

The original documents are located in Box 27, “3/27/76 - Remarks at a Rally in the Mary E. Sawyer Auditorium, La Crosse, WI” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

REMARKS AT MARY E. SAWYER AUDITORIUM

LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -- LA CROSSE

-- THANK YOU, DR. GUNDERSON,

-- GOVERNOR KNOWLES,

-- MAYOR ZIELKE, (ZEE - L - KEY)

-- REVEREND CLERGY,

-- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

LET ME SAY FIRST OF ALL -- IT'S GREAT TO BE
IN GOD'S COUNTRY TODAY.

IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY LA CROSSE WAS CHOSEN
OVER 243 OTHER CITIES LAST YEAR AS THE NUMBER ONE SMALL
METROPOLITAN AREA IN AMERICA -- AND I CONGRATULATE YOU
ON THAT VERY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT.

IN FACT, I SENT A LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS
TO YOUR FINE MAYOR, PAT ZIELKE (ZIL-KEY), WHEN THAT ANNOUNCEMENT
WAS MADE, AND I KNOW THAT ALL OF YOU ARE VERY, VERY PROUD.

YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF THE WAY YOU HAVE
SUCCESSFULLY MAINTAINED A WORKABLE AND BENEFICIAL BALANCE
BETWEEN PRESERVATION AND PROGRESS IN THIS AREA.

A THRIVING CITY AND FERTILE FARMLANDS ARE IN
PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE HERE, AND THE SHEER PHYSICAL BEAUTY
OF LA CROSSE IS REALLY SOMETHING TO BEHOLD.

YOUR PEOPLE ARE STRONG AND FORWARD-LOOKING.

YOUR COMMERCE IS DIVERSE. IN MANY WAYS, LA CROSSE
IS ALMOST AN AMERICA IN MINIATURE.

YOU HAVE ENJOYED A RICH AND EXCITING HISTORY,

AS AMERICA HAS. YOU HAVE HAD YOUR SHARE OF PROBLEMS,

AS AMERICA HAS. BUT YOUR ACCENT IS ALWAYS ON THE FUTURE,

JUST AS AMERICA'S MUST BE.

THE YEAR 1976 IS A VITALLY IMPORTANT,

VERY CRITICAL YEAR FOR AMERICA.

IT MARKS A TURNING POINT FOR OUR COUNTRY AS
WE ENTER THE LAST QUARTER OF THE 20th CENTURY, AND BEGIN
THE THIRD CENTURY OF AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE.

IT IS GOOD FOR US, SOMETIMES, TO TAKE STOCK
OF WHERE WE HAVE BEEN, WHERE WE ARE NOW, AND WHERE WE
ARE GOING -- AS PEOPLE AND AS A NATION.

AMERICA HAS COME A LONG, LONG WAY IN THE LAST

200 YEARS.

WE HAVE GROWN FROM A VERY SMALL, POOR, WEAK,

STRUGGLING COLLECTION OF COLONIES TO BECOME THE GREATEST NATION

IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

YOUR ANCESTORS HELPED CONQUER A VAST AND DANGEROUS

CONTINENT, AND MADE THE HEART OF AMERICA STRONG.

TOGETHER, WE HAVE COME THROUGH WARS, DEPRESSIONS,
DROUGHTS, RIOTS, ASSASSINATIONS, SCANDALS -- PRACTICALLY
EVERYTHING THAT FATE COULD THROW AT US.

BUT WE HAVE ALSO ENJOYED PHENOMENAL ECONOMIC,
TECHNOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN AMERICA, AND THAT
PROGRESS HAS MADE OUR WAY OF LIFE THE ENVY OF ALL THE WORLD.

DESPITE ALL THE PROBLEMS WE'VE HAD, I DON'T THINK
ANY ONE OF US WOULD TRADE PLACES WITH THE PEOPLE OF ANY
OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.

WE HEAR A LOT OF TALK THESE DAYS ABOUT AMERICA
BEING IN A STATE OF DECLINE. WE HEAR THAT AMERICA'S BEST
DAYS ARE BEHIND US. WE HEAR THAT AMERICA IS ONLY A
SECOND-RATE POWER IN THE WORLD TODAY.

THAT'S DEAD WRONG, AND FRANKLY, I'M SICK AND
TIRED OF HEARING PEOPLE WHO ARE ALWAYS RUNNING DOWN AMERICA.

I'M PROUD OF AMERICA, AND I'M PROUD TO BE
AN AMERICAN, ~~AND I KNOW YOU ARE, TOO.~~

I BELIEVE IN THIS COUNTRY. I BELIEVE IN ITS
VALUES, ITS TRADITIONS, ITS INSTITUTIONS, ITS PEOPLE.

I BELIEVE IN AMERICA'S FUTURE.

WE HAVE THE CAPACITY IN THIS COUNTRY TO DO JUST
ABOUT ANYTHING WE SET OUR MINDS TO DO.

AMERICA TODAY REMAINS THE BEST HOPE OF PEACE,
THE STRONGEST GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM, IN THE WORLD. **WE**
ARE

PURSUING A POLICY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH. ALL OF US

CHERISH THE PEACE THAT AMERICA ENJOYS -- THE PEACE THAT

FINDS NO AMERICANS IN COMBAT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD TONIGHT.

BUT TO MAINTAIN THAT PEACE, TO DETER AGGRESSION
IN THE WORLD, AND TO PROTECT OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, AMERICA
MUST BE STRONG.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT AMERICA'S ^{military} ~~DEFENSIVE~~

~~CAPABILITIES ARE SECOND TO NONE -- AND I INTEND TO KEEP~~
IT THAT WAY.

America is #1

Industry

Agri

Military

Morally & Spiritually

America #1 because

215 million dedicated

BUT AMERICA'S STRENGTH IS MEASURED BY MORE THAN
ARMAMENTS ALONE.

AMERICA TODAY IS THE GREATEST AGRICULTURAL POWER,
THE MOST PROLIFIC PRODUCER OF FOOD AND FIBER IN THE WORLD.

THAT IS A CREDIT, | IN LARGE PART, | TO THE DAIRY FARMS
AND OTHER FARMS RIGHT HERE IN LA CROSSE AND THROUGHOUT
WISCONSIN -- AND I COMMEND YOU FOR IT.

MANY OF THESE FARMS HAVE BEEN IN THE SAME FAMILY

FOR GENERATIONS. I WANT TO SEE THE FAMILY FARM SURVIVE

AND THRIVE IN AMERICA. I WANT TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE

TO PASS ON THEIR FARMS -- THE PRODUCT OF MANY YEARS OF

HARD WORK AND LOVE AND FAITH -- TO THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

I WANT TO MAKE IT EASIER TO KEEP THOSE FARMS IN
THE FAMILY, RATHER THAN SACRIFICING THEM TO THE TAX COLLECTOR.

I'VE PROPOSED TWO MEASURES TO HELP PROMOTE THAT
RESULT. FIRST, I PROPOSED THAT THE CONGRESS ACT TO
STRETCH OUT ESTATE TAX PAYMENTS, AT GREATLY REDUCED INTEREST
RATES, OVER A 25-YEAR PERIOD.

AND SECOND, I HAVE PROPOSED AN INCREASE
IN THE ESTATE-TAX EXEMPTION FROM 60 THOUSAND TO 150 THOUSAND
DOLLARS.

THESE PROPOSALS, IF ENACTED, WOULD HELP
NOT ONLY FAMILY FARMS, BUT FAMILY BUSINESSES AS WELL.

FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES, LIKE EVERY OTHER
SEGMENT OF OUR ECONOMY, SUFFERED HEAVILY IN THE WORST
RECESSION IN FORTY YEARS.

BUT THANKS TO SOME STRONG, COMMON-SENSE
POLICIES I INITIATED AT THE OUTSET OF THE RECESSION, AND
THANKS TO THE DETERMINATION AND COURAGE OF THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE, WE ARE WORKING OUR WAY OUT OF OUR ECONOMIC
DIFFICULTIES.

WITH ONE FAVORABLE INDICATOR AFTER ANOTHER
POINTING THE WAY, WE'RE ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY AND
PROSPERITY IN AMERICA, AND WE'RE PICKING UP SPEED
EVERY DAY.

EVEN WITH THE SEVERE SETBACKS WE EXPERIENCED
RECENTLY, AMERICA TODAY IS STILL THE MOST ECONOMICALLY
POWERFUL NATION IN THE WORLD.

I HAVE NEVER LOST FAITH IN THE SYSTEM OF
PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND PERSONAL INITIATIVE WHICH EARNED
THAT WEALTH IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND GAVE US THE HIGHEST
STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE WORLD.

I WILL DO ALL THAT I CAN TO SEE THAT GOVERNMENT
REGULATIONS AND RED TAPE DO NOT ENSLAVE FREE ENTERPRISE
AND PERSONAL FREEDOM IN AMERICA.

~~THE HEAVY HAND OF GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND
ITS WAY INTO TOO MANY AREAS OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE -- AND
THE COST OF GOVERNMENT HAS RISEN MUCH TOO QUICKLY.~~

I KNOW HOW HARD YOU WORK FOR THOSE TAX
DOLLARS, AND I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO SEE THAT
THOSE TAX DOLLARS WORK JUST AS HARD FOR YOU.

I'VE VETOED 46 BILLS SINCE BECOMING PRESIDENT,

AND 39 OF THOSE VETOES HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED. THE SEVEN

VETOES WE LOST WILL COST YOU, THE TAXPAYERS, SEVEN BILLION

EXTRA DOLLARS.

BUT I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT MY OTHER 39

VETOES -- WILL SAVE YOU 13 BILLION DOLLARS -- AND AS ANY

WISCONSIN FARMER KNOWS, THAT AIN'T HAY.

IF THERE'S ONE THING WE MUST NEVER LOSE

SIGHT OF, IT'S THIS: THAT A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO
GIVE US EVERYTHING WE WANT IS A GOVERNMENT BIG
ENOUGH TO TAKE FROM US EVERYTHING WE HAVE.

~~THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT WE~~

~~WANT IN AMERICA.~~

WE HAVE THE BEST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

IN THE WORLD. IT IS A SYSTEM LAID OUT WITH GREAT

CARE AND PAID FOR AT GREAT PRICE BY PATRIOTS YEARNING

FOR FREEDOM.

WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT GOVERNMENT IS

ALWAYS THE SERVANT -- AND NEVER THE MASTER -- OF

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

WE WANT THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE OUR OWN COURSE
IN OUR OWN LIVES, TO CHART OUR OWN FUTURE ON OUR OWN TERMS,
WITHOUT HAVING THE GOVERNMENT TELL US EVERYTHING WE CAN
AND CANNOT DO.

IT WASN'T THE GOVERNMENT THAT MADE AMERICA
THE GREAT NATION IT IS.

THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION OF OUR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN

IN GIVING PEOPLE THE FREEDOM TO DO GREAT THINGS THEMSELVES

TO EXPLORE, TO INVENT, TO BUILD, TO LEARN, TO SPEAK,

AND TO PROSPER.

EIGHT GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS HAVE ENJOYED

THIS FREEDOM AND MADE THE MOST OF IT.

WHAT OTHER NATION ON EARTH CAN MATCH THE
COMBINED ECONOMIC, AGRICULTURAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, MILITARY
AND MORAL STRENGTH OF AMERICA?

~~THE FACT IS THAT~~ NO OTHER NATION CAN MATCH
THIS COMBINATION OF STRENGTH WHICH AMERICA POSSESSES.

WE'RE NUMBER ONE, AND WE'RE GOING TO KEEP IT
THAT WAY IN THE YEARS AHEAD -- ~~I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT.~~

THE ELECTIONS OF 1976 WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT
ROLE IN DECIDING WHAT COURSE WE CHART FOR AMERICA'S
FUTURE, -- ~~IN THE AREAS OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL, ECONOMICS,~~
~~DEFENSE, AND MANY, MANY OTHERS.~~

IN THE PAST 19 MONTHS, WE HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL

PROGRESS. *by doing what is right.*

THERE IS MORE TO BE DONE. ~~OF COURSE~~.

BUT I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY REASON TO TRADE IN YOUR FORD

ON ANOTHER MODEL IN 1976.

I INVITE YOU -- AND ALL OF YOUR
NEIGHBORS IN WISCONSIN -- TO WALK WITH ME ON THE
PATH OF PEACE, ON THE ROAD TO PROSPERITY, ON THE
WAY TO VICTORY IN 1976.

NOW I WOULD BE HAPPY TO RESPOND
TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT