The original documents are located in Box 35, “6/22/76 - Remarks at the Annual Convention of U.S. Jaycees, Indianapolis, Indiana” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS AT U. S. JAYCEES
NATIONAL CONVENTION, INDIANAPOLIS,
INDIANA, TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 1976
I am deeply honored to join all of you here this morning and to receive such a kind, generous welcome.
THANK YOU, MR. ROBINSON.  

(Dick Robinson, President, U.S. Jaycees)

GOVERNOR BOWEN

MAYOR HUDNUT

MR. SIMENSEN  

(Alfred Simensen, Exec. Vice President, U.S. Jaycees)

MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE UNITED STATES JAYCEES
I have been looking forward to this visit for a long time because the Jaycees have always made me feel right at home. When I was just beginning a law career in 1941, I became a proud member of the local Jaycee chapter in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
3.

IN ALL THE YEARS THAT HAVE FOLLOWED AS A CONGRESSMAN, AS VICE PRESIDENT, AND NOW AS PRESIDENT I HAVE FOUND THE PHILOSOPHY AND THE SPIRIT OF THE JAYCEES TO BE A GREAT SOURCE OF PERSONAL STRENGTH.

SO IT IS GOOD TO BE AMONG FRIENDS AGAIN.
4.

I am especially pleased that I can salute you

on the eve of our 200th anniversary as a nation.

If there is any single organization -- if there

is any single group of outstanding young Americans --

that has come to reflect the bicentennial spirit, it is the

United States Jaycees.
FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY, THE JAYCEES HAVE BEEN A FERTILE BREEDING GROUND FOR AMERICA'S MOST PROMISING YOUNG LEADERS. THE KIND OF LEADERS WHO MET IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1776 AND PROCLAIMED A NEW AGE OF FREEDOM FOR MANKIND.
6.

FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY, THE JAYCEES HAVE STOOD TALL IN THEIR PATRIOTISM FOR AMERICA -- THE KIND OF PATRIOTISM THAT RODE IN THE SADDLE WITH PAUL REVERE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BOSTON AND INSPIRED PATRICK HENRY DOWN IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG.
AND FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY, THE JAYCEES HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH A ROCKHARD DETERMINATION TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR AMERICA AND THE KIND OF DETERMINATION THAT SAILLED WITH JOHN PAUL JONES WHEN HE WarnED THE ENEMY "I HAVE NOT YET Begun TO FIGHT."
8.

YOUTH, PATRIOTISM, DETERMINATION, A LOVE OF

LIBERTY -- THOSE ARE THE QUALITIES THAT I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND

IN THE JAYCEES AND I HOPE YOU WILL CARRY THEM FORWARD IN THE

YEARS AHEAD.

AFTER ALL, IF YOU DON'T, WHO WILL?
As when I was an active member of this organization,

I remember that I often asked myself what sort of future I

wanted for my family and for my country.

Many of you today must ask yourselves the same

questions. What do we want for ourselves over the next

20 - 30 years? What do we really want for America's third

century as a nation?
10.

Let me respond to those questions for a few moments this morning by suggesting some of my own answers.

From my readings of history, I am persuaded that America's first two centuries can be split roughly in half.
11.

THE HALLMARK OF OUR FIRST CENTURY WAS THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF A FREE, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN OUR LAND.

RISING UP FROM A WEAK, FLEDGLING NATION, OUR PEOPLE

SPRAWLED ACROSS THE CONTINENT. TERRITORIES WERE ACQUIRED,

STATES WERE FORMED. AND WARS WERE FOUGHT, NONE MORE

DEVASTATING THAN THE ONE THAT TURNED AMERICAN AGAINST AMERICAN.
BUT THE UNION SURVIVED THAT TERRIBLE ORDEAL, AND BY 1876 A REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT WAS FIRMLY IMPLANTED IN OUR SOIL.
OUR SECOND CENTURY AS A NATION, I WOULD SUGGEST, HAS BEEN MARKED BY THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A GREAT INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM. THE PIONEER SPIRIT OF THE EARLY DAYS BEGAN TO CONQUER NEW FRONTIERS, SPANNING THE NATION WITH RAILS, TRANSFORMING OUR MANUFACTURING AND MARKETING, RECASTING OUR CITIES WITH CONCRETE AND STEEL, AND REVOLUTIONIZING OUR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SO THAT AT THIS VERY MOMENT AN AMERICAN SPACECRAFT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MAN'S HISTORY IS PREPARING TO LAND ON THE PLANET MARS.
14.

These have been great achievements — The triumph of free government in our first century, the triumph of free enterprise in our second.
WE HAVE MADE ENORMOUS PROGRESS IN SECURING
AND EXPANDING INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS IN THESE PAST TWO HUNDRED
YEARS AND MUCH OF THAT PROGRESS HAS COME IN OUR OWN
LIFETIMES BUT WE HAVE CERTAINLY NOT FINISHED THE JOB.
17.

FULL INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IN AMERICA MUST MEAN FREEDOM FROM WANT. SO LONG AS OUR NATION IS BURDENED WITH HEAVY INFLATION AND HEAVY UNEMPLOYMENT, WE SHALL NOT BE FREE.
OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, DUE IN LARGE MEASURE TO STOP-START ECONOMIC POLICIES IN WASHINGTON, THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY HAS BEEN ON A LONG AND DANGEROUS ROLLER COASTER RIDE -- UP ON YEAR, DOWN THE NEXT.
THE ACCOMPANYING INFLATION HAS NOT ONLY ERODED PERSONAL INCOME BUT HAS EATEN AWAY AT PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS. THE VERY INSTITUTIONS THAT ONCE SERVED TO GIVE US THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.
THE FIRST ORDER TO GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY IS TO PUT THE ECONOMY ON A SMOOTH, UPWARD COURSE AND TO KEEP IT MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION. THE ENORMOUS SURGE IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND GOVERNMENT DEFICITS MUST BE ENDED: INSTEAD OF CEASELESSLY RAISING THE GOVERNMENT'S TAX-COLLECTIONS.
THE ONLY WAY TO HOLD DOWN THE COST OF LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY IS TO HOLD DOWN THE COST OF GOVERNMENT.
IF I MAY BE PERMITTED A WORD ON A SUBJECT THAT IS BEFORE THE CONGRESS AT THIS MOMENT, I WOULD URGE THAT THIS ORGANIZATION JOIN IN THE STRUGGLE TO ENACT RESPONSIBLE NEW TAX LEGISLATION IN THE NEXT TEN DAYS.
ON JULY 1, THE TEMPORARY TAX CUT ENACTED LAST YEAR WILL EXPIRE AND, UNLESS THE CONGRESS ACTS PROMPTLY, TAXES WILL AUTOMATICALLY INCREASE. THE CONGRESS SHOULD NOT ONLY EXTEND THE TAX CUT BUT SHOULD INCREASE IT BY 10 BILLION DOLLARS AND MAKE IT PERMANENT. THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE MORE AND MORE OF YOUR EARNINGS WHEN IT CANNOT JUSTIFY THEIR USE AND ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY WILL DO MORE GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY IN YOUR OWN POCKET.

Let me identify two specific provisions in the additional $10 billion tax reduction I propose to Congress must approve to help your family and our country. The personal exemption must be increased from $7,500 to $10,000. The estate tax exemption must be increased from $600,000 to at least $1,000,000 for small businesses and the family farm can be kept in the family and not subject to the tax collector's clutches.
FULL INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IN AMERICA ALSO MEANS FREEDOM FROM INTRUSIVE, OVERBEARING GOVERNMENT. THIS IS A FAMILIAR THEME IN OUR HISTORY. THOMAS JEFFERSON SOUNDED IT IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ITSELF WHERE HE COMPLAINED THAT HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAD "ERECTED A MULTITUDE OF NEW OFFICES AND SENT SWARMS OF OFFICERS TO HARASS OUR PEOPLE."
TODAY WE SEE THE INTRUSION OF OUR OWN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN MANY FORMS — SOME OLD, SOME NEW. WE SEE IT IN THE MANY REGULATORY AGENCIES THAT HAVE SPROUTED UP ALONG THE POTOMAC AND HAVE IMPOSED A MASSIVE REGULATORY BURDEN UPON AMERICAN BUSINESS.
WE SEE IT IN THE WAY THAT SOME OF OUR OTHER DEPARTMENTS IN WASHINGTON, UNDER REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY THE CONGRESS, HAVE TAKEN OVER MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT WERE ONCE LEFT TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.
WE SEE IT IN THE PAST RECORDS OF SOME GOVERNMENT AGENCIES THAT EXCEEDED THEIR AUTHORITIES AND SPIED UPON OR OTHERWISE VIOLATED THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS.
AND WE SEE IT IN THE WAY THAT A FEW OF OUR COURTS HAVE WANDERED SO FAR INTO THE SCHOOL BUSING CONTROVERSY THAT THEY ARE PRACTICALLY RUNNING SOME LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS.

THE TIME HAS COME TO ROLL BACK THE WAVE OF BIG GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA.

A boot big enough to give us everything we want is a great big enough to take from us everything we have.
WE MUST BRING ORDER AND RESTRAINT TO THE FEDERAL

REGULATORY PROCESS THROUGH SWEEPING REFORMS

IN AIRLINE TRANSPORTATION, IN TRUCKING, AND IN MANY OTHER AREAS.
IN ORDER TO RESTORE GREATER POWERS TO LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS TO PUT DECISIONS BACK WHERE THEY BELONG --

WE MUST RE-ENACT GENERAL REVENUE SHARING AND COLLAPSE COMPLICATED EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROGRAMS INTO NEW BLOCK GRANTS.
31.
SO THAT THE RIGHTS OF OUR CITIZENS MAY BE PROTECTED

WHILE THE ESSENTIAL INTELLIGENCE FUNCTIONS OF OUR GOVERNMENT CONTINUE, WE ARE UNDERTAKING REFORMS IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND WE ARE PUTTING INTO PLACE NEW GUIDELINES FOR THE FBI.
IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I PLAN TO ANNOUNCE ACTION

IN STILL ANOTHER IMPORTANT AREA -- COURT-ORDERED SCHOOL BUSING.

THERE IS NO GOOD REASON WHY WE CANNOT WIPE OUT THE VESTIGES
OF DISCRIMINATION IN AMERICA, ACHIEVE QUALITY EDUCATION
FOR OUR CHILDREN, AND AT THE SAME TIME, MINIMIZE THE
MASSIVE BUSING OF OUR CHILDREN.
UNDERLYING ACTIONS IN EACH OF THESE AREAS IS OUR FERVENT BELIEF THAT INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY IN AMERICA MEANS LIBERTY FROM OPPRESSIVE, HEAVY-HANDED, BUREAUCRATIC GOVERNMENT. THAT IS A GOAL WE CAN ACHIEVE; THAT IS A GOAL WE MUST ACHIEVE IN OUR THIRD CENTURY.
I firmly believe Americans can do anything, if other Americans do not tie us down with red tape, tie us up with pessimism, or tie us into a knot of frustration and stagnation.
LET ME RE-EMPHASIZE THAT MY VISION OF THE FUTURE MEANS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL OF OUR CITIZENS. THE PRINCIPLE OF RACIAL EQUALITY IS INDELIBLY WRITTEN INTO OUR CONSTITUTION AND INTO OUR HEARTS, AND IN ALL THAT WE DO, WE MUST HONOR IT.
EARLIER IN THIS CENTURY, THE NOVELIST THOMAS WOLFE SPOKE ABOUT AMERICA IN A WAY THAT IS WORTH REMEMBERING.

HERE: "TO EVERY MAN HIS CHANCE, TO EVERY MAN REGARDLESS OF HIS BIRTH, HIS SHINING, GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY, TO EVERY MAN THE RIGHT TO LIVE, TO WORK, TO BE HIMSELF AND TO BECOME WHATEVER THINGS HIS MANHOOD AND HIS VISION CAN COMBINE TO MAKE HIM."

"THIS, HE SAID, "IS THE PROMISE OF AMERICA."
THAT IS THE PROMISE WE SEEK TO FULFILL IN THE NEXT ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

WE MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE, AS GEORGE WASHINGTON DID IN HIS FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, THAT NO NATION ON EARTH OWES MORE TO PROVIDENCE THAN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
OUR GREATNESS IS BECAUSE OF OUR GOODNESS.

SHOULD WE CEASE TO BE GOOD, WE WOULD SOON CEASE TO BE GREAT. AMERICANS HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH ABUSE OF THE MORAL IMPERATIVES OF HONESTY AND OF DECENCY, THE FOUNDATIONS OF CIVILIZED SOCIETY.
AMERICANS, especially our young people, can take little pride in a system that is dishonored by misconduct, whether in the White House -- or in the Houses of Congress.
THE ESSENTIAL TASK OF LEADERSHIP, IN BUSINESS, IN EDUCATION, IN FAMILY LIFE AND IN PUBLIC LIFE, IS TO INSPIRE, TO TEACH, TO ACT WITH COURAGE, TO LIVE WITH HONOR, AND TO SHOW THE WAY. PERSONAL INTEGRITY MUST NOT BE A PART OF NOSTALGIA. IT MUST BE THE LIVING AND LIVED-BY ESSENCE OF THE AMERICAN CHARACTER.
THERE ARE MANY FREEDOMS THAT WE MUST SECURE

AND EXPAND IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT LET ME MENTION ONLY

ONE OTHER -- FREEDOM FROM WAR.
ON THREE OCCASIONS SINCE THE JAYCEES WERE FOUNDED, AMERICA HAS SENT HER FINEST SONS TO BATTLEFIELDS IN FARAWAY LANDS. PROBABLY MANY OF YOU HERE TODAY SAW ACTION IN VIETNAM AND DISCOVERED THE HORRORS OF WAR.
IF YOU DID, YOU ALSO KNOW THAT THE FIRST AND

FOREMOST OBJECTIVE OF EVERY PRESIDENT IS TO PRESERVE AND

PROTECT THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES. TODAY THAT

SECURITY IS AMply PROTECTED. OUR ARMAMENTS ARE

UNsurpassed. OUR ALLIANCES WITH EUROPE AND JAPAN

HAVE NEVER BEEN HEALTHIER. OUR WILL IS STRONG.
YET LET US ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT WE LIVE IN A WORLD THAT IS INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO FREEDOM. ONLY ONE NATION IN SIX IN THE WORLD TODAY IS FREE AND DEMOCRATIC. THERE ARE MANY NATIONS THAT OPPOSE OUR INTERESTS.
THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIPLOMACY,

WE ARE SEEKING TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF TENSIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. WE SHARE WITH THEM AN INTEREST IN PREVENTING NUCLEAR INCINERATION. BUT WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT THEY HAVE CHANGED THEIR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES OR THEIR ESSENTIAL WORLD OUTLOOK.
IT IS THEREFORE INCUMBENT UPON US TO MAINTAIN

**Military strength is the best insurance for peace.**

A STRONG, BALANCED MILITARY POSTURE. ONE OF MY GREATEST

FRUSTRATIONS AS A CONGRESSMAN WAS TO JOIN WITH THE OCCUPANT

OF THE WHITE HOUSE — DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN — IN THE FIGHT

FOR LARGE DEFENSE BUDGETS AND THEN TO SEE THOSE BUDGETS

UNmercifully cut by a CONGRESSIONAL MAJORITY ON THE OTHER

SIDE.
IN JUST THE PAST TEN YEARS, THE CONGRESS HAS CUT SOME FIFTY BILLION DOLLARS FROM THE DEFENSE BUDGET—OFTEN TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW SOCIAL PROGRAMS OF QUESTIONABLE MERIT.

THIS YEAR, I AM PLEASED TO REPORT, WE ARE FINALLY REVERSING THAT TREND AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG, LONG WHILE, THE CONGRESS SEEMS READY TO AGREE TO AN URGENTLY NEEDED INCREASE IN OUR DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT.
ONCE AGAIN, I ASK FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE JAYCEES ON A CRITICAL ISSUE BEFORE THE CONGRESS. THIS COUNTRY SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD ANYTHING LESS THAN THE VERY BEST FOR THE ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE AND MARINES.

Can I count on your support?
49.

America covets no one else's land. We seek no one else's treasures. Indeed, we have given generously of our own when others needed help. But we must also never shirk from the responsibility of protecting our own interests and our own security.
IF THE PROMISE OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IS TO BE

ACHIEVED IN THE COMING CENTURY, IT WILL TAKE A FULL-HEARTED

EFFORT BY ALL AMERICANS.
I know that as Jaycees, you are devoted to humanity as the best work of love. You are neither weak nor timid in your devotion to America. You believe that citizens must be actively involved in the affairs of state and nation.
WE HAVE AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA TODAY.

WE STAND AT THE THRESHOLD OF OUR THIRD CENTURY. WE CAN EITHER

LET THIS TIME SLIP BY WITH NO CLEAR VISION OF WHAT WE WISH TO

ACHIEVE AS A PEOPLE. OR WE CAN SEIZE THIS MOMENT BY RESOLVING

TO FULFILL THE GREAT PROMISE OF AMERICA TO ACHIEVE FULL

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM FOR ALL AMERICANS.
A YEAR AGO, THERE WAS A SPECIAL CEREMONY IN BOSTON AT THE OLD NORTH CHURCH. ... YOU MAY RECALL THAT WAS THE CHURCH WHERE TWO LANTERNS WERE HUNG ON THE NIGHT OF PAUL REVERE'S FAMOUS RIDE.
LAST APRIL THEY HUNG A THIRD LANTERN IN THE OLD NORTH CHURCH, AND AS THEY DID, THE RECTOR SPOKE BRIEFLY ABOUT IT.
"THE TWO LANTERNS WHICH WERE SHOWN FROM THIS STEEPLE," HE SAID, "LED US TO TWO CENTURIES OF SOME PROGRESS IN REASON, IN LIBERTY AND IN FAITH -- BUT NOT ENOUGH; TO SOME FULFILLMENT IN MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT, BUT NOT ENOUGH; TO SOME GAINS IN THINKING, ACTING AND TRUSTING IN FREEDOM -- BUT NOT ENOUGH."
"NOW THE STEEPLE OF THE OLD NORTH CHURCH WILL SHINE WITH A THIRD LANTERN TONIGHT, A NEW SIGNAL THAT WILL CALL US TO RENEWED EFFORT AND RENEWED HOPE IN OUR THIRD CENTURY."
"IT WILL SAY: WE WILL YET MAKE THE AMERICAN PROMISE A REALITY. WE WILL YET MAKE IT THE TRUTH EVERYDAY, EVERYWHERE FOR EVERYONE. WE WILL GO FORWARD AND WE WILL STUMBLE, BUT WE WILL TRY AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN."
MY FELLOW JAYCEES, IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR,

LET US CARRY THAT MESSAGE TO EVERY COMMUNITY ACROSS THE LAND. LET US, THROUGH OUR OWN ACTIONS, BECOME A BEACON OF HOPE AND OF PROMISE. AND LET US, WORKING TOGETHER,

LIGHT THE PATH TO A NEW CENTURY OF FREEDOM FOR ALL AMERICANS.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

END OF TEXT