

The original documents are located in Box 34, “5/31/76 - Remarks at Ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT MEMORIAL DAY
SERVICES AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MONDAY, MAY 31, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU, MR. SUTPHIN

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (Note: BOB DOLE said he would
be there and asked that you mention him)

SPONSORING VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

GENERAL YERKS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Geo. J. Mitchell

THERE IS NO HIGHER OR MORE SOLEMN PRIVILEGE THAN
TO REPRESENT OUR NATION IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO ITS HONORED DEAD.
~~AND~~ IN THIS OUR 200TH YEAR, THIS DAY AND THIS HALLOWED GROUND
TAKE ON A SPECIAL MEANING.

~~FOR~~, AS WE MARK THIS ANNIVERSARY
OF OUR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, WE MUST REMEMBER
THAT THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATES MORE THAN A SUCCESSFUL
POLITICAL REVOLUTION WHICH FREED AMERICA FROM FOREIGN RULE.

THE FOUNDING OF OUR NATION WAS MORE THAN A

POLITICAL EVENT.

IT WAS AN ACT OF FAITH, A PROMISE TO

AMERICANS AND TO THE ENTIRE WORLD.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE DECLARED THAT

PEOPLE CAN GOVERN THEMSELVES, THAT THEY CAN LIVE IN FREEDOM

WITH EQUAL RIGHTS ~~AND~~ THAT THEY CAN RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF

OTHERS.

IN THE TWO CENTURIES THAT HAVE PASSED SINCE 1776,

MILLIONS UPON MILLIONS OF AMERICANS HAVE WORKED AND

TAKEN UP ARMS WHEN NECESSARY -- TO MAKE THAT DREAM A

REALITY. WE CAN BE PROUD OF WHAT THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.

TODAY, WE ARE THE WORLD'S OLDEST REPUBLIC.

WE ARE AT PEACE.

OUR NATION AND OUR WAY OF LIFE ENDURE.

~~AND~~, WE ARE FREE.

ALL WHO COME TO ARLINGTON THIS MEMORIAL DAY

MUST REFLECT UPON THE SACRIFICE MADE BY THOSE COUNTLESS

BRAVE AMERICANS WHO LIE IN REST ON THESE HILLSIDES AS

BENEATH SILENT MARKERS AT VALLEY FORGE, GETTYSBURG, AND

PEARL HARBOR.

THEIR COURAGE WON A REVOLUTION. THEIR BRAVERY

PRESERVED OUR REPUBLIC. THEIR PERSEVERANCE KEPT THE PEACE

AND ENSURED US A HERITAGE OF FREEDOM. IT IS THROUGH

THEIR SACRIFICE THAT WE HAVE A BICENTENNIAL.

IT IS THROUGH THEIR SACRIFICE THAT WE, THE LIVING,
HAVE INHERITED A SACRED BURDEN — A TRUST — TO HONOR
THE PAST BY WORKING FOR THE FUTURE.

OTHER NATIONS HAVE RISEN TO GREAT HEIGHTS ONLY TO
WEAKEN IN THEIR RESOLVE. WE MUST NOT REPEAT THEIR ERROR.

A NATION BORN OF A FAITH AND CARRIED FORWARD BY
ACTION REQUIRES FROM EACH OF US A COMMITMENT TO ADVANCE
INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY AND TO MAINTAIN OUR GUARD AGAINST THOSE
WHO THREATEN OUR FREEDOM.

ALTHOUGH WE THANK GOD THAT NO AMERICANS ARE
DYING IN BATTLE TODAY, WE MUST RENEW OUR RESOLVE TO USE BOTH
OUR MORAL LEADERSHIP AND OUR MATERIAL STRENGTH TO KEEP THE
PEACE.

OVER A CENTURY AGO, ANOTHER PRESIDENT STOOD
BEFORE AMERICA'S FALLEN AT GETTYSBURG AND SPOKE WORDS THAT
HAVE RUNG THROUGH THE DECADES OF OUR HISTORY. THEY ARE
PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE TODAY:

"... IT IS RATHER FOR US TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THE GREAT
TASK REMAINING BEFORE US -- THAT FROM THESE HONORED DEAD WE
TAKE INCREASED DEVOTION TO THAT CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY GAVE THE
LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION;

THAT WE HERE HIGHLY RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL
NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN;

THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW

BIRTH OF FREEDOM;

AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE,

FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH."

END OF TEXT