

The original documents are located in Box 31, “5/10/76 - Remarks at Ceremonies Opening the Exhibit at the Washington Monument” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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WE MEET TODAY IN AN AMERICA AT PEACE.

BUT WE MEET IN THE SHADOW OF A MONUMENT TO ONE WHO SAID:

'TO BE PREPARED FOR WAR IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTUAL WAYS
OF PRESERVING THE PEACE.'

TODAY OUR DEFENSES ARE STRONG,

AND WE WILL KEEP THEM STRONG. NOT STRONG FOR THE SAKE

OF WAR - BUT STRONG FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE.

AROUND US THIS MORNING ARE STIRRING SYMBOLS

OF AMERICA'S MILITARY MIGHT. THEY REMIND US

OF THE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY

WHICH KEEP AMERICA'S DEFENSES STRONG.

BUT LET US REMEMBER, IN THE MIDST

OF THIS IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY, THAT OUR MILITARY STRENGTH

DOES NOT LIE IN THESE WEAPONS ALONE.

IT LIES IN THE MUSCLE AND BRAIN, THE SINEW AND BLOOD

AND BONE OF THOSE WHO SERVE IN OUR ARMED FORCES.

AND STATISTICS LIKE THE NUMBER OF MISSILES --

THE TONNAGE OF OUR SHIPS -- THE FIREPOWER OF OUR WEAPONS --

MUST NOT DISTRACT US FROM THE QUALITY OF THOSE WHO ARE TRAINED

TO USE THEM.

MILITARY HISTORY HAS DEMONSTRATED,

OVER AND OVER AGAIN, THAT THE CHARACTER OF A NATION'S SOLDIERS

AND THEIR COMMANDERS DETERMINES MILITARY STRENGTH

MORE THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE FACTOR.

THE MEN AND WOMEN IN ALL BRANCHES OF OUR DEFENSE
ESTABLISHMENT ARE NOT ONLY WELL-TRAINED AND WELL-ARMED,
BUT JUST AS IMPORTANT, THEY ARE COURAGEOUS AND DEVOTED
TO THE AMERICAN IDEALS OF PEACE AND FREEDOM
THEY MAY BE CALLED UPON TO DEFEND.

SUCH SOLDIERS HAVE NO PRICE TAG.
HOW CAN WE MEASURE THE VALUE OF AN AMERICAN WHO HAS SUFFERED
OR DIED FOR FREEDOM?
AND HOW MUCH WAS A GRANT OR A LEE,
A PATTON OR A NIMITZ OR AN EISENHOWER WORTH?

WE OWE THESE PEOPLE OUR ETERNAL THANKS AND GRATITUDE.

WE OWE THEM OUR ADMIRATION, AND OUR SUPPORT.

Air Men & Marines

OUR SOLDIERS AND SAILORS ARE PROFESSIONALS,

AND WE OWE THEM THE FINEST TOOLS THIS COUNTRY CAN PROVIDE.

WE WILL GIVE THEM THE MEANS TO DO THE JOB.

THE B-1 BOMBER, A MODEL OF WHICH IS DISPLAYED

HERE TODAY, REPRESENTS JUST ONE PART OF OUR COMMITMENT

TO THIS TASK.

WE HAVE LAID THE KEEL FOR THE FIRST OF A SERIES
OF NEW MISSILE LAUNCHING SUBMARINES, THE TRIDENT MISSILE FLEET,
WHICH WILL BE THE FOUNDATION FOR A STRONG AND TECHNOLOGICALLY
SUPERIOR FORCE THROUGH THE 1980s.

WE ARE DEVELOPING A NEW MAIN BATTLE TANK,
NEW FIGHTERS, AND A NEW INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE
FOR THE 1980s.

AND ONE EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF OUR ADVANCED CAPABILITY
IS THE NEW CRUISE MISSILE WE ARE DEVELOPING FOR OUR AIR
AND NAVAL FORCES. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT NEW TECHNOLOGY
IN WHICH WE LEAD THE WORLD.

THE WEAPONS WE HOLD TODAY, AND THOSE WE PLAN
FOR THE FUTURE, GIVE AMERICA A MIGHTY POWER.

BUT WITH SUCH POWER COMES A MIGHTY RESPONSIBILITY.

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH OUR ARSENAL
IS INTENDED.

THAT PURPOSE IS NOT TO TERRIFY THE WEAK,
TO PROVOKE ARMED CONFRONTATION, NOR TO LAY CLAIM
TO THAT WHICH IS NOT OURS•

OUR PURPOSE IS TO DEFEND OUR FREEDOM,
AND TO MAINTAIN A FOUNDATION OF STRENGTH ON WHICH A BETTER
AND MORE PEACEFUL WORLD CAN BE BUILT•

THAT THOUGHT SHOULD MOTIVATE EVERY MAN AND WOMAN
IN OUR ARMED SERVICES•

AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO FULFILL THAT PURPOSE

MUST ALSO LIVE IN THE HEART OF EVERY AMERICAN.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

WE MUST ALL DO OUR BEST TO ENSURE OUR NATION

IS WELL DEFENDED. AND WE MUST ALL DO OUR BEST TO KEEP AMERICA

WORTH DEFENDING -- PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS AND FREE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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