

**The original documents are located in Box 132, folder “May 13, 1974 - Speech, Chamber of Commerce, Pensacola, FL” of the Gerald R. Ford Vice Presidential Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY WITH MY  
GOOD FRIEND, CONGRESSMAN BOB SIKES, AND HIS CHARMING  
WIFE, INEZ.

OUR FRIENDSHIP HAS GROWN NOT ONLY THROUGH OUR  
ASSOCIATION IN CONGRESS FOR OVER 25 YEARS, BUT THROUGH  
OUR SERVICE ON THE DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. AS YOU KNOW, BOB IS ALSO  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE VERY IMPORTANT SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION.

THIS CONGRESSIONAL SERVICE HAS GIVEN ME A VANTAGE  
POINT TO OBSERVE HIS SERVICE NOT ONLY TO OUR NATION BUT  
TO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE HIS CONSTITUENTS. I BELIEVE THAT  
SINCE WE WERE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE AISLE, SOME OF MY  
OBSERVATIONS HAVE A SPECIAL OBJECTIVITY. IT IS FROM THIS  
VANTAGE POINT THAT I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU OF THE  
CONTRIBUTIONS THAT BOB SIKES HAS MADE TO HIS COUNTRY.

AS A RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL WHO SERVED IN WORLD  
WAR TWO, BOB SIKES IS ONE OF THE MOST CREATIVE AND INFORMED  
MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS IN THE VITAL AREA OF OUR NATIONAL  
DEFENSE.





A RECENT POLL CONDUCTED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR  
SOCIAL RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN DISCLOSED  
THAT DESPITE THE PROBLEMS THAT AROSE FROM VIETNAM,  
THE UNITED STATES MILITARY RANKS FIRST IN PUBLIC  
OPINION WHEN RANKED WITH 14 OTHER LEADING AMERICAN  
INSTITUTIONS.



I MIGHT ALSO ADD THAT IN THIS SAME SURVEY, THE  
NEWS MEDIA RATED IN THE UPPER HALF OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS  
MOST ADMIRER BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I MENTION THIS  
BECAUSE BOB SIKES IS ALSO A JOURNALIST. FROM THOSE OF  
US IN PUBLIC LIFE IT IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER  
THE VITAL ROLE OF A FREE PRESS IN ASSURING THAT WE  
HAVE <sup>AN</sup> INFORMED CITIZENRY.





BOB SIKES HAS LENT HIS GREAT ENERGY NOT ONLY  
TO OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE BUT ALSO TO EXCELLENCE IN  
GOVERNMENT GENERALLY. HE IS AN OUTSTANDING LEGISLATOR  
WHOSE LOYALTY TO HIS DISTRICT IS SECOND ONLY TO HIS  
LOYALTY TO HIS NATION. HE TRANSCENDS PARTISAN  
CONSIDERATIONS WHEN IT COMES TO THE SECURITY OF THE  
UNITED STATES. HE HAS ADVOCATED A SOUND FISCAL POLICY  
THAT IS IN HARMONY WITH <sup>THE VIEWS OF</sup> ~~MANY~~ RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF  
BOTH PARTIES.



I NEED NOT RECITE TO THIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ALL THE DETAILS OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY OF THE PENSACOLA AREA OR ENUMERATE THE MANY FLAGS THAT HAVE FLOWN SINCE THE YEAR 1559 WHEN THE FIRST ATTEMPT WAS MADE AT A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT.

PENSACOLA RIGHTFULLY DESERVES THE REPUTATION IT ENJOYS AS "THE ANNAPOLIS OF THE AIR." THIS REGION HAS BEEN A GREAT SOURCE OF OUR NAVAL POWER DATING BACK THROUGH THE YEARS OF HISTORY WHEN THE VERY FIRST UNITED STATES FORESTRY PRESERVE WAS CREATED HERE TO ASSURE FINE OAK TIMBERS FOR OUR NAVAL CONSTRUCTION.





THIS AREA IS NOT ONLY A BASTION OF NAVAL MIGHT BUT  
ALSO A CENTER OF AIR FORCE POWER WITH THE IMPORTANT  
BASES OF EGLIN AND TYNDALL. THE FAMOUS RANGERS OF THE  
UNITED STATES ARMY ALSO HAVE THEIR TRAINING BASE HERE.

YOUR CURRENT GROWTH SPRINGS FROM YOUR INVOLVED  
CITIZENRY AND YOUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WHOSE ENERGIES  
HAVE MADE THIS A CENTER OF INDUSTRY AND RECREATION.





WHEN I SERVED AS MINORITY LEADER, I WAS VERY  
PLEASED TO SUPPORT THE LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH THE  
GULF ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE FACILITY.

ALTHOUGH WE MAY BE FACING PROBLEMS HERE AT  
HOME, LET ME SAY TODAY THAT NO POTENTIAL FOREIGN  
ENEMY SHOULD TAKE COMFORT FROM OUR TEMPORARY  
DIFFICULTIES OR CONCLUDE THAT THESE TRANSIENT PROBLEMS  
WILL LEAD US TO LOWER THE SHIELD OF DEFENSIVE MIGHT  
WHICH IS THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.



THE PUBLIC, AS REFLECTED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MICHIGAN POLL, SHOWED ~~SOME~~ <sup>A</sup> ~~NEGATIVE~~ ~~FE~~ ATTITUDE  
*About some AREAS of*  
~~TOWARD PERSONS HIGH IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.~~ BUT  
THAT SAME PUBLIC MADE KNOWN THAT THIS COUNTRY STILL  
RESPECTS AND ADMIRES THE MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM WHO  
ARE DEVOTING THEIR LIVES TO OUR DEFENSE. OUR MILITARY  
WILL NEITHER FAIL NOR DIP OUR FLAG. IT WILL MAINTAIN ITS  
TRADITIONAL VIGILANCE WHILE WE GET OUR DOMESTIC HOUSE  
BACK INTO ORDER.





EARLIER TODAY I WAS INSPIRED BY A VISIT WITH  
ADMIRAL CAGLE AT YOUR NAVAL BASE. I AM CONVINCED  
THAT WE ARE PROVIDING THE NECESSARY TRAINING REQUIRED  
TO KEEP OUR VITAL SEA LANES OF COMMUNICATIONS OPEN.  
THIS SAME SPIRIT PREVAILS IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND  
WHERE OUR MILITARY STAND LOYAL AND READY. THE PEOPLE  
OF PENSACOLA CAN BE PROUD OF THE ROLE THAT THIS AREA  
AND ITS PEOPLE ARE PLAYING IN MAINTAINING THE READINESS  
OF THE STRONGEST NAVY IN THE WORLD.





IF WE ARE TO ENJOY A DEFENSE SECOND TO NONE,  
WE MUST PROVIDE FOR ALL CONTINGENCIES. THE WAY TO  
DETER AGGRESSION IS TO LET ANY FOE KNOW THAT WE ARE  
PREPARED TO MEET ANY ~~ATTACK~~ <sup>CONTINGENCY</sup> THAT IS WHY I AM  
<sub>contingency</sub>  
FOLLOWING CLOSELY AND URGE SUPPORT FOR THE DEFENSE  
AUTHORIZATION BILL SOON TO BE CONSIDERED ON THE HOUSE  
FLOOR.



SO MANY QUESTIONS ARE BEING RAISED ABOUT OUR  
INSTITUTIONS THAT SOME ABROAD MAY JUMP TO ERRONEOUS  
CONCLUSIONS ABOUT OUR NATIONAL STRENGTH AND WILL.  
WE ARE SEEKING THROUGH AN ENLIGHTENED FOREIGN POLICY  
AND SKILLED DIPLOMACY TO CREATE A NEW ERA OF WORLD  
PEACE. BUT LET NO NATION ON THIS EARTH CONCLUDE THAT  
THERE IS ANY QUESTION HERE ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO  
NATIONAL DEFENSE.





I AM CONFIDENT THAT OUR INFORMED CITIZENS, HERE IN  
PENSACOLA, AND THROUGHOUT THE 50 STATES, WILL JOIN IN  
VERIFYING AND RENEWING THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA, OUR GLORIOUS PAST AND OUR EQUALLY  
PROMISING FUTURE. THEY WILL DO THIS BY LETTING THEIR  
REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON KNOW THAT WHATEVER OTHER  
DIFFERENCES EXIST AMONG OUR PEOPLE THERE SHOULD BE NO  
DOUBT ANYWHERE IN THIS WORLD THAT WE CHERISH OUR FREEDOM  
AND WILL EQUIP OURSELVES WITH THE WEAPONS AND STRENGTH  
NECESSARY TO DEFEND OUR <sup>COUNTRY</sup> ~~CONTINITY~~ AS THE GREATEST FREE  
NATION ON EARTH.





Telephone

Introduction - last year -

Wash  
America  
warm  
welcome

Bob Sikes - Inez

Defense Sub.

Ideological.

Speaks out. - liberal Dems.  
new movement.

Personal - Betty / Inez  
Bob / Inez

Sec Mitchell  
Bill Hunter  
Chip James

Watergate - Corruption  
Constitutional Process  
President =

Demo -  
Republicans  
Institution  
Strong



Scorecards -

Military - most respected

News Media - <sup>2 know</sup> <sup>at this many</sup> wouldn't agree / in pleased.

Congress  
Executive

Worries ME -

Plus Veto Power  
Congress

What we MUST preserve

Free Enterprise - New Federalism  
Federal Bureaucracy - Partly  
enough.

National Security -

Churchill - Democracy worst form.

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## BACKGROUND

- You are arriving at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida.
- *You will be met by Vice Admiral Cagle + Secretary MIWEN DORF.*
- The Navy complex in the Pensacola area forms what historically has been called the "cradle of Naval aviation."
- Since 1973 Pensacola has become more diversified. The Naval Education and Training Command was established at that time and given the responsibility for the education and training of the entire Navy.
- The Naval Education and Training Command manages more than 4,400 courses throughout the U.S. and has an average daily student load in excess of 112,000.
- At any given time this large training organization comprises almost one-fourth of the entire Navy.
- 21,000 military and civilian workers comprise the Pensacola complex.
- The financial impact of the Navy in the Pensacola area amounts to 220 million dollars annually including nearly 160 million in military and civilian payrolls.

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ON ARRIVAL YOU MIGHT SAY:

- I am happy to be in Pensacola -- I am happy to have the opportunity to see firsthand some of the Naval base complex and to meet with some of the students.
- I am anxious to learn more about the Naval Education and Training Command and what you are doing to respond to the challenge of meeting the training requirements of a new and modern Navy.
- When one looks at the current Navy building programs, one realizes that training will play a very important role in the future of the Navy. In fact, modern equipment that will be a part of our new ships will increase the training requirements by a factor of from 3 to 10.
- Comment on Congressman Sikes' role.
- Very pleased to have Acting Secretary of the Navy Middendorf on hand.