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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE DEDICATION
OF THE
GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL CORRIDOR

THE PENTAGON

2:58 P.M. EST

Thank you very much, Secretary Hoffman, Ambassador Bunker, Secretary Clements, General Weyand, Mr. Elsey, distinguished guests, members of the Marshall family:

It is really a great honor for me to join this very distinguished company for a ceremony of this extreme and very special significance to all of us. We are here to dedicate this corridor to the memory of America's most distinguished soldier, a statesman, General George C. Marshall.

This occasion, as I have noted, has been filled with personal remembrances of the General which reveal his warm humanity, his integrity, his great leadership abilities and, above all, his total dedication to the service of his country.

The Nation's memories of General Marshall span the gulf between war and peace. We remember him for building a force that numbered less than 2,000 officers and men shortly before World War II into the greatest fighting army in the history of the world in very short order.

As General Marshall told the Nation as we prepared for global war, "If we are strong enough, peace, democracy and our American way of life should be the rewards."

At the end of World War II, the Army and the Air Corps numbered more than 8 million and had no equal on any battlefield on the face of the earth. Today we know that the military strength and preparedness which General Marshall so forcefully advocated are still absolutely essential to deter aggression, to keep the peace and to protect our national security.

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But we also know it is our solemn duty to make the most of peace as a constructive atmosphere for human progress and human freedom. In this duty, as all Americans know, George C. Marshall did not fail. After the war his name became synonymous with one of the greatest peaceful enterprises in human history, the Marshall Plan.

As a young Congressman from Michigan coming to Washington with the elections of 1948 I was very favorably impressed with and a strong supporter of this compassionate and farsighted American program for rebuilding a continent ravished by war. I was equally impressed with the bipartisan nature of that effort.

One of the great leaders of that bipartisan team is the man who first inspired me to run for public office -- Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Senator Vandenberg said politics stopped at the water's edge, but the more accurate statement was that post-war statesmen like Marshall and Vandenberg recognized the need to unite in a single cohesive foreign policy. From that recognition we gained unity, in unity strength, and from strength great success.

History has already recorded that both the challenges -- the peace and the challenges of peace -- were well met by the man we honor today, and we could ask no better example as we face similar challenges today. For more than a half a century as a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute, as an Army officer and Chief of Staff, the Secretary of State, as President of the American National Red Cross and as Secretary of Defense, General George C. Marshall served his country with unswerving devotion and uncommon ability.

Such a record fully deserves the honor all of us pay him today. It is a record that symbolizes the best of America, for General Marshall personified the strength, the dignity, the compassion, the eagerness for challenge and the pursuit of peace which are the hallmarks of the American experience.

It is a record beautifully presented and fittingly preserved in this great hall.

Sir Winston Churchill once said of General Marshall that succeeding generations must not be allowed to forget his achievements and his example. Having seen this corridor today, having recalled with new admiration and affection his half century of service, none of us need doubt that George C. Marshall's long and important career in American history will endure and inspire his countrymen for many, many generations to come.

Thank you very much.

(AT 3:03 P.M. EST)