

The original documents are located in Box 30, “4/27/76 - Remarks on Arrival at Public Rally at Barksdale Air Force Base, Bossier City, LA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...²³¹

REMARKS AT PUBLIC RALLY AT BARKSDALE AFB,

BOSSIER CITY, LOUISIANA, APRIL 27, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -- BARKSDALE AFB ARRIVAL

THANK YOU, CONGRESSMAN JOE WAGGONER

GOVERNOR EDWARDS

CONGRESSMAN BREAUX

GENERAL HOBAN (CMDR - 8TH AF) (PH: HO - BIN)

MAYOR CATHY (Bossier City)

MAYOR ALLEN (Shreveport)

MR. SHANLEY (President, Holiday In Dixie)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE TODAY TO PARTICIPATE

IN THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL HOLIDAY IN DIXIE FESTIVAL,

AND I AM PARTICULARLY PROUD TO BE THE FIRST PRESIDENT

OF THE UNITED STATES TO SPEAK IN THE SHREVEPORT BOSSIER (Bo-zhar)

AREA.

I WAS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION
OF CONGRESSMAN JOE WAGGONER TO BE WITH YOU DURING THE FESTIVAL.
JOE IS A GOOD FRIEND AND FORMER COLLEAGUE, AND HIS ADVICE
AND ASSISTANCE HAVE BEEN INVALUABLE TO ME OVER THE YEARS.

I AM VERY GRATEFUL THAT SO MANY OF YOU

CAME OUT HERE TO MEET US ON OUR ARRIVAL AT BARKSDALE AIR

FORCE BASE, ~~ESPECIALLY IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY.~~

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE STANDS AS A

SHINING EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL SECURITY AT ITS BEST

AND AS A MONUMENT TO THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT OF THE CITIZENS

OF THIS AREA AND THE MILITARY•

AS THE HOME OF THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND'S

EIGHTH AIR FORCE, BARKSDALE SERVES AS ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES

OF OUR DEFENSE SYSTEM. I AM VERY PROUD OF THE PEOPLE

IN THIS AREA WHO HAVE HELPED TO MAKE THIS BASE

ONE OF THE FINEST IN THE NATION.

ALL OF US HAVE A PART TO PLAY IN KEEPING AMERICA

STRONG AND FREE AND SECURE AND AT PEACE•

THE MOTTO

OF THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND WILL SERVE AS WELL FOR ALL OF US•

"PEACE IS OUR PROFESSION"•

AS PRESIDENT, I AM COMMITTED TO KEEPING AMERICA

STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY OUT THREE ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVES:

-- WE MUST BE READY AND ABLE TO PROTECT

OUR OWN VITAL SECURITY INTERESTS.

-- WE MUST BE READY AND ABLE TO DETER AGGRESSION.

-- AND WE MUST BE READY AND ABLE TO KEEP THE PEACE

AND MAINTAIN OUR FREEDOM.

MY OWN KNOWLEDGE, MY CONCERN AND MY RECORD

IN SUPPORT OF A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE DO NOT GO BACK

MERELY A FEW DAYS, WEEKS OR MONTHS -- BUT ALL THE WAY BACK

TO 1949 WHEN I FIRST WENT TO THE CONGRESS.

FOR 25 YEARS IN THE CONGRESS, I STOOD FOR,

I SPOKE FOR, I VOTED FOR A STRONG DEFENSE FORCE.

FOR 14 YEARS, I SERVED ON THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE

WHICH EACH YEAR EXAMINED IN GREAT DETAIL EVERY SINGLE DEFENSE

PROGRAM, AND THEN PROVIDED THE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE ARMY,

THE NAVY, THE AIR FORCE AND THE MARINES. AND ALWAYS --

IN ALL OF THOSE YEARS -- I CAME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF STRENGTH.

DURING THE YEARS BEFORE I BECAME VICE PRESIDENT,
AS MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
I FOUGHT OPENLY AND HARD, YEAR AFTER YEAR, FOR MAXIMUM
MILITARY STRENGTH.

IN THE LAST TWO YEARS AS YOUR PRESIDENT,

*in support of what
your support
behaviors*

recommended to

I HAVE ~~CALLED UPON~~ THE CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE TWO BIGGEST

DEFENSE BUDGETS IN OUR HISTORY.

AND I PLEDGE TO YOU TODAY THAT AS LONG AS I HOLD

THIS OFFICE, I INTEND TO SEE TO IT THAT THE UNITED STATES

WILL NEVER BECOME SECOND TO ANYBODY -- PERIOD.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

HAS NOT SHARED THAT GOAL IN RECENT YEARS.

all majority in

THE CONGRESS

have

~~HAS~~ SLASHED DEFENSE EXPENDITURES BY FIFTY BILLION DOLLARS

OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, DESPITE MY EFFORTS AND JOE WAGGONER'S

EFFORTS, AND OTHERS.

NO ONE KNOWS BETTER THAN YOU THE NEED FOR STRENGTH

AND MODERNIZATION IN THE FIELD OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS.

THAT IS WHY WE ARE NOW COMPLETING THE FINAL TESTING

OF THE WORLD'S MOST MODERN AND CAPABLE STRATEGIC BOMBER,

THE B-1.

THAT IS WHY I HAVE PROPOSED REPLACING OLDER
TACTICAL AIRCRAFT WITH NEWER AND MORE CAPABLE AIRCRAFT,
INCLUDING A NEW AIR COMBAT FIGHTER.

THAT IS WHY I HAVE PROPOSED INCREASING THE PURCHASES
OF AIR-TO-AIR AND AIR-TO-GROUND MISSILES, AND WHY I AM
FOLLOWING THROUGH ON PLANS FOR A NEW ATTACK HELICOPTER.

THERE ARE OTHER ESSENTIAL WEAPONS SYSTEMS

IN THE WORKS AS WELL, NOT AS A PROVOCATION FOR WAR

BUT AS OUR BEST INSURANCE OF PEACE.

AS A MAJOR WORLD POWER, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION
TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND SECURITY BOTH HERE AND ABROAD.
WE CANNOT HOPE TO MEET THAT OBLIGATION THROUGH
IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS OR RASH BEHAVIOR.

OUR STRENGTH WILL BE MEANINGFUL ONLY IF IT IS MATCHED

BY OUR RESOLVE -- OUR RESOLVE TO KEEP THE PEACE,

OUR RESOLVE TO PRESERVE AND DEFEND OUR PRECIOUS FREEDOM.

WE CANNOT SHRINK FROM THE RESPONSIBILITIES

WHICH OUR POSITION IN THE WORLD HAS THRUST UPON US.

OUR ROLE IS TOO IMPORTANT, TOO CRUCIAL TO BE SHIRKED

OR IGNORED.

I KNOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THAT ROLE,

AND THAT EACH OF YOU IS WILLING AND ABLE TO HELP AMERICA

PLAY THAT ROLE. BEYOND OUR UNSURPASSED MILITARY CAPABILITY,

WE ALSO HAVE THE GREATEST INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY IN THE

HISTORY OF MANKIND.

OUR FARMERS OUTPRODUCE THE FARMERS OF ANY OTHER NATION

OR ANY OTHER PERIOD IN WORLD HISTORY.

WE LEAD THE WORLD

IN EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

WE HAVE THE

GREATEST MORAL AND SPIRITUAL RESOURCES OF ANY MODERN NATION.

AS WE ENTER OUR THIRD CENTURY OF INDEPENDENCE,

LET US BUILD ON THOSE GREAT STRENGTHS AND LEAVE A HERITAGE

OF PROGRESS AND PEACE SO GREAT THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS CAN MAKE

commitment

THE SAME ~~BOAST~~ WE MAKE TODAY;

WE ARE PROUD OF AMERICA

AND PROUD TO BE AMERICANS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH●

END OF TEXT