The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/1/76 - Remarks at the 98th General Conference of the National Guard Association of the U.S. of the Washington Hilton Hotel” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Susan -

Can only assume that these are remarks for the National Guard Association 9/1/76 -- in that folder.

Trudy
THANK YOU, GENERAL CORNING

JIM LYNN

DISTINGUISHED PLATFORM GUESTS

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION
I am honored to be in the company of the United States National Guard who follow in the great tradition of the citizen-soldiers who responded to the call for freedom two hundred years ago.

As Commander in Chief, I am proud to have every one of you on America's national security team.
I can report to you today that this team has never been stronger nor better prepared to meet any challenge to this nation's safety and freedom. We will intend to keep it that way.

Clear and painful lessons of history have taught Americans to demand nothing less.
AMERICA IS A NATION THAT CHERISHES PEACE.

BUT WE HAVE LEARNED IN THIS CENTURY THAT THE BEST INSURANCE OF PEACE IS A MILITARY CAPACITY THAT COMMANDS RESPECT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.
WHEN I TOOK OFFICE AS PRESIDENT, DEFENSE EXPENDITURES CLAIMED A SMALLER PERCENTAGE OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE PEARL HARBOR.

A DECADE OF CONGRESSES HAD CHOPPED AWAY AT AMERICA'S DEFENSE BUDGETS CUTTING MORE THAN 50 BILLION DOLLARS FROM DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS IN THE LAST TEN YEARS.
I knew that dangerous trend had to be reversed, and I reversed it.

Cutting the muscle out of America's defenses is not the best way to ensure peace. It is the best way to destroy it.
THE WORLD IS STILL A DANGEROUS PLACE. WE CANNOT LAY DOWN OUR ARMS IN THE SIMPLE HOPE THAT OTHERS WILL FOLLOW OUR LEAD. WE CANNOT RETREAT FROM THE FRONT LINES OF FREEDOM IF WE ARE TO PRESERVE OUR FREEDOM HERE AT HOME.

THERE ARE THOSE IN THIS POLITICAL YEAR WHO WANT TO WITHDRAW OUR TROOPS FROM THEIR POSITIONS OVERSEAS.
THE VOICES OF RETREAT TALK ABOUT A PHASED WITHDRAWAL.

THEY TALK AS IF OUR DEFENSES WON'T BE WEAKENED IF WE ONLY DISMANTLE THEM ONE BRICK AT A TIME.

THEY ARE WRONG.

PREPAREDNESS PRESERVES PEACE — WEAKNESS INVITES WAR.
OUR "TOTAL FORCE" DEFENSE POLICY, IN WHICH THE NATIONAL GUARD PLAYS A CRUCIAL PART, IS VITAL TO THIS PREPAREDNESS.

OUR ACTIVE ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMED FORCES ARE NO BIGGER THAN THEY HAVE TO BE, BECAUSE OF THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR CAPABLE RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD FORCES.

2,500,000 of us serve you. You and your 10,000,000 comrades at home.
MY POLICY IN THIS AREA IS CLEAR. SINCE WE ARE GIVING THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD EVER GREATER RESPONSIBILITY -- WE HAVE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST TRAINING AND COMBAT READY EQUIPMENT AS WELL.

And, we will.
WE CAN NEVER AGAIN AFFORD TO TREAT OUR NATIONAL GUARD AS THE POOR RELATIONS OF OUR REGULAR FORCES. HAND-ME-DOWN WEAPONS ARE NOT ENOUGH FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD.

MY ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE EVERY EFFORT TO UPGRADE YOUR EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING. OUR GUARD FORCES ARE BEING EQUIPPED AND TRAINED TO FIGHT ON THE FIRST TEAM AGAINST ANY POTENTIAL ENEMY.
YOU ARE NOW BEING ASSIGNED SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST MODERN COMBAT EQUIPMENT. IN THE FUTURE, I WILL RECOMMEND THAT YOU GET EVEN MORE OF THE BEST.

EVERY MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS MADE A COMMITMENT TO OUR COUNTRY. IT IS SUMMED UP IN THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION MOTTO: WE SERVE.
YOU MADE THAT COMMITMENT BECAUSE YOU KNOW THERE COMES A POINT WHEN YOU HAVE TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS.

THERE COMES A POINT WHEN YOU HAVE TO TAKE A STAND.

I REAFFIRM MY PROMISE TO FACE UP TO THOSE SAME TOUGH DECISIONS TO TAKE A STAND FOR THE COUNTRY WE LOVE, FOR THE FREEDOM WE CHERISH, FOR PEACE AMONG NATIONS.
LIKE ALL OF YOU, I CHERISH THE PEACE THAT AMERICA ENJOYS IN 1976. THE PEACE THAT FINDS NO AMERICANS IN COMBAT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD TODAY.

WE POSsess AND WE MUST MAINTAIN THE DIPLOMATIC SKILL AND THE MILITARY MIGHT WHICH CAN KEEP THE PEACE AND PROTECT OUR NATIONAL SECURITY.
I will not lead the American people down the road to
needless danger or senseless destruction.

We will march ahead on the path of peace through
strength, and give freedom a new dimension in the
United States of America.

Thank you very much.

END OF TEXT
Let me thank all of you for this gift, and for the thoughtfulness and imagination behind it.

I notice that on the football carving, you have me standing on the ten-yard line. I'm assuming that's the opponent's ten-yard line, and not Michigan's. In fact, I'm assuming it's Georgia's.

The sailor here is the fellow who, as the assistant navigator on the U. S. S. Monterey, won World War II singlehandedly.

And this distinguished looking fellow over here looks like a man getting ready for a debate. In fact, it looks like he's already won it.

I value this gift in a very personal way, and I can assure you that the next time you see it, it will be in the Oval Office. Thank you very much.