

The original documents are located in Box 29, “4/10/76 - Remarks to Students at West Texas State University, Canyon, Texas” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS AT WEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY,

CANYON, TEXAS

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - WEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

-- THANK YOU, DR. WATKINS (Lloyd Watkins is
President of WTSU)

-- SENATOR TOWER

-- MY FORMER COLLEAGUE AND OLD FRIEND,
BOB PRICE

-- MAYOR BRYAN (Canyon Mayor)

-- STUDENTS, FACULTY AND GUESTS OF
WEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR WARM WELCOME.

IT IS GREAT TO BE HERE IN THE PANHANDLE, AT WEST TEXAS

STATE UNIVERSITY. IT FEELS LIKE I HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS

HERE.

NOT LONG AGO, AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, I WAS
DOING A LITTLE VISITING IN FLORIDA. AND SOME OF MY
FRIENDS IN MIAMI ASKED ME TO BRING YOU A MESSAGE
THIS EVENING -- A MESSAGE TO THE BUFFALOS. / THEY ASKED
ME TO THANK YOU FOR MERCURY MORRIS!

I LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS
TONIGHT, BUT FIRST LET ME SAY JUST A FEW WORDS.

TEXAS IS A PROUD STATE. IT'S A PROUD STATE
BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TOUGH,
HARD-WORKING, AND INDEPENDENT MINDED.

YOU HAVE THE FRONTIER SPIRIT, AND YOU CAN BE
RIGHTLY PROUD OF IT.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF OUR NATION'S GREATNESS
HAS NOT BEEN A RELIANCE ON WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES FOR
THE PEOPLE -- BUT WHAT THE PEOPLE HAVE DONE FOR THEMSELVES.

HERE IN TEXAS YOU HAVE NEVER LOST SIGHT OF ONE
BASIC TRUTH: THAT A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO GIVE US
EVERYTHING WE WANT, IS A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE
FROM US EVERYTHING WE HAVE.

AMERICANS CAN ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL, STRONG AND
PROUD IF THEY ARE FREE -- AND THE DUTY OF MY ADMINISTRATION
IS TO PRESERVE THAT FREEDOM.

AS YOUR PRESIDENT FOR THE LAST 20 MONTHS,
THAT IS THE GOAL I HAVE CONSISTENTLY PURSUED.

AMERICA'S FREEDOM TAKES MANY FORMS●

THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOM IS THE FREEDOM FROM OUTSIDE

THREATS● PRESERVING THAT FREEDOM THROUGH A STRONG

NATIONAL DEFENSE IS ONE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S MOST

IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES●

I HAVE ALWAYS, IN MY 27 YEARS IN GOVERNMENT,
STOOD FOR A STRONG DEFENSE CAPABILITY. IF I LEARNED
ONE THING FROM MY EXPERIENCE IN WORLD WAR II -- THAT
WAS IT. MY VOTING RECORD ON DEFENSE HAS BEEN CLEAR
AND CONSISTENT FOR 27 YEARS, AND I'M PROUD TO STAND ON IT.

AS PRESIDENT I HAVE TO DEAL IN FACTS -- AND
FACT NUMBER ONE IS, TODAY OUR MILITARY STRENGTH IS
SUFFICIENT TO KEEP US FREE AND SECURE. OUR NATIONAL
DEFENSES -- OUR TWO MILLION MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM
AND THE STRATEGIC MIGHT THEY UNDERWRITE -- ARE THE
FINEST IN THE WORLD.

SOME COUNTRIES -- THE SOVIET UNION FOR

EXAMPLE -- MUST PROTECT THEIR BORDERS WITH LARGE STANDING

ARMIES. BUT, FORTUNATELY, WE HAVE FRIENDS ON BOTH

OF OUR LAND BORDERS.

WE DO HAVE A FINE ARMY -- AN ALL-VOLUNTEER

ARMY -- WELL EQUIPPED, WELL RUN, AND WELL COORDINATED

WITH THE ARMIES OF OUR MANY POWERFUL ALLIES AROUND THE WORLD.

BUT OUR BASIC STRENGTH IN PROTECTING OUR
FREEDOM LIES IN OUR ABILITY TO PROJECT OUR POWER BY AIR
AND SEA AROUND THE WORLD●

AND IN THOSE CATEGORIES WHERE OUR MILITARY
PLANNERS CALL FOR CLEAR-CUT SUPERIORITY -- THE FACT IS WE
ARE FIRST. THE UNITED STATES HAS THE MOST ACCURATE
BALLISTIC MISSILES. THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAS
MANY, MANY MORE MISSILE WARHEADS THAN THE SOVIET UNION.

FURTHERMORE, WE ALSO HAVE A VAST SUPERIORITY IN STRATEGIC BOMBERS. WE HAVE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, AND CARRIER TASK FORCES AT SEA.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO RAISE FALSE ALARMS -- BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS MORE SHIPS THAN WE DO.

BUT THE FACT IS, YOU DON'T COMPARE NAVIES BY NUMBERS.

YOU COMPARE TOTAL FIREPOWER, YOU COMPARE TONNAGE AND

COMBAT CAPABILITY -- AND YOU FIND WE ARE ON TOP.

LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY -- WOULD YOU SAY A
FOOTBALL TEAM WAS BETTER THAN THE DALLAS COWBOYS JUST
BECAUSE IT HAD MORE PLAYERS ON THE ROSTER? OF COURSE NOT.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW GOOD THOSE PLAYERS ARE. YOU
COMPARE THE TEAMS' TALENTS, THEIR STRENGTHS AND THEIR
STRATEGIES.

AND IN TERMS OF QUALITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY,

THE NATIONAL DEFENSES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ARE UNSURPASSED. AND WHAT'S MORE, WE'RE GOING TO STAY

THAT WAY SO LONG AS I AM YOUR PRESIDENT.

IT IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR MILITARY FORCES

WHICH MAKES CREDIBLE OUR DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES FOR PEACE

AND WHICH PROVIDES THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF OUR LEADERSHIP

IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

BUT LET ME ADD THAT OUR STRENGTH INVOLVES MORE
THAN OUR MILITARY MIGHT. OUR NATION'S REAL POWER IS
MEASURED MORE COMPLETELY BY CONSIDERING A COMBINATION OF
ITS MILITARY, AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL
AND MORAL STRENGTH. ALL THESE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR
NATIONAL SECURITY.

AND IN EVERY ONE OF THESE AREAS, THE NUMBER ONE

NATION IN THE WORLD IS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BUT EVEN WITHIN A PHYSICALLY SECURE

UNITED STATES, THERE CAN BE OTHER THREATS TO FREEDOM.

JUST THINK BACK TO THE STATE OF OUR ECONOMY A YEAR AND

A HALF AGO, AND YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN.

WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT 20 MONTHS AGO,

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE WAS BAD -- AND GETTING

WORSE. AS A RESULT, AMERICAN CITIZENS WERE LOSING

THEIR FREEDOM TO LIVE THE WAY THEY WANTED TO.

CONSUMERS HAD LESS CHOICE ABOUT WHAT TO BUY,
BECAUSE INFLATION WAS EATING UP THE VALUE OF THEIR INCOMES.
BUSINESSMEN HAD LOST THE FREEDOM TO INVEST, AND TO EXPAND
AND IMPROVE THEIR OPERATIONS.

AND, TRAGICALLY, MANY AMERICANS HAD LOST THE
FREEDOM TO EARN A DECENT LIVING, BECAUSE OUR NOSE-DIVING
ECONOMY DIDN'T NEED THEIR SERVICES.

MY ADMINISTRATION FOUGHT HARD TO REGAIN

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC FREEDOM - AND IT'S CLEAR THAT WE

ARE WINNING. THE FIGURES SHOW US THAT THE RATE OF

INFLATION HAS BEEN CUT IN HALF. INCOMES ARE ONCE AGAIN

RISING FASTER THAN THE COST OF LIVING.

THE MARCH FIGURES SHOW US THAT NOT ONLY HAVE WE RECOVERED

ALL THE JOBS WE HAD LOST TO THE RECESSION -- BUT THERE

ARE MORE AMERICANS WORKING TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE IN

OUR HISTORY.

AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, THE FIGURES SHOW US

THAT THE CONFIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS RISING,

STEADILY AND STRONGLY.

WE'RE GOING TO KEEP AMERICA'S CONFIDENCE RISING.

WE'RE GOING TO KEEP PROTECTING YOUR ECONOMIC FREEDOM

JUST AS STEADFASTLY AS WE PROTECT ALL OF AMERICA'S

FREEDOMS.

ONE WAY I WILL DO THAT, WITH THE COOPERATION OF
THE CONGRESS, IS BY STICKING TO THE PATH OF FISCAL
RESPONSIBILITY. LET ME REMIND YOU OF THE BUDGET
I SUBMITTED THIS YEAR -- AND THOSE I PLAN TO SUBMIT IN
THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. MY PLANS WILL BRING A BALANCED
BUDGET IN 1979.

AND THAT WILL BRING YOU ANOTHER MAJOR TAX CUT. THAT WILL

GIVE YOU THE FREEDOM TO SPEND MORE OF YOUR MONEY / THE WAY

YOU WANT TO SPEND IT.

AND FINALLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, I WILL CONTINUE

TO PROTECT YOUR FREEDOM BY BEING HONEST WITH YOU.

WHEN I GAVE YOU MY FIRST STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE,

I KNEW THINGS LOOKED BAD FOR THE ECONOMY, AND I SAID SO.

I DIDN'T RAISE ANY FALSE HOPES, AND I NEVER WILL.

BUT I WILL NOT CONJURE UP ANY FALSE FEARS, EITHER.

BECAUSE IRRESPONSIBLE AND MISLEADING STATEMENTS THREATEN

OUR PROGRESS AND YOUR FREEDOM -- AND MY JOB IS TO

PROTECT THEM.

THAT'S WHY AMERICA NEEDS A REALISTIC GOVERNMENT.

A GOVERNMENT THAT PROMISES ONLY WHAT IT CAN DELIVER --

AND DELIVERS EVERYTHING IT PROMISES.

A GOVERNMENT THAT PROTECTS ITS PEOPLE'S FREEDOMS

BY BEING STRONG, STEADY AND RESPONSIBLE -- WITHOUT BEING

AFRAID OF THE FUTURE -- AND WITHOUT RETREATING INTO THE

PAST.

THAT IS THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT WE'VE GIVEN YOU
FOR THE LAST 20 MONTHS. AND WITH YOUR HELP NEXT MONTH
AND NEXT NOVEMBER, THAT'S THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT WE'LL
GIVE YOU FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS AS WELL.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. NOW I WILL BE GLAD
TO ANSWER SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT