

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
 TO BE DELIVERED AT MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES
 ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY.

There is no higher or more solemn privilege than to represent our Nation in paying tribute to its honored dead. And in this our 200th year, this day and this hallowed ground take on a special meaning. For, as we mark this anniversary of our national independence, we must remember that the Bicentennial celebrates more than a successful political revolution which freed America from foreign rule.

The founding of our Nation was more than a political event. It was an act of faith, a promise to Americans and to the entire world. The Declaration of Independence declared that people can govern themselves, that they can live in freedom with equal rights and that they can respect the rights of others.

In the two centuries that have passed since 1776, millions upon millions of Americans have worked--and taken up arms when necessary--to make that dream a reality. We can be proud of what they have accomplished. Today, we are the world's oldest Republic. We are at peace. Our Nation and our way of life endure. And, we are free.

No man or woman who comes to Arlington on this Memorial Day can help but reflect upon the sacrifice made by the countless brave Americans who lie in rest on these hillsides as beneath silent markers at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, and Pearl Harbor.

Their courage won a revolution. Their bravery preserved our Republic. Their perseverance kept the peace and ensured us a heritage of freedom. It is through their sacrifice that we have a Bicentennial. It is through their sacrifice that we, the living, have inherited a sacred burden--a trust--to honor the past by working for the future.

Other nations have risen to great heights only to weaken in their resolve. We must not repeat their error. A nation born of a faith and carried forward by action requires from each of us a commitment to advance individual liberty and to maintain our guard against those who threaten our freedom. Although we thank God that no Americans are dying in battle today, we must renew our resolve to use both our moral leadership and our material strength to keep the peace.

Over a century ago, another President stood before America's fallen at Gettysburg and spoke words that have rung through the decades of our history. They are particularly appropriate today:

" . . . It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. "

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