The original documents are located in Box 40, “10/21/76 - Remarks at the Annual Alfred E. Smith Memorial Award Dinner at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, N.Y.C.” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT AL SMITH DINNER
NEW YORK CITY
OCTOBER 21, 1976
Thank you, Your Eminence, for your warm welcome and kind introduction.

Members of the Smith family
Governor Carey
Senator Javits
Senator Buckley
Mayor Beame
Mr. Silver/Dr. Rusk
Distinguished officials and guests
Ladies and gentlemen
LET ME SAY FIRST HOW BUSY IT KEEPS ME RUNNING A COUNTRY AND A CAMPAIGN AT THE SAME TIME. WE SEEM TO GO FROM PLACE TO PLACE WITHOUT PAUSING.
SOMETIMES IT GETS CONFUSING BUT IT IS ALWAYS NICE TO COME BACK HERE, TO PHILADELPHIA. (pause)

THANK YOU AND GOODNIGHT.

OH NO, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET OFF THAT EASY.

IF WE DON'T GET GOOD RATINGS ON THE DEBATE THIS MIGHT BE THE BIGGEST CROWD I GET ALL WEEK.
YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE FIRST SPEECHES I MADE,

WHEN I BECAME VICE PRESIDENT DESIGNATE IN OCTOBER, 1973,

WAS HERE AT THE ALFRED E. SMITH MEMORIAL DINNER.
I got out a copy and read it over. It was very short.

I had in mind Al Smith's famous political maxim:

"Don't speak until you have something to say."

He also had a favorite line with a surprisingly modern ring:

"Never promise anything you are not perfectly sure you can deliver."
IT IS NO WONDER THAT SO MANY POLITICIANS OF BOTH PARTIES COME TOGETHER HERE EVERY YEAR TO PAY TRIBUTE TO GOVERNOR AL SMITH'S MEMORY.
BUT THE DINNER ALSO GIVES OPPOSING CANDIDATES A
CHANCE TO MEET IN GOOD FELLOWSHIP FOR A BRIEF RESPITE
FROM THE ARDORS OF THEIR CAMPAIGNS -- AND I SINCERELY REGRET
THAT GOVERNOR CARTER IS NOT YET HERE.
I guess he will be sitting up on the dais when he gets here. It's easy to know where he sits. It's sometimes hard to know where he stands.
We're coming into the home stretch in this campaign, and tomorrow night is our last debate -- only this one is going to be a little different from the others. Governor Carter is going to answer his questions and I'm going to question my answers.
I DO HAVE A MESSAGE FOR GOVERNOR CARTER,

HOWEVER, IT'S ABOUT SOME NEW SECURITY MEASURES WE'VE TAKEN. WE JUST INSTALLED A SPECIAL LOCK ON THE FRONT DOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE. IT'S JIMMY-PROOF.
I JUST THREW THAT IN.

I THINK I SHOULD HAVE THROWN IT OUT.
I wish I had time to mention all the distinguished Americans who are here. Looking around this head table, I'm not sure whether it's October at the Waldorf or Thanksgiving at Hugh Carey's.
LET ME SAY JUST A WORD ABOUT YOUR EXCITING SENATORIAL RACE HERE IN NEW YORK.
BEFORE THE PROGRAM, I ASKED CARDINAL COOKE WHAT SIGNIFICANCE HE WOULD ATTACH TO THE FACT THAT THIS YEAR JIM BUCKLEY AND PAT MOYNIHAN, TWO GOOD IRISH CATHOLICS, ARE RUNNING FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE.
HE SAID IT MEANT ONLY ONE THING:

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

TONIGHT, RATHER THAN TALKING ABOUT WHAT DIVIDES US, I WOULD RATHER FOCUS ON WHAT UNITES US.
A deep belief in the Almighty, a deep belief in the dignity of human life, a deep belief in the moral imperative of American leadership.
EARLIER THIS WEEK, CARDINAL COOKE DEDICATED A CHURCH IN STATEN ISLAND WHICH HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY FIRE ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO. THE PEOPLE OF THAT CHURCH HAD RALLIED AND WORKED TOGETHER TO RESTORE WHAT THEY HAD ORIGINALLY CREATED AND BELIEVED IN.
Similarly, in the last two years, the American people have rallied. We have restored our belief in ourselves and our system of government.
DURING OUR GREAT BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION THIS PAST JULY WE FELT THAT RENEWED SPIRIT. THE SIGHT OF THOSE TALL SHIPS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD MADE EVERY AMERICAN STAND A LITTLE TALLER.
IT IS ONE THING TO CITE THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE IN AMERICA, TO LIST OUR COMPLAINTS AND TO NOTE THE FRUSTRATION OVER THINGS THAT DON'T WORK AND THE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH GOVERNMENT THAT HAS GROWN SO WIDESPREAD.
BUT WE SHOULD DO MORE. OUR POLITICS OUGHT TO MEAN MORE THAN NOTING A NEGATIVE MOOD IN AMERICA AND BECOMING ITS CHAMPION.
Our politics ought to be able to capture the hope that is there in America too, and find out how to nourish it in specific ways. There is more to America than individuals and their government.
THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS IN-BETWEEN /

WHICH CAN BRIDGE THE GULF BETWEEN THE PERSON

AND THE HUGE IMPERSONAL INSTITUTIONS OF MODERN LIFE.
THESE SAME INSTITUTIONS CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE BEYOND THE POWER OF MEN AND WOMEN TO MEET AS INDIVIDUALS, AND BEYOND THE POWER OF GOVERNMENT TO EVEN UNDERSTAND.

THEY ARE THE COMMUNITIES WHICH A FREE PEOPLE FREELY FORM THE COMMUNITIES OF FAMILY, OF NEIGHBORHOOD, OF FRIENDS, THE COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AND OF CHARITY.
THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN TRADITION FROM WHICH THIS COUNTRY EMERGED, ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE IN NEED, ESPECIALLY THE STRANGER, THE NEWCOMER. THOSE OF US WHO ARE CALLED UPON TO SERVE A PEOPLE BORN INTO THAT TRADITION DO WELL TO RECOGNIZE THE ABUNDANCE OF GOODWILL AND NEIGHBORLINESS THAT CHARACTERIZES SUCH A PEOPLE.
IF WE ASK EVERYTHING OF A GOVERNMENT AS POWERFUL AS GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA IS TODAY, WE MAY SOON END UP LOOKING TO GOVERNMENT TO SET THE STANDARDS FOR COMPASSION AND CARE.
AND WE MAY SOON FORGET THAT THE HIGHEST STANDARDS WERE ALREADY SET FOR US NOT ON CAPITOL HILL BUT LONG AGO, ON TWO LOFTIER PEAKS — MT. SINAI AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.
SO IT HAS BEEN A GREAT HONOR, YOUR EMINENCE, TO TAKE PART IN THIS EVENING'S DEMONSTRATION OF HOW GOOD AND HOW GREAT IS THE HEART OF THIS GREAT CITY, AND HOW STRONG ARE THE BONDS OF COMPASSION AND CONCERN THAT UNITE US AS AMERICANS.
BETORE I GO, I NOTE THAT AMONG THOSE ABSENT TONIGHT

IS ONE DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN WHO HAS BROUGHT HIS INFECTIOUS GOOD

HUMOR TO MANY GATHERINGS LIKE THIS, ONE WE CAN JUSTLY CALL THE

RIGHTFUL HEIR IN OUR TIME OF AL SMITH'S NICKNAME

"THE HAPPY WARRIOR."
MY GOOD FRIEND HUBERT HUMPHREY IS FIGHTING ANOTHER BATTLE TONIGHT IN SLOANE-KETTERING HOSPITAL.

HE SHOULD KNOW THAT HE HAS OUR HEARTFELT PRAYERS FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING HIM WITH US AGAIN NEXT YEAR.
AND THAT VOTE AMONG US ALL, HUBERT, IS UNANIMOUS.

MANY YEARS AGO, I SHARED A BANQUET PODIUM LIKE THIS WITH THEN VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY.
WHAT I SAID THEN I SAY AGAIN TO YOU, TO ALL MY SUPPORTERS, TO ALL GOVERNOR CARTER'S SUPPORTERS AND TO GOVERNOR CARTER HIMSELF AS WE HEAD INTO THE FINAL DAYS OF THIS CAMPAIGN:
"THE THINGS THAT UNITE US AS AMERICANS ARE FAR MORE ENDURING THAN THE THINGS THAT DIVIDE US ... LET'S ALL REMEMBER THAT BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS ARE STRIVING TOGETHER TO CREATE A MORE PERFECT UNION, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL."
"Our unwritten compact of respect for the convictions of others and faith in the decency of others, allows Americans the luxury of rugged political competition."
LET'S ALL WORK TO BANISH WAR FROM OUR SHRINKING WORLD AND HATE FROM OUR EXPANDING HEARTS -- TO MAKE THIS WHOLE PLANET AS FULL OF FRIENDSHIP AND FELICITY AS THIS ROOM TONIGHT."

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.