

The original documents are located in Box 11, folder “Defense Officials Dinner” of the Robert T. Hartmann Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

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 Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections.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

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of every citizen of the United States to personally thank each of you for the tremendous contribution that you have made and are making to the security of America. Your dedication to the defense of freedom today is in keeping with the courage and sacrifice of the men and women who established our independence two hundred years ago.

This gathering tonight has a very special meaning for me. You have been a source of deep strength and confidence during times of world-wide crisis and tension. As your Commander-in-Chief, I have always counted on your loyalty and military readiness to respond in any measure wherever and whenever the need arose.

As we approach the holiday season, not one American is under enemy fire tonight. Peace in the world -- as each of you know -- is dependent on the deterrent strength of our military forces. Our nation has paid dearly for peace -- both in terms of human lives and national treasure. You as Commanders have added the essential ingredient -- leadership -- to make our national defense the best in the world.

Our country will be challenged in the future, as it has been in the past, but freedom will prevail in America as long as we have a strong military team commanded by men of courage and integrity.

In behalf of all Americans I express my deepest thanks.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of every citizen of the United States to personally thank each of you for the tremendous contribution that you have made and are making to the security of America. Your dedication to the defense of freedom today is in keeping with the courage and sacrifice of the men and women who ~~bravely~~ established our independence two hundred years ago.

This ~~group~~ ^{gathering} tonight has a very special meaning for me. You have been a source of deep strength and confidence during times of world-wide crisis and tension. ~~I never once~~ ^{I have} as your Commander-in-Chief ~~have~~ ^{always counted on} ~~doubted~~ your loyalty ~~or~~ ^{and} military readiness to respond in any measure wherever and whenever the need arose.

~~Tonight we stand~~ ^{As we approach the holiday season} at a special moment in our history -- a time ~~when~~ ^{tonight} not one American is under enemy fire ~~on~~ ^{at} a battlefield. Peace in the world -- as each of you know -- is dependent on the deterrent strength of our military forces. Our nation has paid dearly for peace -- both in terms of human lives ^{and national treasure} ~~and material~~ -- and you as Commanders have added the ^{essential} ~~vital personal~~ ingredient -- leadership -- to make our national defense the best in the world.

Our country will be challenged in the future, as it has been in the past, but freedom will prevail in America as long as we have a strong military team commanded by men of courage and integrity.

In behalf of all Americans I express my deepest thanks.