

The original documents are located in Box 24, “3/5/76 - Remarks at Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THANK YOU DR. A BEGG

CONG MICHELS

CONG RAILSBACK

CONG MADIGAN

MAYOR CARVER

FRIENDS OF THE EVERETT MCKINLEY

DIRKSON CHAIR

STUDENTS, FACULTY AND GUESTS
OF BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

REMARKS AT BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

PEORIA, ILLINOIS

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 1976

LET ME SAY FIRST OF ALL THAT IT IS A
GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE AT BRADLEY UNIVERSITY
AND IN THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF PEORIA THIS EVENING.

Mayor Carver

THE TRUSTEES OF THIS UNIVERSITY HAVE HONORED
ME IN A VERY PERSONAL WAY WITH THIS HONORARY APPOINTMENT
TO THE EVERETT McKINLEY DIRKSEN CHAIR OF GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

I am most grateful.

EVERETT DIRKSEN WAS ONE OF THE FINEST

PUBLIC SERVANTS I HAVE EVER KNOWN, AND HISTORY WILL

RECORD HIM AS ONE OF THE MOST GIFTED AND BELOVED MEN

EVER TO SERVE IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

EV AND I BECAME ESPECIALLY CLOSE

DURING THE YEARS WHEN HE SERVED AS REPUBLICAN LEADER

OF THE SENATE, AND I WAS HIS COUNTERPART IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

EVERETT DIRKSEN WAS MORE THAN A STATESMAN,

MORE THAN A MASTER OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, MORE THAN

A NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN SPEAKER.

I KNEW HIM AS A GOOD

FRIEND, A WISE COUNSELLOR, AND AN INSPIRING TEACHER.

HE TAUGHT US ONE OF HIS MOST UNFORGETTABLE
LESSONS ON THE MEMORABLE DAY IN 1963 WHEN THE SENATE
WAS DEBATING RATIFICATION OF THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY•

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THAT TREATY,

SENATOR DIRKSEN SAID, "UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WITH
BIGGER AND MORE DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS BEING BUILT ALL THE TIME,
WITH ARMAMENT BURDENS UPON EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD,
UNLESS WE TAKE A STEP IN THE WHOLE DOMAIN OF FAITH, WHAT
WILL BE LEFT EXCEPT GLOOM AND DEFEATISM / AGAINST THE DAY WHEN
SOME CARELESS PERSON WILL PULL THE TRIGGER?"

EVERETT DIRKSEN KNEW THAT SOMEHOW THE PEACE
OF THE WORLD MUST BE MADE MORE SECURE, THAT IF MEN HAD
MADE THE WORLD DANGEROUS, MEN COULD ALSO MAKE IT SAFE,
AND HAD AN OBLIGATION TO MAKE THAT EFFORT.

TWICE IN THIS CENTURY THE WHOLE WORLD HAS
GONE TO WAR. TWICE THE UNITED STATES HAS JOINED THE
GLOBAL STRUGGLE, BELIEVING WITH WOODROW WILSON THAT
"THE RIGHT IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN PEACE," AND AGREEING
WITH FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT THAT "WE ARE WILLING TO FIGHT
TO MAINTAIN FREEDOM."

TWICE MORE WE HAVE HONORED OUR COMMITMENTS
TO INDIVIDUAL NATIONS WHERE THE PEACE WAS BROKEN BY ACTS
OF NAKED AGGRESSION AND BY ARMIES BENT ON DESTRUCTION
AND TERROR AND CONQUEST•

AMERICA HAS SEEN TOO MUCH OF WAR IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY, TOO MUCH OF SUFFERING AND DYING ON
BLOOD-STAINED FIELDS OF BATTLE.

WE CHERISH THE PEACE THAT AMERICA ENJOYS THE PEACE THAT FINDS NO AMERICAN IN COMBAT ANYWHERE IN
THE WORLD TONIGHT.

AND YET WE KNOW THAT THE FREEDOMS WE
HAVE DEFENDED SO OFTEN ARE STILL BEING CHALLENGED TODAY.

WE KNOW THAT OUR STRENGTH, OUR POWER,
OUR CONSTANT VIGILANCE AND OUR RESOLVE ARE THE FOUNDATION
OF MANKIND'S HOPE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE WORLD.

IF WE SHOULD EVER RELINQUISH THAT ROLE,
IF OUR CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE SHOULD BE DIMINISHED BY
OUR OWN WEAKNESS, THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE SEVERE
AND TRAGIC FOR ALL THE WORLD.

FOR THIS REASON, THE UNITED STATES MUST PURSUE

A POLICY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH. THAT IS THE POLICY

WHICH MY ADMINISTRATION WILL ALWAYS PURSUE.

I HAVE TAKEN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO ENSURE

THAT AMERICA'S ALLIANCES ARE STRONG, OUR COMMITMENTS ARE

WORTHWHILE, AND OUR DEFENSES ARE WITHOUT EQUAL IN THE WORLD.

IN MY PRESIDENCY, I HAVE PROPOSED THE
TWO LARGEST PEACETIME DEFENSE BUDGETS IN AMERICAN HISTORY --
AS THE BEST INSURANCE OF DETECTING AGGRESSION AND MAINTAINING
OUR NATIONAL SECURITY•

THERE ARE SOME VERY SINCERE AND THOUGHTFUL

AND PATRIOTIC AMERICANS WHO BELIEVE THAT THESE DEFENSE

PROPOSALS TAKE TOO MUCH OF OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

AWAY FROM THE DOMESTIC PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY THE

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

BUT WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE FOUNDATION

FOR ALL OF THESE DOMESTIC PROGRAMS, THE BASIC PREMISE

UPON WHICH THEY ALL DEPEND, IS THAT THE UNITED STATES

WILL CONTINUE AS A FREE AND INDEPENDENT AND SECURE NATION.

THAT MUST BE OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY, AND IN THIS ADMINISTRATION,

IT IS.

BEYOND SECURING OUR OWN INDEPENDENCE,
AMERICA'S DEFENSIVE STRENGTH -- BY THE VERY FACT OF ITS
EXISTENCE -- ENABLES US TO DETER AGGRESSION IN MANY
PARTS OF THE WORLD. AND THAT STRENGTH MAKES IT POSSIBLE
FOR US TO NEGOTIATE FOR PEACEFUL PROGRESS FROM A POSITION
THAT COMMANDS RESPECT AND INVITES COOPERATION.

BECAUSE BOTH SIDES OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

RESPECT OUR STRENGTH AND OUR WORD AND OUR COMMITMENT

TO A JUST AND LASTING PEACE, WE HAVE WON THE ROLE OF

PEACEMAKER IN THAT VERY STRATEGIC AND VOLATILE PART

OF THE WORLD.

OUR AIM IS TO MAKE PEACE SECURE THROUGHOUT

THE WORLD.

WE ARE CONDUCTING OUR FOREIGN POLICY

WITH OUR EYES OPEN, OUR GUARD UP, AND OUR POWDER DRY•

WE KNOW THAT PEACE AND NATIONAL SECURITY CANNOT BE PURSUED

ON A ONE-WAY STREET• BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT RETURNING

TO A COLLISION COURSE IN A THERMO-NUCLEAR AGE CAN LEAVE

THE HUMAN RACE IN ASHES•

I WILL NOT LEAD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DOWN THE ROAD TO NEEDLESS DANGER AND SENSELESS DESTRUCTION•

I WILL LEAD THEM ON THE PATH OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH,

AND WE WILL LIVE IN PEACE AND FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA•

IT IS OUR DUTY AND OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY
TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE PEACE AND THE FREEDOM WE ENJOY
IN AMERICA TODAY. LET US SHOW OURSELVES WORTHY
OF THE PRICE WE HAVE PAID FOR THEM - IN BLOOD,
IN SACRIFICE, IN TREASURE.

LET US TAKE MORE SERIOUSLY AND MORE

PERSONALLY OUR PRECIOUS RIGHT OF FREE POLITICAL EXPRESSION

IN THIS ELECTION YEAR.

LET US SET AMBITIOUS GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

OF OUR COUNTRY, AND WORK HARD AND WORK TOGETHER --

TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS.

LET US STRIVE TO SECURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY
FOR OURSELVES AND OUR POSTERITY, AND STAND TALL AND STRONG
AND FREE AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

LET US MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM
HAS NO BETTER FRIEND, NO STRONGER ALLY THAN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

AND LET US RESOLVE, AS THE GREATEST SON
OF ILLINOIS DID A CENTURY AGO, THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE,
BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE / SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE
EARTH.

NOW I WOULD BE HAPPY TO RESPOND TO

ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

END OF TEXT

(CLOSING TO Q AND A)

I'VE ENJOYED BEING AT THIS OUTSTANDING
UNIVERSITY TONIGHT, AND TALKING WITH THE WONDERFUL
PEOPLE OF PEORIA.

BUT BEFORE I LEAVE, LET ME PAY MY
RESPECTS TO ANOTHER GREAT PRODUCT OF PEORIA - - -
THE BASKETBALL TEAM AT RICHWOODS HIGH SCHOOL.

AND LET ME JUST SAY THAT I WOULD LIKE W
NOTHING BETTER THAN TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE - - -
AND GO UNDEFEATED IN ILLINOIS IN 1976.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH, AND GOOD NIGHT.

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