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Year after year, more Americans are at work, earning more, producing more and building more than ever before. Our continuing economic growth provides a standard of living that is the envy of the world. We are better fed, better clothed and better housed than any other people in all history.

Let's look at just a few examples of the progress that our great country has made in the past half century--since 1920.

In 1920, life expectancy in the United States was 54 years; now it is more than 70.

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In 1920 there were 311,266 young people graduated from high schools in the United States. This year the number--in a population that has merely doubled--was 10 times greater.

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In addition to almost eliminating illiteracy, we have a larger proportion of college graduates among our people than any other country in the world. The percentage of college graduates in our population is twice as great as any other nation.

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Despite the tiny vocal radical minority who wave Vietcong flags or hold college deans hostage in their offices, the fact remains that our young people are America's greatest asset.

I have cited examples of progress in education and other fields. These examples serve to remind us how much has changed--how much improvement there has been in health, wealth, education, communication, social consciousness and every other aspect of life in America. And we must never let ourselves forget the basic truth--that this progress has made our country the greatest nation on earth.

Yet we continue today to hear cries of doom. Is this a modern-day phenomenon? No, there have always been doomsdayers in this land as well as in others. And, as in the past, the vast majority of Americans will keep on working and building and helping the United States to go on to new greatness.

Today we hear a constant clamor about the economy, about unemployment.

What the viewers with alarm do not tell you is that our unemployment rate today is less than it was in the four years preceding escalation of the Vietnam War, beginning in February 1965.

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They do not tell you that the typical American family can buy nearly twice as much with its annual income now as it could in 1950.

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I say we are winning the fight against inflation. We are winning it because our present fiscal and monetary policies are the proper policies for this point in time. We are winning it because the U.S. economy is the strongest and soundest that the world has ever known.

What else are the doomsayers wailing about? About how the Vietnam War is tearing this country apart. These are the same people who are saying that we should tell the slackers who have run off to Canada that all is forgiven.

The United States has had draft-dodgers before and we have survived. More than 300,000 draftees refused to report for service in World War I. That was more than 10 per cent of the total who were actually inducted. We lived through that ugly chapter in our history and went on to become a greater nation.

What else are the doomsayers pointing to? Racism? There is no question we must root out racial discrimination wherever we find it. But we can also be proud of the progress this country has made in remedying the wrongs of the past. We can be proud of the fact that in recent years gains in real income, education and standard of living have been proportionately greater for blacks than for whites. The proportion of Negroes earning middle incomes has more than doubled since 1950, and the proportion of black students in colleges has increased more than 50 per cent.
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