The original documents are located in Box 29, “4/23/76 - Presidential Remarks at Peachtree Street Presbyterian Church” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS AT

PEACHTREE STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

APRIL 23, 1976
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
PEACHTREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THANK YOU, ADMIRAL HOWELL

SENATOR TALMADGE

DR. HARRINGTON (Minister)

COL. WILLIAMS (Commander, Atlanta Chapter of Military Order of World Wars)

GOLD STAR MOTHERS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
WE OBSERVE TODAY AN OCCASION OF
SOMBER REFLECTION AND GRATEFUL PRAISE.

AS WE HONOR THE MOTHERS OF MEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY, WE HAVE CAUSE ONCE
AGAIN TO HONOR THE BRAVE MEN THEMSELVES.
ALTHOUGH OUR HEARTS STILL MOURN THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES, WE CAN DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR SUPREME SACRIFICE WAS MADE IN DEFENSE OF OUR NATION'S NOBLEST IDEALS.
THE FACT THAT WE STAND HERE TODAY

AS CITIZENS OF THE STRONGEST AND FREEST AND GREATEST
NATION ON EARTH, IS POWERFUL TESTIMONY TO THE VALOR
AND COURAGE WITH WHICH THESE MEN GAVE THE LAST FULL
MEASURE OF DEVOTION TO AMERICA.
THE PAGES OF HISTORY RECORD THE NAMES

OF MANY BRAVE MEN WHO LED GREAT ARMIES INTO BATTLE

AND TO VICTORY, AND THIS NATION RIGHTLY REVERES THEM.
BUT THERE ARE OTHER NAMES, KNOWN

ONLY TO THOSE OF US ASSEMBLED HERE, WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS

WERE JUST AS GREAT, WHOSE DEVOTION WAS JUST AS

STEADFAST, WHOSE SACRIFICE FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

WAS JUST AS COMPLETE.
THEY ALL SHARE THE SAME GLORY; WON MANY TIMES OVER MANY FOES IN MANY DIFFERENT UNIFORMS. THEIR COMMON ENEMY WAS ALWAYS TYRANNY, AND THANKS TO THEM, THAT ENEMY HAS NEVER CAST ITS SHADOW ON OUR LAND.
IT IS BY THE DEEDS OF THESE GALLANT MEN

BY HERALDED ACTS OF BRAVERY AND BY UNKNOWN ACTS

OF QUIET COURAGE THAT FREEDOM FLOURISHES IN AMERICA

TODAY. IT IS THEIR LEGACY THAT GOVERNMENT

"OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE"

STILL THRIVES IN AMERICA IN 1976.
OUR MEMORIAL TODAY IS A RECOGNITION OF
THEIR DEEDS AND A CELEBRATION OF THAT LEGACY.

IT IS A PRAYER FOR THE DIVINE CARE OF
MEN WHO HAVE PRESSED THE BATTLE OF FREEDOM AND MADE
FREEDOM SECURE.
AND IT IS A PLEDGE TO THEM OF AMERICA'S UNFAILING RESOLVE TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE AND CHERISH THE FREEDOM THEY MADE SECURE FOR US.
AMERICA HAS NO INTENTION OF ABDICATING ITS LEADERSHIP TO ANY NATION COMMITTED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF LIBERTY.
WE KNOW THAT THE FREEDOMS WE HAVE DEFENDED SO OFTEN ARE STILL BEING CHALLENGED TODAY.

WE KNOW THAT OUR STRENGTH, OUR VIGILANCE AND OUR NATIONAL RESOLVE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF MANKIND'S HOPE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE WORLD.
WHEN I TOOK THE SOLEMN OATH OF OFFICE

AS YOUR PRESIDENT TWENTY MONTHS AGO, I PLEDGED

MYSELF AND THIS NATION TO AN UNINTERRUPTED AND SINCERE

SEARCH FOR PEACE.
I said then—and I say again today—that America will remain strong and united, but our strength will be dedicated to the safety of the entire family of man, as well as to our own precious freedom.
AMERICA HAS SEEN TOO MUCH OF WAR IN THE 20th CENTURY, TOO MUCH OF SUFFERING AND DYING ON BLOODSTAINED FIELDS OF BATTLE.

WE CHERISH THE PEACE THAT AMERICA ENJOYS TODAY, THE PEACE THAT FINDS NO AMERICAN BOYS IN COMBAT ANYWHERE ON THE FACE OF THE GLOBE.
PEACE TODAY HAS A VERY SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE

BECAUSE WAR TODAY HAS A VERY SPECIAL TERROR.

THE DEVASTATION AND DEATH LEFT IN THE WAKE OF THERMO-NUCLEAR WAR WOULD BE SO GREAT THAT THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT WOULD SIMPLY CEASE TO EXIST.
THEREFORE WE MUST DO OUR BEST TO KEEP

THE PEACE, NOT THE PEACE OF WEAKNESS AND CONCESSION,

BUT THE PEACE SECURED BY STRENGTH AND COURAGE.
THIS IS THE ROLE THAT DESTINY CALLS US TO

PLAY. OUR COUNTRY IS VERY SPECIAL IN THE EYES OF THE

WORLD.
AMERICA SHINES TODAY AS THE BRIGHTEST BEACON OF HOPE FOR MILLIONS WHO LIVE IN THE DARKNESS OF TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION.

THE MEN WhOSE MOTHERS WE HONOR TODAY HAVE HELD That BEACON HIGH, HAVE CARRIED IT INTO BATTLE, AND MADE THE DARKNESS RETREAT.
NOW THEY HAVE PASSED THE BEACON
TO US. IN THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES, IN THE
STEADFASTNESS OF OUR PURPOSE, WE MUST SHOW OURSELVES
WORTHY OF THE SACRIFICE THEY MADE.

MAY WE, LIKE THEM, DEVOTE OURSELVES
TO PEACE AND LIBERTY AND, LIKE THEM, MARCH ALWAYS
IN THE RANKS OF HONOR.

END OF TEXT