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THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID...

LINCOLN DAY ADDRESS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1976

*Hunt / Kleppe / Mr. Ambassador / My Washington*

MAY I EXPRESS MY THANKS TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE  
PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED HERE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO JOIN YOU IN THIS BICENTENNIAL TRIBUTE TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
ON THE 167TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH.

IN TIME, / LINCOLN WAS CLOSER TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
THAN WE ARE TO THE CIVIL WAR. HIS GRANDFATHER IN VIRGINIA  
HEARD THE GREAT NEWS FROM PHILADELPHIA IN 1776; / ONLY FOUR SCORE  
AND SEVEN YEARS HAD PASSED WHEN PRESIDENT LINCOLN STOOD AMONG  
THE NEW GRAVES AT GETTYSBURG.

TO THE YOUNG LINCOLN GROWING TO MANHOOD IN KENTUCKY,  
INDIANA AND ILLINOIS, / JEFFERSON'S RINGING TRUTHS IN THE  
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WERE EXCITING AND REAL --  
THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL --

THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN

UNALIENABLE RIGHTS -- LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF  
HAPPINESS•

AMONG HIS MANY GIFTS OF GREATNESS,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN HAD AN ALMOST MYSTIC ABILITY TO FIND DEEP  
MEANING IN THE TUMULTOUS EVENTS THAT SWIRLED ABOUT HIM•

HIS EXPRESSION OF THESE INSIGHTS, IN WORDS THAT SOME  
CALLED DULL AND DISHWATERY WHEN THEY WERE SPOKEN,  
ARE INSCRIBED ON THESE WALLS AND IN THE HEARTS OF HIS  
COUNTRYMEN.

BUT IT IS LESS FOR THE POWER OF HIS WORDS THAT  
WE HONOR LINCOLN THAN FOR THE FORCE OF HIS FAITH IN AMERICA  
AND IN THE PEOPLE OF THIS GREAT REPUBLIC.

HE SAW THE POLITICAL SYSTEM CREATED BY THE  
CONSTITUTION / AS A DEFINITIVE ANSWER TO THE ANCIENT DEBATE  
ABOUT THE ABILITY OF MAN / TO GOVERN HIMSELF IN FREEDOM.  
THE WORTH AND THE WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON WAS  
BEING QUESTIONED AND ASSAILED ALL AROUND HIM.

BUT EVEN AS AMERICANS STRUGGLED IN BLOODY BATTLE  
WITH OTHER AMERICANS / OVER ISSUES THE FOUNDING FATHERS  
HAD FAILED TO RESOLVE, / PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS ABLE TO  
DECLARE:

" IT IS MY CONFIDENT HOPE AND BELIEF THAT THIS  
SYSTEM WILL BE FOUND, / AFTER SUFFICIENT TRIALS, / TO BE BETTER  
ADAPTED EVERYWHERE / THAN ANY OTHER, / TO THE GREAT INTEREST  
OF HUMAN SOCIETY -- NAMELY, / THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE, \  
ORDER / AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY. "

AND, / AFTER MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TRIAL, /  
THE UNION WAS SAVED AND THE REPUBLIC ENDURES.  
IT IS TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN THAT WE OWE THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
OBSERVE OUR NATIONAL BICENTENNIAL IN PEACE / AMONG OURSELVES  
AND WITH ALL NATIONS.

TODAY, WE REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE VALUES AND  
GOALS FOR WHICH ABRAHAM LINCOLN LIVED / AND DIED --

" THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH  
OF FREEDOM -- AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE,  
BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, / SHALL NOT PERISH  
FROM THE EARTH. "

END OF TEXT