John F. Kennedy, *Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association*

12 September 1960

Reverend Meza, Reverend Reck, I'm grateful for your generous invitation to state my views.

While the so-called religious issue is necessarily and properly the chief topic here tonight, I want to emphasize from the outset that I believe that we have far more critical issues in the 1960 campaign; the spread of Communist influence, until it now festers only 90 miles from the coast of Florida -- the humiliating treatment of our President and Vice President by those who no longer respect our power -- the hungry children I saw in West Virginia, the old people who cannot pay their doctors bills, the families forced to give up their farms -- an America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space. These are the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues -- for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barrier.

But because I am a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President, the real issues in this campaign have been obscured -- perhaps deliberately, in some quarters less responsible than this. So it is apparently necessary for me to state once again -- not what kind of church I believe in, for that should be important only to me -- but what kind of America I believe in.

I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute; where no Catholic prelate would tell the President -- should he be Catholic -- how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote; where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference, and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him, or the people who might elect him.

I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish; where no public official either requests or accept instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source; where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials, and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.

For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been -- and may someday be again -- a Jew, or a Quaker, or a Unitarian, or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of Baptist preachers, for example, that led to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom. Today, I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you -- until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped apart at a time of great national peril.

Finally, I believe in an America where religious intolerance will someday end, where all men and all churches are treated as equals, where every man has the same right to attend or not to attend the church of his choice, where there is no Catholic vote, no anti-Catholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind, and where Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, at both the lay and the pastoral levels, will refrain from those attitudes of disdain and division which have so often marred their works in the past, and promote instead the American ideal of brotherhood.
That is the kind of America in which I believe. And it represents the kind of Presidency in which I believe, a great office that must be neither humbled by making it the instrument of any religious group nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding it -- its occupancy from the members of any one religious group. I believe in a President whose views on religion are his own private affair, neither imposed upon him by the nation, nor imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office.

I would not look with favor upon a President working to subvert the first amendment's guarantees of religious liberty; nor would our system of checks and balances permit him to do so. And neither do I look with favor upon those who would work to subvert Article VI of the Constitution by requiring a religious test, even by indirection. For if they disagree with that safeguard, they should be openly working to repeal it.

I want a Chief Executive whose public acts are responsible to all and obligated to none, who can attend any ceremony, service, or dinner his office may appropriately require of him to fulfill; and whose fulfillment of his Presidential office is not limited or conditioned by any religious oath, ritual, or obligation.

This is the kind of America I believe in -- and this is the kind of America I fought for in the South Pacific, and the kind my brother died for in Europe. No one suggested then that we might have a divided loyalty, that we did not believe in liberty, or that we belonged to a disloyal group that threatened -- I quote -- "the freedoms for which our forefathers died."

And in fact this is the kind of America for which our forefathers did die when they fled here to escape religious test oaths that denied office to members of less favored churches -- when they fought for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom -- and when they fought at the shrine I visited today, the Alamo. For side by side with Bowie and Crockett died Fuentes, and McCafferty, and Bailey, and Badillo, and Carey -- but no one knows whether they were Catholics or not. For there was no religious test there.

I ask you tonight to follow in that tradition -- to judge me on the basis of 14 years in the Congress, on my declared stands against an Ambassador to the Vatican, against unconstitutional aid to parochial schools, and against any boycott of the public schools -- which I attended myself. And instead of doing this, do not judge me on the basis of these pamphlets and publications we all have seen that carefully select quotations out of context from the statements of Catholic church leaders, usually in other countries, frequently in other centuries, and rarely relevant to any situation here. And always omitting, of course, the statement of the American Bishops in 1948 which strongly endorsed Church-State separation, and which more nearly reflects the views of almost every American Catholic.

I do not consider these other quotations binding upon my public acts. Why should you?

But let me say, with respect to other countries, that I am wholly opposed to the State being used by any religious group, Catholic or Protestant, to compel, prohibit, or prosecute the free exercise of any other religion. And that goes for any persecution, at any time, by anyone, in any country. And I hope that you and I condemn with equal fervor those nations which deny their Presidency
to Protestants, and those which deny it to Catholics. And rather than cite the misdeeds of those
who differ, I would also cite the record of the Catholic Church in such nations as France and
Ireland, and the independence of such statesmen as De Gaulle and Adenauer.

But let me stress again that these are my views.

For contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for President.

I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic.

I do not speak for my church on public matters; and the church does not speak for me. Whatever
issue may come before me as President, if I should be elected, on birth control, divorce,
censorship, gambling or any other subject, I will make my decision in accordance with these
views -- in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and
without regard to outside religious pressure or dictates. And no power or threat of punishment
could cause me to decide otherwise.

But if the time should ever come -- and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible --
when my office would require me to either violate my conscience or violate the national interest,
then I would resign the office; and I hope any conscientious public servant would do likewise.

But I do not intend to apologize for these views to my critics of either Catholic or Protestant
faith; nor do I intend to disavow either my views or my church in order to win this election.

If I should lose on the real issues, I shall return to my seat in the Senate, satisfied that I'd tried my
best and was fairly judged.

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40 million Americans lost their chance of being
President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser, in the
eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, in the eyes of history, and in the eyes of
our own people.

But if, on the other hand, I should win this election, then I shall devote every effort of mind and
spirit to fulfilling the oath of the Presidency -- practically identical, I might add, with the oath I
have taken for 14 years in the Congress. For without reservation, I can, "solemnly swear that I
will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my
ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution -- so help me God.
PROCLAMATION.
A NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.

[From Sparks's Washington, Vol. XII, p. T19.]

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and

Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favor, able interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

- Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the 3d day of October,

A. D. 1789. G.Å, WASHINGTON.
BY AUTHORITY

By the president of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, combinations to defeat the execution of the laws laying duties upon spirits distilled
within the United States and upon stills have from the time of the commencement of those laws
existed in some of the western parts of Pennsylvania.

And whereas, the said combinations, proceeding in a manner subversive equally of the just
authority of government and of the rights of individuals, have hitherto effected their dangerous
and criminal purpose by the influence of certain irregular meetings whose proceedings have
tended to encourage and uphold the spirit of opposition by misrepresentations of the laws
calculated to render them odious; by endeavors to deter those who might be so disposed from
accepting offices under them through fear of public resentment and of injury to person and
property, and to compel those who had accepted such offices by actual violence to surrender or
forbear the execution of them; by circulation vindictive menaces against all those who should
otherwise, directly or indirectly, aid in the execution of the said laws, or who, yielding to the
ddictates of conscience and to a sense of obligation, should themselves comply therewith; by
actually injuring and destroying the property of persons who were understood to have so
complied; by inflicting cruel and humiliating punishments upon private citizens for no other
cause than that of appearing to be the friends of the laws; by intercepting the public officers on
the highways, abusing, assaulting, and otherwise ill treating them; by going into their houses in
the night, gaining admittance by force, taking away their papers, and committing other outrages,
employing for these unwarrantable purposes the agency of armed banditti disguised in such
manner as for the most part to escape discovery;

And whereas, the endeavors of the legislature to obviate objections to the said laws by lowering
the duties and by other alterations conducive to the convenience of those whom they
immediately affect (though they have given satisfaction in other quarters), and the endeavors of
the executive officers to conciliate a compliance with the laws by explanations, by forbearance,
and even by particular accommodations founded on the suggestion of local considerations, have
been disappointed of their effect by the machinations of persons whose industry to excite
resistance has increased with every appearance of a disposition among the people to relax in their
opposition and to acquiesce in the laws, insomuch that many persons in the said western parts of
Pennsylvania have at length been hardy enough to perpetrate acts, which I am advised amount to
treason, being overt acts of levying war against the United States, the said persons having on the
16th and 17th of July last past proceeded in arms (on the second day amounting to several
hundreds) to the house of John Neville, inspector of the revenue for the fourth survey of the
district of Pennsylvania; having repeatedly attacked the said house with the persons therein,
wounding some of them; having seized David Lenox, marshal of the district of Pennsylvania,
who previous thereto had been fired upon while in the execution of his duty by a party of armed
men, detaining him for some time prisoner, till, for the preservation of his life and the obtaining
of his liberty, he found it necessary to enter into stipulations to forbear the execution of certain
official duties touching processes issuing out of a court of the United States; and having finally
obliged the said inspector of the revenue and the said marshal from considerations of personal
safety to fly from that part of the country, in order, by a circuitous route, to proceed to the seat of
government, avowing as the motives of these outrageous proceedings an intention to prevent by
force of arms the execution of the said laws, to oblige the said inspector of the revenue to
renounce his said office, to withstand by open violence the lawful authority of the government of
the United States, and to compel thereby an alteration in the measures of the legislature and a
repeal of the laws aforesaid;

And whereas, by a law of the United States entitled "An act to provide for calling forth the
militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions," it is
enacted that whenever the laws of the United States shall be opposed or the execution thereof
obstructed in any state by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of
judicial proceedings or by the powers vested in the marshals by that act, the same being notified
by an associate justice or the district judge, it shall be lawful for the President of the United
States to call forth the militia of such state to suppress such combinations and to cause the laws
to be duly executed. And if the militia of a state, when such combinations may happen, shall
refuse or be insufficient to suppress the same, it shall be lawful for the President, if the
legislature of the United States shall not be in session, to call forth and employ such numbers of
the militia of any other state or states most convenient thereto as may be necessary; and the use
of the militia so to be called forth may be continued, if necessary, until the expiration of thirty
days after the commencement of the of the ensuing session; Provided always, that, whenever it
may be necessary in the judgment of the President to use the military force hereby directed to be
called forth, the President shall forthwith, and previous thereto, by proclamation, command such
insurgents to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within a limited time;

And whereas, James Wilson, an associate justice, on the 4th instant, by writing under his hand,
did from evidence which had been laid before him notify to me that "in the counties of
Washington and Allegany, in Pennsylvania, laws of the United States are opposed and the
execution thereof obstructed by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary
course of judicial proceedings or by the powers vested in the marshal of that district";

And whereas, it is in my judgment necessary under the circumstances of the case to take
measures for calling forth the militia in order to suppress the combinations aforesaid, and to
cause the laws to be duly executed; and I have accordingly determined so to do, feeling the
deepest regret for the occasion, but withal the most solemn conviction that the essential interests
of the Union demand it, that the very existence of government and the fundamental principles of
social order are materially involved in the issue, and that the patriotism and firmness of all good
citizens are seriously called upon, as occasions may require, to aid in the effectual suppression of
so fatal a spirit;

Therefore, and in pursuance of the proviso above recited, I. George Washington, President of the
United States, do hereby command all persons, being insurgents, as aforesaid, and all others
whom it may concern, on or before the 1st day of September next to disperse and retire
peaceably to their respective abodes. And I do moreover warn all persons whomsoever against
aiding, abetting, or comforting the perpetrators of the aforesaid treasonable acts; and do require
all officers and other citizens, according to their respective duties and the laws of the land, to
exert their utmost endeavors to prevent and suppress such dangerous proceedings.

In testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed to
these presents, and signed the same with my hand. Done at the city of Philadelphia the seventh
day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, and of the independence of the
United States of America the nineteenth.

G. WASHINGTON,

By the President,

Edm. Randolph

Source: Claypoole's Daily Advertiser, August 11, 1794
SPECIAL SESSION MESSAGE.

UNITED STATES, May 16, 1797.

Gentlemen of the Senate arid Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:

The personal inconveniences to the members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives in leaving their families and private affairs at this season of the year are so obvious that I the more regret the extraordinary occasion which has rendered the convention of Congress indispensable.

It would have afforded me the highest satisfaction to have been able to congratulate you on a restoration of peace to the nations of Europe whose animosities have endangered our tranquillity; but we have still abundant cause of gratitude to the Supreme Dispenser of National Blessings for general health and promising seasons, for domestic and social happiness, for the rapid progress and ample acquisitions of industry through extensive territories, for civil, political, and religious liberty. While other states are desolated with foreign war or convulsed with intestine divisions, the United States present the pleasing prospect of a nation governed by mild and equal laws, generally satisfied with the possession of their rights, neither envying the advantages nor fearing the power of other nations, solicitous only for the maintenance of order and justice and the preservation of liberty, increasing daily in their attachment to a system of government in proportion to their experience of its utility, yielding a ready and general obedience to laws flowing from the reason and resting on the only solid foundation-the affections of the people.

It is with extreme regret that I shall be obliged to turn your thoughts to other circumstances, which admonish us that some of these felicities may not be lasting. But if the tide of our prosperity is full and a reflux commencing, a vigilant circumspection becomes us, that we may meet our reverses with fortitude and extricate ourselves from their consequences with all the skill we possess and all the efforts in our power.

In giving to Congress information of the state of the Union and recommending to their consideration such measures as appear to me to be necessary or expedient, according to my constitutional duty, the causes and the objects of the present extraordinary session will be explained.

After the President of the United States received information that the French Government had expressed serious discontents at some proceedings of the Government of these States said to affect the interests of France, he thought it expedient to send to that country a new minister, fully instructed to enter on such amicable discussions and to give such candid explanations as might happily remove the discontents and suspicions of the French Government and vindicate the conduct of the United States. For this purpose he selected from among his fellow-citizens a character whose integrity, talents, experience, and services had placed him in the rank of the most esteemed and respected in the nation. The direct object of his mission was expressed in his
letter of credence to the French Republic, being "to maintain that good understanding which
from the commencement of the alliance had subsisted between the two nations, and to efface
unfavorable impressions, banish suspicions, and restore that cordiality which was at once the
evidence and pledge of a friendly union." And his instructions were to the same effect, "
faithfully to represent the disposition of the Government and people of the United States (their
disposition being one), to remove jealousies and obviate complaints by strewing that they were
groundless, to restore that mutual confidence which had been so unfortunately and injuriously
impaired, and to explain the relative interests of both countries and the real sentiments of his
own."

A minister thus specially commissioned it was expected would have proved the instrument of
restoring mutual confidence between the two Republics. The first step of the French Government
corresponded with that expectation. A few days before his arrival at Paris the French minister of
foreign relations informed the American minister then resident at Paris of the formalities to be
observed by himself in taking leave, and by his successor preparatory to his reception. These
formalities they observed, and on the 9th of December presented officially to the minister of
foreign relations, the one a copy of his letters of recall, the other a copy of his letters of credence.

These were laid before the Executive Directory. Two days afterwards the minister of foreign
relations informed the recalled American minister that the Executive Directory had determined
not to receive another minister plenipotentiary from the United States until after the redress of
grievances demanded of the American Government, and which the French Republic had a right
to expect from it. The American minister immediately endeavored to ascertain whether by
refusing to receive him it was intended that he should retire from the territories of the French
Republic, and verbal answers were given that such was the intention of the Directory. For his
own justification he desired a written answer, but obtained none until toward the last of January,
when, receiving notice in writing to quit the territories of the Republic, he proceeded to
Amsterdam, where he proposed to wait for instruction from this Government. During his
residence at Paris cards of hospitality were refused him, and he was threatened with being
subjected to the jurisdiction of the minister of police; but with becoming firmness he insisted on
the protection of the law of nations due to him as the known minister of a foreign power. You
will derive further information from his dispatches, which will be laid before you.

As it is often necessary that nations should treat for the mutual advantage of their affairs, and
especially to accommodate and terminate differences, and as they can treat only by ministers, the
right of embassy is well known and established by the law and usage of nations. The refusal on
the part of France to receive our minister is, then, the denial of a right; but the refusal to receive
him until we have acceded to their demands without discussion and without investigation is to
treat us neither as allies nor as friends, nor as a sovereign state.

With this conduct of the French Government it will be proper to take into view the public
audience given to the late minister of the United States on his taking leave of the Executive
Directory. The speech of the President discloses sentiments more alarming than the refusal of a
minister, because more dangerous to our independence and union, and at the same time
studiously marked with indignities toward the Government of the United States. It evinces a
disposition to separate the people of the United States from the Government, to persuade them
that they have different affections, principles, and interests from those of their fellow citizens
whom they themselves have chosen to manage their common concerns, and thus to produce
divisions fatal to our peace. Such attempts ought to be repelled with a decision which shall
cconvince France and the world that we are not a degraded people, humiliated under a colonial
spirit of fear and sense of inferiority, fitted to be the miserable instruments of foreign influence,
and regardless of national honor, character, and interest.

I should have been happy to have thrown a veil over these transactions if it had been possible to
conceal them; but they have passed on the great theater of the world, in the face of all Europe
and America, and with such circumstances of publicity and solemnity that they can not be
disguised and will not soon be forgotten. They have inflicted a wound in the American breast. It
is my sincere desire, however, that it may be healed.

It is my sincere desire, and in this I presume I concur with you and with our constituents, to
preserve peace and friendship with all nations; and believing that neither the honor nor the
interest of the United States absolutely forbid the repetition of advances for securing these
desirable objects with France, I shall institute a fresh attempt at negotiation, and shall not fail to
promote and accelerate an accommodation on terms compatible with the rights, duties, interests,
and honor of the nation. If we have committed errors, and these can be demonstrated, we shall be
willing to correct them; if we have done injuries, we shall be willing on conviction to redress
them; and equal measures of justice we have a right to expect from France and every other nation

The diplomatic intercourse between the United States and France being at present suspended, the
Government has no means of obtaining official information from that country. Nevertheless,
there is reason to believe that the Executive Directory passed a decree on the 2d of March last
contravening in part the treaty of amity and commerce of 1778, injurious to our lawful commerce
and endangering the lives of our citizens. A copy of this decree will be laid before you.

While we are endeavoring to adjust all our differences with France by amicable negotiation, the
progress of the war in Europe, the depredations on our commerce, the personal injuries to our
citizens, and the general complexion of affairs render it my indispensable duty to recommend to
your consideration effectual measures of defense.

The commerce of the United States has become an interesting object of attention, whether we
consider it in relation to the wealth and finances or the strength and resources of the nation. With
a seacoast of near 2,000 miles in extent, opening a wide field for fisheries, navigation, and
commerce, a great portion of our citizens naturally apply their industry and enterprise to these
objects. Any serious and permanent injury to commerce would not fail to produce the most
embarrassing disorders. To prevent it from being undermined and destroyed it is essential that it
recede an adequate protection.

The naval establishment must occur to every man who considers the injuries committed on our
commerce, the insults offered to our citizens, and the description of vessels by which these
abuses have been practiced. As the sufferings of our mercantile and seafaring citizens can not be
ascribed to the omission of duties demandable, considering the neutral situation of our country,
they are to be attributed to the hope of impunity arising from a supposed inability on our part to
afford protection. To resist the consequences of such impressions on the minds of foreign nations
and to guard against the degradation and servility which they must finally stamp on the
American character is an important duty of Government.

A naval power, next to the militia, is the natural defense of the United States. The experience of
the last war would be sufficient to shew that a moderate naval force, such as would be easily
within the present abilities of the Union, would have been sufficient to have baffled many
formidable transportations of troops from one State to another, which were then practiced. Our
seacoasts, from their great extent, are more easily annoyed and more easily defended by a naval
force than any other. With all the materials our country abounds; in skill our naval architects and
navigators are equal to any, and commanders and seamen will not be wanting.

But although the establishment of a permanent system of naval defense appears to be requisite, I
am sensible it can not be formed so speedily and extensively as the present crisis demands.
Hitherto I have thought proper to prevent the sailing of armed vessels except on voyages to the
East Indies, where general usage and the danger from pirates appeared to render the permission
proper. Yet the restriction has originated solely from a wish to prevent collisions with the powers
at war, contravening the act of Congress of June, 1794, and not from any doubt entertained by
me of the policy and propriety of permitting our vessels to employ means of defense while
engaged in a lawful foreign commerce. It remains for Congress to prescribe such regulations as
will enable our seafaring citizens to defend themselves against violations of the law of nations,
and at the same time restrain them from committing acts of hostility against the powers at war. In
addition to this voluntary provision for defense by individual citizens, it appears to me necessary
to equip the frigates, and provide other vessels of inferior force, to take under convoy such
merchant vessels as shall remain unarmed.

The greater part of the cruisers whose depredations have been most injurious have been built and
some of them partially equipped in the United States. Although an effectual remedy may be
attended with difficulty, yet I have thought it my duty to present the subject generally to your
consideration. If a mode can be devised by the wisdom of Congress to prevent the resources of
the United States from being converted into the means of annoying our trade, a great evil will be
prevented. With the same view, I think it proper to mention that some of our citizens resident
abroad have fitted out privateers, and others have voluntarily taken the command, or entered on
board of them, and committed spoliations on the commerce of the United States. Such unnatural
and iniquitous practices can be restrained only by severe punishments.

But besides a protection of our commerce on the seas, I think it highly necessary to protect it at
home, where it is collected in our most important ports. The distance of the United States from
Europe and the well-known promptitude, ardor, and courage of the people in defense of their
country happily diminish the probability of invasion. Nevertheless, to guard against sudden and
predatory incursions the situation of some of our principal seaports demands your consideration.
And as our country is vulnerable in other interests besides those of its commerce, you will
seriously deliberate whether the means of general defense ought not to be increased by an
addition to the regular artillery and cavalry, and by arrangements for forming a provisional army.
With the same view, and as a measure which, even in a time of universal peace; ought not to be
neglected, I recommend to your consideration a revision of the laws for organizing, arming, and
disciplining the militia, to render that natural and safe defense of the country efficacious.

Although it is very true that we ought not to involve ourselves in the political system of Europe,
but to keep ourselves always distinct and separate from it if we can, yet to effect this separation,
early, punctual, and continual information of the current chain of events and of the political
projects in contemplation is no less necessary than if we were directly concerned in them. It is
necessary, in order to the discovery of the efforts made to draw us into the vortex, in season to
make preparations against them. However we may consider ourselves, the maritime and
commercial powers of the world will consider the United States of America as forming a weight
in that balance of power in Europe which never can be forgotten or neglected. It would not only
be against our interest, but it would be doing wrong to one-half of Europe, at least, if we should
voluntarily throw ourselves into either scale. It is a natural policy for a nation that studies to be
neutral to consult with other nations engaged in the same studies and pursuits. At the same time
that measures might be pursued with this view, our treaties with Prussia and Sweden, one of
which is expired and the other near expiring, might be renewed.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:

It is particularly your province to consider the state of the public finances, and to adopt such
measures respecting them as exigencies shall be found to require. The preservation of public
credit, the regular extinguishment of the public debt, and a provision of funds to defray any
extraordinary expenses will of course call for your serious attention. Although the imposition of
new burthens can not be in itself agreeable, yet there is no ground to doubt that the American
people will expect from you such measures as their actual engagements, their present security,
and future interests demand.

Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:

The present situation of our country imposes an obligation on all the departments of Government
to adopt an explicit and decided conduct. In my situation an exposition of the principles by
which my Administration will be governed ought not to be omitted.

It is impossible to conceal from ourselves or the world what has been before observed, that
endeavors have been employed to foster and establish a division between the Government and
people of the United States. To investigate the causes which have encouraged this attempt is not
necessary; but to repel, by decided and united councils, insinuations so derogatory to the honor
and aggressions so dangerous to the Constitution, union, and even independence of the nation is
an indispensable duty.

It must not be permitted to be doubted whether the people of the United States will support the
Government established by their voluntary consent and appointed by their free choice, or
whether, by surrendering themselves to the direction of foreign and domestic factions, in
opposition to their own Government, they will forfeit the honorable station they have hitherto
maintained.
For myself, having never been indifferent to what concerned the interests of my country, devoted
the best part of my life to obtain and support its independence, and constantly witnessed the
patriotism, fidelity, and perseverance of my fellow-citizens on the most trying occasions, it is not
for me to hesitate or abandon a cause in which my heart has been so long engaged.

Convinced that the conduct of the Government has been just and impartial to foreign nations,
that those internal regulations which have been established by law for the preservation of peace
are in their nature proper, and that they have been fairly executed, nothing will ever be done by
me to impair the national engagements, to innovate upon principles which have been so
deliberately and uprightly established, or to surrender in any manner the rights of the
Government. To enable me to maintain this declaration I rely, under God, with entire confidence
on the firm and enlightened support of the National Legislature and upon the virtue and
patriotism of my fellow-citizens.

JOHN ADAMS.
Jefferson's Indian Addresses

To the Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation

Washington, January 10, 1806

MY FRIENDS AND CHILDREN, CHIEFLY OF THE CHEROKEE NATION, --

Having now finished our business and to mutual satisfaction, I cannot take leave of you without expressing the satisfaction I have received from your visit. I see with my own eyes that the endeavors we have been making to encourage and lead you in the way of improving your situation have not been unsuccessful; it has been like grain sown in good ground, producing abundantly. You are becoming farmers, learning the use of the plough and the hoe, enclosing your grounds and employing that labor in their cultivation which you formerly employed in hunting and in war; and I see handsome specimens of cotton cloth raised, spun and wove by yourselves. You are also raising cattle and hogs for your food, and horses to assist your labors.

Go on, my children, in the same way and be assured the further you advance in it the happier and more respectable you will be.

Our brethren, whom you have happened to meet here from the West and Northwest, have enabled you to compare your situation now with what it was formerly. They also make the comparison, and they see how far you are ahead of them, and seeing what you are they are encouraged to do as you have done. You will find your next want to be mills to grind your corn, which by relieving your women from the loss of time in beating it into meal, will enable them to spin and weave more. When a man has enclosed and improved his farm, builds a good house on it and raised plentiful stocks of animals, he will wish when he dies that these things shall go to his wife and children, whom he loves more than he does his other relations, and for whom he will work with pleasure during his life. You will, therefore, find it necessary to establish laws for this. When a man has property, earned by his own labor, he will not like to see another come and take it from him because he happens to be stronger, or else to defend it by spilling blood. You will find it necessary then to appoint good men, as judges, to decide contests between man and man, according to reason and to the rules you shall establish. If you wish to be aided by our counsel and experience in these things we shall always be ready to assist you with our advice.

My children, it is unnecessary for me to advise you against spending all your time and labor in warring with and destroying your fellow-men, and wasting your own members. You already see the folly and iniquity of it. Your young men, however, are not yet sufficiently sensible of it. Some of them cross the Mississippi to go and destroy people who have never done them an injury. My children, this is wrong and must not be; if we permit them to cross the Mississippi to war with the Indians on the other side of that river, we must let those Indians cross the river to take revenge on you. I say again, this must not be. The Mississippi now belongs to us. It must not be a river of blood. It is now the water-path along which all our people of Natchez, St. Louis, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and the western parts of Pennsylvania and Virginia are constantly passing with their property, to and from New Orleans. Young men going to war are not easily restrained. Finding our people on the river they will rob them, perhaps kill them. This would bring on a war between us and you. It is better to stop this in time by forbidding your
young men to go across the river to make war. If they go to visit or to live with the Cherokees on
the other side of the river we shall not object to that. That country is ours. We will permit them to
live in it.

My children, this is what I wished to say to you. To go on in learning to cultivate the earth and to
avoid war. If any of your neighbors injure you, our beloved men whom we place with you will
endeavor to obtain justice for you and we will support them in it. If any of your bad people injure
your neighbors, be ready to acknowledge it and to do them justice. It is more honorable to repair
a wrong than to persist in it. Tell all your chiefs, your men, women and children, that I take them
by the hand and hold it fast. That I am their father, wish their happiness and well-being, and am
always ready to promote their good.

My children, I thank you for your visit and pray to the Great Spirit who made us all and planted
us all in this land to live together like brothers that He will conduct you safely to your homes,
and grant you to find your families and your friends in good health.
The Man in the Arena: Citizenship in a Republic*

*Selections from and address delivered at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23, 1910.

Let the man of learning, the man of lettered leisure, beware of that queer and cheap temptation to pose to himself and to others as a cynic, as the man who has outgrown emotions and beliefs, the man to whom good and evil are as one. The poorest way to face life is to face it with a sneer. There are many men who feel a kind of twister pride in cynicism; there are many who confine themselves to criticism of the way others do what they themselves dare not even attempt. There is no more unhealthy being, no man less worthy of respect, than he who either really holds, or feigns to hold, an attitude of sneering disbelief toward all that is great and lofty, whether in achievement or in that noble effort which, even if it fails, comes to second achievement. A cynical habit of thought and speech, a readiness to criticise work which the critic himself never tries to perform, an intellectual aloofness which will not accept contact with life's realities - all these are marks, not as the possessor would fain to think, of superiority but of weakness. They mark the men unfit to bear their part painfully in the stern strife of living, who seek, in the affection of contempt for the achievements of others, to hide from others and from themselves in their own weakness. The rôle is easy; there is none easier, save only the rôle of the man who sneers alike at both criticism and performance.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face in marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who err, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. Shame on the man of cultivated taste who permits refinement to develop into fastidiousness that unfits him for doing the rough work of a workaday world. Among the free peoples who govern themselves there is but a small field of usefulness open for the men of cloistered life who shrink from contact with their fellows. Still less room is there for those who deride of slight what is done by those who actually bear the brunt of the day; nor yet for those others who always profess that they would like to take action, if only the conditions of life were not exactly what they actually are. The man who does nothing cuts the same sordid figure in the pages of history, whether he be a cynic, or fop, or voluptuary. There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder. Well for these men if they succeed; well also, though not so well, if they fail, given only that they have nobly ventured, and have put forth all their heart and strength. It is war-worn Hotspur, spent with hard fighting, he of the many errors and valiant end, over whose memory we love to linger, not over the memory of the young lord who "but for the vile guns would have been a valiant soldier."
France has taught many lessons to other nations: surely one of the most important lesson is the
lesson her whole history teaches, that a high artistic and literary development is compatible with
notable leadership in arms and statecraft. The brilliant gallantry of the French soldier has for
many centuries been proverbial; and during these same centuries at every court in Europe the
"freemasons of fashion: have treated the French tongue as their common speech; while every
artist and man of letters, and every man of science able to appreciate that marvelous instrument
of precision, French prose, had turned toward France for aid and inspiration. How long the
leadership in arms and letters has lasted is curiously illustrated by the fact that the earliest
masterpiece in a modern tongue is the splendid French epic which tells of Roland's doom and the
vengeance of Charlemange when the lords of the Frankish hosts where stricken at Roncesvalles.

Let those who have, keep, let those who have not, strive to attain, a high standard of cultivation
and scholarship. Yet let us remember that these stand second to certain other things. There is
need of a sound body, and even more of a sound mind. But above mind and above body stands
character - the sum of those qualities which we mean when we speak of a man's force and
courage, of his good faith and sense of honor. I believe in exercise for the body, always provided
that we keep in mind that physical development is a means and not an end. I believe, of course,
in giving to all the people a good education. But the education must contain much besides book-
learning in order to be really good. We must ever remember that no keenness and subtleness of
intellect, no polish, no cleverness, in any way make up for the lack of the great solid qualities.
Self restraint, self mastery, common sense, the power of accepting individual responsibility and
yet of acting in conjunction with others, courage and resolution - these are the qualities which
mark a masterful people. Without them no people can control itself, or save itself from being
controlled from the outside. I speak to brilliant assemblage; I speak in a great university which
represents the flower of the highest intellectual development; I pay all homage to intellect and to
elaborate and specialized training of the intellect; and yet I know I shall have the assent of all of
you present when I add that more important still are the commonplace, every-day qualities and
virtues.

Such ordinary, every-day qualities include the will and the power to work, to fight at need, and to
have plenty of healthy children. The need that the average man shall work is so obvious as hardly
to warrant insistence. There are a few people in every country so born that they can lead lives of
leisure. These fill a useful function if they make it evident that leisure does not mean idleness;
for some of the most valuable work needed by civilization is essentially non-remunerative in its
character, and of course the people who do this work should in large part be drawn from those to
whom remuneration is an object of indifference. But the average man must earn his own
livelihood. He should be trained to do so, and he should be trained to feel that he occupies a
contemptible position if he does not do so; that he is not an object of envy if he is idle, at
whichever end of the social scale he stands, but an object of contempt, an object of derision.

In the next place, the good man should be both a strong and a brave man; that is, he should be
able to fight, he should be able to serve his country as a soldier, if the need arises. There are
well-meaning philosophers who declaim against the unrighteousness of war. They are right only
if they lay all their emphasis upon the unrighteousness. War is a dreadful thing, and unjust war is
a crime against humanity. But it is such a crime because it is unjust, not because it is a war. The
choice must ever be in favor of righteousness, and this is whether the alternative be peace or
whether the alternative be war. The question must not be merely, Is there to be peace or war?
The question must be, Is it right to prevail? Are the great laws of righteousness once more to be
fulfilled? And the answer from a strong and virile people must be "Yes," whatever the cost.
Every honorable effort should always be made to avoid war, just as every honorable effort
should always be made by the individual in private life to keep out of a brawl, to keep out of
trouble; but no self-respecting individual, no self-respecting nation, can or ought to submit to
wrong.

Finally, even more important than ability to work, even more important than ability to fight at
need, is it to remember that chief of blessings for any nations is that it shall leave its seed to
inherit the land. It was the crown of blessings in Biblical times and it is the crown of blessings
now. The greatest of all curses in is the curse of sterility, and the severest of all condemnations
should be that visited upon willful sterility. The first essential in any civilization is that the man
and women shall be father and mother of healthy children, so that the race shall increase and not
decrease. If that is not so, if through no fault of the society there is failure to increase, it is a great
misfortune. If the failure is due to the deliberate and wilful fault, then it is not merely a
misfortune, it is one of those crimes of ease and self-indulgence, of shrinking from pain and
effort and risk, which in the long run Nature punishes more heavily than any other. If we of the
great republics, if we, the free people who claim to have emancipated ourselves form the
thraldom of wrong and error, bring down on our heads the curse that comes upon the willfully
barren, then it will be an idle waste of breath to prattle of our achievements, to boast of all that
we have done. No refinement of life, no delicacy of taste, no material progress, no sordid
heaping up riches, no sensuous development of art and literature, can in any way compensate for
the loss of the great fundamental virtues; and of these great fundamental virtues the greatest is
the race's power to perpetuate the race.
MY DEAR SIR:

I quite agree with Judge Lindsey that the Boy Scout Movement is of peculiar importance to the whole country. It has already done much good, and it will do far more, for it is in its essence a practical scheme through which to impart a proper standard of ethical conduct, proper standards of fair play and consideration for others, and courage and decency, to boys who have never been reached and never will be reached by the ordinary type of preaching, lay or clerical. I have been particularly interested in that extract of a letter from a scout master in the Philippines, which runs as follows:

"It might interest you to know that at a recent fire in Manila which devastated acres of ground and rendered 3,000 people homeless, that two patrols of the Manila scouts reached the fire almost with the fire companies, reported to the proper authorities and worked for hours under very trying conditions helping frightened natives into places of safety, removing valuables and other articles from houses that apparently were in the path of the flames, and performing cheerfully and efficiently all the tasks given to them by the firemen and scout master. They were complimented in the public press, and in a kind editorial about their work.

"During the recent Carnival the services of the boys were requested by the Carnival officers, and for a period of ten days they were on duty performing all manner of service in the Carnival grounds, directing strangers to hotels, and acting as guides and helpers in a hundred ways."

What these Boy Scouts of the Philippines have just done, I think our Boy Scouts in every town and country district should train themselves to be able to do. The movement is one for efficiency and patriotism. It does not try to make soldiers of Boy Scouts, but to make boys who will turn out as men to be fine citizens, and who will, if their country needs them, make better soldiers for having been scouts. No one can be a good American unless he is a good citizen, and every boy ought to train himself so that as a man he will be able to do his full duty to the community. I want to see the Boy Scouts not merely utter fine sentiments, but act on them; not merely sing, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," but act in a way that will give them a country to be proud of. No man is a good citizen unless he so acts as to show that he actually uses the Ten Commandments, and translates the Golden Rule into his life conduct—and I don't mean by this in exceptional cases under spectacular circumstances, but I mean applying the Ten Commandments and the Golden
Rule in the ordinary affairs of every-day life. I hope the Boy Scouts will practice truth and square dealing, and courage and honesty, so that when as young men they begin to take a part not only in earning their own livelihood, but in governing the community, they may be able to show in practical fashion their insistence upon the great truth that the eighth and ninth commandments are directly related to every-day life, not only between men as such in their private relations, but between men and the government of which they are part. Indeed the boys even while only boys can have a very real effect upon the conduct of the grown up members of the community, for decency and square dealing are just as contagious as vice and corruption.

Every healthy boy ought to feel and will feel that in order to amount to anything, it is necessary to have a constructive, and not merely a destructive, nature; and if he can keep this feeling as he grows up he has taken his first step toward good citizenship. The man who tears down and criticizes and scolds may be a good citizen, but only in a negative sense; and if he never does anything else he is apt not to be a good citizen at all. The man who counts, and the boy who counts, are the man and boy who steadily endeavor to build up, to improve, to better living conditions everywhere and all about them.

But the boy can do an immense amount right in the present, entirely aside from training himself to be a good citizen in the future; and he can only do this if he associates himself with other boys. Let the Boy Scouts see to it that the best use is made of the parks and playgrounds in their villages and home towns. A gang of toughs may make a playground impossible; and if the Boy Scouts in the neighborhood of that particular playground are fit for their work, they will show that they won't permit any such gang of toughs to have its way. Moreover, let the Boy Scouts take the lead in seeing that the parks and playgrounds are turned to a really good account. I hope, by the way, that one of the prime teachings among the Boy Scouts will be the teaching against vandalism. Let it be a point of honor to protect birds, trees and flowers, and so to make our country more beautiful and not more ugly, because we have lived in it.

The same qualities that mean success or failure to the nation as a whole, mean success or failure in men and boys individually. The Boy Scouts must war against the same foes and vices that most hurt the nation; and they must try to develop the same virtues that the nation most needs. To be helpless, self-indulgent, or wasteful, will turn the boy into a mighty poor kind of a man, just as the indulgence in such vices by the men of a nation means the ruin of the nation. Let the boy stand stoutly against his enemies both from without and from within, let him show courage in confronting fearlessly one set of enemies, and in controlling and mastering the others. Any boy is worth nothing if he has not got courage, courage to stand up against the forces of evil, and courage to stand up in the right path. Let him be unselfish and gentle, as well as strong and brave. It should be a matter of pride to him that he is not afraid of anyone, and that he scorns not to be gentle and considerate to everyone, and especially to those who are weaker than he is. If he doesn't treat his mother and sisters well, then he is a poor creature no matter what else he does; just as a man who doesn't treat his wife well is a poor kind of citizen no matter what his other qualities may be. And, by the way, don't ever forget to let the boy know that courtesy, politeness, and good manners must not be neglected. They are not little things, because they are used at every turn in daily life. Let the boy remember also that in addition to courage, unselfishness, and fair dealing, he must have efficiency, he must have knowledge, he must cultivate a sound body and a good mind, and train himself so that he can act with quick decision in any crisis that may
arise. Mind, eye, muscle, all must be trained so that the boy can master himself, and thereby learn to master his fate. I heartily wish all good luck to the movement.

Very sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.
Woodrow Wilson

*First Inaugural Address*

delivered 4 April 1913

There has been a change of government. It began two years ago, when the House of Representatives became Democratic by a decisive majority. It has now been completed. The Senate about to assemble will also be Democratic. The offices of President and Vice-President have been put into the hands of Democrats. What does the change mean? That is the question that is uppermost in our minds to-day. That is the question I am going to try to answer, in order, if I may, to interpret the occasion.

It means much more than the mere success of a party. The success of a party means little except when the Nation is using that party for a large and definite purpose. No one can mistake the purpose for which the Nation now seeks to use the Democratic Party. It seeks to use it to interpret a change in its own plans and point of view. Some old things with which we had grown familiar, and which had begun to creep into the very habit of our thought and of our lives, have altered their aspect as we have latterly looked critically upon them, with fresh, awakened eyes; have dropped their disguises and shown themselves alien and sinister. Some new things, as we look frankly upon them, willing to comprehend their real character, have come to assume the aspect of things long believed in and familiar, stuff of our own convictions. We have been refreshed by a new insight into our own life.

We see that in many things that life is very great. It is incomparably great in its material aspects, in its body of wealth, in the diversity and sweep of its energy, in the industries which have been conceived and built up by the genius of individual men and the limitless enterprise of groups of men. It is great, also, very great, in its moral force. Nowhere else in the world have noble men and women exhibited in more striking forms the beauty and the energy of sympathy and helpfulness and counsel in their efforts to rectify wrong, alleviate suffering, and set the weak in the way of strength and hope. We have built up, moreover, a great system of government, which has stood through a long age as in many respects a model for those who seek to set liberty upon foundations that will endure against fortuitous change, against storm and accident. Our life contains every great thing, and contains it in rich abundance.

But the evil has come with the good, and much fine gold has been corroded. With riches has come inexcusable waste. We have squandered a great part of what we might have used, and have not stopped to conserve the exceeding bounty of nature, without which our genius for enterprise would have been worthless and impotent, scorning to be careful, shamefully prodigal as well as admirably efficient. We have been proud of our industrial achievements, but we have not hitherto stopped thoughtfully enough to count the human cost, the cost of lives snuffed out, of energies overtaxed and broken, the fearful physical and spiritual cost to the men and women and children upon whom the dead weight and burden of it all has fallen pitilessly the years through. The groans and agony of it all had not yet reached our ears, the solemn, moving undertone of our life, coming up out of the mines and factories, and out of every home where the struggle had its intimate and familiar seat. With the great Government went many deep secret things which we
too long delayed to look into and scrutinize with candid, fearless eyes. The great Government we loved has too often been made use of for private and selfish purposes, and those who used it had forgotten the people.

At last a vision has been vouchsafed us of our life as a whole. We see the bad with the good, the debased and decadent with the sound and vital. With this vision we approach new affairs. Our duty is to cleanse, to reconsider, to restore, to correct the evil without impairing the good, to purify and humanize every process of our common life without weakening or sentimentalizing it. There has been something crude and heartless and unfeeling in our haste to succeed and be great. Our thought has been "Let every man look out for himself, let every generation look out for itself," while we reared giant machinery which made it impossible that any but those who stood at the levers of control should have a chance to look out for themselves. We had not forgotten our morals. We remembered well enough that we had set up a policy which was meant to serve the humblest as well as the most powerful, with an eye single to the standards of justice and fair play, and remembered it with pride. But we were very heedless and in a hurry to be great. We have come now to the sober second thought. The scales of heedlessness have fallen from our eyes. We have made up our minds to square every process of our national life again with the standards we so proudly set up at the beginning and have always carried at our hearts. Our work is a work of restoration.

We have itemized with some degree of particularity the things that ought to be altered and here are some of the chief items: A tariff which cuts us off from our proper part in the commerce of the world, violates the just principles of taxation, and makes the Government a facile instrument in the hand of private interests; a banking and currency system based upon the necessity of the Government to sell its bonds fifty years ago and perfectly adapted to concentrating cash and restricting credits; an industrial system which, take it on all its sides, financial as well as administrative, holds capital in leading strings, restricts the liberties and limits the opportunities of labor, and exploits without renewing or conserving the natural resources of the country; a body of agricultural activities never yet given the efficiency of great business undertakings or served as it should be through the instrumentality of science taken directly to the farm, or afforded the facilities of credit best suited to its practical needs; watercourses undeveloped, waste places unreclaimed, forests untended, fast disappearing without plan or prospect of renewal, un-regarded waste heaps at every mine. We have studied as perhaps no other nation has the most effective means of production, but we have not studied cost or economy as we should either as organizers of industry, as statesmen, or as individuals.

Nor have we studied and perfected the means by which government may be put at the service of humanity, in safeguarding the health of the Nation, the health of its men and its women and its children, as well as their rights in the struggle for existence. This is no sentimental duty. The firm basis of government is justice, not pity. These are matters of justice. There can be no equality or opportunity, the first essential of justice in the body politic, if men and women and children be not shielded in their lives, their very vitality, from the consequences of great industrial and social processes which they can not alter, control, or singly cope with. Society must see to it that it does not itself crush or weaken or damage its own constituent parts. The first duty of law is to keep sound the society it serves. Sanitary laws, pure food laws, and laws determining conditions of
labor which individuals are powerless to determine for themselves are intimate parts of the very 
business of justice and legal efficiency.

These are some of the things we ought to do, and not leave the others undone, the old-fashioned, 
never-to-be-neglected, fundamental safeguarding of property and of individual right. This is the 
high enterprise of the new day: To lift everything that concerns our life as a Nation to the light 
that shines from the hearthfire of every man's conscience and vision of the right. It is 
inconceivable that we should do this as partisans; it is inconceivable we should do it in ignorance 
of the facts as they are or in blind haste. We shall restore, not destroy. We shall deal with our 
economic system as it is and as it may be modified, not as it might be if we had a clean sheet of 
paper to write upon; and step by step we shall make it what it should be, in the spirit of those 
who question their own wisdom and seek counsel and knowledge, not shallow self-satisfaction or 
the excitement of excursions whither they can not tell. Justice, and only justice, shall always be 
our motto.

And yet it will be no cool process of mere science. The Nation has been deeply stirred, stirred by 
a solemn passion, stirred by the knowledge of wrong, of ideals lost, of government too often 
debauched and made an instrument of evil. The feelings with which we face this new age of right 
and opportunity sweep across our heartstrings like some air out of God's own presence, where 
justice and mercy are reconciled and the judge and the brother are one. We know our task to be 
no mere task of politics but a task which shall search us through and through, whether we be able 
to understand our time and the need of our people, whether we be indeed their spokesmen and 
interpreters, whether we have the pure heart to comprehend and the rectified will to choose our 
high course of action.

This is not a day of triumph; it is a day of dedication. Here muster, not the forces of party, but the 
forces of humanity. Men's hearts wait upon us; men's lives hang in the balance; men's hopes call 
upon us to say what we will do. Who shall live up to the great trust? Who dares fail to try? I 
summon all honest men, all patriotic, all forward-looking men, to my side. God helping me, I 
will not fail them, if they will but counsel and sustain me!
Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the 77th Congress:

I address you, the members of this new Congress, at a moment unprecedented in the history of the union. I use the word “unprecedented” because at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today.

Since the permanent formation of our government under the Constitution in 1789, most of the periods of crisis in our history have related to our domestic affairs. And, fortunately, only one of these -- the four-year war between the States -- ever threatened our national unity. Today, thank God, 130,000,000 Americans in 48 States have forgotten points of the compass in our national unity.

It is true that prior to 1914 the United States often has been disturbed by events in other continents. We have even engaged in two wars with European nations and in a number of undeclared wars in the West Indies, in the Mediterranean and in the Pacific, for the maintenance of American rights and for the principles of peaceful commerce. But in no case had a serious threat been raised against our national safety or our continued independence.

What I seek to convey is the historic truth that the United States as a nation has at all times maintained opposition -- clear, definite opposition -- to any attempt to lock us in behind an ancient Chinese wall while the procession of civilization went past. Today, thinking of our children and of their children, we oppose enforced isolation for ourselves or for any other part of the Americas.

That determination of ours, extending over all these years, was proved, for example, in the early days during the quarter century of wars following the French Revolution. While the Napoleonic struggles did threaten interests of the United States because of the French foothold in the West Indies and in Louisiana, and while we engaged in the War of 1812 to vindicate our right to peaceful trade, it is nevertheless clear that neither France nor Great Britain nor any other nation was aiming at domination of the whole world.

And in like fashion, from 1815 to 1914 -- ninety-nine years -- no single war in Europe or in Asia constituted a real threat against our future or against the future of any other American nation.

Except in the Maximilian interlude in Mexico, no foreign power sought to establish itself in this hemisphere. And the strength of the British fleet in the Atlantic has been a friendly strength; it is still a friendly strength.
Even when the World War broke out in 1914, it seemed to contain only small threat of danger to our own American future. But as time went on, as we remember, the American people began to visualize what the downfall of democratic nations might mean to our own democracy.

We need not overemphasize imperfections in the peace of Versailles. We need not harp on failure of the democracies to deal with problems of world reconstruction. We should remember that the peace of 1919 was far less unjust than the kind of pacification which began even before Munich, and which is being carried on under the new order of tyranny that seeks to spread over every continent today. The American people have unalterably set their faces against that tyranny.

I suppose that every realist knows that the democratic way of life is at this moment being directly assailed in every part of the world -- assailed either by arms or by secret spreading of poisonous propaganda by those who seek to destroy unity and promote discord in nations that are still at peace. During 16 long months this assault has blotted out the whole pattern of democratic life in an appalling number of independent nations, great and small. And the assailants are still on the march, threatening other nations, great and small.

Therefore, as your President, performing my constitutional duty to "give to the Congress information of the state of the union," I find it unhappily necessary to report that the future and the safety of our country and of our democracy are overwhelmingly involved in events far beyond our borders.

Armed defense of democratic existence is now being gallantly waged in four continents. If that defense fails, all the population and all the resources of Europe and Asia, and Africa and Austral-Asia will be dominated by conquerors. And let us remember that the total of those populations in those four continents, the total of those populations and their resources greatly exceed the sum total of the population and the resources of the whole of the Western Hemisphere -- yes, many times over.

In times like these it is immature -- and, incidentally, untrue -- for anybody to brag that an unprepared America, single-handed and with one hand tied behind its back, can hold off the whole world.

No realistic American can expect from a dictator’s peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion -- or even good business. Such a peace would bring no security for us or for our neighbors. Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

As a nation we may take pride in the fact that we are soft-hearted; but we cannot afford to be soft-headed. We must always be wary of those who with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal preach the "ism" of appeasement. We must especially beware of that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their own nests.

I have recently pointed out how quickly the tempo of modern warfare could bring into our very midst the physical attack which we must eventually expect if the dictator nations win this war.
There is much loose talk of our immunity from immediate and direct invasion from across the
seas. Obviously, as long as the British Navy retains its power, no such danger exists. Even if
there were no British Navy, it is not probable that any enemy would be stupid enough to attack
us by landing troops in the United States from across thousands of miles of ocean, until it had
acquired strategic bases from which to operate.

But we learn much from the lessons of the past years in Europe -- particularly the lesson of
Norway, whose essential seaports were captured by treachery and surprise built up over a series
of years. The first phase of the invasion of this hemisphere would not be the landing of regular
troops. The necessary strategic points would be occupied by secret agents and by their dupes --
and great numbers of them are already here and in Latin America. As long as the aggressor
nations maintain the offensive they, not we, will choose the time and the place and the method of
their attack.

And that is why the future of all the American Republics is today in serious danger. That is why
this annual message to the Congress is unique in our history. That is why every member of the
executive branch of the government and every member of the Congress face great responsibility,
great accountability. The need of the moment is that our actions and our policy should be
devoted primarily -- almost exclusively -- to meeting this foreign peril. For all our domestic
problems are now a part of the great emergency.

Just as our national policy in internal affairs has been based upon a decent respect for the rights
and the dignity of all our fellow men within our gates, so our national policy in foreign affairs
has been based on a decent respect for the rights and the dignity of all nations, large and small.
And the justice of morality must and will win in the end.

Our national policy is this:

First, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we are
committed to all-inclusive national defense.

Secondly, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we
are committed to full support of all those resolute people everywhere who are resisting
aggression and are thereby keeping war away from our hemisphere. By this support we express
our determination that the democratic cause shall prevail, and we strengthen the defense and the
security of our own nation.

Third, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we are
committed to the proposition that principles of morality and considerations for our own security
will never permit us to acquiesce in a peace dictated by aggressors and sponsored by
appeasers. We know that enduring peace cannot be bought at the cost of other people's freedom.

In the recent national election there was no substantial difference between the two great parties
in respect to that national policy. No issue was fought out on this line before the American
electorate. And today it is abundantly evident that American citizens everywhere are demanding
and supporting speedy and complete action in recognition of obvious danger.
Therefore, the immediate need is a swift and driving increase in our armament production. Leaders of industry and labor have responded to our summons. Goals of speed have been set. In some cases these goals are being reached ahead of time. In some cases we are on schedule; in other cases there are slight but not serious delays. And in some cases -- and, I am sorry to say, very important cases -- we are all concerned by the slowness of the accomplishment of our plans.

The Army and Navy, however, have made substantial progress during the past year. Actual experience is improving and speeding up our methods of production with every passing day. And today's best is not good enough for tomorrow.

I am not satisfied with the progress thus far made. The men in charge of the program represent the best in training, in ability, and in patriotism. They are not satisfied with the progress thus far made. None of us will be satisfied until the job is done.

No matter whether the original goal was set too high or too low, our objective is quicker and better results.

To give you two illustrations:

We are behind schedule in turning out finished airplanes. We are working day and night to solve the innumerable problems and to catch up.

We are ahead of schedule in building warships, but we are working to get even further ahead of that schedule.

To change a whole nation from a basis of peacetime production of implements of peace to a basis of wartime production of implements of war is no small task. And the greatest difficulty comes at the beginning of the program, when new tools, new plant facilities, new assembly lines, new shipways must first be constructed before the actual material begins to flow steadily and speedily from them.

The Congress of course, must rightly keep itself informed at all times of the progress of the program. However, there is certain information, as the Congress itself will readily recognize, which, in the interests of our own security and those of the nations that we are supporting, must of needs be kept in confidence.

New circumstances are constantly begetting new needs for our safety. I shall ask this Congress for greatly increased new appropriations and authorizations to carry on what we have begun.

I also ask this Congress for authority and for funds sufficient to manufacture additional munitions and war supplies of many kinds, to be turned over to those nations which are now in actual war with aggressor nations. Our most useful and immediate role is to act as an arsenal for them as well as for ourselves. They do not need manpower, but they do need billions of dollars’ worth of the weapons of defense.
The time is near when they will not be able to pay for them all in ready cash. We cannot, and we will not, tell them that they must surrender merely because of present inability to pay for the weapons which we know they must have.

I do not recommend that we make them a loan of dollars with which to pay for these weapons -- a loan to be repaid in dollars. I recommend that we make it possible for those nations to continue to obtain war materials in the United States, fitting their orders into our own program. And nearly all of their material would, if the time ever came, be useful in our own defense.

Taking counsel of expert military and naval authorities, considering what is best for our own security, we are free to decide how much should be kept here and how much should be sent abroad to our friends who, by their determined and heroic resistance, are giving us time in which to make ready our own defense.

For what we send abroad we shall be repaid, repaid within a reasonable time following the close of hostilities, repaid in similar materials, or at our option in other goods of many kinds which they can produce and which we need.

Let us say to the democracies: "We Americans are vitally concerned in your defense of freedom. We are putting forth our energies, our resources, and our organizing powers to give you the strength to regain and maintain a free world. We shall send you in ever-increasing numbers, ships, planes, tanks, guns. That is our purpose and our pledge."

In fulfillment of this purpose we will not be intimidated by the threats of dictators that they will regard as a breach of international law or as an act of war our aid to the democracies which dare to resist their aggression. Such aid -- such aid is not an act of war, even if a dictator should unilaterally proclaim it so to be.

And when the dictators -- if the dictators -- are ready to make war upon us, they will not wait for an act of war on our part.

They did not wait for Norway or Belgium or the Netherlands to commit an act of war. Their only interest is in a new one-way international law, which lacks mutuality in its observance and therefore becomes an instrument of oppression. The happiness of future generations of Americans may well depend on how effective and how immediate we can make our aid felt. No one can tell the exact character of the emergency situations that we may be called upon to meet. The nation's hands must not be tied when the nation's life is in danger.

Yes, and we must prepare, all of us prepare, to make the sacrifices that the emergency -- almost as serious as war itself -- demands. Whatever stands in the way of speed and efficiency in defense, in defense preparations of any kind, must give way to the national need.

A free nation has the right to expect full cooperation from all groups. A free nation has the right to look to the leaders of business, of labor, and of agriculture to take the lead in stimulating effort, not among other groups but within their own group.
The best way of dealing with the few slackers or trouble-makers in our midst is, first, to shame them by patriotic example, and if that fails, to use the sovereignty of government to save government.

As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone. Those who man our defenses and those behind them who build our defenses must have the stamina and the courage which come from unshakable belief in the manner of life which they are defending. The mighty action that we are calling for cannot be based on a disregard of all the things worth fighting for.

The nation takes great satisfaction and much strength from the things which have been done to make its people conscious of their individual stake in the preservation of democratic life in America. Those things have toughened the fiber of our people, have renewed their faith and strengthened their devotion to the institutions we make ready to protect.

Certainly this is no time for any of us to stop thinking about the social and economic problems which are the root cause of the social revolution which is today a supreme factor in the world. For there is nothing mysterious about the foundations of a healthy and strong democracy.

The basic things expected by our people of their political and economic systems are simple. They are:

1. Equality of opportunity for youth and for others.
2. Jobs for those who can work.
4. The ending of special privilege for the few.
5. The preservation of civil liberties for all.
6. The enjoyment -- The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living.

These are the simple, the basic things that must never be lost sight of in the turmoil and unbelievable complexity of our modern world. The inner and abiding strength of our economic and political systems is dependent upon the degree to which they fulfill these expectations.

Many subjects connected with our social economy call for immediate improvement. As examples:

- We should bring more citizens under the coverage of old-age pensions and unemployment insurance.
- We should widen the opportunities for adequate medical care.
We should plan a better system by which persons deserving or needing gainful employment may obtain it.

I have called for personal sacrifice, and I am assured of the willingness of almost all Americans to respond to that call. A part of the sacrifice means the payment of more money in taxes. In my budget message I will recommend that a greater portion of this great defense program be paid for from taxation than we are paying for today. No person should try, or be allowed to get rich out of the program, and the principle of tax payments in accordance with ability to pay should be constantly before our eyes to guide our legislation.

If the Congress maintains these principles the voters, putting patriotism ahead pocketbooks, will give you their applause.

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way -- everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want, which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants -- everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor -- anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called “new order” of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception -- the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

Since the beginning of our American history we have been engaged in change, in a perpetual, peaceful revolution, a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly, adjusting itself to changing conditions without the concentration camp or the quicklime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women, and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights and keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose.
To that high concept there can be no end save victory.
Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Forces:

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944. Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned. The free men of the world are marching together to victory.

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory.

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.
[This is a complete transcript of the news conference of this date. All of the President's replies were released for broadcasting or direct quotation at that time except for the last, which is enclosed in brackets.]

1. THE PRESIDENT. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, I have one announcement and one comment to make before we go to questions.
2. The Secretary of Commerce is going to Europe in mid-April in the interests of promoting freer trade among the free nations, and while there, is going to attend at least five great industrial fairs at which will be exhibited, of course, products of American industry and the like.
3. His detailed schedule can be obtained from the Secretary of Commerce.
4. The comment I want to make affects a question asked me last week.
5. Someone asked me a question--I have forgotten whom"quoting the Chief Justice as having made a statement to the effect that if the Bill of Rights were now put before the American people, would be the judgment of the Chief Justice that that would not be approved. And I asked this individual whether he was sure as to what the Chief Justice said.
6. I must assure him he is mistaken. This so bothered me that although I stated here that I had the greatest confidence in the Chief Justice's judgment, patriotism, and dedication, that still--if that were an issue--I would go out, at least, and do my part to help get this Bill of Rights adopted.
7. Actually, when we looked up the speech--and a copy is in Mr. Hagerty's office now where you can see it--he said that his faith in the good sense, the soundness of the American people, was such that if this were now put before the American people, he was sure it would be adopted.
8. So, whoever the questioner was, I would like to assure him he was mistaken in the premise that he proposed. We will go to questions.
9. Q. Robert E. Clark, International News Service: Mr. President, Senator George has proposed that the United States take the initiative in arranging a Big Four conference after the Paris accords are ratified, without waiting for a demonstration of good faith by Russia. Can you bring us up to date on how you feel about a Big Four meeting at the chiefs of state level?
10. THE PRESIDENT. Of course, you open up a subject that is really involved. However, I have said time and again there is no place on this earth to which I would not travel, there is no chore I would not undertake if I had any faintest hope that, by so doing, I would promote the general cause of world peace.
11. Now, international meetings have a number of purposes, and one of them, let us not forget, is just sheer propaganda.
12. Nevertheless, we must never abandon the hope that in some new conference some constructive step will be taken and start this weary world at last on the path that could lead
hopefully and definitely toward a better agreement.

13. I have, I believe, noted—and I think the State Department has—that at this time, while the Paris agreements are still unratified in certain countries, that it is best not to muddy the water, not to introduce any new subject.

14. However, once that is done—and I am not going to speak about the matter of initiative, I do not believe that that in itself is particularly important—but I do believe there have got to be new exploratory talks.

15. I think they would be taken up at first on a different level from the chief of state.

16. You must remember that in this country the chief of state has different constitutional and other types of duties than the chiefs of state in most other countries. The head of a government abroad is spared many of the duties and responsibilities that here fall upon the head of the state.

17. So this meeting at the summit, which we so often hear about, is not so simple for us as it might be for some other countries.

18. So I believe that that out of the way, now from a position of strength—that is, moral and spiritual strength very greatly enhanced through this exhibition of unity—it probably would be time to begin the kind of exploratory talks that might lead to something constructive.

19. Now, I have used as examples in the past the kind of thing I would regard as deeds that would show the good faith of Russia.

20. I have never meant, and never intimated, that those deeds would be limited to the examples I gave.

21. In a dozen different ways this might be done. And I repeat that this Government, as long as I am the head of it, is never going to be backward in seizing upon any kind of opportunity that will apparently advance this cause.

22. Q. Charles S. von Fremd, CBS News: At past conferences, sir, you have indicated that such good deeds, or deeds not words, on the part of Russia might be approving an Austrian peace treaty—

23. THE PRESIDENT. That is right.

24. Q. Mr. von Fremd: --or free elections in Germany, and a free and united Korea.

25. THE PRESIDENT. I give them only as examples. There could be a dozen others, as I said just a few minutes ago. It doesn't necessarily have to be those two.

26. Suppose, well, suppose the proposition that I made on December 9, 1953, before the United Nations, were suddenly accepted, as far as you could see, in complete good faith. Instantly, you would start a conference on a technical and political level between the two countries that would necessarily be directed toward some kind of peaceful pursuits of mankind, and you would—no matter, we don't know how far it would grow. There could be another one.

27. ¹The President, on December 8, 1953, delivered to the United Nations an address entitled "Atomic Power for Peace."

28. There would be a deed, not words.

29. Q. Paul R. Leach, Knight Newspapers: Mr. President, has any thought been given to this Government to the admission or inclusion of Western Germany in such a conference?

30. THE PRESIDENT. Let me answer that in this way, which, possibly, is just not quite as direct as you would like it.

31. This subject of what we may do is discussed at least twice a week between the Secretary of State and myself.
31. Manifestly, we have talked time and again as to the possibility soon of including Western Germany in the conference that might take place.

32. But, of course, I would assume that the very first ones would possibly be limited to the four, because, as quick as you add one, where is the limit to what you must add. And you don't want to kill the possibility of a constructive conference by putting down details or conditions in advance that, when you add on to them from the other side, would just make it an impossible situation. You see the logic of that move?
Q. Mr. Leach: Yes.

33. Q. Merriman Smith, United Press: Mr. President, do you have under consideration an actual conference on, say, the Foreign Minister or Secretary of State level?

34. THE PRESIDENT. No, no; not exactly--that would be untrue to say that.

35. We do take this up, constantly discussing it among ourselves, frequently with one of our allies, just to keep the thinking on the same level so that if particular conditions, favorable conditions, arise, we can move ahead.

36. Q. Richard L. Wilson, Cowles Publications: Mr. President, I wonder if you would clarify one point in this respect: would the initial conference, if successful, be followed by a meeting of the heads of state, or should it be followed by the--

37. THE PRESIDENT. That depends, I would think, Mr. Wilson, on what was accomplished.

38. If any significant thing were brought forward where the presence of the heads of state could give it a solemnity, possibly a promise of success not otherwise obtainable, as I say, I would go anywhere.

39. And let me make one gratuitous remark here: I sincerely hope that this group, at least, will not try to put me, on this subject, in any partisan attitude.

40. In this subject, I am as sincerely bipartisan and nonpartisan as I know how to be.

41. I respect the opinions of everybody that comes in honesty to me on it, and I have no thought of building any kind of special viewpoint in this country in support of somebody else's viewpoint.

42. Q. James B. Reston, New York Times: Sir, in that regard, would you welcome, would you favor, taking Senator George and other representatives of the Congress to such a conference, if it were held?

43. THE PRESIDENT. Indeed, yes, if they should find it convenient and want to go.

44. Some of these trips, you must understand, are anything but comfortable and convenient experiences, and it is entirely possible that they would prefer to be present only for some very significant thing.

45. But I would tell you this: there would be no disposition to keep the thing secret from them. They would be invited.

46. Q. Chalmers M. Roberts, Washington Post and Times Herald: Is it correct to infer from what you said, sir, that your thinking is that when you mention starting with a Big Four meeting, that you are thinking essentially of a further meeting regardless of the level only on the German unification and the Austrian treaty question, or is it possible that a general East-West meeting might be on a larger pattern than that?

47. THE PRESIDENT. I have never inferred in any way that it would be limited to those two things.

48. Those were simply quoted as evidences of Soviet good will and good faith that would open up the whole subject of all of our differences. Everything could come before such a conference.
49. Now, I must tell you this: you will recall in about the summer of 1951, representatives of these four powers met in the Rose Palace in Paris, I think, for 4 months merely trying to agree on an agenda, which they never did; and the conference could not be held.

50. Maybe you could go to a nonagenda conference; I would have no objection.

51. What I am saying is, the things you are talking about are merely instances, already agreed upon in large part. And the Western powers made great concessions in Austria, completely accepted the Soviet viewpoint, but nothing was done on it.

52. Q. Mr. Roberts: May I ask a second point: Senator George, in his remarks on this matter, raised the possibility or suggested the possibility of meeting with the Chinese Communists as well as with the Soviet Union.

53. Would you consider any meeting of that type either separately on Asian matters or together on world problems?

54. THE PRESIDENT. Well, I think at the present moment it is completely academic, because every suggestion that has been made of peace in the Far East to the Red Communists has been accepted only, from their viewpoint, as insults to them. I think it is completely academic; there is no use speculating on it.

55. Q. Edward P. Morgan, American Broadcasting Company: Sir, last week, Representative Walter of Pennsylvania severely criticized the Post Office Department for seizing copies of Izvestia and Pravda in the United States mail.

56. Mr. Walter said that if he had his way about it, he would, on the contrary, have these papers translated into English and distributed to everybody so, as he put it, they could see how nauseating communism could be.

57. Colleges, too, have protested that this ban has complicated their research.

58. THE PRESIDENT. Yes.

59. Q. Mr. Morgan: And it is reported that the CIA has had some difficulty in its own research thereby.

Does this restriction have your approval, sir?

60. THE PRESIDENT. Well, let's make clear this: I am not going to disapprove it with no more than I know about it in detail at this moment. But I will say this: ever since I found that war records—that is, military records—were hidden away and, apparently, we were going to keep them from the American people forever, I have been against censorship.

61. I don't like censorship, and I don't know the reason for this one. It hasn't been brought yet to my attention except through the newspapers. And, unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to look into it. I don't know what it is about, really.

62. Q. Daniel Schorr, CBS News: Mr. President, in view of all you have said this morning about the possibility of a Big Power meeting, I am somewhat confused about the remark of Senator Knowland yesterday, after his visit to you, that Senator George's view was not your view. Is there, in fact, any great difference?

63. THE PRESIDENT. Well, as a matter of fact, I don't think there is any great difference between anybody's view here.

64. This is what I really believe: everybody, in talking about an item such as this, gets a particular detail which he emphasizes in his own mind to a very great degree, and suddenly a quarrel springs out of it.

65. I think all of the gentlemen to whom you refer are sincerely seeking peace; some believe one thing, some another.

66. Now, the Secretary of State, under my direction, is responsible for carrying these things
forward. I think that his attitude toward it is eminently correct and proper and conciliatory.

67. We are trying to seek a peace with honor, and we are simply trying to avoid that kind of useless bickering and the using of international conferences merely for propaganda purposes, disappointing people. That is the futile kind of thing we are trying to avoid, and that is all. Otherwise we are all for seeing, can we advance the cause of peace?

68. Q. Joseph C. Harsch, Christian Science Monitor: Sir, I wonder if you can clarify something I am not quite clear on.

69. In your last press conference, referring to the use of atomic weapons, you said that when it was a question of strictly military targets for strictly military purposes, you saw no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.

70. On January 12, we were talking about atomic weapons in connection with police action as distinct from a major war, and within that context you said you did not think that normally we would use the atomic weapons, because, you thought, you could not conceive of atomic weapons as a police weapon, and there was some further remark there that it was so destructive.

71. THE PRESIDENT. Well, Mr. Harsch, the difference here, I think, is perfectly simple. A police action is not war; a police action is restoring order.

72. Now, you don't send in bombs to restore order when a riot occurs. You get police people to restore order. Occasionally there may be a life lost if someone is too tough about it.

73. But when you get into actual war, you have resorted to force for reaching a decision in a particular area; that is what I call War.

74. And whether the war is big or not, if you have the kind of a weapon that can be limited to military use, then I know of no reason why a large explosion shouldn't be used as freely as a small explosion. That is all I was saying last week.

75. But that is different from trying to restore order. Incidentally, if you want to follow some of these things off into the realm of great philosophical conjecture, suppose you won a war by the indiscriminate use of atomic weapons; what would you have left? Now, what would you do for your police action, for your occupation and restoration of order, and all of the things needed to be done in a great area of the earth?

76. I repeat, the concept of atomic war is too horrible for man to endure and to practice, and he must find some way out of it. That is all I think about this thing.

Q. Mr. Harsch: Sir, I am a little stupid about this thing.

77. THE PRESIDENT. Well, I am glad you didn't say I was! [Laughter]

78. Q. Mr. Harsch: It would seem to me there is big war at one end, just a local police action in which one person might be killed at the other; and, in between, what the military people would say was limited war. The Korean War, in a sense, was a limited war.

79. THE PRESIDENT. It became one, anyway. Q. Mr. Harsch: It became one.

80. If we got into an issue with the Chinese, say, over Matsu and Quemoy, that we wanted to keep limited, do you conceive of using this specific kind of atomic weapon in that situation or not?

81. THE PRESIDENT. Well, Mr. Harsch, I must confess I cannot answer that question in advance.

82. The only thing I know about war are two things: the most changeable factor in war is human nature in its day-by-day manifestation; but the only unchanging factor in war is human nature.
83. And the next thing is that every war is going to astonish you in the way it occurred, and in the way it is carried out.
84. So that for a man to predict, particularly if he has the responsibility for making the decision, to predict what he is going to use, how he is going to do it, would I think exhibit his ignorance of war; that is what I believe.
85. So I think you just have to wait, and that is the kind of prayerful decision that may some day face a President.
   We are trying to establish conditions where he doesn't.
86. Q. Raymond P. Brandt, St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Mr. President, have you any plan to take an active part in saving your foreign trade program in Congress?
87. THE PRESIDENT. Well, I can't go to the floor and debate, Mr. Brandt.
88. After all, we all know that, but this is what I think: the foreign trade program, as a notice to all peoples that we recognize their problems, that we are earnestly trying to establish the kind of economic base on which cultural values and spiritual values can be properly developed and bring about a greater union among us, that kind of a program is so essential to the United States today that I would use every bit of influence that I can properly and appropriately bring to bear to have it passed.
89. I think this is a very critical item now before the United States of America, not merely before Government, but before the whole country.
90. Q. Walter T. Ridder, Ridder Papers: Mr. President, do you believe that the release of the Yalta documents might cramp styles in future conferences?
91. THE PRESIDENT. Well, I would hope not.
92. Among allies, gentlemen, I want to call your attention to this one fact: you make treaties, and good faith is involved.
93. Now, the one place, if you will read history, is that treaties have always fallen down when it came to actual war, if any one country felt that its vital considerations were going to be damaged through the purposes of its allies.
94. You can go back through the history of coalitions, and you will find great evidence of this.
95. As a matter of fact, one soldier said that he always considered Napoleon the greatest soldier that ever lived, until he woke up one day and found that he always fought against coalitions. And then he lost some of his respect.
96. Now, this is one way of defining the difficulties of coalitions. Good faith is involved; so that while I earnestly believe that all documents should be published, not attempting to pin or assess blame for success and failure, I believe when the good faith with an ally is involved we want to be exceedingly careful. Moreover, I think such documents should be confined, in general, to those things that are of political and military significance. Casual conversation, I think, should not be included.
97. I would hope that our country would never be legitimately charged with bad faith, and in this particular case I think it wasn't. They had been, I believe, in communication with our ally for a long time about it. However, there was some difference of opinion.
98. Now, in this matter, let me repeat, there is nothing, as I can see, to be gained by going back 10 years and showing that, in the light of afterevents, that someone may have been wrong, or someone may have been right.
99. People that are so sure that we could do this, forget one thing: you can never recapture the atmosphere of war. You have the great advantage of events.
100. I think I have often told you that one of the most severe decisions I had to make in the
war was to direct the capture of Pantelleria. Yet that was so easy that most of you don't even
know where Pantelleria was. And in the afterevent, it made not a ripple in history. Yet the
decision was so difficult that had the predictions of the pessimists been realized, I certainly
would have been relieved.

101. So that you can never tell, at the moment, is history going to say this was right or this
was wrong.

102. If we believe these people acted for what they thought was the best good, of the cause
for which they were fighting, of their country, well, then, let us take and lay the thing out
dispassionately so that we, in our turn, may profit from their mistakes. But don't let's try to
just damage reputations by such means.

103. Q. Ingrid M. Jewell, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: Mr. President, Senator Bricker thinks
that his proposed amendment.

104. THE PRESIDENT. I couldn't quite hear you.

105. Q. Miss Jewell: Senator Bricker believes that his proposed amendment has a good
chance of going through this year because he thinks you have changed your mind about it
since last year. Have you changed your mind?

106. THE PRESIDENT. No.

107. Q. Clark R. Mollenhoff, Des Moines Register: You suffered one of your sharpest
defeats in the House on this postal pay bill. I wonder if you would give us some of your own
personal views as to why you oppose the 10 percent in favor of the 5 percent?

108. THE PRESIDENT. Since 1945 the postal clerks and carriers have gone from
something of an order of a $1700 wage to a $3200, something of a 92-percent raise. The top
scales, I think, of those same grades have gone up about 94 percent. I give you that statistic
just to show that these people have not been neglected.

109. Moreover, when you begin to talk about pay scales you have got to take in not merely
the percentage that one group now may receive as opposed to another group; you have got to
go back into the whole background and history of the thing.

110. Exactly the same way in the opposite sense with some of the military. Some of the
military grades have been neglected, and we need to raise them or we are not going to have
proper people there.

111. I sent to the Congress a plan, for both civil service people and postal people, that had
been studied long and earnestly in a great effort to do the right thing by the individuals
themselves, to do it sensibly and in accordance with efficient governmental management of
the great processes we have to carry out.

112. Now, I believe still that that is a correct program for the readjustments and revisions
of classification and the scale of increase that it proposes; and any great increase over that
would cause me, as I said in a letter, the gravest concern.

113. Q. Sarah McClendon, El Paso Times: Mr. President, I believe Vice President Nixon
has spoken to you about the merit of completing the Inter-American Highway, and he said at
the present rate it won't be completed until 15 or 25 years have passed.

114. Have you and he--have you agreed on a plan for speeding up the financing of this, so
it may be completed?

115. THE PRESIDENT. No.

116. In his report to the Cabinet he mentioned this, and gave his conclusions as of
tremendous importance.

117. Now, the next thing that will happen will be that State and Commerce will
unquestionably make a recommendation to me as to what we should do in the way of getting
the necessary appropriations. I believe they are relatively small.

118. But I will say this: instinctively, I am on his side. I believe that this road should be
completed.

119. Q. Marvin L. Arrowsmith, Associated Press: Mr. President, is any effort being made
by either this Government directly or through the British to negotiate a cease-fire in the
Formosa Strait,
I mean any new efforts as an attempt through the U.N.?

120. THE PRESIDENT. As of this moment?
Q. Mr. Arrowsmith: Yes.

121. THE PRESIDENT. No, there is no particular or specific program now in progress, but
I should say this: that, of course, the British, with representation in Peking, have always
represented our viewpoint, which is that any just, reasonable solution of the difficulty in the
Formosa Straits would receive our most earnest and sympathetic attention.

122. We ourselves supported putting it before the United Nations, but there is no specific
plan at the moment.

123. Q. William H. Lawrence, New York Times: Mr. President, in your concluding
remarks about the Yalta papers a moment ago, you said if we believe these people acted for
the best good; is it correct to interpret that to say that you believe they acted for the best good
as they saw it?

124. THE PRESIDENT. Well, I meant my remark, Mr. Lawrence, in this way: so far as I
know, I have never in public questioned a man's motives, even if I thought he was mistaken; I
have criticized military leaders in staff schools in my time very severely. I certainly would
not question his motives.

125. I question the motives of no man when I wasn't there and know nothing about what he
was doing.
Q. Mr. Lawrence: May I ask one supplementary question?

126. THE PRESIDENT. Yes.

127. Q. Mr. Lawrence: You were a responsible field commander at the time and informed
of general strategy. Did you record or do you remember a decision that you reached at that
time at your own level as to the rightness or wrongness of Yalta?

128. THE PRESIDENT. No.

129. The only faint connection I had was this: the British and American contingents met in
Malta before going on to Yalta. I didn't have time to go down. I was engaged in a very heavy
battle, and I sent my Chief of Staff down to represent what our operational plans for the
spring were, and to tell them. They were all approved.
As a matter of fact, it was sent down for information.

130. But I did tell two or three of the individuals involved that the Western allied forces
were going to get at least as far as the Elbe in this operation--our calculations were that we
had now used up all the disposable reserves the Germans had to put on the western front, and
that we were going to penetrate deep into Germany--and I would hope, therefore, that these
people would have that knowledge before they made any agreement.

131. However, don't forget this: all during that year of 1944 the European Advisory
Commission had been meeting in London, and these plans were worked out by the Advisory
Commission. As far as I know, Yalta had only the job of approving them, because all these
countries had been represented on that Commission. I believe John Winant was our
representative.

132. I merely said that we were going to go further east into Germany than the line they described to me, and that is the only thing I knew about.

I never was at Yalta; I didn't even go to Malta.

133. Q. Edward T. Folliard, Washington Post and Times Herald: Mr. President, to go back to the high level conference, Senator George's position, as I understand it, is this: that he would not require the Russians to meet any particular conditions; that is, he would not require that they show their earnestness with deeds rather than with words.

134. Now, I do not understand that to be your position, Mr. President. I am trying to find out whether there is a real difference.

135. THE PRESIDENT. Well, there may be. I don't deny that every individual that approaches these problems has his own detailed solution for them.

136. I merely want to say that I am seeking an honorable peace and trying to create confidence among the peoples of the free world, not just bouncing around to do nothing.

137. Now, there is this one thing, the argument on the other side: there have been at least two changes within the last couple of years in the personnel of the ruling group in the Kremlin. Consequently, you have at least the element of, let us say, faint hope that new individuals may be different from the old ones; that may make some exploratory talks very valuable. And as long as we are differentiating between a final big so-called meeting at the summit and exploratory talks--well, exploratory talks, I could make a lot of concessions to have that carried out.

138. Q. Robert G. Spivack, New York Post: Mr. President, if we may return to the Far East for a moment: one of the solutions that has been suggested for ending the Far East crisis has been a U.N. trusteeship for Formosa. I wonder if this Government is receptive to that idea?

139. THE PRESIDENT. I believe I won't talk about that one this morning. I dislike ever saying "No comment" to you people, but that is one that I have not talked in detail because, for my own part, I had not up to this moment taken it as an acceptable solution to people we are trying to keep on our side.

140. Q. Frederick Kuh, Chicago Sun-Times: Mr. President, in your consideration of a Four Power conference, is it your premise that the Russians will be willing to participate in such a conference within a matter of some months after ratification of the Paris agreements?

141. THE PRESIDENT. I don't know. That is one of the subjects we discuss constantly: what would be their attitude toward an invitation? And maybe it would be even worth while finally to find out what that is.

142. But I don't know, and I don't think anyone else could really make a good guess.

143. Q. Nat S. Finney, Buffalo News: Mr. President, did you intend to assign a lower order of priority to the deeds of an Austrian treaty and German elections, and North Korea? Does what you said give them a lower order of priority of importance than they have had heretofore?

144. THE PRESIDENT. I couldn't imagine what would make you ask such a question. Nothing I have ever said would indicate that.

145. No. I am merely giving these indications of something that would mean to me, "Look, these people are talking business." They have violated their word so often, they have left us hanging on the limb. As a matter of fact, our great interest in all of these past agreements and papers is why did we trust them so much.

146. All I want to know is what can I depend on to mean to me this: we are approaching
this seriously and earnestly; that is all.

147. Q. John L. Cutter, United Press: Mr. President, a member of your liaison staff has been up to the Congress to see a member of the Michigan delegation regarding the establishment of a jet air base near Cadillac, Michigan. Does that mean that the White House has any particular interest in that one particular place?

148. THE PRESIDENT. [This is the first time I have heard of it; and if anyone has an interest in it, it certainly must be personal. I know nothing about it.]

Merriman Smith, United Press: Thank you, Mr. President.
President Reagan: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

And, Reverend Clergy all, Senator Hawkins, distinguished members of the Florida congressional delegation, and all of you: I can't tell you how you have warmed my heart with your welcome. I'm delighted to be here today.

Those of you in the National Association of Evangelicals are known for your spiritual and humanitarian work. And I would be especially remiss if I didn't discharge right now one personal debt of gratitude. Thank you for your prayers. Nancy and I have felt their presence many times in many ways. And believe me, for us they've made all the difference.

The other day in the East Room of the White House at a meeting there, someone asked me whether I was aware of all the people out there who were praying for the President. And I had to say, "Yes, I am. I've felt it. I believe in intercessory prayer." But I couldn't help but say to that questioner after he'd asked the question that -- or at least say to them that if sometimes when he was praying he got a busy signal, it was just me in there ahead of him. I think I understand how Abraham Lincoln felt when he said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." From the joy and the good feeling of this conference, I go to a political reception. Now, I don't know why, but that bit of scheduling reminds me of a story which I'll share with you.

An evangelical minister and a politician arrived at Heaven's gate one day together. And St. Peter, after doing all the necessary formalities, took them in hand to show them where their quarters would be. And he took them to a small, single room with a bed, a chair, and a table and said this was for the clergyman. And the politician was a little worried about what might be in store for him. And he couldn't believe it then when St. Peter stopped in front of a beautiful mansion with lovely grounds, many servants, and told him that these would be his quarters.

And he couldn't help but ask, he said, "But wait, how -- there's something wrong -- how do I get this mansion while that good and holy man only gets a single room?" And St. Peter said, "You have to understand how things are up here. We've got thousands and thousands of clergy. You're the first politician who ever made it."

But I don't want to contribute to a stereotype. So I tell you there are a great many God-fearing, dedicated, noble men and women in public life, present company included. And yes, we need your help to keep us ever-mindful of the ideas and the principles that brought us into the public arena in the first place. The basis of those ideals and principles is a commitment to freedom and personal liberty that, itself is grounded in the much deeper realization that freedom prospers only where the blessings of God are avidly sought and humbly accepted.
The American experiment in democracy rests on this insight. Its discovery was the great triumph of our Founding Fathers, voiced by William Penn when he said: "If we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants." Explaining the inalienable rights of men, Jefferson said, "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time." And it was George Washington who said that "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

And finally, that shrewdest of all observers of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, put it eloquently after he had gone on a search for the secret of America's greatness and genius -- and he said: "Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the greatness and the genius of America. America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

Well, I'm pleased to be here today with you who are keeping America great by keeping her good. Only through your work and prayers and those of millions of others can we hope to survive this perilous century and keep alive this experiment in liberty, this last, best hope of man.

I want you to know that this administration is motivated by a political philosophy that sees the greatness of America in you, her people, and in your families, churches, neighborhoods, communities: the institutions that foster and nourish values like concern for others and respect for the rule of law under God.

Now, I don't have to tell you that this puts us in opposition to, or at least out of step with, a -- a prevailing attitude of many who have turned to a modern-day secularism, discarding the tried and time-tested values upon which our very civilization is based. No matter how well intended, their value system is radically different from that of most Americans. And while they proclaim that they're freeing us from superstitions of the past, they've taken upon themselves the job of superintending us by government rule and regulation. Sometimes their voices are louder than ours, but they are not yet a majority.

An example of that vocal superiority is evident in a controversy now going on in Washington. And since I'm involved I've been waiting to hear from the parents of young America. How far are they willing to go in giving to government their prerogatives as parents?

Let me state the case as briefly and simply as I can. An organization of citizens, sincerely motivated, deeply concerned about the increase in illegitimate births and abortions involving girls well below the age of consent, some time ago established a nationwide network of clinics to offer help to these girls and, hopefully, alleviate this situation. Now, again, let me say, I do not fault their intent. However, in their well-intentioned effort, these clinics decided to provide advice and birth control drugs and devices to underage girls without the knowledge of their parents.

For some years now, the federal government has helped with funds to subsidize these clinics. In providing for this, the Congress decreed that every effort would be made to maximize parental participation. Nevertheless, the drugs and devices are prescribed without getting parental consent or giving notification after they've done so. Girls termed "sexually active" -- and that has
replaced the word "promiscuous" -- are given this help in order to prevent illegitimate birth or abortion.

Well, we have ordered clinics receiving federal funds to notify the parents such help has been given. One of the nation's leading newspapers has created the term "squeal rule" in editorializing against us for doing this, and we're being criticized for violating the privacy of young people. A judge has recently granted an injunction against an enforcement of our rule. I've watched TV panel shows discuss this issue, seen columnists pontificating on our error, but no one seems to mention morality as playing a part in the subject of sex.

Is all of Judeo-Christian tradition wrong? Are we to believe that something so sacred can be looked upon as a purely physical thing with no potential for emotional and psychological harm? And isn't it the parents' right to give counsel and advice to keep their children from making mistakes that may affect their entire lives?

Many of us in government would like to know what parents think about this intrusion in their family by government. We're going to fight in the courts. The right of parents and the rights of family take precedence over those of Washington-based bureaucrats and social engineers.

But the fight against parental notification is really only one example of many attempts to water down traditional values and even abrogate the original terms of American democracy. Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged. When our Founding Fathers passed the First Amendment, they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself.

The evidence of this permeates our history and our government. The Declaration of Independence mentions the Supreme Being no less than four times. "In God We Trust" is engraved on our coinage. The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation. And the members of Congress open their sessions with a prayer. I just happen to believe the schoolchildren of the United States are entitled to the same privileges as Supreme Court justices and congressmen.

Last year, I sent the Congress a constitutional amendment to restore prayer to public schools. Already this session, there's growing bipartisan support for the amendment, and I am calling on the Congress to act speedily to pass it and to let our children pray.

Perhaps some of you read recently about the Lubbock school case, where a judge actually ruled that it was unconstitutional for a school district to give equal treatment to religious and nonreligious student groups, even when the group meetings were being held during the students' own time. The First Amendment never intended to require government to discriminate against religious speech.

Senators Denton and Hatfield have proposed legislation in the Congress on the whole question of prohibiting discrimination against religious forms of student speech. Such legislation could go far to restore freedom of religious speech for public school students. And I hope the Congress
considers these bills quickly. And with your help, I think it's possible we could also get the
constitutional amendment through the Congress this year.

More than a decade ago, a Supreme Court decision literally wiped off the books of fifty states
statutes protecting the rights of unborn children. Abortion on demand now takes the lives of up
to one and a half million unborn children a year. Human life legislation ending this tragedy will
someday pass the Congress, and you and I must never rest until it does. Unless and until it can be
proven that the unborn child is not a living entity, then its right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of
happiness must be protected.

You may remember that when abortion on demand began, many, and indeed, I'm sure many of
you, warned that the practice would lead to a decline in respect for human life, that the
philosophical premises used to justify abortion on demand would ultimately be used to justify
other attacks on the sacredness of human life -- infanticide or mercy killing. Tragically enough,
those warnings proved all too true. Only last year a court permitted the death by starvation of a
handicapped infant.

I have directed the Health and Human Services Department to make clear to every health care
facility in the United States that the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects all handicapped persons
against discrimination based on handicaps, including infants. And we have taken the further step
of requiring that each and every recipient of federal funds who provides health care services to
infants must post and keep posted in a conspicuous place a notice stating that "discriminatory
failure to feed and care for handicapped infants in this facility is prohibited by federal law." It
also lists a twenty-four-hour; toll-free number so that nurses and others may report violations in
time to save the infant's life.

In addition, recent legislation introduced by -- in the Congress by Representative Henry Hyde of
Illinois not only increases restrictions on publicly financed abortions, it also addresses this whole
problem of infanticide. I urge the Congress to begin hearings and to adopt legislation that will
protect the right of life to all children, including the disabled or handicapped.

Now, I'm sure that you must get discouraged at times, but there you've done better than you
know, perhaps. There's a great spiritual awakening in America, a renewal of the traditional
values that have been the bedrock of America's goodness and greatness.

One recent survey by a Washington-based research council concluded that Americans were far
more religious than the people of other nations; 95 percent of those surveyed expressed a belief
in God and a huge majority believed the Ten Commandments had real meaning in their lives.
And another study has found that an overwhelming majority of Americans disapprove of
adultery, teenage sex, pornography, abortion, and hard drugs. And this same study showed a
deep reverence for the importance of family ties and religious belief.

I think the items that we've discussed here today must be a key part of the nation's political
agenda. For the first time the Congress is openly and seriously debating and dealing with the
prayer and abortion issues and that's enormous progress right there. I repeat: America is in the
midst of a spiritual awakening and a moral renewal. And with your biblical keynote, I say today, "Yes, let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream."

Now, obviously, much of this new political and social consensus I've talked about is based on a positive view of American history, one that takes pride in our country's accomplishments and record. But we must never forget that no government schemes are going to perfect man. We know that living in this world means dealing with what philosophers would call the phenomenology of evil or, as theologians would put it, the doctrine of sin.

There is sin and evil in the world, and we're enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might. Our nation, too, has a legacy of evil with which it must deal. The glory of this land has been its capacity for transcending the moral evils of our past. For example, the long struggle of minority citizens for equal rights, once a source of disunity and civil war is now a point of pride for all Americans. We must never go back. There is no room for racism, anti-Semitism, or other forms of ethnic and racial hatred in this country.

I know that you've been horrified, as have I, by the resurgence of some hate groups preaching bigotry and prejudice. Use the mighty voice of your pulpits and the powerful standing of your churches to denounce and isolate these hate groups in our midst. The commandment given us is clear and simple: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But whatever sad episodes exist in our past, any objective observer must hold a positive view of American history, a history that has been the story of hopes fulfilled and dreams made into reality. Especially in this century, America has kept alight the torch of freedom, but not just for ourselves but for millions of others around the world.

And this brings me to my final point today. During my first press conference as president, in answer to a direct question, I pointed out that, as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution. I think I should point out I was only quoting Lenin, their guiding spirit, who said in 1920 that they repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas -- that's their name for religion -- or ideas that are outside class conceptions. Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. And everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old, exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat.

Well, I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates a historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are. We saw this phenomenon in the 1930s. We see it too often today.

This doesn't mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them. I intend to do everything I can to persuade them of our peaceful intent, to remind them that it was the West that refused to use its nuclear monopoly in the forties and fifties for territorial gain and which now proposes 50 percent cut in strategic ballistic missiles and the elimination of an entire class of land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missiles.
At the same time, however, they must be made to understand we will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace. But we can assure none of these things America stands for through the so-called nuclear freeze solutions proposed by some.

The truth is that a freeze now would be a very dangerous fraud, for that is merely the illusion of peace. The reality is that we must find peace through strength.

I would agree to a freeze if only we could freeze the Soviets' global desires. A freeze at current levels of weapons would remove any incentive for the Soviets to negotiate seriously in Geneva and virtually end our chances to achieve the major arms reductions which we have proposed. Instead, they would achieve their objectives through the freeze.

A freeze would reward the Soviet Union for its enormous and unparalleled military buildup. It would prevent the essential and long overdue modernization of United States and allied defenses and would leave our aging forces increasingly vulnerable. And an honest freeze would require extensive prior negotiations on the systems and numbers to be limited and on the measures to ensure effective verification and compliance. And the kind of a freeze that has been suggested would be virtually impossible to verify. Such a major effort would divert us completely from our current negotiations on achieving substantial reductions.

A number of years ago, I heard a young father, a very prominent young man in the entertainment world, addressing a tremendous gathering in California. It was during the time of the cold war, and communism and our own way of life were very much on people's minds. And he was speaking to that subject. And suddenly, though, I heard him saying, "I love my little girls more than anything." And I said to myself, "Oh, no, don't. You can't -- don't say that." But I had underestimated him. He went on: "I would rather see my little girls die now; still believing in God, than have them grow up under communism and one day die no longer believing in God."

There were thousands of young people in that audience. They came to their feet with shouts of joy. They had instantly recognized the profound truth in what he had said, with regard to the physical and the soul and what was truly important.

Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness. Pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the State, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.

It was C.S. Lewis who, in his unforgettable Screw Tape Letters, wrote: "The greatest evil is not done now in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. It is not even done in concentration camps and labor camps. In those we see its final result. But it is conceived and ordered; moved, seconded, carried and minuted in clear, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice."
Well, because these quiet men do not raise their voices, because they sometimes speak in soothing tones of brotherhood and peace, because, like other dictators before them, they're always making "their final territorial demand," some would have us accept them at their word and accommodate ourselves to their aggressive impulses. But if history teaches anything, it teaches that simpleminded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.

So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority. You know, I've always believed that old Screw Tape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the Church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride -- the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration's efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real and verifiable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and one day, with God's help, their total elimination.

While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

Whittaker Chambers, the man whose own religious conversion made him a witness to one of the terrible traumas of our time, the Hiss-Chambers case, wrote that the crisis of the Western world exists to the degree in which the West is indifferent to God, the degree to which it collaborates in communism's attempt to make man stand alone without God. And then he said, for Marxism-Leninism is actually the second-oldest faith, first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with the words of temptation, "Ye shall be as gods."

The Western world can answer this challenge, he wrote, "but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as communism's faith in Man."

I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last -- last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man. For in the words of Isaiah: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increased strength. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary."

Yes, change your world. One of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Paine, said, "We have it within our power to begin the world over again." We can do it, doing together what no one church could do by itself.
God bless you and thank you very much.
Clinton justifies U.S. involvement in Kosovo

May 13, 1999

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you, Commander Pouliot (ph). I am grateful to you and to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for your support of America’s efforts in Kosovo. General Shellcoast (ph), Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Secretary West, National Security Advisor Berger, Deputy Secretary Gober (ph), General Shelton and the Joint Chiefs and to the members of the military and the members of the VFW who are here. I'd also like to thank Congressman Engel and Congressman Quinn for coming to be with us today.

I am especially honored to be here with our veterans who have struggled for freedom in World War II and in the half century since. Your service inspires us today as we work with our allies to reverse the systematic campaign of terror and to bring peace and freedom to Kosovo. To honor your sacrifices and fulfill the vision of a peaceful Europe for which so many of the VFW members risked your lives, NATO's mission, as the commander said, must succeed.

My meetings last week in Europe with Kosovar refugees, with allied leaders, with Americans in uniform, strengthened my conviction that we will succeed. With just seven months left in the 20th century, Kosovo is a crucial test. Can we strengthen a global community grounded in cooperation and tolerance, rooted in common humanity, or will repression and brutality, rooted in ethnic, racial and religious hatreds dominate the agenda for the new century and the new millennium?

The World War II veterans here fought in Europe and in the Pacific to prevent the world from being dominated by tyrants who use racial and religious hatred to strengthen their grip and to justify mass killing.

President Roosevelt said in his final inaugural address, we have learned that we cannot live alone. We cannot live alone at peace. We have learned that our own well being is dependent on the well being of other nations far away.

We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community.

The sacrifices of American and allied troops helped to end a nightmare, rescue freedom, and lay the groundwork for the modern world that has benefited all of us. In the long Cold War years, our troops stood for freedom and against communism until the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain collapsed.

Now the nations of Central Europe are free democracies.

We've welcomed new members to NATO and formed security partnerships with many other countries all across Europe's east, including Russia and Ukraine. Both the European Union and NATO have pledged to continue to embrace new members. Some have questioned the need for continuing our security partnership with Europe at the end of the Cold War.
But in this age of growing international interdependence, America needs a strong and peaceful Europe more than ever as our partner for freedom and for economic progress, and our partner against terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and instability.

The promise of a Europe undivided, democratic and at peace is at long-last within reach.

But we all know it is threatened by the ethnic and religious turmoil in Southeastern Europe, where most leaders are freely elected and committed to cooperation both within and among their neighbors.

Unfortunately, for more than 10 years now, President Milosevic has pursued a different course for Serbia and for much of the rest of the Former Yugoslavia.

Since the late 1980s, he has acquired, retained and sought to expand his power by inciting religious and ethnic hatred in the cause of Greater Serbia, by demonizing and dehumanizing people, especially the Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims whose history, culture and very presence in the former Republic of Yugoslavia impedes that vision of a Greater Serbia.

He unleashed wars in Bosnia and Croatia, creating two million refugees and leaving a quarter of a million people dead. A decade ago, he stripped Kosovo of its constitutional self-government and began harassing and oppressing its people. He has also rejected brave calls among his own Serb people for greater liberty.

Today, he uses repression and censorship at home to stifle descent and to conceal what he is doing in Kosovo. Though his ethnic cleansing is not the same as the ethnic extermination of the Holocaust, the two are related; both vicious, premeditated, systematic oppression fueled by religious and ethnic hatred.

This campaign to drive the Kosovars from their land and to indeed erase their very identity is an affront to humanity and attack not only on a people, but on the dignity of all people.

Even now, Mr. Milosevic is being investigated by the International War Crimes Tribunal for alleged war crimes, including mass killing and ethnic cleansing.

Until recently, 1.7 million ethnic Albanians -- about the population of our state of Nebraska -- lived in Kosovo among a total population of 2 million, the others being Serbs.

The Kosovar Albanians are farmers and factory workers, lawyers and doctors, mothers, fathers, school children. They have worked to build better lives under increasingly difficult circumstances. Today, most of them are in camps in Albania, Macedonia and elsewhere, nearly 900,000 refugees, some searching desperately for lost family members.

Or they are trapped within Kosovo itself, perhaps 600,000 more of them, lacking shelter, short of food, afraid to go home.

Or they are buried in mass graves dug by their executioners.
I know we see these pictures of the refugees on television every night, and most people would like another story. But we must not get refugee fatigue. We must not forget the real victims of this tragedy. We must give them aid and hope, and we in the United States must make sure -- must make sure their stories are told.

A Kosovar farmer told how Serb tanks drove into his village. Police lined up all the men, about a hundred of them, by a stream and opened fire.

The farmer was hit by a bullet in the shoulder. The weight of falling bodies all around him pulled him into the stream. The only way he could stay alive was to pretend to be dead.

From a camp in Albania he said, "My daughter tells me, 'Father, sleep. Why don't you sleep?'"

"But I can't. All those dead bodies on top of mine."

Another refugee told of trying to return to his village from Kosovo's capital Pristina. "On my way," he said, "I met one of my relatives. He told me not to go back because there were snipers on the balconies. Minutes after I left, the man was killed. I found him. Back in Pristina, no one could go out because of the Serb policemen in the streets. It was terrible to see our children. They were so hungry. Finally, I tried to go shopping. Four armed men jumped out and said, 'We're going to kill you if you don't get out of here.' My daughters were crying day and night. We were hearing stories about rape. They begged me, 'Please get us out of here.' So we joined thousands of people going through the streets at night toward the train station. In the train wagons, people were tearing up -- police were tearing up passports, taking money, taking jewelry."

Another refugee reported, "The Serbs surrounded us. They kill poor children because their families did not have money to give to the police. They killed them with knives, not guns."

Another recalled the police came early in the morning. They executed almost 100 people. They killed them all -- women and children. They set a fire and threw the bodies in. A pregnant woman watched Serb forces shoot her brother in the stomach. She said, "My father asked for someone to help this boy, but the answer he got was a beating. The Serbs told my brother to put his hands up and then they shot him 10 times. I saw this. I saw my brother die."

Serb forces, their faces often concealed by masks, as they were before in Bosnia, have rounded up Kosovar women and repeatedly raped them.

They have said to children: Go into the woods and die of hunger.

Last week in Germany, I met with a couple of dozen of these refugees, and I asked them all in turn to speak about their experiences. A young man, I'd say 15 or 16 years old, stood and struggled to talk.

Finally, he just sat down and said, "Kosovo, I cannot talk about Kosovo."
Nine of every 10 Kosovar Albanians now has been driven from their home; thousands murdered; at least 100,000 missing; many young men led away in front of their families; over 500 cities, towns and villages torched. All this has been carried out, you must understand, according to a plan carefully designed months earlier in Belgrade.

Serb officials pre-positioned forces, tanks and fuel and mapped out the sequence of attacks. What were the soldiers going to do? What were the paramilitary people going to do? What were the police going to do?

Time after time after time, I've seen the same brutal procedures. Serb forces taking valuables and identity papers, seizing or executing civilians, destroying property records, bulldozing and burning homes, mocking the fleeing.

We and our allies with Russia have worked hard for a just peace. Just last fall, Mr. Milosevic agreed under pressure to halt the previous assault on Kosovo and hundreds of thousands of Kosovars were able to return home.

But soon he broke his commitment and renewed violence. In February and March, again we pressed for peace.

And the Kosovar Albanian leaders accepted a comprehensive plan, including the disarming of their insurgent forces though it did not give them all they wanted.

But instead of joining the peace, Mr. Milosevic, having already massed some 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo, unleashed his forces to intensify their atrocities and complete his brutal scheme.

Now, from the outset of this conflict, we and our allies have been very clear about what Belgrade must do to end it. The central imperative is this: The Kosovars must be able to return home and live in safety. For this to happen, the Serb forces must leave. Partial withdrawals can only mean continued civil wars with the Kosovar insurgents.

There must also be an international security force with NATO at its core. Without that force, after all they've been through, the Kosovars simply won't go home.

Their requirements are neither arbitrary nor overreaching. These things we have said are simply what is necessary to make peace work.

There are those who say Europe and its North American allies have no business intervening in the ethnic conflicts of the Balkans. They are the inevitable results, these conflicts, according to some, of centuries-old animosities which were unleashed by the end of the Cold War restraints in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

I, myself, have been guilty of saying that on an occasion or two, and I regret it now more than I can say. For I have spent a great deal of time in these last six years reading the real history of the
Balkans, and the truth is that a lot of what passes for common wisdom in this area is a gross
oversimplification and misreading of history.

The truth is that for centuries these people have lived together in the Balkans and southeastern
Europe with greater or lesser degree of tensions, but often without anything approaching the
intolerable conditions and conflicts that exist today.

And we do no favors to ourselves or to the rest of the world when we justify looking away from
this kind of slaughter by oversimplifying and conveniently, in our own way, demonizing the
whole Balkans by saying that these people are simply incapable of civilized behavior with one
another.

Second, there is -- people say: OK, maybe it's not inevitable, but, look, there are a lot of ethnic
problems in the world.

Russia has dealt with Chechnya, and you've got Abkhazia and Asisia (ph) on the borders of
Russia, and you've got all these ethnic problems everywhere.

And religious problems. You've got -- that's what the Middle East is about. You've got Northern
Ireland. You've got the horrible, horrible genocide in Rwanda. You've got the war now between
Eritrea and Ethiopia.

They say: Oh, we've got all these problems, and therefore, why do you care about this?

I say to them, there is a huge difference between people who can't resolve their problems
peacefully and fight about it and people who resort to systematic ethnic cleansing and slaughter
of people because of their religious or ethnic background. There is a difference. There is a
difference.

And that is the difference that NATO -- that our allies have tried to recognize and act on.

I believe that is what we saw in Bosnia and Kosovo. I think the only thing we have seen that
really rivals that rooted in ethnic or religious destruction in this decade is what happened in
Rwanda, and I regret very much that the world community was not organized and able to act
quickly there as well.

Bringing the Kosovars home is a moral issue. But it is a very practical, strategic issue in a world
where the future will be threatened by the growth of terrorist groups, the easy spread of weapons
of mass destruction, the use of technology, including the Internet, for people to learn how to
make bombs and wreck countries. This is also a significant security issue, particularly because of
Kosovo's location. It is just as much a security issue for us as ending the war in Bosnia was.

Though we are working hard with the international community to sustain them, a million or more
permanent Kosovar refugees could destabilize Albania, Macedonia, the wider region, become a
fertile ground for radicalism and vengeance that would consume southeastern Europe.
And if Europe were overwhelmed with that, you know we would have to then come in and help them. Far better for us all to work together, to be firm, to be resolute, to be determined to resolve this now.

If the European community and its American and Canadian allies were to turn away from and therefore reward ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, all we would do is to create for ourselves an environment where this sort of practice was sanctioned by other people who found it convenient to build their own political power, and therefore we would be creating a world of trouble for Europe and for the United States in the years ahead.

I'd just like to make one more point about this in terms of the history of the Balkans.

As long as people have existed, there have been problems among people who were different from one another, and there probably always will be. But you do not have systematic slaughter in an effort to eradicate the religion, the culture, the heritage, the very record of presence of a people in any area unless some politician thinks it is in his interest to foment that sort of hatred.

That's how these things happen. People with organized political and military power decide it is in their interest, that they get something out of convincing the people they control or they influence to go kill other people and uproot them and dehumanize them.

I don't believe that the Serb people in their souls are any better -- I mean any worse than we are. Do you? Do you believe when a little baby is born into a certain ethnic or racial group that somehow they have some poison in there that has to at some point when they grow up turn into some vast flame of destruction?

Congressman Engel's got more Albanians than any congressman in the country in his district. Congressman Quinn's been involved in the peace process in Ireland. Do you think there's something about the Catholic and the Protestant Irish kids that sort of genetically predisposes them to -- you know better than that because we're about to make peace there, I hope.

Getting closer.

Political leaders do this kind of thing. Think the Germans would have perpetrated the Holocaust on their own without Hitler? Was there something in the history of the German race that made them do this? No.

We got to -- we got to get straight about this. This is something political leaders do. And if people make decisions to do these kinds of things, other people can make decisions to stop them.

And if the resources are properly arrayed, it can be done. And that is exactly what we intend to do.

Now -- now last week, despite our differences over the NATO action in Kosovo, Russia joined us through the G-8 foreign ministers in affirming basic conditions for ending the conflict and affirming that the mass expulsion of the Kosovars cannot stand.
We and Russia agreed that the international force ideally should be endorsed for the United Nations as it was in Bosnia, and we do want Russian forces along those with -- with those of other nations to participate because the Russians presence will help to reassure the Serbs who live in Kosovo, and they will need some protection after all that has occurred.

NATO and Russian forces have served well side by side in Bosnia with forces from many other countries.

And with all the difficulties, the tensions, the dark memories that still exist in Bosnia, the Serbs, the Muslims and the Croats are still at peace and still working together.

Nobody claims that we can make everyone love each other overnight. That is not required. But what is required are basic norms of civilized conduct.

Until Serbia accepts these conditions, we will continue to grind down its war machine. Today, our allied air campaign is striking at strategic targets in Serbia and directly at Serb forces in Kosovo, making it harder for them to obtain supplies, protect themselves, and attack the ethnic Albanians who are still there. NATO actions will not stop until the conditions I have described for peace are met.

Last week, I had a chance to meet with our troops in Europe, those who are flying the missions and those who are organizing and leading our humanitarian assistance effort.

I can tell you that you and all Americans can be very, very proud of them. They are standing up for what is right, they are performing with great skill and courage and sense of purpose, and in their attempts to avoid civilian casualties they are sometimes risking their own lives.

The wing commander at Spangdahlem Air Force Base in Germany told me, and I quote, "Sir, our team wants to stay with this mission until it's finished."

I am very grateful to these men and women. They are worthy successors to those of you in this audience who are veterans today.

Of course we regret any casualties that are accidental, including those at the Chinese embassy. But let me be clear again: These are accidents, they are inadvertent tragedies of conflict. We have worked very hard to avoid them.

I'm telling you, I talked to pilots who told me that they had been fired at from -- with mobile weapons from people in the middle of highly populated villages, and they turned away rather than answer fire because they did not want to risk killing innocent civilians.

That is not our policy. But those of you who wear the uniform of our country and the many other countries represented here in this room today, and those of you who are veterans, know that it is simply not possible to avoid casualties of noncombatants in this sort of encounter.
We are working hard, and I think it is truly remarkable. I would ask the world to note that we have now flown over 19,000 sorties. Thousands and thousands of bombs have been dropped. And there have been very few incidents of this kind.

I know that you know how many there have been because Mr. Milosevic makes sure that the media has access to them. I grieve for the loss of the innocent Chinese and for their families. I grieve for the loss of the innocent Serbian civilians and their families. I grieve for the loss of the innocent Kosovars who were put into a military vehicle that our people thought were -- was a military vehicle. And they've often been used as shields.

But I ask you to remember the stories I told you earlier. There are thousands of people that have been killed systematically by the Serb forces. There are 100,000 people who are still missing. We must remember who the real victims are here and why this started.

It is no accident that Mr. Milosevic has not allowed the international media to see the slaughter and destruction in Kosovo.

There is no picture reflecting the story that one refugee told of 15 men being tied together and set on fire while they were alive. No, there are no pictures of that. But we have enough of those stories to know that there is a systematic effort that has animated our actions, and we must not forget it.

Now Serbia faces a choice. Mr. Milosevic and his allies have dragged their people down a path of racial and religious hatred. This has resulted again and again in bloodshed and loss of life and loss of territory and denial of the Serbs' own freedom, and now in an unwinnable conflict against a united international community.

But there is another path available, one where people of different backgrounds and religions work together within and across national borders; where people stop redrawing borders and start drawing blueprints for a prosperous, multi-ethnic future.

This is the path the other nations of southeastern Europe have adopted. Day after day they work to improve lives, to build a future in which the forces that pull people together are stronger than those that tear them apart.

Albania and Bulgaria as well as our NATO ally Greece have overcome historical differences to recognize the independence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and others have deepened freedoms, promoted tolerance, pursued difficult economic reforms. Slovenia has advanced democracy at home, and prosperity, stood for regional integration, increased security cooperation, with a center to defuse land mines left from the conflict in Bosnia.

These nations are reaffirming that discord is not inevitable, that there is not some Balkan disease that has been there for centuries, always waiting to break out.

They are drawing on a rich past where peoples of the region did in fact live together in peace.
Now we and our allies have been helping to build that future, but we have to accelerate our efforts. We will work with the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF and others to ease the immediate economic strains, to relieve debt burden, to speed reconstruction, to advance economic reform and regional trade.

We will promote political freedom and tolerance of minorities. At our NATO Summit last month, we agreed to deepen our security engagement in the region, to adopt an ambitious program to help aspiring nations improve their candidacies to join the NATO Alliance.

They have risked and sacrificed to support the military and humanitarian efforts. They deserve our support. Last Saturday was the anniversary of one of the greatest days in American history and in the history of freedom, VE Day.

Though America celebrated that day in 1945, we did not pack up and go home. We stayed to provide economic aid, to help to bolster democracy, to keep the peace. And because our strength and resolve was important as Europe rebuilt, learned to live together, face new challenges together, the resources we devoted to the Marshall Plan, to NATO, other efforts, I think we would all agree, have been an enormous bargain for our long-term prosperity and security here in the United States.

Just as the resources we are devoting here at this institution to reaching out to people from other nations, to their officers, to their militaries in the spirit of cooperation, are an enormous bargain for the future security of the people of the United States.

Now that's what I want to say in my last point here: War is expensive, peace is cheaper, prosperity is down right profitable. We have to invest in the rebuilding of this region.

Southeastern Europe after the Cold War was free, but poor. As long as they are poor, they will offer a less compelling counterweight to the kind of ethnic exclusivity and oppression that Mr. Milosevic preaches. If you believe the Marshall Plan worked and you believe war is to be avoided whenever possible and you understand how expensive it is and how profitable prosperity is, and how much we have gotten out of what we have done, then we have to work with our European allies to rebuild southeastern Europe and to give them an economic future that will pull them together.

The European Union is prepared to take the lead role in Southeastern Europe's development. Russia, Ukraine, other nations of Europe's east are building democracy. They want to be a part of this. We are trying to do this in other places in the world. What a great ally Japan has been for peace and prosperity, and will be again as they work to overcome their economic difficulties.

Despite our present problems, I still believe we must remain committed to building a long-term strategic partnership with China. We must work together with people where we can as we prepare always to protect and defend our security if we must. But a better world and a better Europe are clearly in America's interests. Serbia and the rest of the Balkans should be part of it.

So I want to say this one more time: Our quarrel is not with the Serbian people.
The United States has been deeply enriched by Serbian Americans. Millions of Americans are now cheering for some Serbian Americans as we watch the basketball playoffs every night on television. People of Serbian heritage are an important part of our society. We can never forget that the Serbs fought bravely with the allies against fascist aggression in World War II, that they suffered much, that Serbs, too, have been uprooted from their homes and have suffered greatly in the conflicts of the past decade that Mr. Milosevic provoked.

But the cycle of violence has to end. The children of the Balkans, all of them, deserve the chance to grow up without fear. Serbs simply must free themselves of the notion that their neighbors must be their enemies. The real enemy is a poisonous hatred unleashed by cynical leaders based on a distorted view of what constitutes real national greatness.

The United States has become greater as we have shed racism, as we have shed a sense of superiority, as we have become more committed to working together across the lines that divide us, as we have found other ways to define meaning and purpose in life, and so has every other country that has embarked on that course.

We stand ready, therefore, to embrace Serbia as a part of a new Europe if the people of Serbia are willing to invest and embrace that kind of future, if they are ready to build a Serbia and a Yugoslavia that is democratic and respects the rights and dignity of all people, if they are ready to join a world where people reach across the divides to find their common humanity and their common prosperity.

This is the right vision and the right course. It is not only the morally right thing for America, it is the right thing for our security interests over the long run. It is the vision for which the veterans in this room struggled so valiantly, for which so many others have given their lives.

With your example to guide us and with our allies beside us, it is a vision that will prevail, and it is very, very much worth standing for.

Thank you and God bless you.
Barack Obama

Inaugural Address, January 20, 2009

My fellow citizens:

I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. I thank President Bush for his service to our Nation, as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the Presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we the people have remained faithful to the ideals of our forbears and true to our founding documents.

So it has been; so it must be with this generation of Americans. That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our Nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the Nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly. Our schools fail too many. And each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land, a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights. Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met.

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics.

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history, to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

In reaffirming the greatness of our Nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the fainthearted, for those who prefer leisure over work or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things—some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor—who have carried us up the long, rugged path toward prosperity and freedom.
For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip, and plowed the hard Earth. For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh.

Time and again, these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked 'til their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.

This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive. Our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions, that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. All this we will do.

Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions, who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short, for they have forgotten what this country has already done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose and necessity to courage.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them; that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our Government is too big or too small, but whether it works; whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.

Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched. But this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control. The Nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous. The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity, on our ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart, not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.
As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expediency's sake. And so to all the other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father was born, know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman, and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more.

Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks but with sturdy alliances and enduring convictions. They understood that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use. Our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.

We are the keepers of this legacy. Guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort, even greater cooperation and understanding between nations. We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan. With old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat and roll back the specter of a warming planet. We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense. And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you.

For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth. And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict or blame their society's ills on the West, know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow, to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to suffering outside our borders, nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect, for the world has changed, and we must change with it.

As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to
tell us today, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service, a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet at this moment—a moment that will define a generation—it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all.

For as much as Government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this Nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job, which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter’s courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent’s willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate.

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends—honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism—these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility, a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our Nation, and the world. Duties that we do not grudgingly accept but, rather, seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence—the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny. This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed; why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent Mall, and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

So let us mark this day with remembrance of who we are and how far we have traveled. In the year of America’s birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. The Capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. At a moment when the outcome of our Revolution was most in doubt, the Father of our Nation ordered these words be read to the people:

"Let it be told to the future world . . . that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive . . . that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

America, in the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children’s children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end; that we did not turn back, nor did we falter. And with eyes fixed on the horizon and God’s grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.
Thank you very much, Governor Keating and Mrs. Keating, Reverend Graham, to the families of those who have been lost and wounded, to the people of Oklahoma City, who have endured so much, and the people of this wonderful state, to all of you who are here as our fellow Americans.

I am honored to be here today to represent the American people. But I have to tell you that Hillary and I also come as parents, as husband and wife, as people who were your neighbors for some of the best years of our lives.

Today our nation joins with you in grief. We mourn with you. We share your hope against hope that some may still survive. We thank all those who have worked so heroically to save lives and to solve this crime -- those here in Oklahoma and those who are all across this great land, and many who left their own lives to come here to work hand in hand with you. We pledge to do all we can to help you heal the injured, to rebuild this city, and to bring to justice those who did this evil.

This terrible sin took the lives of our American family, innocent children in that building, only because their parents were trying to be good parents as well as good workers; citizens in the building going about their daily business; and many there who served the rest of us -- who worked to help the elderly and the disabled, who worked to support our farmers and our veterans, who worked to enforce our laws and to protect us. Let us say clearly, they served us well, and we are grateful.

But for so many of you they were also neighbors and friends. You saw them at church or the PTA meetings, at the civic clubs, at the ball park. You know them in ways that all the rest of America could not. And to all the members of the families here present who have suffered loss, though we share your grief, your pain is unimaginable, and we know that. We cannot undo it. That is God's work.

Our words seem small beside the loss you have endured. But I found a few I wanted to share today. I've received a lot of letters in these last terrible days. One stood out because it came from a young widow and a mother of three whose own husband was murdered with over 200 other Americans when Pan Am 103 was shot down. Here is what that woman said I should say to you today:

The anger you feel is valid, but you must not allow yourselves to be consumed by it. The hurt you feel must not be allowed to turn into hate, but instead into the search for justice. The loss you feel must not paralyze your own lives. Instead, you must try to pay tribute to your loved ones by continuing to do all the things they left undone, thus ensuring they did not die in vain.

Wise words from one who also knows.
You have lost too much, but you have not lost everything. And you have certainly not lost America, for we will stand with you for as many tomorrows as it takes.

If ever we needed evidence of that, I could only recall the words of Governor and Mrs. Keating: "If anybody thinks that Americans are mostly mean and selfish, they ought to come to Oklahoma. If anybody thinks Americans have lost the capacity for love and caring and courage, they ought to come to Oklahoma."

To all my fellow Americans beyond this hall, I say, one thing we owe those who have sacrificed is the duty to purge ourselves of the dark forces which gave rise to this evil. They are forces that threaten our common peace, our freedom, our way of life. Let us teach our children that the God of comfort is also the God of righteousness: Those who trouble their own house will inherit the wind.¹ Justice will prevail.

Let us let our own children know that we will stand against the forces of fear. When there is talk of hatred, let us stand up and talk against it. When there is talk of violence, let us stand up and talk against it. In the face of death, let us honor life. As St. Paul admonished us, Let us "not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."²

Yesterday, Hillary and I had the privilege of speaking with some children of other federal employees -- children like those who were lost here. And one little girl said something we will never forget. She said, "We should all plant a tree in memory of the children." So this morning before we got on the plane to come here, at the White House, we planted that tree in honor of the children of Oklahoma. It was a dogwood with its wonderful spring flower and its deep, enduring roots. It embodies the lesson of the Psalms -- that the life of a good person is like a tree whose leaf does not wither.³

My fellow Americans, a tree takes a long time to grow, and wounds take a long time to heal. But we must begin. Those who are lost now belong to God. Some day we will be with them. But until that happens, their legacy must be our lives.

Thank you all, and God bless you.
Barack Obama, January 25, 2011

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow Americans:

Tonight I want to begin by congratulating the men and women of the 112th Congress, as well as your new Speaker, John Boehner. And as we mark this occasion, we're also mindful of the empty chair in this Chamber, and we pray for the health of our colleague and our friend Gabby Giffords.

It's no secret that those of us here tonight have had our differences over the last 2 years. The debates have been contentious; we have fought fiercely for our beliefs. And that's a good thing. That's what a robust democracy demands. That's what helps set us apart as a nation.

But there's a reason the tragedy in Tucson gave us pause. Amid all the noise and passion and rancor of our public debate, Tucson reminded us that no matter who we are or where we come from, each of us is a part of something greater, something more consequential than party or political preference.

We are part of the American family. We believe that in a country where every race and faith and point of view can be found, we are still bound together as one people, that we share common hopes and a common creed, that the dreams of a little girl in Tucson are not so different than those of our own children, that they all deserve the chance to be fulfilled. That too is what sets us apart as a nation.

Now, by itself, this simple recognition won't usher in a new era of cooperation. What comes of this moment is up to us. What comes of this moment will be determined not by whether we can sit together tonight, but whether we can work together tomorrow.

I believe we can, and I believe we must. That's what the people who sent us here expect of us. With their votes, they've determined that governing will now be a shared responsibility between parties. New laws will only pass with support from Democrats and Republicans. We will move forward together or not at all, for the challenges we face are bigger than party and bigger than politics.

At stake right now is not who wins the next election. After all, we just had an election. At stake is whether new jobs and industries take root in this country or somewhere else. It's whether the hard work and industry of our people is rewarded. It's whether we sustain the leadership that has made America not just a place on a map, but the light to the world.

We are poised for progress. Two years after the worst recession most of us have ever known, the stock market has come roaring back, corporate profits are up, the economy is growing again.

But we have never measured progress by these yardsticks alone. We measure progress by the success of our people, by the jobs they can find and the quality of life those jobs offer, by the prospects of a small-business owner who dreams of turning a good idea into a thriving enterprise, by the opportunities for a better life that we pass on to our children.

That's the project the American people want us to work on—together.
Now, we did that in December. Thanks to the tax cuts we passed, Americans' paychecks are a little bigger today. Every business can write off the full cost of new investments that they make this year. And these steps, taken by Democrats and Republicans, will grow the economy and add to the more than 1 million private sector jobs created last year.

But we have to do more. These steps we've taken over the last 2 years may have broken the back of this recession, but to win the future, we'll need to take on challenges that have been decades in the making.

Many people watching tonight can probably remember a time when finding a good job meant showing up at a nearby factory or a business downtown. You didn't always need a degree, and your competition was pretty much limited to your neighbors. If you worked hard, chances are you'd have a job for life, with a decent paycheck and good benefits and the occasional promotion. Maybe you'd even have the pride of seeing your kids work at the same company.

That world has changed. And for many, the change has been painful. I've seen it in the shuttered windows of once booming factories and the vacant storefronts on once busy Main Streets. I've heard it in the frustrations of Americans who've seen their paychecks dwindle or their jobs disappear, proud men and women who feel like the rules have been changed in the middle of the game.

They're right. The rules have changed. In a single generation, revolutions in technology have transformed the way we live, work, and do business. Steel mills that once needed 1,000 workers can now do the same work with 100. Today, just about any company can set up shop, hire workers, and sell their products wherever there's an Internet connection.

Meanwhile, nations like China and India realized that with some changes of their own, they could compete in this new world. And so they started educating their children earlier and longer, with greater emphasis on math and science. They're investing in research and new technologies. Just recently, China became the home to the world's largest private solar research facility and the world's fastest computer.

So yes, the world is changed. The competition for jobs is real. But this shouldn't discourage us. It should challenge us. Remember, for all the hits we've taken these last few years, for all the naysayers predicting our decline, America still has the largest, most prosperous economy in the world. No workers are more productive than ours. No country has more successful companies or grants more patents to inventors and entrepreneurs. We're the home to the world's best colleges and universities, where more students come to study than any place on Earth.

What's more, we are the first nation to be founded for the sake of an idea: the idea that each of us deserves the chance to shape our own destiny. That's why centuries of pioneers and immigrants have risked everything to come here. It's why our students don't just memorize equations, but answer questions like "What do you think of that idea? What would you change about the world? What do you want to be when you grow up?"
The future is ours to win. But to get there, we can’t just stand still. As Robert Kennedy told us, “The future is not a gift. It is an achievement.” Sustaining the American Dream has never been about standing pat. It has required each generation to sacrifice and struggle and meet the demands of a new age.

And now it’s our turn. We know what it takes to compete for the jobs and industries of our time. We need to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. We have to make America the best place on Earth to do business. We need to take responsibility for our deficit and reform our Government. That’s how our people will prosper. That’s how we’ll win the future. And tonight, I’d like to talk about how we get there.

The first step in winning the future is encouraging American innovation. None of us can predict with certainty what the next big industry will be or where the new jobs will come from. Thirty years ago, we couldn’t know that something called the Internet would lead to an economic revolution. What we can do—what America does better than anyone else—is spark the creativity and imagination of our people. We’re the nation that put cars in driveways and computers in offices; the nation of Edison and the Wright brothers, of Google and Facebook. In America, innovation doesn’t just change our lives. It is how we make our living.

Our free enterprise system is what drives innovation. But because it’s not always profitable for companies to invest in basic research, throughout our history, our Government has provided cutting-edge scientists and inventors with the support that they need. That’s what planted the seeds for the Internet. That’s what helped make possible things like computer chips and GPS. Just think of all the good jobs—from manufacturing to retail—that have come from these breakthroughs.

Half a century ago, when the Soviets beat us into space with the launch of a satellite called Sputnik, we had no idea how we would beat them to the Moon. The science wasn’t even there yet. NASA didn’t exist. But after investing in better research and education, we didn’t just surpass the Soviets; we unleashed a wave of innovation that created new industries and millions of new jobs.

This is our generation’s Sputnik moment. Two years ago, I said that we needed to reach a level of research and development we haven’t seen since the height of the space race. And in a few weeks, I will be sending a budget to Congress that helps us meet that goal. We’ll invest in biomedical research, information technology, and especially clean energy technology, an investment that will strengthen our security, protect our planet, and create countless new jobs for our people.

Already, we’re seeing the promise of renewable energy. Robert and Gary Allen are brothers who run a small Michigan roofing company. After September 11th, they volunteered their best roofers to help repair the Pentagon. But half of their factory went unused, and the recession hit them hard. Today, with the help of a Government loan, that empty space is being used to manufacture solar shingles that are being sold all across the country. In Robert’s words, “We reinvented ourselves.”

That’s what Americans have done for over 200 years: reinvented ourselves. And to spur on more success stories like the Allen Brothers, we’ve begun to reinvent our energy policy. We’re not just handing out money. We’re issuing a challenge. We’re telling America’s scientists and engineers that if they assemble
teams of the best minds in their fields and focus on the hardest problems in clean energy, we'll fund the
Apollo projects of our time.

At the California Institute of Technology, they're developing a way to turn sunlight and water into fuel
for our cars. At Oak Ridge National Laboratory, they're using supercomputers to get a lot more power
out of our nuclear facilities. With more research and incentives, we can break our dependence on oil
with biofuels and become the first country to have a million electric vehicles on the road by 2015.

We need to get behind this innovation. And to help pay for it, I'm asking Congress to eliminate the
billions in taxpayer dollars we currently give to oil companies. I don't know if you've noticed, but they're
doing just fine on their own. [Laughter] So instead of subsidizing yesterday's energy, let's invest in
tomorrow's.

Now, clean energy breakthroughs will only translate into clean energy jobs if businesses know there will
be a market for what they're selling. So tonight I challenge you to join me in setting a new goal: By 2035,
80 percent of America's electricity will come from clean energy sources.

Some folks want wind and solar. Others want nuclear, clean coal, and natural gas. To meet this goal, we
will need them all, and I urge Democrats and Republicans to work together to make it happen.

Maintaining our leadership in research and technology is crucial to America's success. But if we want to
win the future, if we want innovation to produce jobs in America and not overseas, then we also have to
win the race to educate our kids.

Think about it. Over the next 10 years, nearly half of all new jobs will require education that goes
beyond a high school education. And yet as many as a quarter of our students aren't even finishing high
school. The quality of our math and science education lags behind many other nations. America has
fallen to ninth in the proportion of young people with a college degree. And so the question is whether
all of us, as citizens and as parents, are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to
succeed.

That responsibility begins not in our classrooms, but in our homes and communities. It's family that first
instills the love of learning in a child. Only parents can make sure the TV is turned off and homework
gets done. We need to teach our kids that it's not just the winner of the Super Bowl who deserves to be
celebrated, but the winner of the science fair. We need to teach them that success is not a function of
fame or PR, but of hard work and discipline.

Our schools share this responsibility. When a child walks into a classroom, it should be a place of high
expectations and high performance. But too many schools don't meet this test. That's why instead of
just pouring money into a system that's not working, we launched a competition called Race to the Top.
To all 50 States, we said, "If you show us the most innovative plans to improve teacher quality and
student achievement, we'll show you the money."

Race to the Top is the most meaningful reform of our public schools in a generation. For less than 1
percent of what we spend on education each year, it has led over 40 States to raise their standards for
teaching and learning. And these standards were developed, by the way, not by Washington, but by
Republican and Democratic Governors throughout the country. And Race to the Top should be the
approach we follow this year as we replace No Child Left Behind with a law that's more flexible and
focused on what's best for our kids.

You see, we know what's possible from our children when reform isn't just a top-down mandate, but the
work of local teachers and principals, school boards and communities. Take a school like Bruce Randolph
in Denver. Three years ago, it was rated one of the worst schools in Colorado, located on turf between
two rival gangs. But last May, 97 percent of the seniors received their diploma. Most will be the first in
their families to go to college. And after the first year of the school's transformation, the principal who
made it possible wiped away tears when a student said, "Thank you, Ms. Waters, for showing that we
are smart and we can make it." That's what good schools can do, and we want good schools all across
the country.

Let's also remember that after parents, the biggest impact on a child's success comes from the man or
woman at the front of the classroom. In South Korea, teachers are known as "nation builders." Here in
America, it's time we treated the people who educate our children with the same level of respect. We
want to reward good teachers and stop making excuses for bad ones. And over the next 10 years, with
so many baby boomers retiring from our classrooms, we want to prepare 100,000 new teachers in the
fields of science and technology and engineering and math.

In fact, to every young person listening tonight who's contemplating their career choice: If you want to
make a difference in the life of our Nation, if you want to make a difference in the life of a child, become
a teacher. Your country needs you.

Of course, the education race doesn't end with a high school diploma. To compete, higher education
must be within the reach of every American. That's why we've ended the unwarranted taxpayer
subsidies that went to banks and used the savings to make college affordable for millions of students.
And this year, I ask Congress to go further and make permanent our tuition tax credit, worth $10,000 for
4 years of college. It's the right thing to do.

Because people need to be able to train for new jobs and careers in today's fast-changing economy,
we're also revitalizing America's community colleges. Last month, I saw the promise of these schools at
Forsyth Tech in North Carolina. Many of the students there used to work in the surrounding factories
that have since left town. One mother of two, a woman named Kathy Proctor, had worked in the
furniture industry since she was 18 years old. And she told me she's earning her degree in biotechnology
now, at 55 years old, not just because the furniture jobs are gone, but because she wants to inspire her
children to pursue their dreams too. As Kathy said, "I hope it tells them to never give up."

If we take these steps, if we raise expectations for every child and give them the best possible chance at
an education, from the day they are born until the last job they take, we will reach the goal that I set 2
years ago: By the end of the decade, America will once again have the highest proportion of college
graduates in the world.
One last point about education: Today, there are hundreds of thousands of students excelling in our schools who are not American citizens. Some are the children of undocumented workers, who had nothing to do with the actions of their parents. They grew up as Americans and pledge allegiance to our flag, and yet they live every day with the threat of deportation. Others come here from abroad to study in our colleges and universities. But as soon as they obtain advanced degrees, we send them back home to compete against us. It makes no sense.

Now, I strongly believe that we should take on, once and for all, the issue of illegal immigration. And I am prepared to work with Republicans and Democrats to protect our borders, enforce our laws, and address the millions of undocumented workers who are now living in the shadows. I know that debate will be difficult. I know it will take time. But tonight, let's agree to make that effort. And let's stop expelling talented, responsible young people who could be staffing our research labs or starting a new business, who could be further enriching this Nation.

The third step in winning the future is rebuilding America. To attract new businesses to our shores, we need the fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information, from high-speed rail to high-speed Internet.

Our infrastructure used to be the best, but our lead has slipped. South Korean homes now have greater Internet access than we do. Countries in Europe and Russia invest more in their roads and railways than we do. China is building faster trains and newer airports. Meanwhile, when our own engineers graded our Nation's infrastructure, they gave us a "D."

We have to do better. America is the nation that built the transcontinental railroad, brought electricity to rural communities, constructed the Interstate Highway System. The jobs created by these projects didn't just come from laying down track or pavement. They came from businesses that opened near a town's new train station or the new off-ramp.

So over the last 2 years, we've begun rebuilding for the 21st century, a project that has meant thousands of good jobs for the hard-hit construction industry. And tonight I'm proposing that we redouble those efforts.

We'll put more Americans to work repairing crumbling roads and bridges. We'll make sure this is fully paid for, attract private investment, and pick projects based [on]* what's best for the economy, not politicians.

Within 25 years, our goal is to give 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail. This could allow you to go places in half the time it takes to travel by car. For some trips, it will be faster than flying, without the pat-down. [Laughter] As we speak, routes in California and the Midwest are already underway.

Within the next 5 years, we'll make it possible for businesses to deploy the next generation of high-speed wireless coverage to 98 percent of all Americans. This isn't just about—this isn't about faster Internet or fewer dropped calls. It's about connecting every part of America to the digital age. It's about
a rural community in Iowa or Alabama where farmers and small-business owners will be able to sell
their products all over the world. It's about a firefighter who can download the design of a burning
building onto a handheld device, a student who can take classes with a digital textbook, or a patient who
can have face-to-face video chats with her doctor.

All these investments, in innovation, education, and infrastructure, will make America a better place to
do business and create jobs. But to help our companies compete, we also have to knock down barriers
that stand in the way of their success.

For example, over the years, a parade of lobbyists has rigged the Tax Code to benefit particular
companies and industries. Those with accountants or lawyers to work the system can end up paying no
taxes at all. But all the rest are hit with one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world. It makes no
sense, and it has to change.

So tonight I'm asking Democrats and Republicans to simplify the system, get rid of the loopholes, level
the playing field, and use the savings to lower the corporate tax rate for the first time in 25 years
without adding to our deficit. It can be done.

To help businesses sell more products abroad, we set a goal of doubling our exports by 2014. Because
the more we export, the more jobs we create here at home. Already, our exports are up. Recently, we
signed agreements with India and China that will support more than 250,000 jobs here in the United
States. And last month, we finalized a trade agreement with South Korea that will support at least
70,000 American jobs. This agreement has unprecedented support from business and labor, Democrats
and Republicans, and I ask this Congress to pass it as soon as possible.

Now, before I took office, I made it clear that we would enforce our trade agreements, and that I would
only sign deals that keep faith with American workers and promote American jobs. That's what we did
with Korea, and that's what I intend to do as we pursue agreements with Panama and Colombia and
continue our Asia Pacific and global trade talks.

To reduce barriers to growth and investment, I've ordered a review of Government regulations. When
we find rules that put an unnecessary burden on businesses, we will fix them. But I will not hesitate to
create or enforce commonsense safeguards to protect the American people. That's what we've done in
this country for more than a century. It's why our food is safe to eat, our water is safe to drink, and our
air is safe to breathe. It's why we have speed limits and child labor laws. It's why last year, we put in
place consumer protections against hidden fees and penalties by credit card companies and new rules
to prevent another financial crisis. And it's why we passed reform that finally prevents the health
insurance industry from exploiting patients.

Now, I have heard rumors that a few of you still have concerns about our new health care law.

[Laughter] So let me be the first to say that anything can be improved. If you have ideas about how to
improve this law by making care better or more affordable, I am eager to work with you. We can start
right now by correcting a flaw in the legislation that has placed an unnecessary bookkeeping burden on
small businesses.
What I'm not willing to do—what I'm not willing to do is go back to the days when insurance companies could deny someone coverage because of a preexisting condition.

I'm not willing to tell James Howard, a brain cancer patient from Texas, that his treatment might not be covered. I'm not willing to tell Jim Houser, a small-business man from Oregon, that he has to go back to paying $5,000 more to cover his employees. As we speak, this law is making prescription drugs cheaper for seniors and giving uninsured students a chance to stay on their patients'—parents' coverage.

So I say to this chamber tonight: Instead of refighting the battles of the last 2 years, let's fix what needs fixing, and let's move forward.

Now, the final critical step in winning the future is to make sure we aren't buried under a mountain of debt.

We are living with a legacy of deficit spending that began almost a decade ago. And in the wake of the financial crisis, some of that was necessary to keep credit flowing, save jobs, and put money in people's pockets.

But now that the worst of the recession is over, we have to confront the fact that our Government spends more than it takes in. That is not sustainable. Every day, families sacrifice to live within their means. They deserve a Government that does the same.

So tonight I am proposing that starting this year, we freeze annual domestic spending for the next 5 years. Now, this would reduce the deficit by more than $400 billion over the next decade and will bring discretionary spending to the lowest share of our economy since Dwight Eisenhower was President.

This freeze will require painful cuts. Already, we've frozen the salaries of hard-working Federal employees for the next 2 years. I've proposed cuts to things I care deeply about, like community action programs. The Secretary of Defense has also agreed to cut tens of billions of dollars in spending that he and his generals believe our military can do without.

Now, I recognize that some in this Chamber have already proposed deeper cuts, and I'm willing to eliminate whatever we can honestly afford to do without. But let's make sure that we're not doing it on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens. And let's make sure that what we're cutting is really excess weight. Cutting the deficit by gutting our investments in innovation and education is like lightening an overloaded airplane by removing its engine. It may make you feel like you're flying high at first, but it won't take long before you feel the impact. [Laughter]

Now, most of the cuts and savings I've proposed only address annual domestic spending, which represents a little more than 12 percent of our budget. To make further progress, we have to stop pretending that cutting this kind of spending alone will be enough. It won't.

The bipartisan fiscal commission I created last year made this crystal clear. I don't agree with all their proposals, but they made important progress. And their conclusion is that the only way to tackle our
deficit is to cut excessive spending wherever we find it, in domestic spending, defense spending, health
care spending, and spending through tax breaks and loopholes.

This means further reducing health care costs, including programs like Medicare and Medicaid, which
are the single biggest contributor to our long-term deficit. The health insurance law we passed last year
will slow these rising costs, which is part of the reason that nonpartisan economists have said that
repealing the health care law would add a quarter of a trillion dollars to our deficit. Still, I'm willing to
look at other ideas to bring down costs, including one that Republicans suggested last year: medical
malpractice reform to rein in frivolous lawsuits.

To put us on solid ground, we should also find a bipartisan solution to strengthen Social Security for
future generations. We must do it without putting at risk current retirees, the most vulnerable, or
people with disabilities, without slashing benefits for future generations, and without subjecting
Americans' guaranteed retirement income to the whims of the stock market.

And if we truly care about our deficit, we simply can't afford a permanent extension of the tax cuts for
the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Before we take money away from our schools or scholarships
away from our students, we should ask millionaires to give up their tax break. It's not a matter of
punishing their success, it's about promoting America's success.

In fact, the best thing we could do on taxes for all Americans is to simplify the individual Tax Code. This
will be a tough job, but members of both parties have expressed an interest in doing this, and I am
prepared to join them.

So now is the time to act. Now is the time for both sides and both Houses of Congress, Democrats and
Republicans, to forge a principled compromise that gets the job done. If we make the hard choices now
to rein in our deficits, we can make the investments we need to win the future.

Let me take this one step further. We shouldn't just give our people a Government that's more
affordable, we should give them a Government that's more competent and more efficient. We can't win
the future with a Government of the past.

We live and do business in the information age, but the last major reorganization of the Government
happened in the age of black-and-white TV. There are 12 different agencies that deal with exports.
There are at least five different agencies that deal with housing policy. Then there's my favorite
example: The Interior Department is in charge of salmon while they're in fresh water, but the Commerce
Department handles them when they're in saltwater. [Laughter] I hear it gets even more complicated
once they're smoked. [Laughter]

Now, we've made great strides over the last 2 years in using technology and getting rid of waste.
Veterans can now download their electronic medical records with a click of the mouse. We're selling
acres of Federal office space that hasn't been used in years, and we'll cut through redtape to get rid of
more. But we need to think bigger. In the coming months, my administration will develop a proposal to
merge, consolidate, and reorganize the Federal Government in a way that best serves the goal of a more
competitive America. I will submit that proposal to Congress for a vote, and we will push to get it passed.

In the coming year, we'll also work to rebuild people's faith in the institution of Government. Because you deserve to know exactly how and where your tax dollars are being spent, you'll be able to go to a web site and get that information for the very first time in history. Because you deserve to know when your elected officials are meeting with lobbyists, I ask Congress to do what the White House has already done: put that information online. And because the American people deserve to know that special interests aren't larding up legislation with pet projects, both parties in Congress should know this: If a bill comes to my desk with earmarks inside, I will veto it. I will veto it.

The 21st-century Government that's open and competent, a government that lives within its means, an economy that's driven by new skills and new ideas—our success in this new and changing world will require reform, responsibility, and innovation. It will also require us to approach that world with a new level of engagement in our foreign affairs.

Just as jobs and businesses can now race across borders, so can new threats and new challenges. No single wall separates East and West. No one rival superpower is aligned against us.

And so we must defeat determined enemies, wherever they are, and build coalitions that cut across lines of region and race and religion. And America's moral example must always shine for all who yearn for freedom and justice and dignity. And because we've begun this work, tonight we can say that American leadership has been renewed and America's standing has been restored.

Look to Iraq, where nearly 100,000 of our brave men and women have left with their heads held high. American combat patrols have ended, violence is down, and a new Government has been formed. This year, our civilians will forge a lasting partnership with the Iraqi people, while we finish the job of bringing our troops out of Iraq. America's commitment has been kept. The Iraq war is coming to an end.

Of course, as we speak, Al Qaida and their affiliates continue to plan attacks against us. Thanks to our intelligence and law enforcement professionals, we're disrupting plots and securing our cities and skies. And as extremists try to inspire acts of violence within our borders, we are responding with the strength of our communities, with respect for the rule of law, and with the conviction that American Muslims are a part of our American family.

We've also taken the fight to Al Qaida and their allies abroad. In Afghanistan, our troops have taken Taliban strongholds and trained Afghan security forces. Our purpose is clear: By preventing the Taliban from reestablishing a stranglehold over the Afghan people, we will deny Al Qaida the safe haven that served as a launching pad for 9/11.

Thanks to our heroic troops and civilians, fewer Afghans are under the control of the insurgency. There will be tough fighting ahead, and the Afghan Government will need to deliver better governance. But we are strengthening the capacity of the Afghan people and building an enduring partnership with them.
This year, we will work with nearly 50 countries to begin a transition to an Afghan lead, and this July, we will begin to bring our troops home.

In Pakistan, Al Qaida's leadership is under more pressure than at any point since 2001. Their leaders and operatives are being removed from the battlefield. Their safe havens are shrinking. And we've sent a message from the Afghan border to the Arabian Peninsula to all parts of the globe: We will not relent, we will not waver, and we will defeat you.

American leadership can also be seen in the effort to secure the worst weapons of war. Because Republicans and Democrats approved the new START Treaty, far fewer nuclear weapons and launchers will be deployed. Because we rallied the world, nuclear materials are being locked down on every continent so they never fall into the hands of terrorists.

Because of a diplomatic effort to insist that Iran meet its obligations, the Iranian Government now faces tougher sanctions, tighter sanctions than ever before. And on the Korean Peninsula, we stand with our ally South Korea and insist that North Korea keeps its commitment to abandon nuclear weapons.

This is just a part of how we're shaping a world that favors peace and prosperity. With our European allies, we revitalized NATO and increased our cooperation on everything from counterterrorism to missile defense. We've reset our relationship with Russia, strengthened Asian alliances, built new partnerships with nations like India.

This March, I will travel to Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador to forge new alliances across the Americas. Around the globe, we're standing with those who take responsibility, helping farmers grow more food, supporting doctors who care for the sick, and combating the corruption that can rot a society and rob people of opportunity.

Recent events have shown us that what sets us apart must not just be our power—it must also be the purpose behind it. In south Sudan—with our assistance—the people were finally able to vote for independence after years of war. Thousands lined up before dawn. People danced in the streets. One man who lost four of his brothers at war summed up the scene around him. "This was a battlefield for most of my life," he said. "Now we want to be free."

And we saw that same desire to be free in Tunisia, where the will of the people proved more powerful than the writ of a dictator. And tonight let us be clear: The United States of America stands with the people of Tunisia and supports the democratic aspirations of all people.

We must never forget that the things we've struggled for, and fought for, live in the hearts of people everywhere. And we must always remember that the Americans who have borne the greatest burden in this struggle are the men and women who serve our country.

Tonight let us speak with one voice in reaffirming that our Nation is united in support of our troops and their families. Let us serve them as well as they've served us, by giving them the equipment they need, by providing them with the care and benefits that they have earned, and by enlisting our veterans in the great task of building our own Nation.
Our troops come from every corner of this country. They’re Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American. They are Christian and Hindu, Jewish and Muslim. And yes, we know that some of them are gay. Starting this year, no American will be forbidden from serving the country they love because of who they love. And with that change, I call on all our college campuses to open their doors to our military recruiters and ROTC. It is time to leave behind the divisive battles of the past. It is time to move forward as one Nation.

We should have no illusions about the work ahead of us. Reforming our schools, changing the way we use energy, reducing our deficit, none of this will be easy. All of it will take time. And it will be harder because we will argue about everything: the costs, the details, the letter of every law.

Of course, some countries don't have this problem. If the central government wants a railroad, they build a railroad, no matter how many homes get bulldozed. If they don't want a bad story in the newspaper, it doesn't get written.

And yet, as contentious and frustrating and messy as our democracy can sometimes be, I know there isn't a person here who would trade places with any other nation on Earth.

We may have differences in policy, but we all believe in the rights enshrined in our Constitution. We may have different opinions, but we believe in the same promise that says this is a place where you can make it if you try. We may have different backgrounds, but we believe in the same dream that says this is a country where anything is possible, no matter who you are, no matter where you come from.

That dream is why I can stand here before you tonight. That dream is why a working-class kid from Scranton can sit behind me. [Laughter] That dream is why someone who began by sweeping the floors of his father’s Cincinnati bar can preside as Speaker of the House in the greatest nation on Earth.

That dream—that American Dream—is what drove the Allen Brothers to reinvent their roofing company for a new era. It's what drove those students at Forsyth Tech to learn a new skill and work towards the future. And that dream is the story of a small-business owner named Brandon Fisher.

Brandon started a company in Berlin, Pennsylvania, that specializes in a new kind of drilling technology. And one day last summer, he saw the news that halfway across the world, 33 men were trapped in a Chilean mine, and no one knew how to save them.

But Brandon thought his company could help. And so he designed a rescue that would come to be known as Plan B. His employees worked around the clock to manufacture the necessary drilling equipment, and Brandon left for Chile.

Along with others, he began drilling a 2,000-foot hole into the ground, working 3 or 4 hour—3 or 4 days at a time without any sleep. Thirty-seven days later, Plan B succeeded, and the miners were rescued. But because he didn't want all of the attention, Brandon wasn't there when the miners emerged. He'd already gone back home, back to work on his next project.
And later, one of his employees said of the rescue, "We proved that Center Rock is a little company, but we do big things."

We do big things.

From the earliest days of our founding, America has been the story of ordinary people who dare to dream. That's how we win the future.

We're a nation that says, "I might not have a lot of money, but I have this great idea for a new company." "I might not come from a family of college graduates, but I will be the first to get my degree." "I might not know those people in trouble, but I think I can help them, and I need to try." "I'm not sure how we'll reach that better place beyond the horizon, but I know we'll get there. I know we will."

We do big things.

The idea of America endures. Our destiny remains our choice. And tonight more than two centuries later, it's because of our people that our future is hopeful, our journey goes forward, and the state of our Union is strong.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.
President Barack Obama today vetoed a bill that would have removed impediments to interstate commerce by allowing states to recognize notarizations conducted in other states.

In a presidential veto message, Obama said it was necessary to have further deliberations about the possible unintended impact of the bill, the "Interstate Recognition of Notarizations Act of 2010," on consumer protections, including those for mortgages, before the bill can be finalized. Accordingly, Obama is withholding his approval of the bill. (The Pocket Veto Case, 279 U.S. 655 (1929)).

The authors of this bill no doubt had the best intentions in mind when trying to remove impediments to interstate commerce. My Administration will work with them and other leaders in Congress to explore the best ways to achieve this goal going forward.

To leave no doubt that the bill is being vetoed, in addition to withholding my signature, I am returning H.R. 3808 to the Clerk of the House of Representatives, along with this Memorandum of Disapproval.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,

October 8, 2010.
On October 18, 1999, President Clinton vetoed H.R. 2606 -- the Foreign Operation Appropriations Act, 2000. The following is the actual text of the veto message the President sent to the House of Representatives. The format and content of this document is typical of Presidential Veto Messages.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000--VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

(H. DOC. NO. 106-145) (House of Representatives - October 18, 1999)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following veto message from the President of the United States:

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2606, the "Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000."

The central lesson we have learned in this century is that we cannot protect American interests at home without active engagement abroad. Common sense tells us, and hard experience has confirmed, that we must lead in the world, working with other nations to defuse crises, repel dangers, promote more open economic and political systems, and strengthen the rule of law. These have been the guiding principles of American foreign policy for generations. They have served the American people well, and greatly helped to advance the cause of peace and freedom around the world.

This bill rejects all of those principles. It puts at risk America's 50-year tradition of leadership for a safer, more prosperous and democratic world. It is an abandonment of hope in our Nation's capacity to shape that kind of world. It implies that we are too small and insecure to meet our share of international responsibilities, too shortsighted to see that doing so is in our national interest. It is another sign of a new isolationism that would have America bury its head in the sand at the height of our power and prosperity.

In the short term, H.R. 2606 fails to address critical national security needs. It suggests we can afford to underfund our efforts to keep deadly weapons from falling into dangerous hands and walk away without peril from our essential work toward peace in places of conflict. Just as seriously, it fails to address America's long-term interests. It reduces assistance to nations struggling to build democratic societies and open markets and backs away from our commitment to help people trapped in poverty to stand on their feet. This, too, threatens our security because future threats will come from regions and nations where instability and misery prevail and future opportunities will come from nations on the road to freedom and growth.
By denying America a decent investment in diplomacy, this bill suggests we should meet threats to our security with our military might alone. That is a dangerous proposition. For if we underfund our diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. Shortchanging our arsenal of peace is as risky as shortchanging our arsenal of war.

The overall funding provided by H.R. 2606 is inadequate. It is about half the amount available in real terms to President Reagan in 1985, and it is 14 percent below the level that I requested. I proposed to fund this higher level within the budget limits and without spending any of the Social Security surplus. The specific shortfalls in the current bill are numerous and unacceptable.

For example, it is shocking that the Congress has failed to fulfill our obligations to Israel and its neighbors as they take risks and make difficult decisions to advance the Middle East peace process. My Administration, like all its predecessors, has fought hard to promote peace in the Middle East. This bill would provide neither the $800 million requested this year as a supplemental appropriation nor the $500 million requested in FY 2000 funding to support the Wye River Agreement. Just when Prime Minister Barak has helped give the peace process a jump start, this sends the worst possible message to Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians about America's commitment to the peace process. We should instead seize this opportunity to support them.

Additional resources are required to respond to the costs of building peace in Kosovo and the rest of the Balkans, and I intend to work with the Congress to provide needed assistance. Other life-saving peace efforts, such as those in Sierra Leone and East Timor, are imperiled by the bill's inadequate funding of the voluntary peacekeeping account.
Transcript of President Bush's address to a joint session of Congress on Thursday night, September 20, 2001. (War Declaration)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tempore, members of Congress, and fellow Americans, in the normal course of events, presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the union. Tonight, no such report is needed; it has already been delivered by the American people.

We have seen it in the courage of passengers who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground. Passengers like an exceptional man named Todd Beamer. And would you please help me welcome his wife Lisa Beamer here tonight?

We have seen the state of our union in the endurance of rescuers working past exhaustion.

We've seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers in English, Hebrew and Arabic.

We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own.

My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of union, and it is strong.

Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

I thank the Congress for its leadership at such an important time.

All of America was touched on the evening of the tragedy to see Republicans and Democrats joined together on the steps of this Capitol singing "God Bless America."

And you did more than sing. You acted, by delivering $40 billion to rebuild our communities and meet the needs of our military. Speaker Hastert, Minority Leader Gephardt, Majority Leader Daschle and Senator Lott, I thank you for your friendship, for your leadership and for your service to our country.

And on behalf of the American people, I thank the world for its outpouring of support.

America will never forget the sounds of our national anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the streets of Paris and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

We will not forget South Korean children gathering to pray outside our embassy in Seoul, or the prayers of sympathy offered at a mosque in Cairo.
We will not forget moments of silence and days of mourning in Australia and Africa and Latin America.

Nor will we forget the citizens of 80 other nations who died with our own. Dozens of Pakistanis, more than 130 Israelis, more than 250 citizens of India, men and women from El Salvador, Iran, Mexico and Japan, and hundreds of British citizens.

America has no truer friend than Great Britain. (APPLAUSE) Once again, we are joined together in a great cause.

I'm so honored the British prime minister has crossed an ocean to show his unity with America.

Thank you for coming, friend.

On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars, but for the past 136 years they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war, but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning.

Americans have known surprise attacks, but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking, "Who attacked our country?"

The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda. They are some of the murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and responsible for bombing the USS Cole.

Al Qaeda is to terror what the Mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money, its goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.

The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics; a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam.

The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans and make no distinctions among military and civilians, including women and children. This group and its leader, a person named Osama bin Laden, are linked to many other organizations in different countries, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries.

They are recruited from their own nations and neighborhoods and brought to camps in places like Afghanistan where they are trained in the tactics of terror. They are sent back to their homes or sent to hide in countries around the world to plot evil and destruction. The leadership of al
Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country. In Afghanistan we see al Qaeda's vision for the world. Afghanistan's people have been brutalized, many are starving and many have fled.

Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough. The United States respects the people of Afghanistan -- after all, we are currently its largest source of humanitarian aid -- but we condemn the Taliban regime.

It is not only repressing its own people, it is threatening people everywhere by sponsoring and sheltering and supplying terrorists.

By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder. And tonight the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban:

-- Deliver to United States authorities all of the leaders of Al Qaeda who hide in your land.
-- Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens you have unjustly imprisoned.
-- Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country.
-- Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. And hand over every terrorist and every person and their support structure to appropriate authorities.
-- Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating.

These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion.

The Taliban must act and act immediately.

They will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate. I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah.

The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself.

The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends. It is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them.

Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there.

It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.
Americans are asking "Why do they hate us?"

They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa.

These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us because we stand in their way.

We're not deceived by their pretenses to piety.

We have seen their kind before. They're the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies. Americans are asking, "How will we fight and win this war?"

We will direct every resource at our command -- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war -- to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network.

Now, this war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat.

Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes visible on TV and covert operations secret even in success.

We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place until there is no refuge or no rest.

And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.

From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime. Our nation has been put on notice, we're not immune from attack. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans. Today, dozens of federal departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments, have responsibilities affecting homeland security.
These efforts must be coordinated at the highest level. So tonight, I announce the creation of a Cabinet-level position reporting directly to me, the Office of Homeland Security. And tonight, I also announce a distinguished American to lead this effort, to strengthen American security: a military veteran, an effective governor, a true patriot, a trusted friend, Pennsylvania's Tom Ridge.

He will lead, oversee and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to safeguard our country against terrorism and respond to any attacks that may come. These measures are essential. The only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it and destroy it where it grows.

Many will be involved in this effort, from FBI agents, to intelligence operatives, to the reservists we have called to active duty. All deserve our thanks, and all have our prayers. And tonight a few miles from the damaged Pentagon, I have a message for our military: Be ready. I have called the armed forces to alert, and there is a reason.

The hour is coming when America will act, and you will make us proud.

This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

We ask every nation to join us.

We will ask and we will need the help of police forces, intelligence service and banking systems around the world. The United States is grateful that many nations and many international organizations have already responded with sympathy and with support -- nations from Latin America to Asia to Africa to Europe to the Islamic world.

Perhaps the NATO charter reflects best the attitude of the world: An attack on one is an attack on all. The civilized world is rallying to America's side.

They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror unanswered can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments.

And you know what? We're not going to allow it.

Americans are asking, "What is expected of us?"

I ask you to live your lives and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight, and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat.

I ask you to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here.
We're in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.

I ask you to continue to support the victims of this tragedy with your contributions. Those who want to give can go to a central source of information, Libertyunites.org, to find the names of groups providing direct help in New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The thousands of FBI agents who are now at work in this investigation may need your cooperation, and I ask you to give it. I ask for your patience with the delays and inconveniences that may accompany tighter security and for your patience in what will be a long struggle.

I ask your continued participation and confidence in the American economy. Terrorists attacked a symbol of American prosperity; they did not touch its source.

America is successful because of the hard work and creativity and enterprise of our people. These were the true strengths of our economy before September 11, and they are our strengths today.

And finally, please continue praying for the victims of terror and their families, for those in uniform and for our great country. Prayer has comforted us in sorrow and will help strengthen us for the journey ahead. Tonight I thank my fellow Americans for what you have already done and for what you will do.

And ladies and gentlemen of the Congress, I thank you, their representatives, for what you have already done and for what we will do together.

Tonight we face new and sudden national challenges. We will come together to improve air safety, to dramatically expand the number of air marshals on domestic flights and take new measures to prevent hijacking.

We will come together to promote stability and keep our airlines flying with direct assistance during this emergency.

We will come together to give law enforcement the additional tools it needs to track down terror here at home.

We will come together to strengthen our intelligence capabilities to know the plans of terrorists before they act and to find them before they strike.

We will come together to take active steps that strengthen America's economy and put our people back to work.

Tonight, we welcome two leaders who embody the extraordinary spirit of all New Yorkers, Governor George Pataki and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.
As a symbol of America's resolve, my administration will work with Congress and these two leaders to show the world that we will rebuild New York City.

After all that has just passed, all the lives taken and all the possibilities and hopes that died with them, it is natural to wonder if America's future is one of fear.

Some speak of an age of terror. I know there are struggles ahead and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them.

As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror. This will be an age of liberty here and across the world.

Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment.

Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us.

Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail.

It is my hope that in the months and years ahead life will return almost to normal. We'll go back to our lives and routines and that is good.

Even grief recedes with time and grace.

But our resolve must not pass. Each of us will remember what happened that day and to whom it happened. We will remember the moment the news came, where we were and what we were doing.

Some will remember an image of a fire or story or rescue. Some will carry memories of a face and a voice gone forever.

And I will carry this. It is the police shield of a man named George Howard who died at the World Trade Center trying to save others.

It was given to me by his mom, Arlene, as a proud memorial to her son. It is my reminder of lives that ended and a task that does not end.

I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it. I will not yield, I will not rest, I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.

The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.
Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come.

In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom and may he watch over the United States of America. Thank you.
Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the White House and to this day to which Hillary and the vice president and I look forward so much every year.

This is always an important day for our country, for the reasons that the vice president said. It is an unusual and, I think, unusually important day today. I may not be quite as easy with my words today as I have been in years past, and I was up rather late last night thinking about and praying about what I ought to say today. And rather unusually for me, I actually tried to write it down. So if you will forgive me, I will do my best to say what it is I want to say to you -- and I may have to take my glasses out to read my own writing.

First, I want to say to all of you that, as you might imagine, I have been on quite a journey these last few weeks to get to the end of this, to the rock bottom truth of where I am and where we all are.

I agree with those who have said that in my first statement, after I testified, I was not contrite enough. I don't think there is a fancy way to say that I have sinned.

It is important to me that everybody who has been hurt know that the sorrow I feel is genuine; first and most important, my family; also my friends, my staff, my Cabinet, Monica Lewinsky and her family, and the American people. I have asked all for their forgiveness.

But I believe that to be forgiven, more than sorrow is required -- at least two more things. First, genuine repentance -- a determination to change and to repair breaches of my own making. I have repented. Second, what my Bible calls a "broken spirit"; an understanding that I must have God's help to be the person that I want to be; a willingness to give the very forgiveness I seek; a renunciation of the pride and the anger which cloud judgment, lead people to excuse and compare, and to blame and complain.

Now, what does all this mean for me and for us? First, I will instruct my lawyers to mount a vigorous defense, using all available appropriate arguments. But legal language must not obscure the fact that I have done wrong. Second, I will continue on the path of repentance, seeking pastoral support and theirs of other -- and that of other caring people so that they can hold me accountable for my own commitment. Third, I will intensify my efforts to lead our country and the world toward peace and freedom, prosperity and harmony, in the hope that with a broken spirit and a still strong heart I can be used for greater good -- for we have many blessings and many challenges and so much work to do.

In this, I ask for your prayers and for your help in healing our nation. And though I cannot move beyond or forget this -- indeed, I must always keep it as a caution light in my life -- it is very important that our nation move forward.
I am very grateful for the many, many people -- clergy and ordinary citizens alike -- who have written me with wise counsel. I am profoundly grateful for the support of so many Americans who somehow through it all seem to still know that I care about them a great deal, that I care about their problems and their dreams. I am grateful for those who have stood by me and who say that in this case and many others, the bounds of privacy have been excessively and unwisely invaded. That may be. Nevertheless, in this case, it may be a blessing, because I still sinned. And if my repentance is genuine and sustained, and if I can maintain both a broken spirit and a strong heart, then good can come of this for our country as well as for me and my family.

I -- The children of this country can learn in a profound way that integrity is important and selfishness is wrong, but God can change us and make us strong at the broken places. I want to embody those lessons for the children of this country -- for that little boy in Florida who came up to me and said that he wanted to grow up and be President and to be just like me. I want the parents of all the children in America to be able to say that to their children.

A couple of days ago when I was in Florida a Jewish friend of mine gave me this liturgy book called "Gates of Repentance." And there was this incredible passage from the Yom Kippur liturgy. I would like to read it to you:

Now is the time for turning. The leaves are beginning to turn from green to red to orange. The birds are beginning to turn and are heading once more toward the south. The animals are beginning to turn to storing their food for the winter. For leaves, birds and animals, turning comes instinctively. But for us, turning does not come so easily. It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking old habits. It means admitting that we have been wrong, and this is never easy. It means losing face. It means starting all over again. And this is always painful. It means saying 'I am sorry'. It means recognizing that we have the ability to change. These things are terribly hard to do. But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday's ways. Lord help us to turn, from callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith. Turn us around, O' Lord, and bring us back toward you. Revive our lives as at the beginning, and turn us toward each other, Lord, for in isolation there is no life.

I thank my friend for that. I thank you for being here. I ask you to share my prayer that God will "search me and know my heart, try me and know my anxious thoughts; see if there is any hurtfulness in me, and lead me toward the life everlasting."¹

I ask that God give me a clean heart. Let me "walk by faith and not sight."²

I ask once again to be able to love my neighbor -- all my neighbors -- as my self;³ to be an instrument of God's peace; to "let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart"⁴ and, in the end, the work of my hands, be pleasing.

This is what I wanted to say to you today.

Thank you. God bless you.
Fellow citizens: For eight years, it has been my honor to serve as your president. The first decade of this new century has been a period of consequence—a time set apart. Tonight, with a thankful heart, I have asked for a final opportunity to share some thoughts on the journey that we have traveled together and the future of our Nation.

Five days from now, the world will witness the vitality of American democracy. In a tradition dating back to our founding, the presidency will pass to a successor chosen by you, the American people. Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose story reflects the enduring promise of our land. This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole Nation. And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to President-elect Obama, his wife Michelle, and their two beautiful girls.

Tonight I am filled with gratitude—to Vice President Cheney and members of the Administration; to Laura, who brought joy to this house and love to my life; to our wonderful daughters, Barbara and Jenna; to my parents, whose examples have provided strength for a lifetime. And above all, I thank the American people for the trust you have given me. I thank you for the prayers that have lifted my spirits. And I thank you for the countless acts of courage, generosity, and grace that I have witnessed these past eight years.

This evening, my thoughts return to the first night I addressed you from this house—September 11, 2001. That morning, terrorists took nearly 3,000 lives in the worst attack on America since Pearl Harbor. I remember standing in the rubble of the World Trade Center three days later, surrounded by rescuers who had been working around the clock.

I remember talking to brave souls who charged through smoke-filled corridors at the Pentagon and to husbands and wives whose loved ones became heroes aboard Flight 93. I remember Arlene Howard, who gave me her fallen son’s police shield as a reminder of all that was lost. And I still carry his badge.

As the years passed, most Americans were able to return to life much as it had been before Nine-Eleven. But I never did. Every morning, I received a briefing on the threats to our Nation. And I vowed to do everything in my power to keep us safe.

Over the past seven years, a new Department of Homeland Security has been created. The military, the intelligence community, and the FBI have been transformed. Our Nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists’ movements, freeze their finances, and break up their plots. And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them.

Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harbored al Qaeda and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school. Iraq has gone from a brutal dictatorship and a sworn enemy of America to an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States.
There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions. But there can be little debate about the results. America has gone more than seven years without another terrorist attack on our soil. This is a tribute to those who toil night and day and night to keep us safe – law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, homeland security and diplomatic personnel, and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Our Nation is blessed to have citizens who volunteer to defend us in this time of danger. I have cherished meeting these selfless patriots and their families. America owes you a debt of gratitude. And to all our men and women in uniform listening tonight: There has been no higher honor than serving as your Commander in Chief.

The battles waged by our troops are part of a broader struggle between two dramatically different systems. Under one, a small band of fanatics demands total obedience to an oppressive ideology, condemns women to subservience, and marks unbelievers for murder. The other system is based on the conviction that freedom is the universal gift of Almighty God and that liberty and justice light the path to peace.

This is the belief that gave birth to our Nation. And in the long run, advancing this belief is the only practical way to protect our citizens. When people live in freedom, they do not willingly choose leaders who pursue campaigns of terror. When people have hope in the future, they will not cede their lives to violence and extremism.

So around the world, America is promoting human liberty, human rights, and human dignity. We are standing with dissidents and young democracies, providing AIDS medicine to bring dying patients back to life, and sparing mothers and babies from malaria. And this great republic born alone in liberty is leading the world toward a new age when freedom belongs to all nations.

For eight years, we have also strived to expand opportunity and hope here at home. Across our country, students are rising to meet higher standards in public schools. A new Medicare prescription drug benefit is bringing peace of mind to seniors and the disabled. Every taxpayer pays lower income taxes.

The addicted and suffering are finding new hope through faith-based programs. Vulnerable human life is better protected. Funding for our veterans has nearly doubled. America’s air, water, and lands are measurably cleaner. And the Federal bench includes wise new members like Justice Sam Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

When challenges to our prosperity emerged, we rose to meet them. Facing the prospect of a financial collapse, we took decisive measures to safeguard our economy. These are very tough times for hardworking families, but the toll would be far worse if we had not acted. All Americans are in this together. And together, with determination and hard work, we will restore our economy to the path of growth. We will show the world once again the resilience of America’s free enterprise system.

Like all who have held this office before me, I have experienced setbacks. There are things I would do differently if given the chance. Yet I have always acted with the best interests of our country in mind. I
have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some tough
decisions I have made. But I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.

The decades ahead will bring more hard choices for our country, and there are some guiding principles
that should shape our course.

While our Nation is safer than it was seven years ago, the gravest threat to our people remains another
terrorist attack. Our enemies are patient and determined to strike again. America did nothing to seek
or deserve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We
must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve. And we must never let down our guard.

At the same time, we must continue to engage the world with confidence and clear purpose. In the face
of threats from abroad, it can be tempting to seek comfort by turning inward. But we must reject
isolationism and its companion, protectionism. Retreating behind our borders would only invite danger.
In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty abroad. If
America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.

As we address these challenges – and others we cannot foresee tonight – America must maintain our
moral clarity. I have often spoken to you about good and evil. This has made some uncomfortable. But
good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering
the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere.

Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This Nation must continue to speak out
for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of
peace.

President Thomas Jefferson once wrote, “I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the
past.” As I leave the house he occupied two centuries ago, I share that optimism. America is a young
country, full of vitality, constantly growing and renewing itself. And even in the toughest times, we lift
our eyes to the broad horizon ahead.

I have confidence in the promise of America because I know the character of our people. This is a
Nation that inspires immigrants to risk everything for the dream of freedom. This is a Nation where
citizens show calm in times of danger and compassion in the face of suffering. We see examples of
America’s character all around us. And Laura and I have invited some of them to join us in the White
House this evening.

We see America’s character in Dr. Tony Recasner, a principal who opened a new charter school from the
ruins of Hurricane Katrina. We see it in Julio Medina, a former inmate who leads a faith-based program
to help prisoners returning to society. We see it in Staff Sergeant Aubrey McDade, who charged into an
ambush in Iraq and rescued three of his fellow Marines.

We see America’s character in Bill Krissoff, a surgeon from California. His son Nathan, a Marine, gave his
life in Iraq. When I met Dr. Krissoff and his family, he delivered some surprising news: He told me he
wanted to join the Navy Medical Corps in honor of his son. This good man was 60 years old – 18 years above the age limit.

But his petition for a waiver was granted, and for the past year he has trained in battlefield medicine. Lieutenant Commander Krissoff could not be here tonight, because he will soon deploy to Iraq, where he will help save America’s wounded warriors and uphold the legacy of his fallen son.

In citizens like these, we see the best of our country – resilient and hopeful, caring and strong. These virtues give me an unshakable faith in America. We have faced danger and trial, and there is more ahead. But with the courage of our people and confidence in our ideals, this great Nation will never tire ... never falter ... and never fail.

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as your President. There have been good days and tough days. But every day I have been inspired by the greatness of our country and uplifted by the goodness of our people. I have been blessed to represent this Nation we love. And I will always be honored to carry a title that means more to me than any other: citizen of the United States of America.

And so, my fellow Americans, for the final time: Good night. May God bless this house and our next President. And may God bless you and our wonderful country. Thank you."