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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...*df*

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS
RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1975

I AM PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL FOR THIS HIGH HONOR
BECAUSE OF THE BOUNDLESS RESPECT AND ADMIRATION I HAVE
ALWAYS HAD FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION. THE ROA HAS NEVER LOST SIGHT OF THE
GOAL OF A STRONG AND SECURE AMERICA -- A NATION THAT
STANDS STEADY, BECAUSE IT STANDS READY. AND I
PLEDGE TO YOU THAT I WILL ALWAYS STAND SHOULDER TO
SHOULDER WITH THE MEN AND WOMEN HERE TONIGHT WHO
HAVE MADE THIS STRENGTH A REALITY.

AS A MEMBER OF THE RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION,

I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW DELIGHTED I AM TO BE HERE --

TO RENEW SO MANY OLD FRIENDSHIPS, AND RECALL SO

MANY HAPPY MEMORIES.

TELL ME, HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

BEFORE COMING OVER HERE TONIGHT, I STARTED REMINISCING

ABOUT MY ACTIVE SERVICE. *Telling my dear wife, Betty, how our ship, won*
I GOT A LITTLE NOSTALGIC. *The war on*
The Pacific.

AND THEN I MADE A TACTICAL ERROR -- I TRIED TO PUT ON

MY OLD NAVY UNIFORM.

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW SOMETHING HAPPENS TO
THOSE OLD UNIFORMS WHEN YOU KEEP THEM IN THE CLOSET
TOO LONG? THEY START TO SHRINK
PARTICULARLY AROUND THE MIDDLE.

WELL, IT TOOK ME FIVE MINUTES TO GET INTO
THE COAT AND TEN MINUTES TO GET INTO THE PANTS.

INCIDENTALLY, SOME OF MY CRITICS WILL BE INTERESTED

TO KNOW -- THE CAP STILL FITS.

BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT FINALLY CHANGED MY

MIND ABOUT WEARING MY BLUES TONIGHT. BETTY

CAME OVER, TOOK ONE LOOK -- AND BELIEVE ME,

THERE'S NOTHING MORE EMBARRASSING THAN HAVING YOUR

WIFE TELL YOU TO PULL IN YOUR STOMACH -- WHEN YOU

ALREADY HAVE!

IT IS ESPECIALLY FITTING THIS EVENING TO

RECALL THE WORDS AND DEEDS OF THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY.

TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-THREE YEARS AGO TOMORROW --

AT WAKEFIELD ON POPE'S CREEK IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY,

VIRGINIA -- GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS BORN.

AMERICA ESTEEMS GEORGE WASHINGTON BECAUSE HE WAS

NOT ONLY OUR FIRST PRESIDENT, BUT, AS ROA HAS NOTED,

HE WAS OUR FIRST RESERVE OFFICER AS WELL. WASHINGTON'S

QUALITIES AS A MILITARY MAN AND A BUILDER OF PEACE

PERSONIFY THE FINEST DIMENSIONS OF THE AMERICAN CHARACTER.

YES, GEORGE WASHINGTON STILL LIVES -- IN THE
SPIRIT OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF ORGANIZATIONS
LIKE THE ROA.

AS GENERAL AND LATER PRESIDENT, HE FACED GREAT
CHALLENGES AND SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS,
THE CONGRESS HE SERVED AS THE CONTINENTAL ARMY'S
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LACKED DECISIVE LEADERSHIP.

INFLATION WAS RAMPANT. FUNDS TO EQUIP THE ARMY

WERE EXTREMELY SHORT. WASHINGTON'S TROOPS OFTEN

WENT WITHOUT PAY. SUPPLY PROBLEMS WERE INCREDIBLE.

BRITAIN RULED THE SEAS. WASHINGTON WAS FORCED TO

RETREAT FROM ONE BATTLE TO ANOTHER FOR MUCH OF THE WAR --

TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY. BUT HE WON THE LAST BATTLE,

WHICH IS THE ONE THAT COUNTS.

THAT IS WHY WASHINGTON LIVES: HIS IRON WILL.

HIS DIGNITY. HIS PERSONAL EXAMPLE -- TO THE

PATRIOTS OF HIS DAY AND OF OURS. IN FACT, THIS

PLAIN PATRIOTISM MARKED HIM FOR IMMORTALITY.

HIS INCREDIBLE PERSEVERENCE AND TENACIOUS ENDURANCE

ASSURED OUR INDEPENDENCE.

TODAY, WE ARE CALLED UPON TO EXHIBIT THE
SAME SPIRIT -- WHICH CARRIED WASHINGTON AND THIS
NATION THROUGH SOME OF ITS DARKEST DAYS. IT IS
IMPERATIVE THAT WE MAINTAIN A WORLD-WIDE MILITARY
BALANCE -- YET WE ARE BEING TOLD THAT THE PRICE
THAT IS ASKED IS TOO HIGH.

SINCE I AM SPEAKING OF DEFENSE, LET ME SAY

A WORD ABOUT THE DEFENSE BUDGET.

AS A RESULT OF CONGRESSIONAL CUTS AND

INFLATION, DEFENSE SPENDING IN 1976 -- MEASURED IN

REAL TERMS -- WILL BE MORE THAN ONE-THIRD BELOW

$\frac{1}{3}$

2070

THE PEAK VIETNAM WAR LEVEL AND ABOUT TWENTY PERCENT

BELOW THE PRE-VIETNAM LEVEL.

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING --

THAT IS, FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL -- REAL DEFENSE

17

OUTLAYS AMOUNT TO ABOUT SEVENTEEN PERCENT, THE LOWEST

PROPORTION SINCE 1950. SINCE FISCAL YEAR 1968,

THE ACTIVE DUTY STRENGTH OF THE ARMY HAS BEEN CUT IN

HALF. OUR NAVY WILL DROP BELOW FIVE-HUNDRED SHIPS

IN THE ACTIVE FLEET IN THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR. THAT IS

THE LOWEST LEVEL IN MORE THAN THIRTY-FIVE YEARS.

I BELIEVE IN PEACE.

I BELIEVE IN DETENTE.

AND I BELIEVE THAT BOTH PEACE AND DETENTE ARE DEPENDENT

ON A STRONG DEFENSE.

THEREFORE, I AM DETERMINED TO

MAINTAIN OUR MILITARY STRENGTH.

92.8

THAT IS WHY I CONSIDER THE NINETY-TWO POINT
EIGHT BILLION DOLLARS IN DEFENSE SPENDING -- WHICH
I HAVE REQUESTED FOR FISCAL 1976 -- A BASIC MINIMUM
TO ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THIS NATION IN AN INSECURE
WORLD.

THOSE WHO TELL US THAT WE MUST SUBSTANTIALLY
CUT THE COST OF DEFENSE MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE
RISK INVOLVED.

THE DECLARATION WHICH OUR FOREFATHERS SIGNED
IN 1776 LAUNCHED THE INDEPENDENCE OF THIS NATION.

I WILL TELL YOU THIS TONIGHT: I AM NOT GOING TO SIGN
ANY DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE AND INFERIORITY.

NOT ALL GOOD MEN AGREE ON GOODNESS.

NOT ALL JUST MEN AGREE ON JUSTICE. BUT ALL

FREE MEN AGREE THAT FREEDOM REQUIRES SACRIFICE,

IT IS COSTLY. WE MUST BE WILLING TO PAY ITS

FULL PRICE.

OVER THE PAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS, THE AMERICAN

PEOPLE HAVE WILLINGLY PAID THE FULL PRICE OF FREEDOM.

I PROMISE YOU THAT I ~~WILL~~ NEVER TURN MY

BACK ON DEFENSE BECAUSE I REMEMBER WHEN IT SAVED

FREEDOM. I WILL NEVER ACCEPT SECOND BEST IN

DEFENSE NOR WILL I EVER REJECT MY FULL COMMITMENT

TO OUR ARMED FORCES AND MY SOLEMN DUTY TO THE AMERICAN

PEOPLE.

WITHOUT STRENGTH, WE CAN HAVE NO FREEDOM;

WITHOUT FREEDOM, WE CAN HAVE NO PEACE. BUT WITH

STRENGTH, WE CAN HAVE A WORLD IN WHICH OUR CHILDREN

AND GRANDCHILDREN CAN LIVE IN FREEDOM AND PEACE.



AS A FORMER RESERVE OFFICER MYSELF, I AM AWARE
OF THE DEDICATION OF EACH OF YOU TO THE UNIFORM IN WHICH
YOU SERVE. EVEN MORE, I AM AWARE OF YOUR PATRIOTISM
AND ALLEGIANCE TO OUR COUNTRY. YOU AND THE MEN AND
WOMEN WHO SERVE SO LOYALLY IN OUR ARMED FORCES DESERVE
THE HIGHEST ACCOLADES THE NATION CAN PAY YOU.

AS YOU HAVE IN THE PAST, I KNOW THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE VITAL BACKUP ROLE YOU ALWAYS HAVE AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR DEFENSE POSTURE.

OF HIS MANY TITLES -- PRESIDENT, GENERAL,
REVOLUTIONARY LEADER, COLONIAL HERO, FATHER OF OUR
COUNTRY -- GEORGE WASHINGTON CHERISHED MOST THE
SIMPLE DESCRIPTION OF BEING A FREE MAN. IN THAT
SPIRIT, I ACCEPT THE HIGH HONOR YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON
ME THIS EVENING. I ACCEPT IT AND WILL DO MY BEST
TO BE FAITHFUL TO ITS IDEALS.

GOOD EVENING AND THANK YOU.

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