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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

November 12, 1975

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH VETERANS-MILITARY
ORGANIZATIONS, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1975

I am very pleased to be here this afternoon with such distinguished leaders of America's veterans and military organizations. I commend you for your dedication to country in peace as well as in war.

I salute you for your continued concern that America have a defense system second to none and for your strong support of national security. Your aid was invaluable, for example, in working with the Congress to secure a favorable vote overturning the previous ban on military assistance to Turkey, a vitally important NATO ally. Thank you for your help.

You have been briefed by the Administrator of the Veterans Administration, the Director of the National Security Council and the Acting Secretary of Defense. I am confident they brought you up to date on this Administration's programs and policies in their areas.

There is one point I wish to stress in my remarks to you.

From a Nation virtually alone when we achieved our independence 200 years ago, America is now allied with many free nations in common defense. World leadership was thrust upon this Nation and we have assumed it.

In accepting that role, the United States has assumed responsibility from which it cannot and will not retreat. Free nations need the United States and we need free nations.

The national security policy of this country is based on this premise: that weakness invites war, that strength is the only sure foundation for peace and that America in concert with our allies must maintain a defense capability second to none. That has been a solid non-partisan policy -- a policy which I have supported strongly all of my public life. That policy has not changed and will not change.

I restate this policy here today because there has been some speculation, following my announcement of several new appointments among my national security advisers, that these changes signalled

revisions in this extremely important and significant area. I want to emphasize to you -- as I have to our allies and our adversaries around the world -- that there will be no change in this Administration's devotion to America's strength and vigilance as we seek a safer and saner world.

There is not now, there never has been and there never will be -- as long as I am President -- any softness or weakness on the subject of national defense of the United States and its vital security interests, both at home and abroad.

The policy which this Administration has followed and will follow in the future is consistent, clear and unchanged.

The time when America could spend one or two years gearing up for war is gone forever. Today, our security, our prosperity -- indeed the very survival of the ideas for which this country stands -- depends upon our ability to counter any potential aggressor on little more than a minute's notice.

America's armed forces today are second to none. I assure you I will take whatever steps are necessary to see that they stay that way. Our potential adversaries certainly are not reducing the levels of their military power. The United States must -- and will -- remain alert and strong.

A vital part of our ability to remain alert is our intelligence capability. I will not stand passively by while the intelligence security of the United States is unilaterally dismantled by sweeping attacks and exposes of our intelligence activities. I certainly do not condone improper activities or violations of Constitutional rights of Americans. I will take administrative action and recommend legislation to the Congress for whatever must be done to prevent future abuses. But intelligence in today's world is absolutely essential to our Nation's security -- even our survival.

I assure you American will continue -- and I know with your support --
to stand for strength, security and a safer world.

Thank you.

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