

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 27, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Bossier City, Louisiana)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD MILITARY BALL

THE SHREVEPORT CONVENTION HALL

9:13 P.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much Joe and John Breaux and all of you wonderful members of the Louisiana National Guard and your lovely wives:

I have had a just tremendous day here in Shreveport. The experience out at Barksdale, the various functions that I have had the privilege and honor to attend, the wonderful people that I have had the opportunity to meet, shake hands with, talk with, listen to, this has been a tremendous day, and I want to thank all of you here but also thank all of the people in this area through you.

So, it is just nice to be here, and the next time I am going to bring Betty down. I thank you on behalf of Betty, but you know, I get self-conscious when I get those (Laughter) wonderful applauses for her. I bask in her glory, which is great, but I know she would love being here and the next time I come down, we will come down together and enjoy your hospitality, your friendship and the warm welcome that you have given her, as I am sure you will do for us when we make it the next time.

As I was coming here, shaking hands with many of you, it brought back some wonderful memories of my experiences back in my home town of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is roughly the size of Shreveport, about 190,000 or 200,000.

I have to let you in on a little secret. I was a Navy man, but they used to invite me to the National Guard, they used to invite me to their annual dances or their festivities such as you are having here.

I learned firsthand, as I am sure Joe and John have learned, that this country depends very significantly on the contributions that the National Guard has made and is making and will make to our national security.

MORE

I know from talking to many of my older friends around home that the National Guard moved in in World War I and did the job that was required, the job that was needed. I know that the National Guard from home went down to New Guinea and fought there early in the war and did a superb job.

I know the National Guard moved in and took care of the situation, in many respects, at the time of Korea. The National Guard has always been ready to do its duty, in peacetime or in wartime.

I also know that the people who one normally meets in the National Guard are the kind of fine citizens, whether they are professional people, whether they are labor or management, whether they are in one part of our society or another, they are leaders and this is what has made the Guard and all of its organizations around the country so important in our society.

This country is counting on you. This country is dependent on you. I see a few infiltrators like myself -- a Navy man -- here tonight. (Laughter) But you know we are all part of a family and a family sticks together and does the job and that is what we, in America, really are -- 215 million Americans who have a devotion to our precious freedom, a dedication to our free enterprise system, a love for the kind of Government that we have that has given so much to so many over a period of 200 years.

In the first century of our Nation's history, our forefathers built a kind of Government that by any standards is the finest in the history of mankind. In the second century of our Nation's history, we developed the greatest industrial capacity of all time.

Now we are moving into our third century. We have the Government that can and will do the job. We have the capacity to provide the material well-being for all of us, but now, in the third century, I like to think of this next hundred years as a time when we can really give to individuals the kind of liberty, the kind of opportunity.

We have had too much mass Government, too much mass business, mass labor, mass industry, mass education. The next century, this one that is on our doorstep now, ought to be the century of the individual, and I can't imagine 215 million individuals like we have in this country -- we will take them all on.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 9:19 P.M. CDT)