

The original documents are located in Box 33, “5/24/76 - Remarks at an Open Forum for Members of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce and San Diego Council of the Navy League, San Diego, CA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN. . . .

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS TO THE NAVY LEAGUE
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, MAY 24, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SAN DIEGO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SAN DIEGO COUNCIL OF THE NAVY LEAGUE

THANK YOU, PETE.

(Mayor Wilson introduces you.)

CONGRESSMAN BOB WILSON



ADMIRAL STOECKLEIN

(Navy League President)

EVAN JONES

(President, San Diego Chamber of
Commerce)

MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE NAVY LEAGUE AND THE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON IN
THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF SAN DIEGO SPEAKING TO THE CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND THE NAVY LEAGUE. YOU AND I HAVE MUCH IN
COMMON. WE SHARE A BELIEF THAT OUR FREE USE OF THE SEAS
IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR NATION'S ECONOMY AND ITS SECURITY.

SAN DIEGO AND THE NAVY HAVE GROWN STEADILY

TOGETHER FOR OVER 75 YEARS, IN A VERY SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP.

SAN DIEGO LIKES THE NAVY, AND THE NAVY LIKES SAN DIEGO.

THIS AFTERNOON LET ME SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY

THOUGHTS ON OUR NAVAL FORCES, DESCRIBE SOME OF THE REASONS

FOR MY DECISIONS AS PRESIDENT, AND CHART OUR DIRECTION

FOR THE FUTURE.

THE OCEANS HAVE ALWAYS SERVED THE UNITED STATES
BOTH AS BARRIERS FOR DEFENSE, AND AS AVENUES OF COMMERCE
AND INFLUENCE.

NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF OUR OVERSEAS TRADE
MOVES BY SHIP. WE HAVE TWO STATES, THE COMMONWEALTH
OF PUERTO RICO, AND THE TERRITORIES OF GUAM, SOMOA AND
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS LINKED BY SEALANES TO THE CONTINENTAL
UNITED STATES.

FURTHERMORE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR ALLIES --

FORTY-ONE OF THE FORTY-THREE NATIONS WITH WHOM WE HAVE

SECURITY TREATIES -- LIE OVERSEAS.

SINCE OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH ARE FRIENDLY,
OUR MAJOR STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND MORE GENERAL POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS DEPEND ON MAINTAINING OUR
ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OF THE SEAS.

WE AND OUR ALLIES MUST MAINTAIN OUR FREEDOM TO
MOVE OVER, ACROSS AND BENEATH THE SEAS.

WE MUST NOT ONLY BE ABLE TO PROTECT THE SEA LANES. WE MUST
BE ABLE TO PROJECT OUR POWER FROM THE SEA ONTO THE LAND
WHEREVER AND WHENEVER WE MUST AND WE MUST BE CAPABLE
OF PREVENTING OUR ENEMIES FROM DOING LIKEWISE.

WHEN I SHIPPED OUT OF SAN DIEGO AS A LIEUTENANT

As a member of the crew of the U.S.S. Monterey, CVE 26

IN OCTOBER OF 1943, AMERICA WAS ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING THE

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STRONGEST NAVAL POWER THE WORLD HAD EVER SEEN•

WE EMERGED FROM WORLD WAR II WITH AN OVERWHELMING NAVAL

SUPERIORITY•

IN THE NEXT TWO DECADES WE REPLACED MANY SHIPS

IN OUR FLEET WITH MORE MODERN ONES•

BUT MUCH OF IT REMAINED WORLD WAR II VINTAGE, AND BY THE
1970's WE WERE FORCED TO FACE THE OBSOLESCENCE OF A LARGE
BLOCK OF OUR SHIPS.

WHEN I CAME INTO OFFICE TWO YEARS AGO, THIS
THREAT TO OUR SEAPOWER WAS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS
PROBLEMS I FACED.

Committee

I KNEW WE HAD TO MAINTAIN A NAVAL FORCE ABLE TO COUNTER ANY
ADVERSARY ON THE SEAS TODAY. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAD
TO LAY THE KEELS FOR THE SHIPS WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE
FOUNDATION OF AMERICA'S COMBAT-READY FLEET INTO THE 1980'S
AND 90'S AND BEYOND.

OUR DEFENSE STRUCTURE STANDS ON FOUR BASIC
PREMISES.

FIRST, WE MUST HAVE THE MILITARY MIGHT NECESSARY TO MEET
ANY CHALLENGE.

SECOND, OUR ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES MUST KNOW

WE HAVE IT.

THIRD, WE MUST HAVE THE WILL TO USE OUR WEAPONS

IF WE MUST, TO PROTECT OUR NATIONAL INTEREST.

FINALLY, ALL WHO MIGHT CONSIDER AGGRESSION
MUST KNOW WE HAVE THAT WILLPOWER -- AND RESPECT IT.

THE BASIS FOR OUR PRESENT NAVAL SUPERIORITY IS
BROAD, AND IS BUILT UPON AMERICAN TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS.

OUR AIRCRAFT CARRIERS ARE UNMATCHED, AND
CAN BRING SQUADRONS OF OUR NEWEST AIRCRAFT WITHIN
RANGE OF TARGETS ON LAND OR SEA.

OUR SUBMARINES ARE MORE ADVANCED, AND OUR EXPERTISE IN
THE CRITICAL AREAS OF AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE, ANTI-SUBMARINE
WARFARE, AND FLEET RESUPPLY ARE UNSURPASSED.

AND PERHAPS THE SINGLE DECIDING FACTOR -- ONE
OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO YOU IN THE NAVY LEAGUE -- IS THE
QUALITY AND CALIBER OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NAVY
AND MARINE CORPS. THEIR TRAINING, PROFESSIONALISM,
AND EXPERIENCE ARE UNMATCHED. I KNOW AND I ADMIRE
THEIR DEDICATION TO DUTY.

BOTH OUR ALLIES AND OUR ADVERSARIES ARE FULLY
AWARE OF OUR TREMENDOUS NAVAL POWER.

WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES FULLY TO MAINTAINING THE
SUPERIORITY OF AMERICAN SEAPOWER. EVER SINCE
I BECAME PRESIDENT, I HAVE FOUGHT TO REVERSE THE
DANGEROUS TREND IN THE CONGRESS TOWARD GIVING DEFENSE
A SMALLER AND SMALLER SLICE OF OUR FEDERAL BUDGET.

BETWEEN 1964 AND 1974, THE CONGRESS CUT FIFTY BILLION
DOLLARS FROM DEFENSE SPENDING•

I FOUGHT THIS DANGEROUS TREND FOR 25 YEARS

IN THE CONGRESS, FOR FOURTEEN OF THOSE YEARS IN THE THICK
OF IT ON THE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE•

AS PRESIDENT, I HAD THE CHANCE TO TAKE DECISIVE
ACTION / AND I TOOK IT.

MY BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEARS 1976 AND 1977 WERE
DESIGNED TO PRODUCE A NET INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF OUR FLEET.

MY FISCAL '76 BUDGET CONTAINED 5.4 BILLION DOLLARS FOR NAVY
SHIPBUILDING.

FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR I INCREASED THAT REQUEST TO 6.3
BILLION DOLLARS.

I BUDGETED FOR 16 NEW SHIPS IN OUR NAVY --

A ONE-FOURTH INCREASE OVER OUR AVERAGE SHIPBUILDING IN THE
PREVIOUS NINE YEARS.

AT THE SAME TIME, I SAW THAT THE NEW PROBLEMS
WE FACED DEMANDED A SWEEPING NEW APPROACH.

I CALLED FOR A STUDY WITHIN THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
OF OUR LONG-TERM NAVAL REQUIREMENTS AND SHIPBUILDING NEEDS.

THIS BLUEPRINT FOR OUR FUTURE NAVAL REQUIREMENTS

IS NOT YET FINISHED. ITS TENTATIVE FINDINGS CONFIRM,

HOWEVER, THAT WE MUST INCREASE OUR SHIPBUILDING EFFORTS --

NOW.

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FOR THIS REASON, I RECENTLY ASKED FOR ANOTHER

1.2 BILLION DOLLARS OVER OUR ORIGINAL BUDGET REQUEST FOR

FISCAL 1977. THIS WILL PROVIDE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF

FIVE ADDITIONAL SHIPS, AND ADVANCE FUNDING FOR A NEW

NIMITZ-CLASS AIRCRAFT CARRIER, THE FINEST AFLOAT.

THE NAVY NEEDS THESE SHIPS.

THE FACT IS, WE CANNOT

AFFORD LESS.

WE MUST HAVE A BALANCED NAVY. ONE THAT CAN

DETER CONFLICT - BUT ONE THAT CAN, IF NECESSARY, HANDLE
THE FULL SPECTRUM OF POSSIBLE CONFLICT, FROM FIRING A
WARNING SHOT ACROSS A BOW - TO WINNING AN ALL-OUT WAR.
IT MUST BE MODERN AND IT MUST BE BALANCED.

SUCH A NAVAL FORCE REQUIRES A MAJOR EFFORT
TO BUILD NEW SHIPS, AND REQUIRES THAT WE CONTINUE TO
MODERNIZE OUR EXISTING FLEET AND ITS ARSENAL•

WITH YOUR TREMENDOUS TECHNOLOGICAL AND
PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITY HERE IN CALIFORNIA, YOU WILL CONTINUE
TO PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THIS EFFORT•

THROUGH THE YEARS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA INDUSTRY

HAS ALSO MADE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANOTHER VITAL

AREA OF OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE - AIRCRAFT DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY.

UNITED STATES AIRCRAFT - MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL -

OUT-PERFORM THEIR COUNTERPARTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THE B-1, OUR NEWEST STRATEGIC BOMBER, REPRESENTS THE

ULTIMATE IN ADVANCED AIRCRAFT DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE.

HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, THE CONGRESS SEEMS INTENT

UPON TURNING VICTORY INTO DEFEAT. AFTER COMPLETING THE MOST

THOROUGH TEST PROGRAM IN THE HISTORY OF MANNED FLIGHTS --

NOW 90 PERCENT COMPLETE -- AFTER THREE PRESIDENTS AND

SEVEN DEFENSE SECRETARIES AND EVERY CONGRESS SINCE 1970

HAVE CERTIFIED ITS VALUE AND IMPORTANCE -- AFTER ALMOST

25 YEARS SINCE OUR LAST STRATEGIC BOMBER WAS BUILT,

THE SENATE HAS JUMPED UP AND SAID, "LET'S WAIT TIL NEXT

FEBRUARY."

WELL, I BELIEVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL

RECOGNIZE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THAT KIND OF POLITICAL

INTERFERENCE WITH OUR NATIONAL SECURITY NEEDS.

ON NOVEMBER 1, I WILL MAKE THE FINAL DECISION ON WHETHER

OR NOT TO GO AHEAD WITH PRODUCTION. THE MONEY THE SENATE

WANTS TO HOLD BACK / WOULD BE SPENT ONLY IF AND WHEN THE

TESTS ARE COMPLETED IN A SATISFACTORY WAY / AND ONLY IF I

HAVE MADE THE DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH PRODUCTION.

I HOPE THAT THE CONGRESS WILL UNDERSTAND THE

FOLLY OF PREVENTING US FROM BEING ABLE TO PRODUCE THIS

AIRCRAFT IN A TIMELY MANNER.

WE ARE STRONG TODAY AND OUR ALLIES AND OUR

ADVERSARIES KNOW IT. THAT IS WHY AMERICA IS AT

PEACE TODAY.

LET THERE BE NO DOUBT THAT WE INTEND TO STAY STRONG SO THAT

WE CAN STAY AT PEACE.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE OUR SOLDIERS, SAILORS,

AIRFORCE AND MARINES THE TOOLS TO DO THEIR JOB. WE WILL

USE OUR WEAPONS IF WE MUST. WE WILL ALWAYS FAVOR

REASON OVER FORCE -- BUT WE WILL USE FORCE IF FORCE IS

NECESSARY.

WE WILL STAY STRONG BY MAINTAINING AMERICA'S

TOTAL STRENGTH.

THAT MEANS WE MUST KEEP AMERICA'S

ECONOMY STRONG.

NOT LONG AGO; AMERICA'S STRENGTH WAS

THREATENED

- NOT BY A FOREIGN ADVERSARY,

BUT BY OUR

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

TOO MANY AMERICANS HAD LOST THEIR JOBS.

INFLATION WAS EATING UP THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR.

BUSINESSMEN ^{feared} [REDACTED] TO INVEST, AND THE FUTURE LOOKED

VERY BLEAK.

THERE WERE SOME WHO LOST FAITH IN OUR GREAT

SYSTEM.

THEY THOUGHT THAT WE COULD ONLY GET OUT OF THE

RECESSION IF WE BOUGHT OUR WAY OUT WITH A FEDERAL CHECK,

OR BY LETTING THE GOVERNMENT INTERFERE IN THE PEOPLE'S

BUSINESS.

BUT WE DIDN'T PANIC•

WE DECIDED TO FIGHT

THIS THREAT TO AMERICA'S STRENGTH WITH SOUND AND STEADY

ACTION•

WE GAVE TAX CUTS TO CONSUMERS, INCENTIVES

TO INDUSTRY AND WE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO HOLD DOWN THE

COST OF GOVERNMENT•

THE PRESIDENTIAL VETO IS AN IMPORTANT WEAPON

IN THE FIGHT TO HOLD DOWN FEDERAL SPENDING. THE CONGRESS

KNOWS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS THAT WEAPON. AND THE

CONGRESS KNOWS THE PRESIDENT HAS THE WILL TO USE IT,

BECAUSE I HAVE USED IT 49 TIMES TO SAVE THE AMERICAN

TAXPAYERS OVER 13 BILLION DOLLARS.

NOW WE ARE IN THE FULL SURGE OF RECOVERY•

INFLATION HAS BEEN CUT IN HALF• SINCE THE BOTTOM OF THE
RECESSION ALMOST A YEAR AGO, WE HAVE GAINED THREE MILLION,
300 THOUSAND NEW JOBS• MORE AMERICANS ARE EMPLOYED
TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY•

AND AMERICA'S FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM
HAS BEEN RESTORED•

WE WILL MAINTAIN THAT CONFIDENCE, AND WE WILL

KEEP OUR ECONOMY STRONG.

ONE WAY WE WILL DO THAT IS

BY MINIMIZING FEDERAL INTERFERENCE IN AMERICAN COMMERCE.

I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT CAN AND SHOULD HELP

INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES WHEN IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY --

BUT MOST OF THE TIME, WE SHOULD STAND BACK AND LET THE

AMERICAN PEOPLE GET ON WITH THE JOB.

JUST AS WE ARE LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A BIGGER
AND BETTER NAVY, SO WE ARE LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A
NEW PROSPERITY IN AMERICA'S THIRD CENTURY. THAT WILL BE
A CENTURY FOR INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT AND SELF-FULFILLMENT.
IN OUR NEXT CENTURY AMERICANS WILL BUILD ON ALL THE GREAT
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR FIRST 200 YEARS.

BUT TO DO THAT, AMERICANS MUST BE SECURE --
IN THEIR HOMES AND ON THEIR STREETS -- IN THEIR JOBS --
AND IN A PEACEFUL WORLD. IT MUST BE A CENTURY OF
SECURITY FOR ALL AMERICANS.

AND THAT IS THE GOAL OF ALL OUR EFFORTS --
IN DEFENSE, IN DIPLOMACY, AND IN ECONOMIC STABILITY.

ALL OUR EFFORTS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, BOTH AT HOME AND
ABROAD, HAVE BEEN LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A PEACEFUL
AND PROSPEROUS THIRD CENTURY FOR THE UNITED STATES.

THERE CAN BE NO BETTER WAY TO HONOR OUR
BICENTENNIAL.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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