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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE NEW JERSEY BANKERS ASSOCIATION
AT HADDON HALL HOTEL, ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY
11:30 A.M. THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1970

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

These seem to be dark hours, but I see them as the beginning of the dawn.

These are confusing days, "for now we see through a glass, darkly," but the time will soon come when we will know the situation not only in part but in whole.

That is how I view the explosive developments which have occurred since President Nixon on Thursday, April 30, ordered the Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia cleaned out by South Vietnamese and U.S. troops.

The President's announcement amazed many Americans. It took them by surprise. It was only 10 days earlier that Mr. Nixon had announced we would be pulling an additional 150,000 G.I.'s out of Vietnam over the next 12 months.

The result has been over-reaction on the part of thousands of our people. Emotion has completely overwhelmed reason, both in the Senate of the United States and on college campuses throughout the country.

Fevered imaginations have fuzzed up the facts and created a series of confrontations in this country.

The crisis will cool -- I am certain of it. The country will come out all right in the end, and that is all that matters.

But let me in the meantime give you my view of the President's Cambodian decision.

In his book, "Profiles in Courage," the late President John F. Kennedy said: "A man does what he must -- in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures."

That is what President Nixon did when he ordered our troops into Cambodia. He did what he felt he must do, what he felt was right.

This was truly an act of courage. It required more courageous leadership than that demanded of Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt during the darkest days of World Wars I and II because those chief executives knew the American people were behind them.

President Nixon, on Cambodia, made the loneliest of decisions. He did what he believed was right even though he knew it would bring the antiwar forces

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He knew very well he was destroying the calm he had created in the Nation with his steady troop withdrawals from Vietnam and his announcement that 150,000 more men would be withdrawn. He realized fully that he would be triggering a new round of antiwar demonstrations. But he did what he had to do.

I think the end will bring President Nixon and the Nation out all right. There is reason to believe that the Cambodian decision has dealt the enemy a hard if not staggering blow in the Vietnam conflict. The Cambodian action might well mark a turning point in the war. It could prove to be a masterstroke. I feel sure it will shorten the war.

As for the public reaction to the President's move, let us keep it in perspective.

The U.S. House of Representatives has firmly rejected all attempts by those who oppose the Cambodian decision to emasculate the President's powers as commander-in-chief of our armed forces.

And, speaking only for my own congressional district in Michigan, I can tell you that the sentiment of many older Americans is running strongly against the sometimes obscene and sometimes violent ways in which some college students are expressing their reaction to the President's decision.

There have always been differences between age groups. The split we are witnessing today is probably more severe than we have ever seen. But I am convinced that the kind of dissent we have seen at Kent State University and Jackson (Miss.) State College -- dissent that erupts into bloodshed and killing -- will not become a part of the American way of life.

President Nixon has made a special effort to open up lines of communication with our young people. His early dawn visit to talk with a group of college students at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington is evidence of that. He also instructed members of his White House staff to engage in dialogues with college students.

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Our young people must be made to realize that violence is not the way to resolve issues in America. They must realize that throwing rocks at national guardsmen is not the answer, either. And they should realize they are being misled by militant radicals when they are urged to kill or to destroy buildings and other property.

I believe that for those who engage in violence on the campus, the only redress is for the college authorities to administer stern discipline. We must not, we cannot, tolerate violence and expect our society to bear the strain.

Bloodshed stemming from the actions of an irrational few must be avoided on college campuses and city streets.

I am pleased that the massive antiwar gathering in the Nation's capital on Saturday, May 9, was peaceful for the most part. I think this was a tribute both to a majority of the young people who journeyed to Washington for the demonstration and also to the Washington Metropolitan Police Department which exhibited great restraint in handling the mammoth crowd.

The demonstration in Washington offered a sharp contrast to what happened at Kent State and Jackson State. What transpired at Kent and Jackson, where students were shot and killed, can only be described as senseless tragedy.

We must, and I pray that we will, find a balance of reason and moderation in the days ahead. It is my deep hope that the American people will find it possible to join in support of the President as tempers cool and passions fade.

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As for me, I think the President is profoundly right in what he has done.

And I am most disturbed by what I feel is an irrational wave of neo-isolationism in this country -- not only on our college campuses but in the United States Senate.

There are strange parallels -- but I think unmistakable parallels -- between the anti-militarists and neo-isolationists of today and the pacifists and isolationists of the 1930s.

Many of you remember the 1930s. You recall when Hitler's book, "Mein Kampf," was first published. Few people in this country took that book seriously.

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The United States had engaged in unilateral disarmament after World War I, in the period leading into the Thirties. We were living in a dream world. We said war just couldn't happen. And if it did happen to somebody else we would just not become involved. The mentality of the entire country was attuned to what became known as the "Fortress America" concept.

It was a Republican, Sen. Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, who led the Fortress America forces in the 30s. Today isolationism is being preached by leading Democrats in the Senate, together with a few Republicans.

Nye blamed war on the international bankers and the arms manufacturers.

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There were protests in the 30s against compulsory military training, and so a number of land grant colleges made military drill optional. Today we find students burning down ROTC buildings or forcing college administrations to drop ROTC from the curriculum. And today, too, we have draft card burning and the pouring of blood on draft card files.

As a result of antiwar hearings in the early 30s by a committee Sen. Nye headed, the Congress in 1935 approved what became known as the Neutrality Act. That legislation was similar to a recently-enacted Senate resolution limiting the use of U.S. ground troops in Laos, and it was similar to the amendments aimed at cutting off the use of U.S. troops in Cambodia.

Throughout the Thirties the antiwar sentiment waxed strong, and it is growing today.

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Does any American today really believe that the line of least resistance is the path to lasting peace?

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REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE LIONS OF MICHIGAN GOLDEN PRESIDENTS BANQUET
AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
6:30 P.M. FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1970 [Same speech as May 21]

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Let me say this is only the seeming and not the actuality. In truth, we all have reason to be cautiously optimistic about the immediate future in this country.

Whatever the outcry over the offensive in Cambodia, the fact remains we have reversed the course of the Vietnam War. We have been withdrawing troops from Vietnam instead of putting more in, and we are making Vietnamization work.

We are embarked on strategic armaments limitation talks with the Soviet Union, and there is cause to have real hope for strategic arms control.

We have achieved major draft reform and we are moving steadily toward an end to the draft.

We have reordered our national priorities so that for the first time in two decades we will be spending more Federal funds on human resources than on military programs.

We have cut taxes and reformed the Federal tax structure.

We are near the point of reforming the scandalous welfare system inherited from a previous era.

We will be reforming the postal service despite a general belief that this was not politically possible.

We are making progress in fighting the inflation inherited by the present Administration, and I look for a moderate upswing in the economy before the end of the year without a revival of strong inflationary pressures.

Congress last week passed an ambitious airport construction bill which puts the national airport construction program on a pay-as-you-go basis for the first time in our history.

We are improving mass transportation and have proposed the most far-reaching mass transit program ever.

We are protecting the national health and safety and have written into law the most effective coal mine safety bill in the history of American labor.

We could do much more. We will do much more.

Looking at the record I have just cited, I do not see how anyone who is not blind to America's aims and accomplishments can sell this country short.

I do not see how anyone can fail to perceive the great surge of progress that lies just ahead of us.

I, for one, am not given to feelings of gloom and doom. I believe in the greatness of America and its people.

I believe, to paraphrase the words of Abraham Lincoln, that the end will bring us out all right.