

The original documents are located in Box 17, folder “Speeches Often Requested (5)” of the Robert T. Hartmann Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 15, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Norfolk, Virginia)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
1976 SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

SCOPE CONVENTION CENTER

3:08 P.M. EDT

Dr. Weber, Congressman Downing, Congressman Daniel, Mayor Hill, members of the Executive Committee, ladies and gentlemen:

It is truly a great honor for me to be the first President of the United States to address this Southern Baptist Convention. I recall with great interest the last time I was introduced at an event sponsored by the Southern Baptists. It was a Brotherhood Commission prayer breakfast in Dallas almost exactly two years ago when I was Vice President. The man introducing me was very considerate, very generous in his remarks and very friendly. I was introduced as a man with an open mind and a compassionate heart, and today I would like to return that compliment to the gentleman who introduced me then -- Governor Jimmy Carter.

The honor you have paid me with the invitation to speak at this convention is very special to me in a very personal way. Although our religious denominations are different, I have long admired the missionary spirit of Baptists and the fact that you strive to keep the Bible at the center of your lives. I also respect and appreciate your commitment to health care and educational advancement of your fellow citizens, as exemplified by the many hospitals, universities and seminaries supported by Baptist churches.

My oldest son, Mike, who is now a divinity student at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Massachusetts, was graduated from the Baptist-affiliated Wake Forest University, and it was my pleasure four years ago to be the speaker at his graduation ceremony.

We meet today in a year of historic importance and national celebration -- the Bicentennial year of American independence. Even as your denomination has grown from fewer than 500 people in America at the beginning of the 18th Century to almost 13 million today, Baptists have played a very fundamental part in the birth and growth of America.

MORE

(OVER)

An early champion of religious freedom -- which the great Baptist Minister George Truett once called "the supreme contribution of the New World to the Old" -- was Roger Williams, founder of Providence, forerunner of Jefferson and giant among Baptists. The principle of democracy itself was rooted deeply in the Baptist Church long before there was a United States of America. Thomas Jefferson so admired the Baptist form of church government that he called it the purest democracy in the world.

Abraham Lincoln's mother, a devout Baptist, was perhaps the most important and enduring influence in the memorable life of her son, implanting in him a deep faith in God and always encouraging him to be somebody. History gives us many, many more examples of profound Baptist influence on American life, a tradition still being enriched today.

Billy Graham came from your ranks to become one of today's most influential Christian evangelists and one of the most admired men of our times. Brooks Hays -- twice the President of this convention, a former colleague of mine in the House of Representatives and a very dear friend, has stood through his distinguished career as a man of courage and a man of conviction, a man of towering moral strength, a man who sets a good example for all of us in public or private life.

These rich contributions of religious liberty, democratic principles, social equality, evangelistic fervor and moral strength have reserved for your people an honored place in American society. You have always jealously guarded the separation of church and State but you have always believed that private morality and public service can and must go hand in hand.

The essential task of leadership in our modern age as in ages past is to inspire, to teach, to act with courage, to live with honor and to show the way.

The minister in the pulpit, the teacher in the classroom, the foreman on the dock, the executive in the boardroom, the commanders of armies and navies, the parents of children all share the burden and the satisfaction of leadership fully as much as those who serve in government.

What is required of us all if we are to lead successfully, as a long moral foundation. We cannot stand very long on the shifting sands of "situation ethics." History proves that power and prestige are slippery peaks from which the mighty have often fallen into disgrace. Jesus said, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

MORE

We stand in danger today of losing the soul of America to the seductions of material gain and moral apathy, to a new code of conduct which revives the basic truths and mocks the basic beliefs on which this Nation and much of religion were founded.

Forgiving hearts and tolerant attitudes are among the greatest lessons of Christian teaching, but at some point we must take a stand and say this is right, this is wrong -- there is a difference.

In this Bicentennial year we celebrate our independence from a foreign power, but we reaffirm our dependence upon a higher power. We recognize, just as George Washington did in his first inaugural address, that no nation on earth can owe more to providence than the United States of America. Our greatness is because of our goodness. Should we cease to be good, we would soon cease to be great.

Public officials have a special responsibility to set a good example for others to follow, in both their private and public conduct. The American people, particularly our young people, cannot be expected to take pride or even to participate in a system of Government that is defiled and dishonored, whether in the White House or in the halls of Congress.

Jesus said, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." Personal integrity is not too much to ask of public servants. We should accept nothing less.

The American people have seen too much abuse of the moral imperatives of honesty and of decency upon which religion in Government and civilized society must rest. To remedy these abuses we must look not only to the Government but, more importantly, to the Bible, the church, the human heart. We must look to the family for the instruction in righteousness and for the stabilizing influence so important in a complex, confusing and ever-changing world. We must look to the faith of our fathers. The laws of God were of very special importance to our Founding Fathers and to the Nation they created.

The early history of our country was written by men who valued the freedom of religion and had in common a deep faith in God. I believe it is no accident of history, no coincidence that this Nation, which declared its dependence on God even while declaring its independence from foreign domination, has become the most richly blessed Nation in the history of mankind and the world. For it is as true today as it was in the Old Testament times that "blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." I believe that very deeply and so do you.

MORE

In my own life and throughout my career in public service, I have found in the passages of the Bible a steady compass and a source of great strength and peace. As each of my predecessors in the Presidency has done, I asked for God's guidance as I undertook the duties of this office. I have asked for that guidance many times since. Just as Roger Williams and his followers found refuge in Providence, more and more Americans today are turning for refuge to the safe harbor of religious faith -- a fact born out by your own rapidly increasing membership roll.

This rekindling of religious conviction, this new appreciation for Biblical teaching we see in America today is an encouraging development as we move into our third century as a Nation. It means that we will resolve to make our society not only prosperous but noble, not only progressive but constructive. We may come to know peace not as the mere absence of war but as a climate in which understanding can grow and human dignity can flourish.

While we are far from attaining heaven on earth, we can make this earth a better place to live. That must be our constant goal, whether we labor in Government or in the kingdom of God.

The Southern Baptist Convention has sought throughout most of its history to overcome the enemies of the world -- ignorance, disease, poverty, tyranny, injustice, greed and war itself -- even while setting your sights on the gates of heaven.

As America enters its third century still battling these enemies, still reaching for life on a higher plane, we could ask no better inspiration than these words of a favorite passage of mine from the Book of Proverbs: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 3:24 P.M. EDT)

JUNE 22, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Indianapolis, Indiana)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
U.S. JAYCEES CONVENTION

INDIANAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER

10:24 A.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, President Dick Robinson, Governor Bowen, Mayor Hudnut, Mr. Simensen, members and guests of the United States Jaycees:

I am overwhelmed and obviously deeply honored to join you here this morning and to receive such a warm and generous welcome and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have been looking forward to this visit for a long, long time because the Jaycees have always made me feel right at home. When I was just beginning a law career in 1941 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I became a proud member of our local Jaycee chapter. In all of the years that have followed, as a Congressman, as Vice President and now as President, I have found the philosophy and the spirit of the Jaycees to be a great source of personal strength. So it is great to be among friends on this occasion.

I am especially proud that I can salute all of you on the eve of our 200th anniversary as a Nation. If there is a single organization, if there is a single group of outstanding young Americans that has come to reflect the Bicentennial spirit, it is the United States Jaycees, and I congratulate you.

For over a half century the Jaycees have been fertile breeding ground for America's most promising young leaders, the kinds of leaders -- men in Philadelphia in 1776 that proclaimed a new age of freedom for mankind. For over half a century the Jaycees have stood tall in their patriotism for the United States -- the kind of patriotism that rode in the saddle with Paul Revere on the outskirts of Boston and inspired Patrick Henry down in Colonia Williamsburg for over half a century the Jaycees have been filled with rock hard determination to do what is best for America, the kind of determination that sailed with John Paul Jones when he warned the enemy, "I have not yet begun to fight."

Youth, patriotism, determination, a love of liberty -- those are the qualities that I have always found in the Jaycees and I know this group and those that will follow will carry forward this same determination, this same patriotism, this same love of liberty in the years ahead, and if you don't, who will?

MORE

As an active member of this organization just a few years ago -- (Laughter) -- I remember then that I often asked myself what sort of a future did I want for my family and for my country? Many of you here today may ask yourself the same questions: What do we want for ourselves over the next 20 or 30 years? What do we really want for America's third century as a Nation?

Let me respond to some of those questions for just a few moments by suggesting some of my own answers. From my readings of history I am persuaded that America's first two centuries can be split roughly in half. The hallmark of our first century was the establishment of a free democratic Government in our land. Rising up from a weak, fledgling Nation our people sprawled across the continent, territories were acquired, States were formed, wars were fought, none more devastating than the one that turned American against American.

But the Union survived that terrible ordeal and by 1876, at the end of our first century, a responsive and responsible form of Government was firmly implanted in our soil.

Our second century as a Nation, I would suggest, has been marked by the growth and the development of a great industrial system. The pioneer spirit of the early days began to conquer new frontiers, spanning the Nation with rails transforming our manufacturing and marketing, recasting our cities with concrete and steel, revolutionizing our science and technology, so that at this very moment an American spacecraft, for the first time in man's history, is preparing to land on the planet of Mars.

These have been great achievements-- the triumph of free Government in our first century, the triumph of free enterprise in our second.

Now, in our third century, I promise that we climb an even higher mountain. Let us fulfill the dreams of the early fathers. Let us make these new 100 years the ultimate triumph of people, the triumph of individual freedom in the United States of America.

We made enormous progress in securing and expanding individual freedoms in the past 200 years, and much of that progress has come in our own lifetimes. But, we have not finished the job. Full individual freedom in America must mean freedom from want. America has the compassion and the resources to meet this challenge.

So long as our Nation is burdened with heavy inflation and heavy unemployment, we shall not be free. Over the past 15 years, due in large measures to stop and start economic policies in Washington, the United States' economy has been on a long and dangerous roller coaster ride -- up one year, down the next. The accompanying inflation has not only eroded personal income but it has eaten away at public confidence in our economic institutions, the very institutions that served to give us the highest standard of living anywhere in the world.

The first order of business in the Government of the United States is to put the economy on a smooth, upward course and to keep it moving in that direction. The enormous surge in Government spending and Government deficits must be ended. The only way to hold down the cost of living is to hold down the cost of Government.

If I may be permitted to interject a word on a subject that is before the Congress at this moment, I would urge that this organization join in the struggle to enact responsible, new tax legislation in the next 10 days.

On July 1, the temporary tax enacted last year will expire and, unless the Congress acts promptly, taxes will automatically increase. The Congress should not only extend the tax cut that was enacted last year but should increase it by \$10 billion and make it permanent. There is no excuse for the Government to take more and more of your earnings when it cannot fully justify their use, and especially when those hard-earned tax dollars of yours can do more good for you and for this country in your pocket, not in the Government Treasury.

Let me specify two specific provisions in the additional \$10 billion tax reduction that I proposed and Congress must approve, to help your family and our country. The personal exemption must be increased from \$750 to \$1,000. The estate tax exemption must be increased from \$60,000 to \$150,000, so that small businesses and small farms can stay in one family from one generation to another and not in the pockets of the taxpayer.

And there is one other provision that involves all of you -- estate tax transfers from husband to wife or wife to husband must be tax free. Full individual freedom in America also means freedom from intrusive, overbearing Government. This is a familiar theme in our American history.

As long ago as Thomas Jefferson, he sounded it in the Declaration of Independence himself, where he complained there His Majesty's Government has erected a multitude of new offices and sent swarms of officers to harrass our people.

MORE

Today we see the intrusion of our own Federal Government in many forms -- some old and some new. We see it in the many regulatory agencies that have sprouted up along the Potomac and have imposed the massive regulatory burden upon American business. We see it in the way that some of our other departments in Washington under requirements mainly imposed by the Congress have taken over many, many of the activities that were once left to the State and local units of government.

We see it in the past records of some government agencies that exceeded their authority and spied upon and otherwise violated the rights of individual American citizens.

And we see it in the way that a few of our courts have wandered so far into the school busing controversy that they are practically running our local school boards.

The time has come to roll back the wave of big government in America and we must never forget a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have.

We must bring order and restraint to the Federal regulatory process through sweeping reforms, in airline transportation, in trucking and in many other areas. In order to restore greater powers to local and State Governments to put decisions back where they belong we must reenact general revenue sharing and collapse complicated education and health programs into new block grants so that the rights of our citizens may be protected while the essential intelligence functioning of our government continues.

We are undertaking reforms in the intelligence community and we are putting into place new constructive guidelines for the FBI. In the next few days I plan to announce action in still another area -- court-ordered forced busing. There is no good reason why we cannot wipe out the vestiges of discrimination in America, achieve quality education for our children and at the same time minimize the massive busing of our children.

Underlying actions in each of these areas is our fervent belief that individual liberty in this great country means liberty from oppressive, heavy-handed, bureaucratic government. That is a goal we can achieve. That is a goal we must achieve in our third century. I firmly believe that Americans can do anything if other Americans do not tie us down with red tape, tie us up with pessimism or tie us into a knot of frustration and stagnation.

MORE

Let me reemphasize that my vision of the future means equal opportunity and equal rights for all of our citizens. The principle of racial equality is indelibly written into our Constitution and into our hearts, and in all that we do we must honor it.

Earlier in this century the novelist, Thomas Wolfe, spoke about America in a way that is worth remembering. He said, "To every man his chance, to every man regardless of his birth his shining golden opportunity, to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself and to become whatever things his manhood and his vision can combine to make him. This," he said, "is the promise of America."

That is the promise we seek to fulfill in the next 100 years. We must also recognize, as George Washington did in his first inaugural address, that no nation on earth owes more to providence than does the United States of America. Our greatness is because of our goodness. Should we cease to be good, we would soon cease to be great. Americans have seen too much abuse of the moral imperatives of honesty and decency, the foundations of our civilized society.

Americans, especially our young people, can take little pride in the system that is dishonored by misconduct whether in the White House or in the halls of Congress. The essential task of leadership in business, in education, in family life and in public life is to inspire, to teach, to act with courage--to live with honor and to show the way. Personal integrity must not be a part of nostalgia, it must be the living and life essence of the American character.

There are many freedoms that we must secure, that we must expand in the United States, but let me mention only one other, freedom from war. On too many occasions since the Jaycees were founded America has sent her finest sons to the battlefields in faraway lands. The first and foremost objective of every President is to protect and preserve the security of the United States.

Today that security is fully protected. Our armaments are unsurpassed, our alliances with Europe and Japan have never been healthier. Our will in America is strong.

Yet we must also recognize that we live in a world that is increasingly hostile to freedom. Only one nation in six in the world today is free and democratic. There are many, many nations that oppose our interests and our belief and our dedication to freedom and to liberty. Through negotiations and constructive diplomacy we are seeking to reduce the level of tensions with the Soviet Union. We share with them an interest in preventing a nuclear incineration but we have no illusions that they have changed their political objectives or their essential world outlook. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to maintain a strong balanced military posture. Military strength is the best insurance for peace. We have that peace and we are going to keep it.

One of my greatest frustrations as a Congressman -- and I think Mayor Bill Hudnut can vividly recall it because he served in the Congress with me -- but that frustration was to join with the occupant of the White House, Democrat or Republican, in the fight for large defense budgets and then to see those budgets unmercifully cut by a Congressional majority on the other side.

In just the past 10 years the Congress has cut some \$50 billion from the defense budget recommended by three different Presidents, often to make room for new social programs of questionable merit.

This year, I am pleased to report to you we are finally reversing that trend and, for the first time in a long, long while the Congress seems ready to agree with the President for a needed increase in the expenditures and programs for the defense establishment. However, once again, I ask the support of the Jaycees on a critical issue. This country simply cannot afford anything less than the very best for the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines.

America covets no one else's land. We seek no one else's treasures. Indeed, we have given generously of our own when others needed help, but we must also never shirk from the responsibility of protecting our interests and our own security. If the promise of individual freedom is to be achieved in the coming century, it will take a full-hearted effort by all Americans.

I know that as Jaycees you are devoted to humanity as the best work of life. You are neither weak nor timid in your devotion to America. You believe that citizens must be actively involved in the affairs of the State and of the Nation.

We have an historic opportunity in America today. We stand at the threshold of our third century. We can either let this time slip by with no clear vision of what we wish to achieve as a people or we can seize this moment by resolving to fulfill the great promise of America -- to achieve full individual freedom for all Americans.

A year ago, there was a special ceremony in the City of Boston at Old North Church. You may recall that was the church where two lanterns were hung on the night of Paul Revere's famous ride. Last April, they hung a third lantern in the Old North Church and as they did the rector spoke briefly about it: "The two lanterns which were shown from this steeple," he said, "led us to two centuries of some progress in reason, liberty and in faith -- but not enough. To some fulfillment in mind, body and spirit -- but not enough. To some gains in thinking, acting and trusting in freedom -- but not enough.

"Now the steeple of the Old North Church will shine with a third lantern tonight, a new signal that will call us to renewed effort and renewed hope in our third century. It will say we will yet make the American promise a reality. We will yet make it the truth every day, everywhere for everyone. We will go forward and we will stumble, but we will try again and again and again."

My fellow Jaycees in this Bicentennial year, let us carry that message to every community across this land. Let us, through our own actions, become a beacon of hope and of promise, and let us working together light the path to a new century of freedom for all Americans.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 10:49 A.M. CDT)

JUNE 25, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT UPON ARRIVAL
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

In recent years the industrialized democracies have become increasingly concerned with questions of economic growth and stability. The linkages between our nations have multiplied and our economies have become more closely interrelated. Last November at Rambouillet we began a dialogue which recognized our mutual concerns and our inter-relationships. Today we come together to continue that dialogue. We are fully aware of how important it is for us to work together to shape policies to achieve stable economic growth and to respond to the new challenges and opportunities which face us all.

Since we last met we have witnessed significant economic improvements throughout the world. Certainly in the United States our progress has been better than many predicted. But some old problems remain and new ones confront us. The very speed of the recovery itself serves as a major test of our ability to ensure long-term stability in our economy. This is not a test, however, for the United States alone. It is the special challenge facing the peoples of all the industrialized democracies. I welcome the opportunity to meet again with the leaders of our major economic partners. I am confident that these discussions will help us to continue our current economic progress, and move us ever closer to our goal of economic growth and stability throughout the world.

This is my first visit as President to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It is a fitting moment to reflect on the rich and long history of cooperation and participation which this Island and its people share with the United States. That history has been built on a simple but fundamental precept--the right of the people of Puerto Rico and the United States freely to determine the nature of their ties with one another. Over the years we have chosen to have a close relationship, and we have built this relationship around a common citizenship, a common defense, a common currency, and a common market.

Today, we find that the nature of our relationship is again, as in the past, a subject of free discussion and debate. This in itself is the best testament to the strength of what we have built together, and it is the best promise that what we together choose to do in the future will be beneficial to the people of this Island.

There are those, however, who seek to distort the facts; to mislead others about our relationship with Puerto Rico. The record is clear and open. We are proud of the relationship that we have developed together and we invite the world to examine it. We commend to its critics the same freedom of choice through free and open election which is enjoyed by the people of Puerto Rico. Those who might be inclined to interfere in our freely determined relations should know that such an act will be considered as intervention in the domestic affairs of Puerto Rico and the United States; it will be an unfriendly act which will be resisted by appropriate means.

In the midst of this beautiful setting, we cannot forget that problems, both political and economic, remain. As we base our hopes on freedom of choice and expression to help resolve the political problems, so we look to cooperation and interdependence to overcome our economic problems. I am hopeful that the work of the Summit will give a new impetus to the growth of our worldwide economy and improved international cooperation, and thus will have a positive effect on both the United States and Puerto Rico.

#

JUNE 26, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Carolina, Puerto Rico)

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
RAFAEL HERNANDEZ COLON
GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO

PUERTO RICO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

12:10 P.M. AST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Governor, distinguished members of the welcoming committee, I thank you for the very warm welcome upon my arrival at the Summit. It is an honor for the United States to be the host of this conference. I know that world leaders who are joining me will be as appreciative of the beauty and the hospitality of Puerto Rico as I am.

In recent years, the industrialized democracies have become increasingly concerned with the questions of economic growth and stability. The linkages between our nations have multiplied. Our economies have become more closely interrelated. Last November at Rambouillet we began a dialogue which recognized our mutual concerns and our interrelationships. Today, we come together to continue that dialogue. We are fully aware of how important it is for us to work together to shape policies, to achieve stable economic growth and to respond to the new challenges and opportunities which face us all.

Since we last met, we have witnessed significant economic improvements throughout the world. Certainly, in the United States our progress has been better than many predicted, but some old problems remain and new ones confront us. The very speed of the recovery itself serves as a major test of our ability to ensure long-term stability in our economy.

This is not a test, however, for the United States alone. It is the special challenge facing the people of all the industrialized democracies. I welcome the opportunity to meet again with the leaders of our major economic partners. I am confident that these discussions will help us to continue our current economic progress and move us ever closer to our goal of economic growth and stability throughout the world.

MORE

Mr. Governor, this is my first visit as President to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It is a fitting moment to reflect on the rich and long history of cooperation and participation which this Island and its people share with the United States. That history has been built on a simple but fundamental concept -- the right of the people of Puerto Rico and the United States freely to determine the nature of their ties with one another. Over the years we have chosen to have a close relationship. We have built this relationship around a common citizenship, a common defense, a common currency and a common market.

Today, we find that the nature of our relationship is again, as in the past, a subject of free discussion and free debate. This in itself is the best testament to the strength of what we have built together, and it is the best promise that what we together choose to do in the future will be beneficial to the people of this Island.

There are those, however, who seek to distort the facts, to mislead others about our relationship with Puerto Rico. The record is clear; the record is open. We are proud of the relationship that we have developed together and we invite the world to examine it. We commend to its critics the same freedom of choice through free and open election, which is enjoyed by the people of Puerto Rico. Those who might be inclined to interfere in our freely determined relations should know that such an act will be considered an intervention in the domestic affairs of Puerto Rico and the United States and will be an unfriendly act which will be resisted by appropriate means.

In the midst of this beautiful setting, we cannot forget that problems, both political and economic, still remain. As we base our hopes on freedom of choice and expression to help resolve the political problems, so we look to cooperation and interdependence to overcome our economic problems.

Mr. Governor, I am hopeful that the work of this Summit will give a new impetus to the growth of our worldwide economy and improve international cooperation and thus we will have a positive effect on both the United States and Puerto Rico.

Again, I thank you, Mr. Governor, for your warm welcome and for your help in hosting this Summit.

Thank you.

MORE

GOVERNOR COLON: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR COLON: Mr. President, on behalf of all the people of Puerto Rico, bienvenidos -- welcome to Puerto Rico.

The Commonwealth is both proud and honored for this visit by the President of the United States and to serve as the site for the summit conference of the heads of State and Government of the United States, France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada.

The decisions to be made during the two days of the conference will have a profound and lasting effect on the economies of the world. We pray that your deliberations and those of your fellow heads of State and Government be guided by the highest sense of world community and a profound commitment to the welfare of the peoples of the world.

We know that during this conference of the industrialized democracies special attention and consideration will be given to the needs of the developing nations of the world in the interest of true human harmony and brotherhood.

We in Puerto Rico are convinced that ultimate success lies in common cooperation and mutual respect of the kind that exists between Puerto Rico and the United States and which have been the basis of our struggle to bring a better life, a better way of life for all of our people.

Mr. President, please accept a warm and fraternal abrazo in the name of the people of Puerto Rico and our sincere desire for a fruitful and successful conference.

END

(AT 12:10 P.M. AST)

JUNE 27, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Dorado Beach, Puerto Rico)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE
OPENING SESSION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PUERTO RICO

On behalf of myself and my colleagues, and the people of the United States, I welcome you to Puerto Rico. We have a formidable task ahead of us in these next two days -- to address major common concerns, and to identify areas in which improved cooperation among us can contribute to the well being of our citizens and to a more secure and prosperous world.

As we all know, meetings of this sort raise anticipations of dramatic results. But the important thing about Rambouillet, and our meeting here today, is that they are part of an essential and continuing bilateral and multilateral effort by the leaders of key industrialized democracies to address common problems and to improve mutual understanding. The complexity of our nations' economies, individually and collectively, means that we as leaders cannot afford to allow major difficulties to arise and then, by dramatic meetings, attempt to resolve them. It requires instead that we concert our efforts to prevent problems from arising in the first place -- to shape the future rather than reacting to it. It is with that objective in mind that this Summit is being held.

The central economic, political, and security importance of our countries to one another, and to the world, confers upon us special responsibilities. In the economic area, on which we will focus today and tomorrow, our strong commitment to shape constructive approaches can contribute to the prosperity of our peoples, strengthen our broader relationships, and prove highly beneficial to the world at large. Recent experience has clearly demonstrated that, because of the interdependence of our nations, common problems are unlikely to be solved unless we apply our mutual efforts. They have, in addition, shown that our common interests are far more significant than the differences which arise among us from time to time. We have, therefore, wisely approached recent problems with a political will and spirit of cooperation which have not only helped us resolve them but which have in fact strengthened considerably relations among our nations and among the industrialized democracies as a whole.

This conference builds on, and can help us continue, the progress already made. The vision and sense of shared purpose which results from our meetings will help each of us pursue constructive policies at home, with respect to our economic partners, and in dealing with major global issues.

I am confident that the same positive spirit that was developed at Rambouillet will extend through our meetings here in Puerto Rico and beyond. Much of the world's future depends on our constructive cooperation.

#

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSEREMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON SIGNING THE
FOURTH OF JULY PROCLAMATIONTHE OVAL OFFICE

2:05 P.M. EDT

The Continental Congress, by resolution adopted July 2, 1776, declared that 13 American colonies were free and independent States. Two days later, on the 4th of July, the Congress adopted a Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed to the world the birth of the United States of America.

In the two centuries that have passed, we have matured as a Nation and as a people. We have gained the wisdom that age and experience brings, yet we have kept the strength and idealism of youth.

In this year of our Nation's Bicentennial, we entered our third century with the knowledge that we have achieved greatness as a Nation and have contributed to the good of all mankind. We face the future with renewed dedication to the principles embodied in our Declaration of Independence and with renewed gratitude that those who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to preserve the individual liberty for all of us.

In the recognition of the 200th anniversary of the great historic events of 1776 and in keeping with the wishes of the Congress, I ask that all Americans join in an extended period of celebration, thanksgiving and prayer on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th days of July of our Bicentennial year so that the people of all faiths in their own way may give thanks for the protection of divine providence through the 200 years and pray for the future safety and happiness of our Nation.

To commemorate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the Congress declared that the anniversary should be observed by the ringing of bells throughout the United States. As President, I hereby proclaim that the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence be observed by the simultaneous ringing of bells throughout the United States at the hour of 2:00 Eastern Daylight Time on the afternoon of the 4th of July for a period of two minutes, signifying our two centuries of independence.

MORE

I call upon civic, religious and other community leaders to encourage public participation in this historic observance. I call upon all Americans, here as well as abroad, including all United (States) flag ships at sea, to join in this salute.

As the bells ring in our third century and as millions of free men and women pray, let every American resolve that this Nation, under God, will meet the future with the same courage, with the same dedication Americans showed the world two centuries ago.

In perpetuation of the joyous ringing of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, let us again proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.

I will, therefore, sign at this time the official Proclamation.

END (AT 2:09 P.M. EDT)

JULY 1, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
DEDICATION CEREMONIES OF THE
AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

11:13 A.M. EDT

Mr. Chief Justice, Mr. Vice President, distinguished Members of Congress, Secretary Ripley, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

This beautiful new museum and its exciting exhibits of the mastery of air and space is a perfect birthday present from the American people to themselves. Although it is almost impolite to boast, perhaps we can say with patriotic pride that the flying machines we see here from the Wright Brothers 12-horsepower biplane to the latest space vehicle were mostly "Made in U.S.A."

The story of powered flight is an American saga. The wonder is that it has all happened within the lifetime and the memory of living Americans. How many of us remember vividly the thrill of the first take-off? How many recall the first news of Lindbergh's safe landing in Paris? How many saw man's first giant step that planted the American flag on the moon?

At this moment, an unmanned Viking spacecraft is circling the planet Mars. It has only been 80 years since the Smithsonian's Samuel Langley launched his unmanned aerodrome for a half-mile flight before it plunged into the Potomac.

The amazing American achievements in air and space tell us something even more important about ourselves on earth. The hallmark of the American adventure has been a willingness -- even an eagerness -- to reach for the unknown.

For three and a half centuries Americans and their ancestors have been explorers and inventors, pilgrims and pioneers, always searching for something new across the oceans, across the continent, across the solar system, across the frontiers of science, beyond the boundaries of the human mind.

MORF



Confined within these walls and windows are the products of American men and women whose imagination could not be confined. There is nothing more American than saying if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Nor could Americans be confined to the Atlantic Seaboard. The wide open spaces have lured Americans from our beginnings. The frontier shaped and molded our society and our people.

Gertrude Stein once wrote, "In the United States there is more space where nobody is than where anybody is." This is what makes America what it is.

Indeed, the impact of what is unknown, of what was dimly perceived to be as "out there" has left a permanent mark on the American character.

In the early 17th century, a few fragile vessels-- like the Discovery in 1607 and the Mayflower in 1620-- sailed across 3,000 miles of unfriendly sea. Their passengers and crew knew far less about their destination than the American astronauts knew at lift-off about the lunar landscape a quarter million miles away.

The pilgrims feared the perils of the voyage and the misery of the unfamiliar land, but the sentiments that sustained them were recorded by Governor William Bradford "that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties and must be both enterprised and overcome with answerable courages."

Behind them lay the mighty ocean, separating them from the world they knew and before them lay an untamed wilderness. Three and a half centuries later that wilderness has been transformed. A continent once remote and isolated now supports a mighty nation, a nation built by those who also dared to reach for the unknown.

The discovery of this continent was unprecedented. It opened the eyes of mankind, showing them the world was bigger than they had thought. Our nation's birthday was unprecedented as well. A new form of Government was begun which would allow for change by future generations, yet secure basic rights to men and women.

The chance to earn property was given to those who had never had property, education to those who had never been educated.

MORE

In the New World, Americans had to be handy. Ours was a do-it-yourself society. Our fascination with machines to lighten labor and increase production began very early. The practical problems of engineering and science required education. The hard life attracted few learned scholars from Europe. Sometimes Americans built their schools before their own rough cabins.

By the time of the Revolution, there were more colleges and universities in America than in the British Isles. The men who wrote our Declaration of Independence were probably the best educated rebels and revolutionaries history had ever seen. When independence was won, the growth of free public education in the United States amazed the world and quickened our pace in science and technology.

Our Constitution specifically gave Congress power to promote science and useful arts by rewarding inventors and authors with patents and copyrights. While some Governments are always fearful of what individuals may write or discover, ours has always encouraged free inquiry, with results that speak for themselves.

It was just a century ago, at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, that Alexander Graham Bell first publicly demonstrated his telephone. Today, millions around the world can see and hear the highlights of history as they are happening. Each new discovery, the result of each experiment, humbles us by the dimensions of the unknown. Our progress can be measured not only by the extent of our knowledge, but by increasing awareness of all that remains to be discovered.

To keep reaching into the unknown, we must remain free. We must have freedom to find and freedom to fail. Like our ancestors, we are always at the edge of the unknown.

In the next 100 years, the American spirit of adventure can find out even more about the forces of nature, how to harness them, preserve them; explore the great riches of the oceans, still an uncharted frontier; turn space into a partner for controlling pollution and instant communication to every corner of the world; learn how to make our energy resources renewable and draw new energy from sun and earth; develop new agricultural technologies so all the deserts of the earth can bloom; conquer many more of humanity's deadly enemies, such as cancer and heart disease.

MORE

As Thoreau reminded us, long before the age of air and space, "The frontiers are not east or west, north or south, but wherever man fronts a fact." The American adventure is driven forward by challenge, competition and creativity.

It demands of us sweat and sacrifice and gives us substance and satisfaction. Our country must never cease to be a place where men and women try the untried, test the impossible and take uncertain paths into the unknown.

Our Bicentennial commemorates the beginning of such a quest, a daring attempt to build a new order in which free people govern themselves and fulfill their individual destinies. But, the best of the American adventure lies ahead.

Thomas Jefferson said: "I like to dream of the future better than the history of the past." So did his friendly rival, John Adams, who wrote of his dream: "to see rising in America an empire of liberty, and a prospect of two or three hundred millions of freemen, without one noble or one king among them. You say it is impossible. If I should agree with you in this, I would still say -- let us try the experiment."

I can only add -- let the experiment continue.

Thank you.

FND

(AT 11:22 A.M. EDT)

JULY 1, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
CENTENNIAL SAFE OPENING CEREMONY

STATUARY HALL
THE CAPITOL

12:13 P.M. EDT

Senator Mike Mansfield, Mr. Speaker, Senator Scott, Senator Brooke, Congresswoman Boggs, distinguished Members of the House and Senate, ladies and gentlemen:

Obviously, I am deeply honored to have the opportunity this afternoon to open this historic centennial safe. It contains many items of interest to us today as we celebrate the completion of our second century. But, it symbolizes much more than a valuable collection of mementoes -- it symbolizes something about the United States of America that is so mighty and so inspiring that it cannot be locked up in a safe. I mean the American spirit.

When this safe was sealed, Americans looked forward to the future, to this year of 1976. There was no doubt in their minds that a President of a free government would participate in a ceremony here in the United States Capitol Building.

Just as American men and women 200 years ago looked to the future, those who sealed this safe 100 years ago also looked to the future.

So it is today with Americans, but there is no safe big enough to contain the hopes, the energies, the abilities of our people. Our real national treasure does not have to be kept under lock and key in a safe or in a vault. America's wealth is not in material objects but in our great heritage, our freedom and our belief in ourselves.

A century ago, the population of the United States numbered over 40 million. Today, we have more than five times as many. But the growth of our population has not lessened our devotion to the principles that inspired Americans in 1776 or 1876.

In 1876, our immense wealth, both natural and inventive, commanded worldwide attention. We grew from coast to coast in greater industrial and agricultural development than humanity had ever known.

MORE

In 1876, America was still emerging from a terrible fraternal war. A lesser people might have been unequal to the challenge, but 1976 finds the confidence of 1876 confirmed. Today, there is far greater equality of opportunity, liberty and justice for all of our citizens in every corner of America. There is rising prosperity for our Nation and peace and progress for our people.

We look back to the evening of July 4, 1776. It was then, after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, that the Continental Congress resolved that Franklin, Adams and Jefferson begin work on a seal as a national symbol. We are all familiar with the front part of that great seal. But the reverse side, which also appears on every dollar bill, is especially instructive. It depicts a pyramid which is not completed and a single eye gazing out radiantly. The unfinished pyramid represents the work that remains for Americans to do. The Latin motto below is freely translated: "God has favored our undertaking."

Two hundred years later, we know God has. Though we may differ as Americans have throughout the past, we share a common purpose. It is the achievement of a future in keeping with our glorious past. The American Republic provides for continued growth through a convergence of views and interests, but that growth must be spiritual as well as material.

As we look inside this safe, let us look inside ourselves. Let us look into our hearts and into our hopes.

On Sunday, we start a new century, a century of the individual. We have given meaning to our life as a Nation. Let us now welcome a century in which we give new meaning to our lives as individuals. Let us look inside ourselves to unleash the God-given treasures stored within. And let us look outside ourselves to the needs of our families, our friends, our communities, our Nation and our moral and spiritual consciousness.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 12:20 P.M. EDT)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 4, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT
INDEPENDENCE HALL

11:18 A.M. EDT

Charlton Heston, Mayor Rizzo, Governor Shapp, Reverend Clergy, distinguished Members of Congress, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

On Washington's Birthday in 1861, a fortnight after six States had formed a Confederacy of their own, Abraham Lincoln came here to Independence Hall knowing that in ten days he would face the cruelest national crisis of our 85-year history.

"I am filled with deep emotion," he said, "at finding myself standing here in the place where collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live."

Today, we can all share these simple noble sentiments. Like Lincoln, I feel both pride and humility, rejoicing in reverence as I stand in the place where two centuries ago the United States of America was conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

From this small but beautiful building, then the most imposing structure in the Colonies, came the two great documents that continue to supply the moral and intellectual power for the American adventure in self-government.

Before me is the great bronze bell that joyously rang out the news of the birth of our Nation from the steeple of the State House. It was never intended to be a church bell. Yet, a generation before the great events of 1776, the elected assembly of Pennsylvania ordered it to be inscribed with this Biblical verse:

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof."

MOPE

(OVER)

The American settlers had many, many hardships, but they had more liberty than any other people on earth. That was what they came for and what they meant to keep. The verse from Leviticus on the Liberty Bell refers to the ancient Jewish year of Jubilee.

In every 50th year, the Jubilee restored the land and the equality of persons that prevailed when the children of Israel entered the land of promise and both gifts came from God, as the Jubilee regularly reminded them.

Our Founding Fathers knew their Bibles as well as their Blackstone. They boldly reversed the age-old political theory that King's derive their powers from God and asserted that both powers and unalienable rights belong to the people as direct endowments from their creator. Furthermore, they declared that Governments are instituted among men to secure their rights and to serve their purposes, and Governments continue only so long as they have the consent of the governed.

With George Washington, already commanding the American Continental Army in the field, the Second Continental Congress met here in 1776, not to demand new liberty, but to regain long-established rights which were being taken away from them without their consent.

The American Revolution was unique and remains unique in that it was fought in the name of the law as well as liberty. At the start, the Declaration of Independence proclaimed the divine source of individual rights and the purpose of human Government as Americans understood it.

That purpose is to secure the rights of the individuals against even Government itself. But, the Declaration did not tell us how to accomplish this purpose or what kind of Government to set up.

First, our independence had to be won. It was not won easily, as the nearby encampment of Valley Forge, the rude bridge at Concord and the crumbling battlements at Yorktown bear vivid interest (interest).

We have heard much, though we cannot hear it too often, about 56 Americans who cast their votes and later signed their names to Thomas Jefferson's ringing declaration of equality and freedom so movingly read to us this morning by Miss Marian Anderson.

MORE

Do you know what price the signers of that parchment paid for their patriotism, the devotion to principle of which Lincoln spoke? John Hancock of Massachusetts was one of the wealthiest men who came to Philadelphia. Later, as he stood outside Boston and watched the enemy sweep by, he said, "Burn Boston, though it makes John Hancock a beggar."

Altogether, of the 56 men who signed our great Declaration, five were taken prisoner, twelve had their homes sacked, two lost their sons and nine died in the war itself.

Those men knew what they were doing. In the final stirring words of the Declaration, they pledged to one another "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." And when liberty was at stake, they were willing to pay the price.

We owe a great debt to these founders and to the foot soldiers who followed General Washington into battle after battle, retreat after retreat. But, it is important to remember that final success in that struggle for independence, as in the many struggles that have followed, was due to the strength and support of ordinary men and women who were motivated by three powerful impulses -- personal freedom, self-government and national unity.

For all but the black slaves--many of whom fought bravely beside their masters because they also heard the promise of the Declaration--freedom was won in 1783, but the loose Articles of Confederation have proved adequate in war and were even less effective in peace.

Again in 1787 representatives of the people and the States met in this place to form a more perfect union, a permanent legal mechanism that would translate the principles and purposes of Jefferson's Declaration into effective self-government.

Six signers of the Declaration came back to forge the Constitution, including the sage of Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin. Jefferson had replaced him as Ambassador in Paris. The young genius of the constitutional convention was another Virginian, James Madison. The hero of the Revolution, Washington, was called back from Mount Vernon to preside.

Seldom in history have the men who made a revolution seen it through, but the United States was fortunate. The result of their deliberation and compromises was our Constitution, which William Gladstone, a great British Prime Minister, called "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

MORE

The Constitution was created to make the promise of the Declaration come true. The Declaration was not a protest against Government but against the excesses of Government. It prescribed the proper role of Government to secure the rights of individuals and to effect their safety and their happiness.

No modern society, no individual can do this all alone, so Government is not necessarily evil but a necessary good.

The framers of the Constitution feared a central Government that was too strong, as many Americans rightly do today. The framers of the Constitution, after their experience under the Articles, feared a central Government that was too weak, as many Americans rightly do today.

They spent days studying all of the contemporary Governments of Europe and concluded with Dr. Franklin that all contained the seeds of their own destruction. So, the framers built something new, drawing upon their English traditions, on the Roman Republic, on the uniquely American institution of the town meeting to reassure those who felt the original Constitution did not sufficiently spell out the unalienable rights of the Declaration.

The First United States Congress added -- and the States ratified -- the first ten Amendments, which we call the Bill of Rights.

Later, after a tragic fraternal war, those guarantees were expanded to include all Americans. Later still voting rights were assured for women and for younger citizens 18 to 21 years of age.

It is good to know that in our own lifetime we have taken part in the growth of freedom and in the expansion of equality which began here so long ago. This union of corrected wrongs and expanded rights has brought the blessings of liberty to the 215 million Americans, but the struggle for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is never truly won.

Each generation of Americans, indeed of all humanity, must strive to achieve these aspirations anew. Liberty is a living flame to be fed, not dead ashes to be revered, even in a Bicentennial year. It is fitting that we ask ourselves hard questions even on a glorious day like today.

Are the institutions under which we live working the way they should? Are the foundations laid in 1776 and 1789 still strong enough and sound enough to resist the tremors of our times? Are our God-given rights secure, our hard-won liberties protected?

MORE

The very fact that we can ask these questions, that we can freely examine and criticize our society, is cause for confidence itself. Many of the voices raised in doubt 200 years ago served to strengthen and improve the decisions finally made.

The American adventure is a continuing process. As one milestone is passed, another is sighted. As we achieve one goal, a longer lifespan, a literate population, a leadership in world affairs, we raise our sights.

As we begin our third century, there is still so much to be done. We must increase the independence of the individual and the opportunity of all Americans to attain their full potential. We must insure each citizen's right to privacy. We must create a more beautiful America, making human works conform to the harmony of nature.

We must develop a safe society, so ordered that happiness may be pursued without fear of crime or man-made hazards. We must build a more stable international order, politically, economically and legally. We must match the great breakthroughs of the past century by improving health and conquering disease.

We must continue to unlock the secrets of the universe beyond our planet as well as within ourselves. We must work to enrich the quality of American life at work, at play and in our homes.

It is right that Americans are always improving. It is not only right, it is necessary. From need comes action, as it did here in Independence Hall. Those fierce political rivals -- John Adams and Thomas Jefferson -- in their later years carried out a warm correspondence. Both died on the Fourth of July of 1826, having lived to see the handiwork of their finest hour endure a full 50 years.

They had seen the Declaration's clear call for human liberty and equality arouse the hopes of all mankind. Jefferson wrote to Adams that "even should the clouds of barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and libraries of Europe, this country remains to preserve and restore life and liberty to them."

Over a century later, in 1936, Jefferson's dire prophesy seemed about to come true. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, speaking for a mighty nation, reinforced by millions and millions of immigrants who had joined the American adventure, was able to warn the new despotisms:

"We too, born to freedom, and believing in freedom, are willing to fight to maintain freedom. We, and all others who believe as deeply as we do, would rather die on our feet than live on our knees."

MORE

The world knows where we stand. The world is ever conscious of what Americans are doing for better or for worse because the United States today remains the most successful realization of humanity's universal hope.

The world may or may not follow, but we lead because our whole history says we must. Liberty is for all men and women as a matter of equal and unalienable right. The establishment of justice and peace abroad will in large measure depend upon the peace and justice we create here in our own country, where we still show the way.

The American adventure began here with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence. It continues in a common conviction that the source of our blessings is a loving God, in whom we trust. Therefore, I ask all the members of the American family, our guests and friends, to join me now in a moment of silent prayer and meditation in gratitude for all that we have received and to ask continued safety and happiness for each of us and for the United States of America.

Thank you and God bless you.

END

(AT 11:37 A.M. EDT)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 29, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

OLD FAITHFUL LODGE

1:12 P.M. MDT

Tom Kleppe, Senator Hansen, representatives of the Department of Interior, Reverend Clergy, ladies and gentlemen:

Labor day, next weekend, marks the end of a glorious summer. It means one more carefree holiday before we all go back to school, back to work, back to the duties we must do to build a better life for ourselves, our children and our country.

For many, many families it means one last chance to get out of town, out into the sun, under the stars, close to nature's beauties and nature's creatures. For me, this is a moment that I have been looking forward to for a long, long time -- to return to Yellowstone where I spent one of the greatest summers of my life.

Being a seasonal Park Ranger -- we used to call them 90-day wonders, maybe they still do (Laughter) -- was one of the most challenging experiences, one of the greatest jobs I ever had following my graduation from the University of Michigan.

Now it seems more like fun than hard work, though we had plenty of both.

I have been telling my family about that summer ever since. Maybe I overdid those bedtime stories about my fire-fighting exploits and my heroic bouts with the bears. (Laughter)

At least that is what Mike, Jack, Steve and Susan keep on telling me. (Laughter)

MORE

So, this time, I brought some of the family along. Jack, as you know, and has been mentioned, is no stranger to Yellowstone. Two years ago this month, he was working as a ranger at a tower station -- actually he was out fishing -- when he got a sudden summons to come to Washington to see his old man get a new job.

So, today, it is a sentimental return to the scene of wonderful memories for two of the Fords and a new experience for Susan, who hopes to get some good Yellowstone photographs like she did last summer at Yosemite.

Family vacations -- especially among the majestic mountains of the West -- are a tradition of our family. My parents always took my brothers and myself to lakes and woods in my State of Michigan before I was big enough to go myself as a Boy Scout. There is something wonderful about the wide open spaces that is almost a necessity for Americans. Being alone with nature strengthens our love for one another and for our country.

For those who live close to the land, this is nothing new. But as more and more Americans live in cities, the lure of the mountains, the beaches, the lakes and the rivers, becomes more and more compelling. So, I have a serious, as well as a sentimental, reason for this visit today.

Our Bicentennial Fourth of July turned out to be a very profound experience for millions and millions of Americans. Amid the fireworks and parades, the Tall Ships and the trips to historic shrines in our joyous celebration of two hundred years of our Nation under God, we found new meaning for the words of freedom, equality and unity.

I always knew the Park Service was efficient and effective (Laughter), and they really proved it just a moment ago. (Laughter)

If I might say, with our Bicentennial Celebration, which was very meaningful, on the Fourth of July, we did find new meaning for the words freedom, equality and unity. Somehow, despite our difficulties and our differences -- perhaps because of them -- Americans recaptured the essential spirit and greatness that makes us a very special kind of people. We realized again what a wonderful thing it is just to be an American.

As I thought about the changes that have taken place in this great country -- not only in the last two years, but during the last two centuries -- I also thought about those things that must never change. Those unchanging things really make us Americans.

MORE

They are the things we must pass on to future generations. Some are intangible, invisible -- our deep religious and moral convictions, our bonds of family and community, our political values embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

But we have other common treasures that are material and visible, that can be damaged and destroyed by man. We must be equally committed to conserve and to cherish our incomparable natural heritage -- our wildlife, our air, our waters and our land, itself.

More than a century ago, we began to save our natural heritage for the enjoyment of future Americans, with the national park system, of which Yellowstone is the oldest and the largest. This year alone, we expect 260 million Americans to visit and enjoy our 287 national parks that spread from the Virgin Islands to Maine to Alaska and to Hawaii.

MORE

I am sure there are times when some of you thought that all 260 million were camping on your camp site.
(Laughter)

We have had a wonderful Bicentennial. We celebrated what our patriotic founders and our immigrant ancestors handed down to us. We renewed our vows to their vision of free Government and equality. But, I found myself saying we ought to do more. Can't we do something special, as our Bicentennial birthday presents to future generations, a gift that will be gratefully remembered 100 years from now. We can.

I, therefore, decided upon a ten-year national commitment to double America's heritage of national parks, recreation areas, wildlife sanctuaries, urban parks and historic sites.

I will send to the Congress Tuesday a Bicentennial Land Heritage Act, which calls for a pledge of \$1 billion 500 million during the next ten years. It will more than double our present acreage of land for national parks, recreation areas and wildlife sanctuaries; development of these new lands to make them accessible and enjoyable; improving facilities and increasing dedicated personnel at existing national parks; making available \$200 million for urban parks, bringing the benefits of nature to those who live in our cities; and accelerating the development of parklands and sanctuaries now delayed for lack of manpower and of money.

This national commitment means we may have to tighten our belts elsewhere a bit, but it is the soundest investment in the future of America that I can envision. We must act now to prevent the loss of treasures that can never be replaced for ourselves, our children and for future generations of Americans.

This is a big job, one that requires Government action at all levels. But, like most of the big jobs Americans undertake, it cannot be left to Government alone. In the past, the cause of land conservation has been advanced by many concerned citizens, companies and private organizations.

The Rockefeller family, represented here today by Mary and Laurence Rockefeller, is an outstanding example of this dedication. I thank them and all such far-sighted Americans for their generous contributions to our national park system and the preservation of our priceless natural heritage.

MORE

I call upon all Americans -- our Bicentennial generation which has enjoyed the blessings of liberty and the pursuit of happiness, ours for 200 years -- to join in a great new undertaking, to improve the quality of our lives and of our land.

I recall that snowy day in 1961 when President Kennedy was inaugurated. I can still see that great American poet, Robert Frost, standing on the steps of the United States Capitol, reciting these moving lines:

"The land was ours before we were the land's. She was our land more than 100 years before we were her people."

I remember as a ranger the first time I stood alone on Inspiration Point over at Canyon Station looking out over this beautiful land. I thought to myself of how lucky I was that my parent's and grandparent's generation had the vision and the determination to save it for us.

Now it is our turn to make our own gift outright to those who will come after us 15 years, 40 years, 100 years from now. I want to be as faithful to my grandchildren's generation as Old Faithful has been to ours. What better way can we add a new dimension to our third century of freedom?

Thank you very much.

END (AT 11:26 A.M. MDT)