mr. Osborne?

Q Mr. Secretary, two clarifying questions. Would it be intended to bring the endangered Vietnamese to the United States, number one. Number two, there is a reference on page 3 to diplomatic notes being sent to members of the Paris Conference. That is a reference to the January notes?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No. We have sent a new set of notes tonight. The destination of these individuals has not yet been decided, but we will be approaching other countries and we, without any question, will have to take a substantial number of them.

Q Sir, as I understand the reading of this, you will not only have to get the money, but you will have to get -- isn't it two laws on the books now that you will have to have taken off the books? You will have to go back and say we want to nullify these two laws in case the Church-Case law and continuing resolutions --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No. We are asking for the money, and we are asking with respect to the law, for a clarification of one point, which I believe will present no difficulty whatsoever; namely, the President's legal authority to use American forces to extract American citizens.

We could probably do that on a unilateral interpretation. We simply would like to get this clarified. I am confident from consultations that this is no problem.

The second is not to take the Church-Case off the books, but rather to get an exception for a limited period of time for a specific purpose for a one-time operation.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END (AT 8:00 P.M. EDT)

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE  
AT 9:00 P.M., EDT

APRIL 10, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF AN ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO BE DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, distinguished guests, my good friends in the Congress and fellow Americans:

In my report on the State of the Union in January I concentrated on two subjects which were uppermost in the minds of the American people -- urgent actions for the recovery of our economy and a comprehensive program to make the United States independent of foreign sources of energy.

I thank the Congress for the action it has taken thus far in response to my economic recommendations. I look forward to early approval of a national energy program to meet our country's long range and emergency needs.

Tonight it is my purpose to review our relations with the rest of the world, in the spirit of candor and consultation which I have sought to maintain with my former colleagues and with our countrymen from the time I took office. It is the first priority of my Presidency to sustain and strengthen the mutual trust and respect which must exist among Americans and their government if we are to deal successfully with the challenges confronting us at home and abroad.

The leadership of the United States of America, since the end of World War II, has sustained and advanced the security, well-being and freedom of millions of human beings besides ourselves. Despite some mistakes and some setbacks, the United States has made peace a real prospect for us and for all nations. I know firsthand that Congress has been a partner in the development and support of the American foreign policy which five Presidents before me have carried forward, with changes of course but not of destination.

The course which our country chooses in the world today has never been of greater significance -- for ourselves as a nation and for all mankind.

We build from a solid foundation.

Our alliances with the great industrial democracies in Europe, North America and Japan remain strong, with a greater degree of consultation and equity than ever before.

With the Soviet Union we have moved across a broad front toward a more stable, if still competitive relationship. We have begun to control the spiral of strategic nuclear armaments.

After two decades of mutual estrangement we have achieved an historic opening with the People's Republic of China.

In the best American tradition we have committed -- often with striking success -- our influence and good offices to help contain conflicts and settle disputes in many regions of the world. We have, for example, helped the parties of the Middle East take the first steps toward living with one another in peace.

(MORE)

We have opened a new dialogue with Latin America looking toward a healthier hemispheric partnership. We are developing a closer relationship with the nations of Africa. We have exercised international leadership on the great new issues of our interdependent world, such as energy, food, environment and the law of the sea.

The American people can be proud of what their nation has achieved and helped others to accomplish. But we have, from time to time, suffered setbacks and disappointments in foreign policy. Some were events over which we had no control; some were difficulties we imposed upon ourselves.

We live in a time of testing and a time of change. Our world--a world of economic uncertainty, political unrest, and threats to the peace--does not allow us the luxury of abdication or domestic discord. I recall the words of President Truman to the Congress when the United States faced a far greater challenge at the end of the Second World War: "If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world--and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this nation."

President Truman's resolution must guide us today. Our purpose is not to point the finger of blame; but to build upon our many successes; to repair damage where we find it; to recover our balance; to move ahead as a united people. Tonight is a time for straight talk among friends about where we stand, and where we're going.

A vast human tragedy has befallen our friends in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Tonight I shall not talk only of obligations arising from legal documents. Who can forget the enormous sacrifices in blood, dedication and treasure that we made in Vietnam? Under five Presidents and seven Congresses the United States was engaged in Indochina. Millions of Americans served, thousands died, and many more were wounded, imprisoned, or lost. Over \$150 billion have been appropriated for that war by the Congress of the United States. And after years of effort, we negotiated under the most difficult circumstances a settlement which made it possible for us to remove our military forces and bring home with pride our prisoners. This settlement, if its terms had been adhered to, permitted our South Vietnamese ally, with our material and moral support, to maintain its security and rebuild after two decades of war.

The chances for an enduring peace after the last American fighting man left Vietnam in 1973 rested on two publicly stated premises: First, that if necessary the United States would help sustain the terms of the Paris Accords it signed two years ago; and second, that the United States would provide adequate economic and military assistance to South Vietnam. Let us refresh our memories for a moment. The universal consensus in the United States at that time was that if we could end our own involvement and obtain the release of our prisoners we would provide adequate material support to South Vietnam.

(MORE)

The North Vietnamese, from the moment they signed the Paris Accords, systematically violated the cease-fire and other provisions of the agreement. Flagrantly disregarding the ban on infiltration of troops into the South, they increased Communist forces to the unprecedented level of 350,000. In direct violation of the agreement, they sent in the most modern equipment in massive amounts. Meanwhile, they continued to receive large quantities of supplies and arms from their friends.

In the face of this situation, the United States -- torn as it was by the emotions of a decade of war -- was unable to respond. We deprived ourselves by law of the ability to enforce the agreement -- thus giving North Vietnam assurance that it could violate that agreement with impunity. Next we reduced our economic and arms aid to South Vietnam. Finally we signalled our increasing reluctance to give any support to that nation struggling for its survival.

Encouraged by these developments, the North Vietnamese in recent months began sending even their reserve divisions into South Vietnam. Eighteen divisions, virtually their entire army, are now in South Vietnam. The Government of South Vietnam, uncertain of further American assistance, hastily ordered a strategic withdrawal to more defensible positions. This extremely difficult maneuver, decided upon without consultations, was poorly executed, hampered by floods of refugees, and thus led to panic. The results are painfully obvious and profoundly moving.

In my first public comment on this tragic development, I called for a new sense of national unity and purpose. I said I would not engage in recriminations or attempts to assess blame.

In the same spirit I welcomed the statement of the distinguished Majority Leader of the United States Senate earlier this week that: "It is time for the Congress and the President to work together in the area of foreign as well as domestic policy."

Let us start afresh.

I am here to work with the Congress. In the conduct of foreign affairs, Presidential initiative and the ability to act swiftly in emergencies are essential to our national interest.

With respect to North Vietnam, I call upon Hanoi -- and ask the Congress to join me in this call -- to cease military operations immediately and to honor the terms of the Paris agreement. The United States is urgently requesting the signatories of the Paris Conference to meet their obligation to use their influence to halt the fighting and enforce the 1973 Accords. Diplomatic notes to this effect have been sent to all members of the Paris Conference, including the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

The situation in South Vietnam and Cambodia has reached a critical phase requiring immediate and positive decisions by this government.

The options before us are few, and time is short.

-- On the one hand, the United States could do nothing more; let the government of South Vietnam save itself and what is left of its territory if it can; let those South Vietnamese civilians who have worked with us for a decade save their lives and families if they can; in short, shut our eyes and wash our hands of the whole matter -- if we can.

(MORE)

-- Or, on the other hand, I could ask Congress for authority to enforce the Paris Accords with our troops and our tanks and our aircraft and our artillery, and to carry the war to the enemy.

There are two narrower options:

- First, stick with my January request that the Congress appropriate \$300,000,000 for military assistance for South Vietnam and seek additional funds for economic and humanitarian purposes
- Or, increase my requests for both emergency military and humanitarian assistance to levels which by best estimates might enable the South Vietnamese to stem the onrushing aggression, to stabilize the military situation, permit the chance of a negotiated political settlement between the North and South Vietnamese, and, if the very worst were to happen, at least allow the orderly evacuation of Americans and endangered South Vietnamese to places of safety.

Let me now state my considerations and conclusions:

I have received a full report from General Weyand, whom I sent to Vietnam to assess the situation. He advises that the current military situation is critical, but that South Vietnam is continuing to defend itself with the resources available. However, he feels that if there is to be any chance of success for their defense plan, South Vietnam needs urgently an additional \$722 million in very specific military supplies from the United States. In my judgment, a stabilization of the military situation offers the best opportunity for a political solution.

I must, of course, consider the safety of some 6,000 Americans who remain in South Vietnam, and tens of thousands of South Vietnamese employees of the United States Government, of news agencies, of contractors and businesses for many years whose lives, with their dependents, are in grave peril. There are tens of thousands of other South Vietnamese intellectuals, professors and teachers, editors and opinion-leaders who have supported the South Vietnamese cause and the alliance with the United States, to whom we have a profound moral obligation.

I am also mindful of our posture toward the rest of the world, and particularly on our future relations with the free nations of Asia. These nations must not think for a minute that the United States is pulling out on them or intends to abandon them to aggression.

I have therefore concluded that the national interests of the United States and the cause of world stability require that we continue to give both military and humanitarian assistance to the South Vietnamese.

Assistance to South Vietnam at this stage must be swift and adequate. Drift and indecision invite far deeper disaster. The sums I had requested before the major North Vietnamese offensive and the sudden South Vietnamese retreat are obviously inadequate. Half-hearted action would be worse than none. We must act together and decisively.

MORE

I am asking the Congress to appropriate without delay \$722 million for emergency military assistance and an initial sum of \$250 million for economic and humanitarian aid for South Vietnam.

The situation in South Vietnam is changing rapidly and the need for emergency food, medicine and refugee relief is growing. I will work with the Congress in the days ahead to develop additional humanitarian assistance to meet these pressing needs.

Fundamental decency requires that we do everything in our power to ease the misery and pain of the monumental human crisis which has befallen the people of Vietnam. Millions have fled in the face of the Communist onslaught and are now homeless and destitute. I hereby pledge in the name of the American people that the United States will make a maximum humanitarian effort to help care for and feed them.

I ask Congress to clarify immediately its restrictions on the use of U.S. military forces in Southeast Asia for the limited purposes of protecting American lives by ensuring their evacuation, if this should become necessary. I also ask prompt revision of the law to cover those Vietnamese to whom we have a special obligation and whose lives may be endangered, should the worst come to pass.

I hope that this authority will never be used, but if it is needed there will be no time for Congressional debate.

Because of the urgency of the situation, I urge the Congress to complete action on all these measures not later than April 19.

In Cambodia the situation is tragic. The United States and the Cambodian Government have each made major efforts -- over a long period and through many channels -- to end that conflict. But because of their military successes, steady external support, and American legislative restrictions, the Communist side has shown no interest in negotiation, compromise, or a political solution.

And yet, for the past three months the beleagured people of Phnom Penh have fought on, hoping against hope that the United States would not desert them, but instead provide the arms and ammunition they so badly need.

I have received a moving letter from the new acting President of Cambodia, Saukham Khoy.

"Dear Mr. President," he wrote. "As the American Congress reconvenes to reconsider your urgent request for supplemental assistance for the Khmer Republic, I appeal to you to convey to the American legislators our plea not to deny these vital resources to us, if a non-military solution is to emerge from this tragic 5 year old conflict."

"To find a peaceful end to the conflict we need time. I do not know how much time, but we all fully realize that the agony of the Khmer people cannot and must not go on much longer. However, for the immediate future, we need the rice to feed the hungry and the ammunition and weapons to defend ourselves against those who want to impose their will by force of arms. A denial by the American people of the means for us to carry on will leave us no alternative but inevitably abandoning our search for a solution which will give our citizens some freedom of choice as to their future. For a number of years now the Cambodian people have placed their trust in America. I cannot believe that this confidence was misplaced and that suddenly America will deny us the means which might give us a chance to find an acceptable solution to our conflict."

(MORE)

This letter speaks for itself. In January, I requested food and ammunition for the brave Cambodians. I regret to say that as of this evening, it may be too late.

Members of the Congress, my fellow Americans, this moment of tragedy for Indochina is a time of trial for us. It is a time for national resolve.

It has been said that the United States is overextended; that we have too many commitments too far from home; that we must re-examine what our truly vital interests are and shape our strategy to conform to them. I find no fault with this as theory, but in the real world such a course must be pursued carefully and in close coordination with solid progress toward overall reduction in worldwide tensions.

We cannot in the meantime abandon our friends while our adversaries support and encourage theirs. We cannot dismantle our defenses, our diplomacy or our intelligence capability while others increase and strengthen theirs.

Let us put an end to self-inflicted wounds. Let us remember that our national unity is a most priceless asset. Let us deny our adversaries the satisfaction of using Vietnam to pit Americans against Americans.

At this moment, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, this nation must present to the world a united front.

Above all, let us keep events in Southeast Asia in their proper perspective. The security and progress of hundreds of millions of people everywhere depend importantly on us.

Let no potential adversary believe that our difficulties or our debates mean a slackening of our national will.

We will stand by our friends.

We will honor our commitments.

We will uphold our country's principles.

The American people know that our strength, our authority and our leadership have helped prevent a third World War for more than a generation. We will not shrink from this duty in the decades ahead.

Let me now review with you the basic elements of our foreign policy, speaking candidly about our strengths and our difficulties.

We must first of all face the fact that what has happened in Indochina has disquieted many of our friends, especially in Asia. We must deal with this situation promptly and firmly. To this end, I have already scheduled meetings with the leaders of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Indonesia, and I expect to meet with leaders of other Asian countries as well.

A key country in this respect is Japan. The warm welcome I received in Japan last November vividly symbolized for both our peoples the friendship and solidarity of this extraordinary partnership. I look forward with very special pleasure to welcoming the Emperor when he visits the United States later this year.

(MORE)

We consider our Security Treaty with Japan the cornerstone of stability in the vast reaches of Asia and the Pacific. Our relations are crucial to our mutual prosperity. Together we are working energetically on the international multilateral agenda--in trade, energy and food. We will continue the process of strengthening our friendship, mutual security and prosperity.

Also of fundamental importance is our mutual security relationship with the Republic of Korea, which I reaffirmed on my recent visit. Our relations with Western Europe have never been stronger. There are no peoples with whom America's destiny has been more closely linked. There are no peoples whose friendship and cooperation are more needed for the future. For none of the members of the Atlantic community can be secure, none can prosper, none can advance unless all do so together. More than ever, these times demand our close collaboration in order:

- to maintain the sure anchor of our common security in this time of international riptides;
- to work together on the promising negotiations with our potential adversaries;
- to pool our energies on the great new economic challenges that face us.

In addition to this traditional agenda, there are new problems, involving energy, raw materials, and the environment. The Atlantic nations face many and complex negotiations and decisions. It is time to take stock, to consult on our future, to affirm once again our cohesion and our common destiny. I therefore expect to join with the other leaders of the Atlantic Alliance, at a Western Summit in the very near future.

Before this NATO meeting, I earnestly ask Congress to weigh the broader consequences of its past actions on the complex Greek and Turkish dispute of Cyprus. Our foreign policy cannot be simply a collection of special economic or ethnic or ideological interests. There must be a concern for the overall design of our international actions. To achieve this design for peace and to assure that our individual acts have coherence, the Executive must have flexibility in the conduct of foreign policy.

United States military assistance to an old and faithful ally-Turkey--has been cut off by action of the Congress. This has imposed an embargo on military purchases by Turkey, extending even to items already paid for--an unprecedented act against a friend. These moves, I know, were sincerely intended to influence Turkey in the Cyprus negotiations. I deeply share the concern of many citizens for the immense human suffering on Cyprus. I sympathize with the new democratic government in Greece. We are continuing our earnest efforts about equitable solutions to the problems which exist between Greece and Turkey. But the result of the Congressional action has been:

- to block progress toward reconciliation, thereby prolonging the suffering on Cyprus;
- to complicate our ability to promote successful negotiations:

(MORE)

-- to increase the danger of a broader conflict.

Our longstanding relationship with Turkey is not simply a favor to Turkey; it is clear and essential mutual interest. Turkey lies on the rim of the Soviet Union and at the gates to the Middle East. It is vital to the security of the eastern Mediterranean, the southern flank of Western Europe and the collective security of the Western Alliance. Our U.S. military bases in Turkey are as critical to our own security as they are to the defense of NATO.

I therefore call upon the Congress to lift the American arms embargo against our Turkish ally by passing the bipartisan Mansfield-Scott Bill, now before the Senate. Only this will enable us to work with Greece and Turkey to resolve the differences between our two allies. I accept -- and indeed welcome -- the bill's requirement for monthly reports to the Congress on progress toward a Cyprus settlement. But unless this is done with dispatch, forces may be set in motion within and between the two nations which could not be reversed.

At the same time, in order to strengthen the democratic government of Greece, and to reaffirm our traditional ties with the people of Greece, we are actively discussing a program of economic and military assistance. We will shortly be submitting specific requests to the Congress.

A vital element of our foreign policy is our relationship with the developing countries -- in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These countries must know that America is a true and concerned friend, reliable in word and deed.

As evidence of this friendship, I urge the Congress to reconsider one provision of the 1974 Trade Act which has had an unfortunate and unintended impact on our relations with Latin America, where we have such long ties of friendship and cooperation. Under this legislation all members of OPEC were excluded from our generalized system of trade preferences. This punished two old South American friends, Ecuador and Venezuela, as well as other OPEC nations such as Nigeria and Indonesia none of which participated in last year's oil embargo. This exclusion has seriously complicated our new dialogue with our friends in this hemisphere.

I therefore endorse the amendments which have been introduced in the Congress to provide Executive authority to waive those restrictions of the Trade Act that are incompatible with our national interest.

The interests of America as well as our allies are vitally affected by what happens in the Middle East. So long as the state of tension continues, it threatens military crisis, the weakening of our alliances, the stability of the world economy, and confrontation among the nuclear superpowers. These are intolerable risks.

Because we are in the unique position of being able to deal with all the parties, we have at their request been engaged for the past year and a half in a peacemaking effort unparalleled in the history of the region.

(MORE)

Our policy has brought remarkable successes on the road to peace. Last year two major disengagement agreements were negotiated and implemented with our help. For the first time in 30 years a process of negotiation on the basic political issues was begun -- and is continuing.

Unfortunately, the latest efforts to reach a further interim agreement between Israel and Egypt have been suspended. The issues dividing the parties are vital to them and not amenable to easy or quick solutions. However, the United States will not be discouraged.

The momentum toward peace that has been achieved over the last 18 months must and will be maintained.

The active role of the United States must and will be continued. The draft toward war must and will be prevented.

I pledge the United States to a major effort for peace in the Middle East -- an effort which I know has the solid support of the American people and their Congress. We are now examining how best to proceed. We have agreed in principle to reconvene the Geneva conference. We are prepared as well to explore other forums. The United States will move ahead on whatever course looks most promising, either towards an overall settlement or interim agreements, should the parties desire them. We will not accept stagnation or a stalemate, with all its attendant risks to peace and prosperity and to our relations in and outside of the region.

The national interest -- and national security -- require as well that we reduce the dangers of war. We shall strive to do so by continuing to improve relations with potential adversaries.

The United States and the Soviet Union share an interest in lessening tensions and building a more stable relationship. During this process we have never had any illusions. We know that we are dealing with a nation that reflects different principles and is our competitor in many parts of the globe. Through a combination of firmness and flexibility, the United States has in recent years laid the basis of a more reliable relationship founded on mutual interest and mutual restraint. But we cannot expect the Soviet Union to show restraint in the face of United States weakness or irresolution. As long as I am President, America will maintain its strength, its alliances, and its principles -- as a prerequisite to a more peaceful planet. As long as I am President, we will not permit detente to become a license to fish in troubled waters. Detente must be a two-way street.

Central to U.S. - Soviet relations today is the critical negotiation to control strategic nuclear weapons. We hope to turn the Vladivostok agreements into a final agreement this year at the time of General Secretary Brezhnev's visit to the United States. Such an agreement would for the first time put a ceiling on the strategic arms race. It would mark a turning point in postwar history and would be a crucial step in lifting from mankind the threat of nuclear war.

Our use of trade and economic sanctions as weapons to alter the internal conduct of other nations must also be seriously re-examined. However well-intentioned the goals, the fact is that some of our recent actions in the economic field have been self-defeating. They are not achieving the objectives intended by the Congress. And they have damaged our foreign policy.

MORE

The Trade Act of 1974 prohibits most-favored nation treatment, credit and investment guarantees and commercial agreements with the Soviet Union so long as their emigration policies fail to meet our criteria. The Soviet Union has therefore refused to put into effect the important 1972 trade agreement between our two countries.

As a result, Western Europe and Japan have stepped into the breach. They have extended credits exceeding \$8 billion in the last six months. These are economic opportunities -- jobs and business -- which could have gone to Americans.

There should be no illusions about the nature of the Soviet system -- but there should also be no illusions about how to deal with it. Our belief in the right of peoples of the world freely to emigrate has been well demonstrated. This legislation, however, not only harmed our relations with the Soviet Union but it seriously complicated the prospects of those seeking to emigrate. The favorable trend, aided by our quiet diplomacy, by which emigration increased from 400 in 1968 to over 33,000 in 1973, has been seriously set back. Remedial legislation is urgently needed to further our national interest.

With the People's Republic of China we are firmly fixed on the course set forth in the Shanghai Communique. Stability in Asia and the world require our constructive relations with one-fourth of the human race. After two decades of mutual isolation and hostility, we have in recent years built a promising foundation. Deep differences in our philosophies and social systems will endure. But so should our mutual long-term interests and the goals to which our countries have jointly subscribed in Shanghai.

I will visit China later this year to reaffirm these interests and to accelerate the improvement in our relations.

The issues I have discussed are the most pressing on the traditional agenda of foreign policy. But ahead of us also is a vast new agenda of issues in an interdependent world. The United States -- with its economic power, its technology, its zest for new horizons -- is the acknowledged world leader in dealing with many of these challenges. If this is a moment of uncertainty in the world, it is even more a moment of rare opportunity:

- We are summoned to meet one of man's most basic challenges -- hunger. At the World Food Conference last November in Rome, the United States outlined a comprehensive program to close the ominous gap between population growth and food production over the long-term. Our technological skill and our enormous productive capacity are crucial to accomplishing this task.
- The old order -- in trade, finance, and raw materials -- is changing, and American leadership is needed in the creation of new institutions and practices for worldwide prosperity and progress.
- The world's oceans, with their immense resources and strategic importance, must become areas of cooperation rather than conflict. American policy is directed to that end.
- Technology must be harnessed to the service of mankind while protecting the environment. This too is an arena for American leadership.

(MORE)

-- The interests and aspirations of the developed and developing nations must be reconciled in a manner that is both realistic and humane. This is our goal in this new era.

One of the finest success stories in our foreign policy is our cooperative effort with other major energy-consuming nations. In little more than a year, together with our partners,

- we have created the International Energy Agency;
- we have negotiated an emergency sharing arrangement which helps to reduce the dangers of an embargo;
- we have launched major international conservation efforts;
- we have developed a massive program for the development of alternative sources of energy.

But the fate of all of these programs depends crucially on what we do at home. Every month that passes brings us closer to the day when we will be dependent on imported energy for 50% of our requirements. A new embargo under these conditions would have a devastating impact on jobs, industrial expansion, and inflation at home. Our economy cannot be left to the mercy of decisions over which we have no control.

I call upon the Congress to act.

In a world where information is power, a vital element of our national security lies in our intelligence services. They are as essential to our nation's security in peace as in war. Americans can be grateful for the important, but largely unsung, contributions and achievements of the intelligence services of this nation.

It is entirely proper that this system be subject to Congressional review. But a sensationalized public debate over legitimate intelligence activities is a disservice to this nation and a threat to our intelligence system. It ties our hands while our potential enemies operate with secrecy, skill and vast resources. Any investigation must be conducted with maximum discretion and dispatch, to avoid crippling a vital national institution.

As Congress oversees intelligence activities it must organize itself to do so in a responsible way. It has been traditional for the Executive to consult with the Congress through specially-protected procedures that safeguard essential secrets. But recently those procedures have been altered in a way that makes the protection of vital information next to impossible. I will work with the leaders of the House and Senate to devise procedures which will meet the needs of the Congress for review and the needs of the nation for an effective intelligence service.

Underlying any successful foreign policy is the strength and credibility of our defense posture.

We are strong and we are ready. We intend to remain so.

Improvement of relations with adversaries does not mean any relaxation of our national vigilance. On the contrary, it is the firm maintenance of both strength and vigilance that makes possible steady progress toward a safer and more peaceful world.

The national security budget I have submitted is the minimum the United States needs in this critical hour. The Congress should review it carefully. But it is my considered judgment that any significant reduction would endanger our national security and thus jeopardize the peace.

Let no ally doubt our determination to maintain a defense second to none. Let no adversary be tempted to test our readiness or our resolve.

History is testing us today. We cannot afford indecision, disunity or disarray in the conduct of our foreign affairs.

You and I can resolve here and now that this nation shall move ahead with wisdom, assurance, and national unity.

The world looks to us for the vigor and vision that we have demonstrated so often before at great moments in our history.

--I see a confident America, secure in its strength and values--and determined to maintain both.

--I see a consiliatory America, extending its hand to allies and adversaries alike, forming bonds of cooperation to deal with the vast problems facing us all.

--I see a compassionate America, its heart reaching out to orphans, to refugees and to our fellow human beings afflicted by war and tyranny and hunger.

As President, entrusted by the Constitution with primary responsibility for the conduct of our foreign affairs, I renew the pledge I made last August: To work cooperatively with the Congress.

I ask that the Congress help to keep America's word good throughout the world. We are one nation, one government, and we must have one foreign policy.

In an hour far darker than this, Abraham Lincoln told his fellow citizens:

"We cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us."

We who are entrusted by the people with the great decisions that fashion their future can escape neither our responsibilities nor our consciences.

By what we do now the world will know our courage, our constancy, and our compassion.

The spirit of America is good and the heart of America is strong. Let us be proud of what we have done and confident of what we can yet do. And may God ever guide us to do what is right.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 10, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE  
JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

THE HOUSE CHAMBER

9:04 P.M. EDT

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, distinguished guests, my very good friends in the Congress, and fellow Americans:

I stand before you tonight after many agonizing hours in very solemn prayers for guidance by the Almighty. In my report on the State of the Union in January, I concentrated on two subjects, which were uppermost in the minds of the American people -- urgent actions for the recovery of our economy, and a comprehensive program to make the United States independent of foreign sources of energy.

I thank the Congress for the action that it has taken thus far in my response for economic recommendations. I look forward to early approval of a national energy program to meet our country's long-range and emergency needs in the field of energy.

Tonight it is my purpose to review our relations with the rest of the world in the spirit of candor and consultation, which I have sought to maintain with my former colleagues and with our countrymen from the time that I took office.

It is the first priority of my Presidency to sustain and strengthen the mutual trust and respect which must exist among Americans and their government if we are to deal successfully with the challenges confronting us both at home and abroad.

The leadership of the United States of America since the end of World War II has sustained and advanced the security, well being and freedom of millions of human beings besides ourselves.

MORE

Despite some setbacks, despite some mistakes, the United States has made peace a real prospect for us and for all nations. I know firsthand that the Congress has been a partner in the development and in the support of American foreign policy, which five Presidents before me have carried forward with changes of course, but not of destination.

The course which our country chooses in the world today has never been of greater significance for ourselves as a Nation and for all mankind. We build from a solid foundation. Our alliances with great industrial democracies in Europe, North America and Japan remain strong with a greater degree of consultation and equity than ever before.

With the Soviet Union we have moved across a broad front toward a more stable, if still competitive, relationship. We have begun to control the spiral of strategic nuclear armaments. After two decades of mutual estrangement, we have achieved a historic opening with the People's Republic of China.

In the best American tradition, we have committed, often with striking success, our influence and good offices to help contain conflicts and settle disputes in many, many regions of the world.

We have, for example, helped the parties of the Middle East take the first steps toward living with one another in peace. We have opened a new dialogue with Latin America, looking toward a healthier hemispheric partnership.

We are developing closer relations with the nations of Africa. We have exercised international leadership on the great new issues of our interdependent world, such as energy, food, environment and the law of the sea.

The American people can be proud of what their Nation has achieved and helped others to accomplish, but we have from time to time suffered setbacks and disappointments in foreign policy. Some were events over which we had no control. Some were difficulties we imposed upon ourselves.

We live in a time of testing and of a time of change. Our world, a world of economic uncertainty, political unrest and threats to the peace, does not allow us the luxury of abdication or domestic discord.

MORE

I recall quite vividly the words of President Truman to the Congress when the United States faced a far greater challenge at the end of the Second World War.

If I might quote: "If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world, and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation."

President Truman's resolution must guide us today. Our purpose is not to point the finger of blame, but to build upon our many successes, to repair damage where we find it, to recover our balance, to move ahead as a united people.

Tonight is a time for straight talk among friends, about where we stand and where we are going.

A vast human tragedy has befallen our friends in Vietnam and Cambodia. Tonight I shall not talk only about obligations arising from legal documents. Who can forget the enormous sacrifices of blood, dedication and treasure that we made in Vietnam?

Under five Presidents and 12 Congresses, the United States was engaged in Indochina. Millions of Americans served, thousands died, and many more were wounded, imprisoned or lost.

Over \$150 billion have been appropriated for that war by the Congress of the United States. And after years of effort, we negotiated under the most difficult circumstances a settlement, which made it possible for us to remove our military forces and bring home with pride our American prisoners.

MORE

This settlement, if its terms had been adhered to, would have permitted our South Vietnamese ally, with our material and moral support, to maintain its security and rebuild after two decades of war.

The chances for an enduring peace after the last American fighting man left Vietnam in 1973, rested on two publicly stated premises. First, that if necessary, the United States would help sustain the terms of the Paris accords it signed two years ago. Second, that the United States would provide adequate economic and military assistance to South Vietnam.

Let us refresh our memories for just a moment. The universal consensus in the United States, at that time, late 1972, was that if we could end our own involvement and obtain the release of our prisoners, we would provide adequate material support to South Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese, from the moment they signed the Paris accords, systematically violated the cease-fire and other provisions of that agreement. Flagrantly disregarding the ban on the infiltration of troops, the North Vietnamese illegally introduced over 350,000 men into the South. In direct violation of the agreement, they sent in the most modern equipment in massive amounts. Meanwhile, they continued to receive large quantities of supplies and arms from their friends.

In the face of this situation, the United States -- torn as it was by the emotions of a decade of war -- was unable to respond. We deprived ourselves by law of the ability to enforce the agreement thus giving North Vietnam assurance that it could violate that agreement with impunity.

Next, we reduced our economic and arms aid to South Vietnam. Finally, we signaled our increasing reluctance to give any support to that nation struggling for its survival.

Encouraged by these developments, the North Vietnamese, in recent months, began sending even their reserve divisions into South Vietnam. Some 20 divisions, virtually their entire army, are now in South Vietnam.

The government of South Vietnam, uncertain of further American assistance, hastily ordered a strategic withdrawal to more defensible positions. The extremely difficult maneuver, decided upon without consultations, was poorly executed, hampered by floods of refugees and thus led to panic. The results are painfully obvious and profoundly moving.

MORE

In my first public comment on this tragic development, I called for a new sense of national unity and purpose. I said I would not engage in recriminations or attempts to assess the blame.

I reiterate that tonight. In the same spirit, I welcome the statement of the distinguished Majority Leader of the United States Senate, earlier this week, and I quote, "It is time for the Congress and the President to work together in the area of foreign as well as domestic policy."

So, let us start afresh.

I am here to work with the Congress. In the conduct of foreign affairs, Presidential initiative and the ability to act swiftly in emergencies are essential to our national interests.

With respect to North Vietnam, I call upon Hanoi, and ask the Congress to join with me in this call, to cease military operations immediately and to honor the terms of the Paris agreement.

The United States is urgently requesting the signatories of the Paris Conference to meet their obligations to use their influence to halt the fighting and to enforce the 1973 accords.

Diplomatic notes to this effect have been sent to all members of the Paris Conference, including the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

The situation in South Vietnam and Cambodia has reached a critical phase requiring immediate and positive decisions by this government. The options before us are few and the time is very short.

On the one hand, the United States could do nothing more. Let the government of South Vietnam save itself and what is left of its territory, if it can. Let those South Vietnamese civilians who have worked with us for a decade or more save their lives and their families, if they can.

In short, shut our eyes and wash our hands of the whole affair, if we can.

MORE

Or, on the other hand, I could ask the Congress for authority to enforce the Paris accords with our troops and our tanks and our aircraft and our artillery, and carry the war to the enemy.

There are two narrow options: First, stick with my January request that Congress appropriate \$300 million for military assistance for South Vietnam and seek additional funds for economic and humanitarian purposes, or increase my request for both emergency military and humanitarian assistance to levels which, by best estimates, might enable the South Vietnamese to stem the onrushing aggression, to stabilize the military situation, permit the chance of a negotiated political settlement between the North and South Vietnamese and, if the very worst were to happen, at least allow the orderly evacuation of Americans and endangered South Vietnamese to places of safety.

Let me now state my considerations and my conclusions.

I have received a full report from General Weyand, who I sent to Vietnam to assess the situation. He advises that the current military situation is very critical, but that South Vietnam is continuing to defend itself with the resources available.

However, he feels that if there is to be any chance of success for their defense plan, South Vietnam needs urgently an additional \$722 million in very specific military supplies from the United States.

In my judgment, a stabilization of the military situation offers the best opportunity for a political solution.

I must, of course, as I think each of you would, consider the safety of nearly 6000 Americans who remain in South Vietnam and tens of thousands of South Vietnamese employees of the United States government, of news agencies, of contractors and businesses for many years whose lives, with their dependents, are in very grave peril.

There are tens of thousands of other South Vietnamese intellectuals, professors and teachers, editors and opinion leaders, who have supported the South Vietnamese cause and the alliance with the United States to whom we have a profound moral obligation.

MORE

I am also mindful of our posture toward the rest of the world, and particularly of our future relations with the free nations of Asia. These nations must not think for a minute that the United States is pulling out on them or intends to abandon them to aggression.

I have, therefore, concluded that the national interests of the United States and the cause of world stability require that we continue to give both military and humanitarian assistance to the South Vietnamese.

Assistance to South Vietnam at this stage must be swift and adequate. Drift and indecision invite far deeper disaster. The sums I had requested before the major North Vietnamese offensive and the sudden South Vietnamese retreat are obviously inadequate.

Half-hearted action would be worse than none. We must act together and act decisively.

I am, therefore, asking the Congress to appropriate without delay \$722 million for emergency military assistance, and an initial sum of \$250 million for economic and humanitarian aid for South Vietnam.

The situation in South Vietnam is changing very rapidly, and the need for emergency food, medicine and refugee relief is growing by the hour. I will work with the Congress in the days ahead to develop humanitarian assistance to meet these very pressing needs.

Fundamental decency requires that we do everything in our power to ease the misery and the pain of the monumental human crisis which has befallen the people of Vietnam. Millions have fled in the face of the Communist onslaught and are now homeless and are now destitute.

I hereby pledge in the name of the American people that the United States will make a maximum humanitarian effort to help care for and feed these hopeless victims.

Now I ask the Congress to clarify immediately its restrictions on the use of U.S. military forces in Southeast Asia for the limited purposes of protecting American lives by ensuring their evacuation, if this should be necessary.

I also ask prompt revision of the law to cover those Vietnamese to whom we have a very special obligation and whose lives may be endangered should the worst come to pass.

MORE

I hope that this authority will never have to be used, but if it is needed, there will be no time for a Congressional debate.

Because of the gravity of the situation, I ask the Congress to complete action on all of these measures not later than April 19.

In Cambodia, the situation is tragic. The United States and the Cambodian government have each made major efforts over a long period, and through many channels, to end that conflict, but because of their military successes, steady external support and their awareness of American legal restrictions, the Communist side has shown no interest in negotiation, compromise, or political solution.

And yet, for the past three months, the beleaguered people of Phnom Penh have fought on, hoping against hope that the United States would not desert them, but instead provide the arms and ammunition they so badly needed.

I have received a moving letter from the new acting President of Cambodia, Saukham Khoy, and let me quote for you:

"Dear Mr. President," he wrote. "As the American Congress reconvenes to reconsider your urgent request for supplemental assistance for the Khmer Republic, I appeal to you to convey to the American legislators our plea not to deny these vital resources to us, if a nonmilitary solution is to emerge from this tragic five-year old conflict.

"To find a peaceful end to the conflict, we need time. I do not know how much time, but we all fully realize that the agony of the Khmer people cannot and must not go on much longer. However, for the immediate future, we need the rice to feed the hungry and the ammunition and the weapons to defend ourselves against those who want to impose their will by force.

"A denial by the American people of the means for us to carry on will leave us no alternative but inevitably abandoning our search for a solution, which will give our citizens some freedom of choice as to their future.

"For a number of years now, the Cambodian people have placed their trust in America. I cannot believe that this confidence was misplaced and that suddenly America will deny us the means which might give us a chance to find an acceptable solution to our conflict."

MORE

This letter speaks for itself. In January, I requested food and ammunition for the brave Cambodians, and I regret to say that as of this evening, it may be soon too late.

Members of the Congress, my fellow Americans, this moment of tragedy for Indochina is a time of trial for us. It is a time for national resolve.

It has been said that the United States is over-extended, that we have too many commitments too far from home, that we must re-examine what our truly vital interests are and shape our strategy to conform to them.

I find no fault with this as a theory, but in the real world, such a course must be pursued carefully and in close coordination with solid progress toward overall reduction in worldwide tensions.

We cannot, in the meantime, abandon our friends while our adversaries support and encourage theirs. We cannot dismantle our defenses, our diplomacy or our intelligence capability while others increase and strengthen theirs.

Let us put an end to self-inflicted wounds. Let us remember that our national unity is a most priceless asset. Let us deny our adversaries the satisfaction of using Vietnam to pit Americans against Americans.

At this moment, the United States must present to the world a united front. Above all, let's keep events in Southeast Asia in their proper perspective. The security and the progress of hundreds of millions of people everywhere depend importantly on us.

Let no potential adversary believe that our difficulties or our debates mean a slackening of our national will. We will stand by our friends, we will honor our commitments, and we will uphold our country's principles.

The American people know that our strength, our authority and our leadership have helped prevent a third world war for more than a generation. We will not shrink from this duty in the decades ahead.

Let me now review with you the basic elements of our foreign policy, speaking candidly about our strengths and our difficulties.

MORE

We must, first of all, face the fact that what has happened in Indochina has disquieted many of our friends, especially in Asia. We must deal with this situation promptly and firmly. To this end, I have already scheduled meetings with the leaders of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Indonesia, and I expect to meet with the leaders of other Asian countries, as well.

A key country in this respect is Japan. The warm welcome I received in Japan last November vividly symbolized for both our peoples the friendship and the solidarity of this extraordinary partnership.

I look forward, as I am sure all of you do, with very special pleasure to welcoming the Emperor when he visits the United States later this year.

We consider our security treaty with Japan the cornerstone of stability in the vast reaches of Asia and the Pacific. Our relations are crucial to our mutual well-being. Together, we are working energetically on the international multilateral agenda -- in trade, energy and food. We will continue the process of strengthening our friendship, mutual security and prosperity.

Also, of course, of fundamental importance is our mutual security relationship with the Republic of Korea which I reaffirmed on my recent visit. Our relations with Europe have never been stronger. There are no peoples with whom America's destiny has been more closely linked. There are no peoples whose friendship and cooperation are more needed for the future. For none of the members of the Atlantic community can be secure, none can prosper, none can advance unless we all do so together.

More than ever, these times demand our close collaboration in order to maintain the sure anchor of our common security in this time of international riptides; to work together on the promising negotiations with our potential adversaries; to pool our energies the great new economic challenge that faces us.

In addition to this traditional agenda, there are new problems involving energy, raw materials and the environment. The Atlantic nations face many and complex negotiations and decisions. It is time to take stock, to consult on our future, to affirm once again our cohesion and our common destiny.

I therefore expect to join with the other leaders of the Atlantic Alliance at a Western Summit in the very near future.

MORE

Before this NATO Meeting, I earnestly ask Congress to weigh the broader considerations and consequences of its past actions on the complex Greek and Turkish dispute over Cyprus. Our foreign policy cannot be simply a collection of special economic or ethnic or ideological interests. There must be a deep concern for the overall design of our international actions.

To achieve this design for peace and to assure that our individual acts have coherence, the Executive must have some flexibility in the conduct of foreign policy.

United States military assistance to an old and faithful ally, Turkey, has been cut off by action of the Congress. This has imposed an embargo on military purchases by Turkey, extending even to items already paid for -- an unprecedented act against a friend.

These moves, I know, were sincerely intended to influence Turkey in the Cyprus negotiations. I deeply share the concern of many citizens for the immense human suffering on Cyprus. I sympathize with the new democratic government in Greece. We are continuing our earnest efforts to find equitable solutions to the problems which exist between Greece and Turkey. But the results of the Congressional action has been to block progress towards reconciliation, thereby prolonging the suffering on Cyprus; to complicate our ability to promote successful negotiations; to increase the danger of a broader conflict.

Our longstanding relationship with Turkey is not simply a favor to Turkey. It is a clear and essential mutual interest. Turkey lies on the rim of the Soviet Union and at the gates of the Middle East. It is vital to the security of the eastern Mediterranean, the southern flank of Western Europe and the collective security of the Western Alliance.

Our U.S. military bases in Turkey are as critical to our own security as they are to the defense of NATO.

I therefore call upon the Congress to lift the American arms embargo against our Turkish ally by passing the bipartisan Mansfield-Scott bill now before the Senate. Only this will enable us to work with Greece and Turkey to resolve the differences between our allies.

I accept and I indeed welcome the bill's requirement for monthly reports to the Congress on progress toward a Cyprus settlement, but unless this is done with dispatch, forces may be set in motion within and between the two nations which could not be reversed.

MORE

At the same time, in order to strengthen the democratic government of Greece and to reaffirm our traditional ties with the people of Greece, we are actively discussing a program of economic and military assistance with them. We will shortly be submitting specific requests to the Congress in this regard.

A vital element of our foreign policy is our relationship with the developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These countries must know that America is a true, that America is a concerned friend, reliable both in word and deed.

As evidence of this friendship, I urge the Congress to reconsider one provision of the 1974 Trade Act which has had an unfortunate and unintended impact on our relations with Latin America where we have such a long tie of friendship and cooperation.

Under this legislation, all members of OPEC were excluded from our generalized system of trade preferences. This, unfortunately, punished two South American friends -- Ecuador and Venezuela, as well as other OPEC nations, such as Nigeria and Indonesia, none of which participated in last year's oil embargo.

This exclusion has seriously complicated our new dialogue with our friends in this hemisphere.

I therefore endorse the amendments which have been introduced in the Congress to provide Executive authority to waive those restrictions on the Trade Act that are incompatible with our national interest.

The interests of America, as well as our allies, are vitally affected by what happens in the Middle East. So long as the state of tension continues, it threatens military crisis, the weakening of our alliances, the stability of the world economy and confrontation with a nuclear superpower. These are intolerable risks.

Because we are in the unique position of being able to deal with all the parties, we have, at their request, been engaged for the past year and a half in the peacemaking effort unparalleled in the history of the region.

Our policy has brought remarkable success on the road to peace. Last year, two major disengagement agreements were negotiated and implemented with our help. For the first time in 30 years, a process of negotiation on the basic political issues was begun and is continuing.

MORE

Unfortunately, the latest efforts to reach a further interim agreement between Israel and Egypt have been suspended. The issues dividing the parties are vital to them and not amenable to easy and to quick solutions.

However, the United States will not be discouraged. The momentum toward peace that has been achieved over the last 18 months must, and will, be maintained.

The active role of the United States must, and will, be continued. The drift toward war must, and will, be prevented.

I pledge the United States to a major effort for peace in the Middle East, an effort which I know has the solid support of the American people and their Congress.

MORE

We are now examining how best to proceed. We have agreed in principle to reconvene the Geneva Conference. We are prepared as well to explore other forums.

The United States will move ahead on whatever course looks most promising, even towards an overall settlement or interim agreements should the parties themselves desire them. We will not accept stagnation or stalemate with all its attendant risks to peace and prosperity and to our relations in and outside of the region.

The national interest and national security require as well that we reduce the dangers of war. We shall strive to do so by continuing to improve our relations with potential adversaries.

The United States and the Soviet Union share an interest in lessening tensions and building a more stable relationship. During this process, we have never had any illusions. We know that we are dealing with a nation that reflects different principles and is our competitor in many parts of the globe.

Through a combination of firmness and flexibility, the United States, in recent years, laid the basis of a more reliable relationship, founded on futile interests and mutual restraint.

But we cannot expect the Soviet Union to show restraint in the face of the United States weakness or irresolution.

As long as I am President, America will maintain its strengths, its alliances and its principles as a prerequisite to a more peaceful planet. As long as I am President, we will not permit detente to become a license to fish in troubled waters. Detente must be -- and I trust will be -- a two-way relationship.

Central to U.S.-Soviet relations today is the critical negotiation to control strategic nuclear weapons. We hope to turn the Vladivostok agreements into a final agreement this year at the time of General Secretary Brezhnev's visit to the United States.

Such an agreement would, for the first time, put a ceiling on the strategic arms race. It would mark a turning point in post-war history and would be a crucial step in lifting for mankind the threat of nuclear war.

MORE

Our use of trade and economic sanctions as weapons to alter the internal conduct of other nations must also be seriously re-examined. However well-intentioned the goals, the fact is that some of our recent actions in the economic field have been self-defeating, they are not achieving the objectives intended by the Congress and they have damaged our foreign policy.

The Trade Act of 1974 prohibits most favored nation treatment, credit and investment guarantees with the Soviet Union, so long as their emigration policies fail to meet our criteria.

The Soviet Union has, therefore, refused to put into effect the important 1972 trade agreement between our two countries. As a result, Western Europe and Japan have stepped into the breach.

Those countries have extended credits to the Soviet Union exceeding \$8 billion in the last six months. These are economic opportunities, jobs and business which could have gone to Americans. There should be no illusions about the nature of the Soviet system, but there should be no illusions about how to deal with it.

Our belief in the right of peoples of the world freely to emigrate has been well demonstrated. This legislation, however, not only harmed our relations with the Soviet Union, but seriously complicated the prospects of those seeking to emigrate.

The favorable trend, aided by quite diplomacy, by which emigration increased from 400 in 1968 to over 33,000 in 1973 has been seriously set back. Remedial legislation is urgently needed in our national interest.

With the People's Republic of China, we are firmly fixed on the course set forth in the Shanghai communique. Stability in Asia and the world require our constructive relations with one-fourth of the human race.

After two decades of mutual isolation and hostility, we have, in recent years, built a promising foundation. Deep differences in our philosophy and social systems will endure, but so should our mutual long-term interests and the goals to which our countries have jointly subscribed in Shanghai.

MORE

I will visit China later this year to reaffirm these interests and to accelerate the improvement in our relations, and I was glad to welcome the distinguished Speaker and the distinguished Minority leader of the House back today from their constructive visit to the People's Republic of China.

Let me talk about new challenges. The issues I have discussed are the most pressing of the traditional agenda on foreign policy, but ahead of us also is a vast new agenda of issues in an interdependent world.

The United States -- with its economic power, its technology, its zest for new horizons -- is the acknowledged world leader in dealing with many of these challenges. If this is a moment of uncertainty in the world, it is even more a moment of rare opportunity.

We are summoned to meet one of man's most basic challenges -- hunger. At the World Food Conference last November in Rome, the United States outlined a comprehensive program to close the ominous gap between population growth and food production over the long term. Our technological skill and our enormous productive capacity are crucial to accomplishing this task.

The old order -- in trade, finance and raw materials -- is changing and American leadership is needed in the creation of new institutions and practices for worldwide prosperity and progress.

The world's oceans, with their immense resources and strategic importance, must become areas of cooperation rather than conflict. American policy is directed to that end.

Technology must be harnessed to the service of mankind while protecting the environment. This, too, is an arena for American leadership.

The interests and the aspirations of the developed and developing nations must be reconciled in a manner that is both realistic and humane. This is our goal in this new era.

One of the finest success stories in our foreign policy is our cooperative effort with other major energy-consuming nations. In little more than a year, together with our partners, we have created the International Energy Agency; we have negotiated an emergency sharing arrangement which helps to reduce the dangers of an embargo; we have launched major international conservation efforts; we have developed a massive program for the development of alternative sources of energy.

MORE

But the fate of all of these programs depends crucially on what we do at home. Every month that passes brings us closer to the day when we will be dependent on imported energy for 50 percent of our requirements. A new embargo under these conditions could have a devastating impact on jobs, industrial expansion, and inflation at home. Our economy cannot be left to the mercy of decisions over which we have no control.

I call upon the Congress to act affirmatively.

In a world where information is power, a vital element of our national security lies in our intelligence services. They are essential to our Nation's security in peace as in war. Americans can be grateful for the important, but largely unsung contributions and achievements of the intelligence services of this Nation.

It is entirely proper that this system be subject to Congressional review. But a sensationalized public debate over legitimate intelligence activities is a disservice to this Nation and a threat to our intelligence system.

It ties our hands while our potential enemies operate with secrecy, with skill and with vast resources. Any investigation must be conducted with maximum discretion and dispatch to avoid crippling a vital national institution.

Let me speak quite frankly to some in this Chamber and perhaps to some not in this Chamber. The Central Intelligence Agency has been of maximum importance to Presidents before me. The Central Intelligence Agency has been of maximum importance to me. The Central Intelligence Agency, and its associated intelligence organizations, could be of maximum importance to some of you in this audience who might be President at some later date.

I think it would be catastrophic for the Congress, or anyone else, to destroy the usefulness by dismantling, in effect, our intelligence systems upon which we rest so heavily.

Now, as Congress oversees intelligence activities it must, of course, organize itself to do so in a reasonable way. It has been traditional for the Executive to consult with the Congress through specially protected procedures that safeguard essential secrets, but recently, some of those procedures have been altered in a way that makes the protection of vital information very, very difficult.

MORE

I will say to the leaders of the Congress, the House and the Senate, that I will work with them to devise procedures which will meet the needs of the Congress for review of intelligence agency activities and the needs of the Nation for an effective intelligence service.

Underlying any successful foreign policy is the strength and the credibility of our defense posture. We are strong and we are ready and we intend to remain so.

Improvement of relations with adversaries does not mean any relaxation of our national vigilance. On the contrary, it is the firm maintenance of both strength and vigilance that makes possible steady progress toward a safer and a more peaceful world.

The national security budget that I have submitted is the minimum the United States needs in this critical hour. The Congress should review it carefully, and I know it will. But it is my considered judgment that any significant reduction or revision would endanger our national security and thus jeopardize the peace.

Let no ally doubt our determination to maintain a defense second to none, and let no adversary be tempted to test our readiness or our resolve.

History is testing us today. We cannot afford indecision, disunity or disarray in the conduct of our foreign affairs. You and I can resolve here and now that this Nation shall move ahead with wisdom, with assurance and with national unity.

The world looks to us for the vigor and for the vision that we have demonstrated so often in the past in great moments of our history.

I see a confident America, secure in its strengths and values -- and determined to maintain both.

I see a conciliatory America, extending its hand to allies and adversaries alike, forming bonds of cooperation to deal with the vast problems facing us all.

I see a compassionate America, its heart reaching out to orphans, to refugees, and to our fellow human beings afflicted by war, by tyranny and by hunger.

As President, entrusted by the Constitution with primary responsibility for the conduct of our foreign affairs, I renew the pledge I made last August: to work cooperatively with the Congress.

MORE

I ask that the Congress help to keep America's word good throughout the world. We are one Nation, one government, and we must have one foreign policy.

In an hour far darker than this, Abraham Lincoln told his fellow citizens, and I quote: "We cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us."

We who are entrusted by the people with the great decisions that fashion their future can escape neither responsibilities nor our consciences.

By what we do now, the world will know our courage, our constancy and our compassion.

The spirit of America is good and the heart of America is strong. Let us be proud of what we have done and confident of what we can do.

And may God ever guide us to do what is right.

Thank you.

END

(AT 10:05 P.M. EDT)