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6:00 P. M. (EST)

DECEMBER 31, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

We stand tonight at an important threshold.

Within the next few hours, we will usher in not only a New Year, not only the final quarter of the 20th century, but a fresh, new chapter in American history: our third century as a nation.

Behind us lie 200 years of toil and struggle, 200 years of accomplishment and triumph. We remain, in Lincoln's words, "the last, best hope of earth."

But what lies ahead?

Shall we let the coming year slip into the record books virtually unnoticed and undistinguished except for the fanfare of a gigantic birthday party?

Or shall we make 1976 and the years that follow something very special-- a time that sparks a renaissance of the American spirit, a time when the greatness of our past illuminates a new path into the future, a time that inaugurates a new century of liberty and hope?

That is the central question we face tonight.

Let each of us in the days ahead consider what answer we shall give in our own personal lives.

Let us remember the heritage of our forefathers and ask what we shall leave to the generations to come.

And then let us resolve that 1976 shall be the year when the American people united once again to remain "the ark that bears the liberties of the world."

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