

The original documents are located in Box 27, “3/29/76 - Remarks Upon the Presentation of Department of Defense Medals for Distinguished Service to Three Recipients” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DOD MEDALS FOR DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE PRESENTATION

SECRETARY RUMSFELD (Will introduce you.)

HONORED AMBASSADORS

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

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I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN YOU HERE TODAY
IN HONORING THREE OUTSTANDING MEN WHO HAVE SERVED AS THEIR
COUNTRIES' REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL --
AMBASSADOR de STAERCKE OF BELGIUM, AMBASSADOR de ROSE
OF FRANCE AND AMBASSADOR BRUCE OF THE UNITED STATES.

IN PAYING THIS TRIBUTE, WE REAFFIRM OUR
COMMITMENT TO OUR DEFENSE, TO OUR WAY OF LIFE, AND TO
THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM EVERYWHERE.

THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE
NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, AND MOST PARTICULARLY IT IS THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY,
THE UNITED STATES.

IN THIS AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL YEAR, WE ARE REMINDED OF
OUR DUTY TO SAFEGUARD THE HERITAGE OF DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY.
IF WE FAIL, THERE IS NO ONE TO TAKE OUR PLACE.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE
TO MEET BOTH IN WASHINGTON AND IN BRUSSELS WITH THE
AMBASSADORS WE HONOR HERE TODAY.

I HAVE FOUND A REMARKABLE NEW UNITY AMONG ALL THE NATIONS
OF THE ALLIANCE ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE AND ON
THE CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLECTIVE DEFENSE.

EACH OF THE MEN WE HONOR HAS GIVEN MORE THAN HIS FULL
MEASURE OF THE CLEAR-SIGHTED AND DEDICATED SERVICE THAT
WE ARE ALL CALLED UPON TO SHOW.

-- AMBASSADOR de STAERCKE HAS GIVEN MORE
THAN 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO NATO, SPANNING THE SERVICE
OF TEN U.S. AMBASSADORS AND MAKING -- IN THE TRUEST SENSE
OF THE WORD -- A LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLIDARITY
OF THE WEST.

I WOULD NOTE THAT OUR TIES WITH BELGIUM BILATERALLY AND
IN THE ALLIANCE ARE TRULY OUTSTANDING.

THE STRENGTH AND DURABILITY OF OUR TIES ARE EXPRESSED
IN SPECIAL MEASURE BY ONE OF THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE TODAY.
FRANCE IS OUR OLDEST ALLY AND IN OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR
IT IS WITH SPECIAL WARMTH THAT WE REAFFIRM THE CLOSENESS
OF UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH FRANCE.

-- AMBASSADOR de ROSE, IN A LONG AND
DISTINGUISHED DIPLOMATIC CAREER, HAS EARNED AN ENVIABLE
REPUTATION FOR THE SKILL WITH WHICH HE HAS REPRESENTED FRANCE,
WHOSE ROLE IS SO IMPORTANT TO THE SECURITY AND WELL-BEING
OF THE WEST.

I KNOW FROM SECRETARIES KISSINGER AND RUMSFELD THAT
AMBASSADOR de ROSE'S ANALYTICAL POWERS AND ELOQUENCE
ENLIVENED AND DIGNIFIED THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE NORTH
ATLANTIC COUNCIL AND WERE A SOURCE OF MUCH WISDOM.

-- A LITTLE MORE THAN A MONTH AGO, IT WAS MY
PLEASURE TO CONFER THE HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD OF THE
UNITED STATES -- THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM WITH DISTINCTION --
ON DAVID BRUCE.

HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICE OVER HALF A CENTURY OF PUBLIC LIFE
HAS BEEN A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN DIPLOMACY
AND ATLANTIC UNITY THAT WILL NEVER BE EQUALLED.

WHAT WE SHOULD DO -- WHAT WE MUST DO --
TO HONOR THESE MEN TODAY IN A TRULY MEANINGFUL WAY, IS TO
ENSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR STRENGTH, AND THAT / WITH THAT
STRENGTH, / WE SAFEGUARD THE PEACE AND DEFEND THE VALUES
THAT HAVE MADE OUR SOCIETIES GREAT AND PRODUCED MEN
SUCH AS THESE.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE SUCCESS OF OUR DIPLOMACY
FOR PEACE DEPENDS ON OUR STRENGTH. THE WORLD'S SECURITY
DEPENDS ON OUR KNOWLEDGE -- AND THE WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE --
THAT WE ARE STRONG AND PREPARED TO DEFEND OURSELVES WHEN
CHALLENGED.

OUR ADVERSARIES KNOW THAT THE MILITARY STRENGTH
OF THE UNITED STATES IS UNSURPASSED ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD TODAY.
THEY KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES IS COMMITTED
TO A STRONG AND POWERFUL ALLIANCE IN EUROPE.

BUT THEY ALSO KNOW THAT THE TREND OF RELATIVE MILITARY

STRENGTH HAS BEEN CHANGING OVER THE PAST DECADE AND MORE.

~~EVEN AS WE REMAIN POWERFUL, THE SOVIETS HAVE COME A LONG WAY,~~
and overall unsurpassed + we
shall keep that way,
~~AND UNLESS WE TAKE EFFECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES, THEY COULD ONE DAY~~
~~SURPASS US.~~

THAT IS WHY WE MUST NOT ONLY PERSEVERE IN SEEKING

GREATER STABILITY IN THE WORLD BUT WE MUST ALSO BE WILLING

TO SPEND GREATER AMOUNTS ON OUR OWN DEFENSES IN THE UNITED STATES.

SINCE BECOMING PRESIDENT, I HAVE SUBMITTED THE TWO BIGGEST

DEFENSE BUDGETS IN OUR PEACETIME HISTORY.

I AM DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF OUR OWN CONGRESS,
APPARENTLY OBLIVIOUS TO THE REALITIES OF TODAY'S WORLD,
NOW SEEK TO MAKE SIZEABLE REDUCTIONS IN MY DEFENSE BUDGET
FOR THE COMING YEAR. THAT BUDGET IS A MINIMUM BUDGET;
THERE IS NO ROOM IN IT FOR MAJOR REDUCTIONS.

I WANT TO SERVE NOTICE TODAY THAT IF THE CONGRESS SENDS ME A
DEFENSE BILL THAT SHORT-CHANGES THE FUTURE SAFETY OF THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE, I WILL VETO THAT DEFENSE BILL -- UNPRECEDENTED THOUGH
THAT MIGHT BE -- AND GO DIRECTLY TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS --
215 MILLION STRONG -- ON THIS LIFE-AND-DEATH ISSUE.
NOTHING IS MORE VITAL THAN OUR OWN NATIONAL SECURITY.

ALL OF US RECOGNIZE THAT THE AIM OF OUR ALLIANCE
IS NOT STRENGTH FOR ITS OWN SAKE BUT STRENGTH FOR PEACE●
OUR AIM IN EUROPE IS SECURITY AND TRUE RELAXATION OF TENSION,
NOT PERPETUAL CONFRONTATION●

THE STABILITY THAT WE HAVE ENSURED IN EUROPE BY MAINTAINING
THE MILITARY BALANCE FOR 30 YEARS -- WHICH WE MUST MAINTAIN --
CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONFIDENT DIPLOMACY -- TO DEFUSE
POWDERKEGS SUCH AS BERLIN, OR TO NEGOTIATE ON MUTUAL AND
BALANCED REDUCTIONS OF FORCES● THIS HAS BEEN NATO'S
DECLARED POLICY FOR NEARLY A DECADE●

THIS STABILITY ALSO CREATES OPPORTUNITIES

FOR BUILDING BRIDGES -- FOR SEEKING GREATER COMMUNICATION AND
UNDERSTANDING AMONG PEOPLES OF EASTERN EUROPE, THE SOVIET UNION
AND THE WEST. IT BUILDS AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH FREE
MOVEMENT OF PEOPLES AND IDEAS CAN TAKE PLACE.

AS I STATED EMPHATICALLY BEFORE ALL THE LEADERS OF THE COMMUNIST
AS WELL AS THE WESTERN COUNTRIES OF EUROPE, THERE CAN BE NO TRUE
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE UNTIL HUMAN RIGHTS AND
FREEDOM ARE EXPANDED EVERYWHERE.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE STAND FOR FREEDOM.

THAT IS MY POLICY -- AND THAT IS THE POLICY OF MY ENTIRE

ADMINISTRATION.

AND SO, GENTLEMEN, AS WE HONOR YOU

WE ALSO HONOR OUR OWN HIGHEST PRINCIPLES -- AND WE ARE

REMINDED OF OUR DUTY. MAY WE SERVE IT AS WELL AS YOU.

END OF TEXT