

America Speaks

Of the Moment speeches from
American History

Fort Bragg Library Book Club

Discussion: Thursday,
September 26, 2024 at 4 pm

America Speaks

- 1796, George Washington - Farewell Address to Troops
- 1854, Chief Seattle of the Coast Salish Treaty Oration
- 1863, Abraham Lincoln – Gettysburg Address
- 1865, Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address
- 1872, Susan B. Anthony – After Being Convicted of Voting
- 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt – Four Freedoms speech
- 1961, John F. Kennedy – First Inaugural Address
- 1963, John F. Kennedy – “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech
- 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – “I Have a Dream” speech
- 1986, Cesar Chavez, Wrath of Grapes speech (excerpts)
- 1984, Ronald Reagan, 40th Anniversary of D-Day Landings
- 1987, Ronald Reagan, “Tear down this wall” speech
- 2024, Kamala Harris, DNC Convention acceptance speech

This packet presents various viewpoints—some controversial, some widely-accepted. All in all, they represent important advances in how and who we imagine ourselves. This month’s meeting has the extra pop of discussing a unique and lasting form of literature: the public speech.

George Washington

Farewell Address; September 19, 1796

In this public letter, initially composed with the assistance of James Madison in 1792 (when Washington first planned to retire), and revised by Alexander Hamilton in 1796, President Washington outlined his hopes for the American experiment and what he believed would be necessary to achieve success. Washington emphasized his belief in identifying with the Union (against sectionalism or localist interests), his constitutional textualism, his worries of the corrosive effects of parties and factions, his belief in the moral preconditions for self-government, and his fear that the United States would become unnecessarily involved in the affairs of European imperial powers rather than develop as a strong and independent nation.

To the People of the United States of America....

...Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes....

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined can not fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations, and what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other. *(By being a single union, America will be more likely to deter conflict, and thus will not need to rely on an excessively large military and checks on liberty that would otherwise be necessary.)*

... Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government. *(According to Washington, faithfulness to the*

Constitution is critically important; both citizens and government must follow it until changed by an amendment clearly consented to by the people.)

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community, and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common counsels and modified by mutual interests. . . . *(Washington warns against allowing small factions to obstruct the laws and put their needs before those of the people.)*

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things to become potent engines by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion... Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily [denounce] irregular oppositions to [the] acknowledged authority [of the Constitution], but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, [amendments] which will impair the energy of the system [and] undermine what cannot be directly overthrown.... Liberty [will be found in a government with] powers properly distributed and adjusted. . . . *(Washington recognizes the care with which the checks and balances, like most of the Constitution, were arranged, and thus warns against freely tinkering with the Constitution's provisions.)*

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true; and in governments of a monarchical cast patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose; and there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of public opinion to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume. *(Washington here warns of the dangers of excessive partisanship.)*

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those intrusted with its administration to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of

government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power and proneness to abuse it which predominates in the human heart is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes.

To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If in the opinion of the people the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this in one instance may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield. (*Washington warns against the easy temptation to ignore the Constitution's structures and consolidate power.*)

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness--these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. (*Washington encourages religion and morality and encourages politicians to support those civic virtues.*)

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric? Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that [some expenditure] to prepare for danger frequently prevent[s] much greater [expenses.] [At the same time, avoid going into] debt, not only by [budgeting wisely], but by [paying off debts from] unavoidable wars.... [It] is essential that you should practically bear in mind that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes... (*Washington advises the nation to avoid debt and war.*)

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. And can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded, and that in place of them just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation prompted by ill will and resentment sometimes impels to war the government contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject. At other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility, instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification.

It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country without odium, sometimes even with popularity, gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation. (*In the paragraphs above, Washington explains why "amicable feelings" toward all nations are best.*)

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly

alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak toward a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter. Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial, else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense . . . it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable

defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the Government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard. . . .
(Washington's opinion on avoiding foreign alliances and entanglements also extends to special trading arrangements as well).

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793¹, is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined as far as should depend upon me to maintain it with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity toward other nations. The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress

¹ Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality between Britain and France in 1793 had declined to assist France in its revolutionary wars with England despite the 1778 treaty of alliance between the United States and France. The brief proclamation itself did not explain its reasoning, but the Washington administration clarified that it understood the treaty with France to be a defensive alliance and inapplicable to a war France had initiated.

without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes. . . .



Chief Seattle of the Coast Salish

(c.1780-1866)

Authentic Text of Chief Seattle's Treaty Oration

"Chief Seattle's 1854 Oration"--ver. 1

The Suquamish Tribe, Port Madison Indian Reservation, WA

Yonder sky that has wept tears of compassion upon my people for centuries untold, and which to us appears changeless and eternal, may change. Today is fair. Tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds. My words are like the stars that never change. Whatever Seattle says, the great chief at Washington can rely upon with as much certainty as he can upon the return of the sun or the seasons. The white chief says that Big Chief at Washington sends us greetings of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him for we know he has little need of our friendship in return. His people are many. They are like the grass that covers vast prairies. My people are few. They resemble the scattering trees of a storm-swept plain. The great, and I presume--good, White Chief sends us word that he wishes to buy our land but is willing to allow us enough to live comfortably. This indeed appears just, even generous, for the Red Man no longer has rights that he need respect, and the offer may be wise, also, as we are no longer in need of an extensive country.

There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away with the greatness of tribes that are now but a mournful memory. I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame.

Youth is impulsive. When our young men grow angry at some real or imaginary wrong, and disfigure their faces with black paint, it denotes that their hearts are black, and that they are often cruel and relentless, and our old men and old women are unable to restrain them. Thus it has ever been. Thus it was when the white man began to push our forefathers ever westward. But let us hope that the hostilities between us may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain. Revenge by young men is considered gain, even at the cost of their own lives, but old men who stay at home in times of war, and mothers who have sons to lose, know better.

Our good father in Washington--for I presume he is now our father as well as yours, since King George has moved his boundaries further north--our great and good father, I say, sends us word that if we do as he

desires he will protect us. His brave warriors will be to us a bristling wall of strength, and his wonderful ships of war will fill our harbors, so that our ancient enemies far to the northward--the Haidas and Tsimshians--will cease to frighten our women, children, and old men. Then in reality he will be our father and we his children. But can that ever be? Your God is not our God! Your God loves your people and hates mine! He folds his strong protecting arms lovingly about the paleface and leads him by the hand as a father leads an infant son. But, He has forsaken His Red children, if they really are His.

Our God, the Great Spirit, seems also to have forsaken us. Your God makes your people wax stronger every day. Soon they will fill all the land. Our people are ebbing away like a rapidly receding tide that will never return. The white man's God cannot love our people or He would protect them. They seem to be orphans who can look nowhere for help. How then can we be brothers? How can your God become our God and renew our prosperity and awaken in us dreams of returning greatness? If we have a common Heavenly Father He must be partial, for He came to His paleface children. We never saw Him. He gave you laws but had no word for His red children whose teeming multitudes once filled this vast continent as stars fill the firmament. No; we are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little in common between us.

To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their resting place is hallowed ground. You wander far from the graves of your ancestors and seemingly without regret. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron finger of your God so that you could not forget. The Red Man could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors--the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people.

Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains, sequestered vales and verdant lined lakes and bays, and ever yearn in tender fond affection over the lonely hearted living, and often return from the happy hunting ground to visit, guide, console, and comfort them.

Day and night cannot dwell together. The Red Man has ever fled the approach of the White Man, as the morning mist flees before the morning sun. However, your proposition seems fair and I think that my people will accept it and will retire to the reservation you offer them. Then we will dwell apart in peace, for the words of the Great White Chief seem to be the words of nature speaking to my people out of dense darkness.

It matters little where we pass the remnant of our days. They will not be many. The Indian's night promises to be dark. Not a single star of hope hovers above his horizon. Sad-voiced winds moan in the distance. Grim fate seems to be on the Red Man's trail, and wherever he will hear the approaching footsteps of his fell destroyer and prepare stolidly to meet his doom, as does the wounded doe that hears the approaching footsteps of the hunter.

A few more moons, a few more winters, and not one of the descendants of the mighty hosts that once moved over this broad land or lived in happy homes, protected by the Great Spirit, will remain to mourn over the graves of a people once more powerful and hopeful than yours. But why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see.

We will ponder your proposition and when we decide we will let you know. But should we accept it, I here and now make this condition that we will not be denied the privilege without molestation of visiting at any time the tombs of our ancestors, friends, and children. Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. Even the rocks, which seem to be dumb and dead as the swelter in the sun

along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people, and the very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch.

Our departed braves, fond mothers, glad, happy hearted maidens, and even the little children who lived here and rejoiced here for a brief season, will love these somber solitudes and at eventide they greet shadowy returning spirits. And when the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone.

Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

ANALYSIS

from "The Real Chief Seattle," *Salishan* (2007)

Michael Hollister

In cities and universities, many affluent white people who worshipped Nature were comparing themselves to Indians, and one of their most celebrated exemplars was the coast Salish chief Seattle. A noble statue of the chief stood tall downtown near the Space Needle, a mythic equivalent of the chief on the old buffalo nickel. He became a leader of the Suquamish tribe by suppressing the militant Cowiche tribe on Vancouver Island, by attacking the Chemakum and S'Klallam tribes from the Olympic Peninsula, by ambushing raiders from other tribes in the Cascade foothills and by fighting off the more powerful Yakimas and Klickitats from the other side of the mountains, leading and participating in more raids than any other chief in the region of Puget Sound. He had eight slaves and he freed them in response to President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. After he befriended white settlers and protected them from attacks by other Indians, they expressed their gratitude by naming their village after him.

Seattle became an icon because of a speech he made in 1854 to about a thousand of his people on the beach just north of the present Kingdome, accepting a treaty that sold the remaining lands of the coast Salish to the United States. Witnesses agreed that the speech lasted about half an hour and that throughout, the tall Indian kept one hand on the head of the short white territorial governor Isaac Stevens. Sitting there in the pew beside Shona, during the sermon Daniel pulled a copy of the speech from the breast pocket of his suit, its edges ragged from being torn out of a magazine. He reviewed it discretely in his lap.

There was no verbatim transcript of the actual speech. Over thirty years afterward, one witness, the early white settler and Victorian poet Dr. Henry A. Smith published a version of it in a Seattle newspaper, rendered from the notes he took at the time, including words, rhetorical flourishes and concepts that it is unlikely could have been expressed in the language spoken by Seattle, who did not speak English. Smith did not understand the chief's Suquamish dialect of the central Puget Sound Salish language, Lushootseed. No one knows whether anyone present at the time orally translated the speech into Chinook jargon, a simple trading language. Hence it is possible that Smith made up his entire version.

A few decades later, two sentences were added to the end of Smith's rendition by the historian A. C. Ballard. Another white poet, William Arrowsmith, rewrote Smith's version in the 1960s, changing the style to sound less Victorian and more Indian. Then a professor named Ted Perry wrote a fraudulent version in a script for a film about ecology produced in 1972, changing the content and turning the speech into a letter to President Franklin Pierce. This fraudulent version casts Chief Seattle in the role of an ecological visionary, an environmental pantheist who refers to buffalo as if they were native to his region and sounds

like the founder of the Sierra Club. Still another version, the fourth, shortened the fraudulent speech in the movie script and was presented as a verbatim quotation in an exhibit at Expo '74 in Spokane, Washington.

In the years that followed that day in church, Daniel was repeatedly amazed and pointed out to Shona the continuing reinforcements of the myth. Sophie Fullmoon thought it was hilarious and told all her friends on the reservation. The movie script fraud replaced the original version of the speech and was quoted as historical truth by the first President Bush, by the popularizer of myths Joseph Campbell, by the public television broadcaster Bill Moyers, by Vice President Al Gore in a book in 1992, and by the author of a book for grade school children. *Publishers Weekly* called it a speech that had "stood the test of time." Beginning in 1991, a year before Gore's book, the fraud was widely exposed to the public in articles with titles such as "Sorry, But Chief Seattle Didn't Speak in Bumper Sticker" and "Noble Savage Speaks with Forked Tongue."

As originally rendered by Dr. Smith, the speech does express love of the land, but it contains no reference to conservation. Seattle says the land is sacred because every part of it "has been rendered hallowed by some sad or happy event." The white Chief "sends us word that he wishes to buy our land but is willing to allow us enough to live comfortably. This indeed appears just, even generous, for the Red Man no longer has rights that he need respect, and the offer may be wise, also, as we are no longer in need of an extensive country... I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame... Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless."

Daniel thought Chief Seattle was a visionary in recognizing the futility of warfare against the whites and the advantages of acquiring their firearms, their goods, their protection from his Indian enemies, and even their God. According to Smith, the chief declared that God was on the side of the whites. Six years *before* his famous speech, he was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. His children also were baptized and raised in that faith. The noble icon of environmentalism was not the pantheist invented by white secularists, he was a Christian. He identified himself with the beliefs that Marxists later would blame for contributing to capitalist exploitation and "raping the environment."

The best known photograph of Chief Seattle, as an old man, had been altered repeatedly, like his speech. In the original photo, his eyes were closed. Later his eyes were retouched to look open. Some versions of the photo show him with a cane, others do not. In one, his head has been grafted onto the body of another man. Sophie Fullmoon could not stop laughing.

Michael Hollister
Salishan (2007)

Transcript of the Gettysburg Address- Resource

Transcription of the Gettysburg Address delivered at the dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863.

Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

March 4, 1865

Fellow countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper.

Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war.. All dreaded it-- all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war-- seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it.

These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen,

perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other.

It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered--that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope--ferverently do we pray--that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.

Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said

three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

After Being Convicted Of Voting

A speech by Susan B. Anthony

Delivered 1872

Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any state to deny.

The preamble of the Federal Constitution says:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government - the ballot.

For any state to make sex a qualification that must ever result in the disfranchisement of one entire half of the people, is to pass a bill of attainder, or, an ex post facto law, and is therefore a violation of the supreme law of the land. By it the blessings of liberty are forever withheld from women and their female posterity.

To them this government has no just powers derived from the consent of the governed. To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic. It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex; the most hateful aristocracy ever established on the face of the globe; an oligarchy of wealth,

where the rich govern the poor. An oligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant, or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this oligarchy of sex, which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters, of every household - which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects, carries dissension, discord, and rebellion into every home of the nation.

Webster, Worcester, and Bouvier all define a citizen to be a person in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office.

The only question left to be settled now is: Are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not. Being persons, then, women are citizens; and no state has a right to make any law, or to enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence, every discrimination against women in the constitutions and laws of the several states is today null and void, precisely as is every one against Negroes.

FOUR FREEDOMS SPEECH

Franklin Delano Roosevelt
The State of the Union Address to Congress
Delivered January 6, 1941

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Seventy-seventh Congress:

I address you, the Members of the Seventy-seventh 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. Fortunately, only one of these—the four-year War Between the States—ever threatened our national unity. Today, thank God, one hundred and thirty million Americans, in forty-eight States, have forgotten points of the compass in our national unity.

It is true that prior to 1914 the United States often had been disturbed by events in other Continents. We had 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 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, 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.

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, 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.

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 sixteen long months this assault has blotted out the whole pattern of democratic life in an appalling number of independent nations, great and small. 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, Asia, Africa and Australasia will be dominated by the conquerors. Let us remember that the total of those populations and their resources in those four continents greatly exceeds the sum total of the population and the resources of the whole of the Western Hemisphere—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 softhearted; 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 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.

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 faces great responsibility and 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 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.

Second, by an impressive expression of the public will and without regard to partisanship, we are committed to full support of all those resolute peoples, 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. 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, and new ship ways must first be constructed before the actual matériel 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 man power, 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. Nearly all their matériel would, if the time ever came, be useful for 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 within a reasonable time following the close of hostilities, 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. This 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 is not an act of war, even if a dictator should unilaterally proclaim it so to be.

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 upon 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.

We must all 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 preparations 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 groups.

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 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 fibre 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:

Equality of opportunity for youth and for others.

Jobs for those who can work.

Security for those who need it.

The ending of special privilege for the few.

The preservation of civil liberties for all.

The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living.

These are the simple, 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. 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 shall recommend that a greater portion of this great defense program be paid for from taxation than we are paying today. No person should try, or be allowed, to get rich out of this 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 of 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 quick-lime 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 or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose.

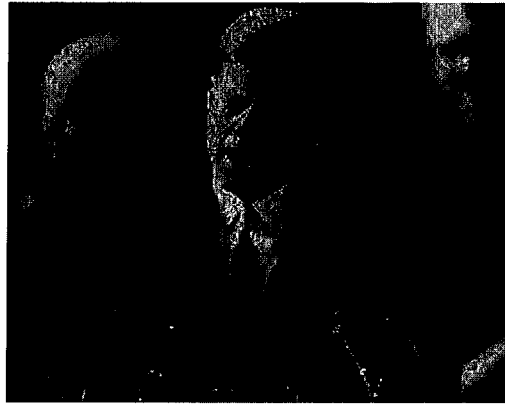
To that high concept there can be no end save victory.

Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union," January 6, 1941, in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1940 Volume* (New York: MacMillan, 1941), 663–672.

Inaugural of John F. Kennedy (January 20, 1961)

Added to the National Registry: 2003

Essay by Ryan Koonce



John F. Kennedy at his 1961 inauguration

There are four United States presidential inaugural speeches that have transcended their largely drab and unmemorable siblings. Only four: Abraham Lincoln's first and second inaugural addresses; Franklin Roosevelt's first, and John F. Kennedy's. In the category of the Great Speech—by which I mean those anthology-ready history-making texts whose quotations become littered throughout our common speech until knowledge of their origins passes to the historically minded—inaugural addresses are strange birds. A powerful oration is generally given in response to something: a catastrophe, a battle, a war; a danger or a victory or a triumph. And they usually require some period to “set” before their greatness is recognized. History is not so much prologue as it is selective memory—what becomes “great” are largely those events that stick out in our minds as we are remembering the past. That was not so with the Kennedy inaugural. Like a thunderbolt it riveted American attention from the moment it was uttered and connected to the heart of the nation like no inaugural address since.

“Let the word go forth from this time and place,” “pay any price, bear any burden,” “support any friend, oppose any foe,” “let us never negotiate out of fear . . . but let us never fear to negotiate,” and of course, “ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” The quotations roll off the tongue and mind as effortlessly as lines from our favorite movies or cherished anecdotes from our lives. Pithy phrases are the hooks on which our excitement is caught and roused. What other speech in living memory is so suffused with phrases that are not only so memorable but so impossible to forget? It had remained such a touchstone for the public that in the wake of Kennedy's death published recordings of the inaugural and his other speeches were purchased to such a degree that the recording broke into the pop album charts. No other presidential speech has attained such a distinction.

John F. Kennedy was elected president in 1960 by one of the slimmest margins, both electorally and popularly, in the history of the United States. As he ascended the rostrum to deliver his inaugural address, he must have been acutely aware that his legitimacy as the American president was still in doubt by a great many Americans. He was also the youngest person elected president and that came with both drawbacks and advantages. Drawback in that he was

considered a lightweight or the privileged puppet of his powerful father; advantage in that he was the vanguard of a new generation seizing the reigns of power from a sclerotic old guard. The address was crafted to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive of this persona.

Like all presidential speeches in the modern era, this speech was not solely the work of the president, but of a team of contributors, most especially Ted Sorenson. Sorenson was the youngest of Kennedy's aides and his principal speechwriter. His devotion to his boss was fathomless. Often characterized as Kennedy's "intellectual alter ego," Sorenson had the ability to create a feedback loop between himself and his boss wherein ideas and contours of phrases originated with Kennedy but then bounced back-and-forth between the two of them until an acceptable final version was authorized by Kennedy. The murky gray area this created in between the genesis and terminus of Kennedy's speeches stoked the belief amongst much of Washington's chattering class that Sorenson was in fact exclusively responsible for Kennedy's eloquence. Many, including Richard Nixon and Katharine Graham, openly asserted that Kennedy was merely reading a Sorenson speech at the inauguration. Most historians have refuted this claim, identifying Kennedy as the primary architect and craftsman, and Sorenson more aptly characterized as the chief polisher of the work.

The speech was in its entirety a Cold War speech. One has to wonder if the intended audience was actually the American people or the Soviet Politburo. Competition with the Soviet Union over influence throughout the world had become a monomania for Americans since the end of the Second World War and this intense focus on foreign affairs was *the* theme of the address. The address was perhaps Kennedy's—he of the generation who had fought the gruesome and perhaps unnecessary war against fascism—chance to mark the line in the sand to a despotic Soviet Union in 1961 that should have been marked by the Western powers to the despotic Axis powers in 1938. (To be sure, Kennedy had spent much of his political life running from his father's record as an appeaser in the run-up to the war, and thus the urge to foster an ostentatiously belligerent attitude towards the enemies of freedom was pronounced within him.)

Today we find ourselves befuddled trying to chart a clear path in a chaotic multipolar world of rising powers and an ever-increasing number of non-state actors. It feels almost quaint to listen to the words spoken during the most bipolar era this planet has ever known. Kennedy's recurring admonitions to "both sides" demonstrate acutely that there were none but two forces in the world that really mattered in 1961. This highlights another audience Kennedy was addressing: the scores of independent nations in Africa and Asia that had won their independence from the Western empires since 1945. Early in his congressional career, Kennedy had known that the United States would have to campaign proactively to the newly independent nations to win their support and alliance. The creation of what became the Peace Corps, long a goal of Kennedy and other policymakers, was one of the outgrowths of this aim for mutual benefit between the First and Third Worlds expressed by the new president.

Finally, besides examining the great uplifting messages within the inaugural address, attention must be paid to the sad gaping hole that existed within it. Although the address was almost entirely devoted to foreign policy, there was a domestic issue deliberately avoided by Kennedy that was rapidly metastasizing into an existential threat for the United States government: the struggle for civil rights by black Americans. Because the Kennedy Administration began their

term so focused on the freedom and human rights of the peoples across the seas, they were woefully inconsiderate of the enemies of freedom operating within their own government. Indeed, the power of the reactionary southern Democrats in government made the liberal Democratic president sadly beholden to their interests in order to advance his other priorities. There had been an attempt to include a reference to struggles black Americans were making to gain their rightful share of dignity as citizens. One line was included in an early draft of the speech which did allude to the ongoing civil rights controversies: [so that] "our nation's most precious resource, our youth, are not developed according to their race or funds, instead of their own capability," but it was dropped from the final version. Two of Kennedy's advisors (Louis Martin and Harris Wofford) did manage to convince Kennedy to add the phrase "*at home and around the world*" to his statement about defending human rights.*

Quibbling aside, the Kennedy inaugural speech shall likely be read and studied centuries from now alongside Pericles, Shakespeare, and Lincoln. Its influence on the Baby Boom generation of Americans was profound, especially coming at the apex of a time when the public had an almost religious faith that the United States government could accomplish any positive end it attempted to achieve. It is rather astounding that the speech has endured as a paragon of American exceptionalism even as the current generation of Americans revel in a sarcastic and cynical disdain for the idealism of the '60s. Perhaps we are not as world weary and snidely sophisticated as we think we are. Historian Douglas Brinkley summed it up like this:

His identification with a moment of unusual public activism explains much of his appeal to many Americans of the 1960s, and even to many Americans born after his death. They look back nostalgically to an era that seemed to be a time of national confidence and purpose. Kennedy reminds many Americans of an age when it was possible to believe that politics could be harnessed to America's highest aspirations, that it could speak to the country's moral yearnings. And perhaps most of all, Kennedy reminds Americans of a time when the nation's capacities seemed limitless, when its future seemed unbounded, when it was possible to believe that the United States could solve social problems and accomplish great deeds....

To the many Americans who yearn for a new age of public activism and commitment, the image of a heroic John Fitzgerald Kennedy has endured as a bright and beckoning symbol of the world that many people believe they have lost.

Many more generations will have to pass before any final judgment can be rendered on this quandary. Was Kennedy expressing a dangerous naïveté that would lead to quagmire wars and fiscal insolvency, or rationally comprehending the need for vigorous engagement with a world that needs a beacon of righteousness? Can our ideals ever really withstand the onslaught of pitiless circumstance?

* "... and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today *at home and around the world.*"

Ich bin ein Berliner
Speech by US President John F. Kennedy

26 June 1963

I am proud to come to this city as the guest of your distinguished Mayor, who has symbolized throughout the world the fighting spirit of West Berlin. And I am proud to visit the Federal Republic with your distinguished Chancellor who for so many years has committed Germany to democracy and freedom and progress, and to come here in the company of my fellow American, General Clay, who has been in this city during its great moments of crisis and will come again if ever needed.

Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was "civis Romanus sum." Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is "Ich bin ein Berliner."

I appreciate my interpreter translating my German!

There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the Communist world. Let them come to Berlin. There are some who say that communism is the wave of the future. Let them come to Berlin. And there are some who say in Europe and elsewhere we can work with the Communists. Let them come to Berlin. And there are even a few who say that it is true that communism is an evil system, but it permits us to make economic progress. Lasst sie nach Berlin kommen. Let them come to Berlin.

Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us. I want to say, on behalf of my countrymen, who live many miles away on the other side of the Atlantic, who are far distant from you, that they take the greatest pride that they have been able to share with you, even from a distance, the story of the last 18 years. I know of no town, no city, that has been besieged for 18 years that still lives with the vitality and the force, and the hope and the determination of the city of West Berlin. While the wall is the most obvious and vivid demonstration of the failures of the Communist system, for all the world to see, we take no satisfaction in it, for it is, as your Mayor has said, an offense not only against history but an offense against humanity, separating families, dividing husbands and wives and brothers and sisters, and dividing a people who wish to be joined together.

What is true of this city is true of Germany--real, lasting peace in Europe can never be assured as long as one German out of four is denied the elementary right of free men, and that is to make a free choice. In 18 years of peace and good faith, this generation of Germans has earned the right to be free, including the right to unite their families and their nation in lasting peace, with good will to all people. You live in a defended island of freedom, but your life is part of the main. So let me ask you as I close, to lift your eyes beyond the dangers of today, to the hopes of tomorrow, beyond the freedom merely of this city of Berlin, or your country of Germany, to the advance of freedom everywhere, beyond the wall to the day of peace with justice, beyond yourselves and ourselves to all mankind.

Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free. When all are free, then we can look forward to that day when this city will be joined as one and this country and this great Continent of Europe in a peaceful and hopeful globe. When that day finally comes, as it will, the people of West Berlin can take sober satisfaction in the fact that they were in the front lines for almost two decades.

All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner."

Group 1: Handout
"I Have a Dream Speech" – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Source: <http://www.freemaninstitute.com/Dream.htm>

August 28, 1963 --

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves, who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must ever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecutions and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends. And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, *down* in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. And this will be the day, this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!" And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring -- from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring -- from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring -- from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring -- from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring -- from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that.

Let freedom ring -- from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring -- from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring -- from every hill and molehill of Mississippi,
from every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual,

"Free at last, free at last.

Thank *God* Almighty, we are free at last."

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

Four Freedoms Curriculum Resource

Cesar Chavez

Wrath of Grapes Speech (excerpt)

May 1986

(approx 7 minutes)

I am speaking to you about our Wrath of Grapes Boycott.

Because I believe our greatest court, the court of last resort, is the American people. And I believe that once you have taken a few moments to hear this message you will concur in this verdict along with a million other North Americans who are already committed to the largest grape boycott in history.

The worth of humans is involved here.

I see us as one family. We cannot turn our backs on each other and our future. We farm workers are closest to food production. We were the first to recognize the serious health hazards of agriculture pesticides to both consumers and ourselves.

Twenty years ago over 17 million Americans united in a grape boycott campaign that transformed the simple act of refusing to buy grapes into a powerful and effective force against poverty and injustice. Through the combined strengths of a national boycott, California farm workers won many of the same rights as other workers--the right to organize and negotiate with growers.

But we also won a critical battle for all Americans. Our first contracts banned the use of DDT, DDE, Dieldrin on crops, years before the federal government acted.

Twenty years later, our contracts still seek to limit the spread of poison in our food and fields, but we need your help once again if we are to succeed.

Consumers must be alerted now that no one can actually define or measure so called safe exposure to residual poison that accumulates in the human body as environments differ and each person's tolerance is unique.

What might be safe statistically for the average healthy 40 year old male, might irreparably harm an elderly consumer, a child, or the baby of a pregnant mother.

What we do know absolutely is that human lives are worth more than grapes and that innocent looking grapes on the table may disguise poisonous residues hidden deep inside where washing cannot reach.

And a new study shows pesticides used in growing may be responsible for the illness of over 300,000 of the nation's 4 million farm workers.

Statistics and new articles do not relate the real cost, the human anguish that originates from poisons on our food. They do not tell the tragedies I personally learn of daily.

How can I explain these chemicals to 3 year old Amalia Larios who will never walk, born with a spinal defect due to pesticide exposure of her mother.

What statistics are important to Adrian Espinoza 7 years old and dying of cancer with 8 other children--whose only source of water was polluted with pesticides.

What headlines can justify the loss of irrigator Manuel Anaya's right hand, amputated due to recurrent infection from powerful herbicides added to the water he worked with in the fields.

How do we comfort the mother of maimed and stillborn infants, the parents who watch their teenage children sicken or die.

What report can be cited at the hospital beds I visit, at growing numbers of wakes I attend.

What court will hear the case of 32 year old Juan Chaboya, murdered by deadly chemicals in the freshly sprayed fields outside San Diego. His dead body dumped by the growers 45 miles away at a Tijuana clinic. What excuse for justice will we offer his 4 children and his widow if we do nothing.

Now is the time for all of us to stand as a family and demand a response in the name of decency. Too much is at stake. This is a battle that none of us can afford to lose because it is a fight for the future of America. It is a fight we can win and it is a fight that everyone can join.

My friends, the wrath of grapes is a plague born of selfish men that is indiscriminately and undeniably poisoning us all. Our only protection is to boycott the grapes and our

only weapon is the truth. If we unite we can only triumph for ourselves, for our children and for their children.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Ronald Reagan on the 40th Anniversary of the Landings on D-Day (Excerpt)

3:00 Min.

We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied armies joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For 4 long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps, millions cried out for liberation. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here in Normandy the rescue began. Here the Allies stood and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission was one of the most difficult and daring of the invasion: to climb these sheer and desolate cliffs and take out the enemy guns. The Allies had been told that some of the mightiest of these guns were here and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers -- the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns, and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back, and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the continent of Europe. Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After 2 days of fighting, only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there. These are the boys

of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.

Gentlemen, I look at you and I think of the words of Stephen Spender's poem. You are men who in your "lives fought for life . . . and left the vivid air signed with your honor."

....Forty summers have passed since the battle that you fought here. You were young the day you took these cliffs; some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you. Yet, you risked everything here. ...Why did you do it? What impelled you to put aside the instinct for self-preservation and risk your lives to take these cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met here? We look at you, and somehow we know the answer. It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on this beachhead or on the next. It was the deep knowledge -- and pray God we have not lost it -- that there is a profound, moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest. You were here to liberate, not to conquer, and so you and those others did not doubt your cause. And you were right not to doubt.

.....We are bound today by what bound us 40 years ago, the same loyalties, traditions, and beliefs. We're bound by reality. ...Here, in this place where the West held together, let us make a vow to our dead. Let us show them by our actions that we understand what they died for. Let our actions say to them the words for which General Matthew Ridgway listened: "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

Strengthened by their courage, heartened by their valor, and borne by their memory, let us continue to stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

President Ronald Reagan - June 6, 1984

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

Introduction

President Ronald Reagan's "Tear Down This Wall" speech marked his visit to the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on June 12, 1987, following the G7 summit meeting in Venice. As Reagan spoke, his words were amplified to both sides of the Berlin Wall, reaching both East and West Germans. The President noted recent Soviet progress toward "a new policy of reform and openness," but wondered, "Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? Or are they token gestures, intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it?" Reagan declared that the Berlin Wall offered the Soviets and their president, Mikhail Gorbachev, an opportunity to make a "sign" of their sincerity and "advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace." The "sign" Reagan proposed was simple: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

Excerpt

In the 1950s, Khrushchev predicted: "We will bury you." But in the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history. In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind--too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself. After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.

And now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Some political prisoners have been released. Certain foreign news broadcasts are no longer being jammed. Some economic enterprises have been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control.

Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? Or are they token gestures, intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it? We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace.

General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Ronald Reagan, "Tear Down this Wall" speech at the Brandenburg Gate of the Berlin Wall, West Berlin, June 12, 1987.

Questions for Discussion

Read the document introduction, the excerpt, the notes, and if available the text of the speech. Then apply your knowledge of American history in order to answer the questions that follow.

1. Why did President Reagan follow President Kennedy and President Nixon to make his speech at almost the exact same site they visited?
2. Why did Reagan address his remarks about the wall specifically to the Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev?
3. How did Reagan in his speech seek to prove that life in West Germany was superior to life in the Communist East?
4. What indications are there in the speech that significant changes were about to take place?

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

Image



Piece of the Berlin Wall displayed at the Newseum, Arlington, Virginia (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

Transcript

Ronald Reagan, Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin, June 12, 1987.
http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Remarks_on_East_West_Relations_at_Brandenburg%20Gate_061287.pdf

Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin

June 12, 1987

Thank you very much. Chancellor Kohl, Governing Mayor Diepgen, ladies and gentlemen: Twenty four years ago, President John F. Kennedy visited Berlin, speaking to the people of this city and the world at the city hall. Well, since then two other presidents have come, each in his turn, to Berlin. And today I, myself, make my second visit to your city.

We come to Berlin, we American Presidents, because it's our duty to speak, in this place, of freedom. But I must confess, we're drawn here by other things as well: by the feeling of history in this city, more than 500 years older than our own nation; by the beauty of the Grunewald and the Tiergarten; most of all, by your courage and determination. Perhaps the composer, Paul Lincke, understood something about American Presidents. You see, like so many Presidents before me, I come here today because wherever I go, whatever I do: "Ich hab noch einen koffer in Berlin." [I still have a suitcase in Berlin.]

Our gathering today is being broadcast throughout Western Europe and North America. I understand that it is being seen and heard as well in the East. To those listening throughout Eastern Europe, I extend my warmest greetings and the good will of the American people. To those listening in East Berlin, a special word: Although I cannot be with you, I address my remarks to you just as surely as to those standing here before me. For I join you, as I join your fellow countrymen in the West, in this firm, this unalterable belief: Es gibt nur ein Berlin. [There is only one Berlin.]

Behind me stands a wall that encircles the free sectors of this city, part of a vast system of barriers that divides the entire continent of Europe. From the Baltic, south, those barriers cut across Germany in a gash of barbed wire, concrete, dog runs, and guardtowers. Farther south, there may be no visible, no obvious wall. But there remain armed guards and checkpoints all the same--still a restriction on the right to travel, still an instrument to impose upon ordinary men and women the will of a totalitarian state. Yet it is here in Berlin where the wall emerges most clearly; here, cutting across your city, where the news photo and the television screen have imprinted this brutal division of a continent upon the mind of the world. Standing before the Brandenburg Gate, every man is a German, separated from his fellow men. Every man is a

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

Berliner, forced to look upon a scar.

President von Weizsacker has said: "The German question is open as long as the Brandenburg Gate is closed." Today I say: As long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind. Yet I do not come here to lament. For I find in Berlin a message of hope, even in the shadow of this wall, a message of (Pg. 635) triumph.

In this season of spring in 1945, the people of Berlin emerged from their air raid shelters to find devastation. Thousands of miles away, the people of the United States reached out to help. And in 1947 Secretary of State--as you've been told--George Marshall announced the creation of what would become known as the Marshall plan. Speaking precisely 40 years ago this month, he said: "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos."

In the Reichstag a few moments ago, I saw a display commemorating this 40th anniversary of the Marshall plan. I was struck by the sign on a burnt-out, gutted structure that was being rebuilt. I understand that Berliners of my own generation can remember seeing signs like it dotted throughout the Western sectors of the city. The sign read simply: "The Marshall plan is helping here to strengthen the free world." A strong, free world in the West, that dream became real. Japan rose from ruin to become an economic giant. Italy, France, Belgium--virtually every nation in Western Europe saw political and economic rebirth; the European Community was founded.

In West Germany and here in Berlin, there took place an economic miracle, the Wirtschaftswunder. Adenauer, Erhard, Reuter, and other leaders understood the practical importance of liberty--that just as truth can flourish only when the journalist is given freedom of speech, so prosperity can come about only when the farmer and businessman enjoy economic freedom. The German leaders reduced tariffs, expanded free trade, lowered taxes. From 1950 to 1960 alone, the standard of living in West Germany and Berlin doubled.

Where four decades ago there was rubble, today in West Berlin there is the greatest industrial output of any city in Germany--busy office blocks, fine homes and apartments, proud avenues, and the spreading lawns of park land. Where a city's culture seemed to have been destroyed, today there are two great universities, orchestras and an opera, countless theaters, and museums. Where there was want, today there's abundance--food, clothing, automobiles--the wonderful goods of the Ku'damm. From devastation, from utter ruin, you Berliners have, in freedom, rebuilt a city that once again ranks as one of the greatest on Earth. The Soviets may have had other plans. But, my friends, there were a few things the Soviets didn't count on Berliner herz, Berliner humor, ja, und Berliner schnauze. [Berliner heart, Berliner humor, yes, and a Berliner schnauze.]

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

[Laughter]

In the 1950's, Khrushchev predicted: "We will bury you." But in the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history. In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind--too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself. After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.

And now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Some political prisoners have been released. Certain foreign news broadcasts are no longer being jammed. Some economic enterprises have been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control. Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? Or are they token gestures, intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it? We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace.

There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

I understand the fear of war and the pain (Pg. 636) of division that afflict this continent--and I pledge to you my country's efforts to help overcome these burdens. To be sure, we in the West must resist Soviet expansion. So we must maintain defenses of unassailable strength. Yet we seek peace; so we must strive to reduce arms on both sides. Beginning 10 years ago, the Soviets challenged the Western alliance with a grave new threat, hundreds of new and more deadly SS-20 nuclear missiles, capable of striking every capital in Europe. The Western alliance responded by committing itself to a counter-deployment unless the Soviets agreed to negotiate a better solution; namely, the elimination of such weapons on both sides. For many months, the Soviets refused to bargain in earnestness. As the alliance, in turn, prepared to go forward with its counter-deployment, there were difficult days--days of protests like those during my 1982 visit to this city--and the Soviets later walked away from the table.

But through it all, the alliance held firm. And I invite those who protested then--I invite those who protest today--to mark this fact: Because we remained strong, the Soviets came back to the table. And because we remained strong, today we have within reach the possibility, not merely of

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

limiting the growth of arms, but of eliminating, for the first time, an entire class of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. As I speak, NATO ministers are meeting in Iceland to review the progress of our proposals for eliminating these weapons. At the talks in Geneva, we have also proposed deep cuts in strategic offensive weapons. And the Western allies have likewise made far-reaching proposals to reduce the danger of conventional war and to place a total ban on chemical weapons.

While we pursue these arms reductions, I pledge to you that we will maintain the capacity to deter Soviet aggression at any level at which it might occur. And in cooperation with many of our allies, the United States is pursuing the Strategic Defense Initiative--research to base deterrence not on the threat of offensive retaliation, but on defenses that truly defend; on systems, in short, that will not target populations, but shield them. By these means we seek to increase the safety of Europe and all the world. But we must remember a crucial fact: East and West do not mistrust each other because we are armed; we are armed because we mistrust each other. And our differences are not about weapons but about liberty. When President Kennedy spoke at the City Hall those 24 years ago, freedom was encircled, Berlin was under siege. And today, despite all the pressures upon this city, Berlin stands secure in its liberty. And freedom itself is transforming the globe.

In the Philippines, in South and Central America, democracy has been given a rebirth. Throughout the Pacific, free markets are working miracle after miracle of economic growth. In the industrialized nations, a technological revolution is taking place--a revolution marked by rapid, dramatic advances in computers and telecommunications.

In Europe, only one nation and those it controls refuse to join the community of freedom. Yet in this age of redoubled economic growth, of information and innovation, the Soviet Union faces a choice: It must make fundamental changes, or it will become obsolete. Today thus represents a moment of hope. We in the West stand ready to cooperate with the East to promote true openness, to break down barriers that separate people, to create a safer, freer world.

And surely there is no better place than Berlin, the meeting place of East and West, to make a start. Free people of Berlin: Today, as in the past, the United States stands for the strict observance and full implementation of all parts of the Four Power Agreement of 1971. Let us use this occasion, the 750th anniversary of this city, to usher in a new era, to seek a still fuller, richer life for the Berlin of the future. Together, let us maintain and develop the ties between the Federal Republic and the Western sectors of Berlin, which is permitted by the 1971 agreement.

And I invite Mr. Gorbachev: Let us work to bring the Eastern and Western parts of the city closer together, so that all the inhabitants of all Berlin can enjoy the benefits that come with life

Reagan Speech: "Tear down this wall"

in one of the great cities of the world. To open Berlin still further to (Pg. 637) all Europe, East and West, let us expand the vital air access to this city, finding ways of making commercial air service to Berlin more convenient, more comfortable, and more economical. We look to the day when West Berlin can become one of the chief aviation hubs in all central Europe.

With our French and British partners, the United States is prepared to help bring international meetings to Berlin. It would be only fitting for Berlin to serve as the site of United Nations meetings, or world conferences on human rights and arms control or other issues that call for international cooperation. There is no better way to establish hope for the future than to enlighten young minds, and we would be honored to sponsor summer youth exchanges, cultural events, and other programs for young Berliners from the East. Our French and British friends, I'm certain, will do the same. And it's my hope that an authority can be found in East Berlin to sponsor visits from young people of the Western sectors.

One final proposal, one close to my heart: Sport represents a source of enjoyment and ennoblement, and you many have noted that the Republic of Korea--South Korea--has offered to permit certain events of the 1988 Olympics to take place in the North. International sports competitions of all kinds could take place in both parts of this city. And what better way to demonstrate to the world the openness of this city than to offer in some future year to hold the Olympic games here in Berlin, East and West?

In these four decades, as I have said, you Berliners have built a great city. You've done so in spite of threats--the Soviet attempts to impose the East-mark, the blockade. Today the city thrives in spite of the challenges implicit in the very presence of this wall. What keeps you here? Certainly there's a great deal to be said for your fortitude, for your defiant courage. But I believe there's something deeper, something that involves Berlin's whole look and feel and way of life--not mere sentiment. No one could live long in Berlin without being completely disabused of illusions. Something instead, that has seen the difficulties of life in Berlin but chose to accept them, that continues to build this good and proud city in contrast to a surrounding totalitarian presence that refuses to release human energies or aspirations. Something that speaks with a powerful voice of affirmation, that says yes to this city, yes to the future, yes to freedom. In a word, I would submit that what keeps you in Berlin is love--love both profound and abiding.

Perhaps this gets to the root of the matter, to the most fundamental distinction of all between East and West. The totalitarian world produces backwardness because it does such violence to the spirit, thwarting the human impulse to create, to enjoy, to worship. The totalitarian world finds even symbols of love and of worship an affront. Years ago, before the East Germans began rebuilding their churches, they erected a secular structure: the television tower at Alexander Platz. Virtually ever since, the authorities have been working to correct what they view as the

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tower's one major flaw, treating the glass sphere at the top with paints and chemicals of every kind. Yet even today when the Sun strikes that sphere--that sphere that towers over all Berlin--the light makes the sign of the cross. There in Berlin, like the city itself, symbols of love, symbols of worship, cannot be suppressed.

As I looked out a moment ago from the Reichstag, that embodiment of German unity, I noticed words crudely spray-painted upon the wall, perhaps by a young Berliner, "This wall will fall. Beliefs become reality." Yes, across Europe, this wall will fall. For it cannot withstand faith; it cannot withstand truth. The wall cannot withstand freedom.

And I would like, before I close, to say one word, I have read, and I have been questioned since I've been here about certain demonstrations against my coming. And I would like to say just one thing, and to those who demonstrate so. I wonder if they have ever asked themselves that if they should have the kind of government they apparently seek, no one would ever be able to do what they're doing again.

Thank you and God bless you all.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 2024

**REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY:
Vice President Harris' Acceptance Speech**

Good evening.

To my husband, Doug, thank you for being an incredible partner to me and father to Cole and Ella.

And happy anniversary. I love you so very much.

To Joe Biden—Mr. President. When I think about the path we have traveled together, I am filled with gratitude.

Your record is extraordinary, as history will show.

And your character is inspiring. Doug and I love you and Jill. And I am forever thankful to you both.

And to Coach Tim Walz, you are going to be an incredible Vice President.

And to the delegates and everyone who has put your faith in our campaign—your support is humbling.

America, the path that led me here in recent weeks, was no doubt ... unexpected. But I'm no stranger to unlikely journeys.

My mother Shyamala Harris had one of her own. I miss her every day. Especially now. And I know she's looking down tonight. And smiling.

My mother was 19 when she crossed the world alone, traveling from India to California, with an unshakeable dream to be the scientist who would cure breast cancer.

When she finished school, she was supposed to return home to a traditional arranged marriage.

But, as fate would have it, she met my father, Donald Harris, a student from Jamaica. They fell in love and got married, and that act of self-determination made my sister Maya and me.

Growing up, we moved a lot. I will always remember that big Mayflower truck, packed with all our belongings, ready to go: to Illinois, to Wisconsin, and wherever our parents' jobs took us.

My early memories of my parents together are joyful ones. A home filled with laughter and music. Aretha. Coltrane. And Miles.

At the park, my mother would tell us to stay close. But my father would just smile, and say, "Run, Kamala. Run." "Don't be afraid." "Don't let anything stop you."

From my earliest years, he taught me to be fearless.

But the harmony between my parents did not last.

When I was in elementary school, they split up. And it was mostly my mother who raised us.

Before she could finally afford to buy a home, she rented a small apartment in the East Bay.

In the Bay, you either live in the hills or the flatlands. We lived in the flats.

A beautiful working-class neighborhood of Firefighters, nurses, and construction workers, all who tended their lawns with pride.

My mother worked long hours.

And, like many working parents, she leaned on a trusted circle to help raise us.

Mrs. Shelton, who ran the daycare below us and became a second mother. Uncle Sherman. Aunt Mary. Uncle Freddy. And Auntie Chris.

None of them, family by blood. And all of them, Family. By love.

Family who taught us how to make gumbo. How to play chess. And sometimes even let us win.

Family who loved us. Believed in us. And told us we could be anything. Do anything.

They instilled in us the values they personified. Community. Faith. And the importance of treating others as you would want to be treated. With kindness. Respect. And compassion.

My mother was a brilliant, five-foot-tall, brown woman with an accent. And, as the eldest child, I saw how the world would sometimes treat her.

But she never lost her cool. She was tough. Courageous. A trailblazer in the fight for women's health.

And she taught Maya and me a lesson that Michelle mentioned the other night— She taught us to never complain about injustice. But...do something about it.

She also taught us—Never do anything half-assed. That's a direct quote.

I grew up immersed in the ideals of the Civil Rights Movement.

My parents had met at a civil rights gathering. And they made sure we learned about civil rights leaders, including lawyers like Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley.

Those who battled in the courtroom to make real the Promise of America. So, at a young age, I decided I wanted to do that work. I wanted to be a lawyer.

And when it came time to choose – the type of law I would pursue – I reflected on a pivotal moment in my life.

When I was in high school, I started to notice something about my best friend Wanda.

She was sad at school. And there were times she didn't want to go home.

So, one day, I asked if everything was alright. And she confided in me that she was being sexually abused by her step-father. And I immediately told her she had to come stay with us.

And she did. That is one of the reasons I became a prosecutor.

To protect people like Wanda. Because I believe everyone has a right: To safety. To dignity. And to justice.

As a prosecutor, when I had a case, I charged it not in the name of the victim. But in the name of. "The People."

For a simple reason. In our system of justice, a harm against any one of us is a harm against all of us.

I would often explain this, to console survivors of crime. To remind them: No one should be made to fight alone. We are all in this together.

Every day in the courtroom, I stood proudly before a judge and said five words:
"Kamala Harris, for the People."

And to be clear: My entire career, I have only had one client. The People.
And so, on behalf of The People, On behalf of every American. Regardless of
party. Race. Gender. Or the language your grandmother speaks.
On behalf of my mother and everyone who has ever set out on their own unlikely
journey.

On behalf of Americans like the people I grew up with. People who work hard.
Chase their dreams. And look out for one another.

On behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on
Earth.

I accept your nomination for President of the United States of America.

With this election, our nation has a precious, fleeting opportunity to move past
the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past.

A chance to chart a New Way Forward.
Not as members of any one party or faction. But as Americans.
I know there are people of various political views watching tonight.

And I want you to know: I promise to be a President for all Americans.

You can always trust me to put country above party and self. To hold sacred
America's fundamental principles. From the rule of law. To free and fair
elections. To the peaceful transfer of power.
I will be a President who unites us around our highest aspirations. A President
who leads. And listens. Who is realistic. Practical. And has common sense. And
always fights for the American people.
From the courthouse to the White House, that has been my life's work.

As a young courtroom prosecutor in Oakland, I stood up for women and children
against predators who abused them.

As Attorney General of California, I took on the Big Banks. Delivered \$20 billion
for middle-class families who faced foreclosure. And helped pass a Homeowner
Bill of Rights—one of the first of its kind.

I stood up: For veterans and students being scammed by Big for-Profit colleges.
For workers who were being cheated out of the wages they were due. For seniors
facing elder abuse.

I fought against cartels who traffic in guns, drugs, and human beings. Who threaten the security of our border and the safety of our communities. Those fights were not easy. And neither were the elections that put me in those offices. We were underestimated at every turn. But we never gave up. Because the future is always worth fighting for.

And that's the fight we are in right now. A fight for America's future.

Fellow Americans, this election is not only the most important of our lives. It is one of the most important in the life of our nation.

In many ways, Donald Trump is an unserious man.

But the consequences of putting Donald Trump back in the White House are extremely serious.

Consider not only the chaos and calamity when he was in office, but also the gravity of what has happened since he lost the last election. Donald Trump tried to throw away your votes.

When he failed, he sent an armed mob to the United States Capitol, where they assaulted law enforcement officers.

When politicians in his own party begged him to call off the mob and send help, he did the opposite. He fanned the flames.

And now, for an entirely different set of crimes, he was found guilty of fraud by a jury of everyday Americans. And separately, found liable for committing sexual abuse.

And consider what he intends to do if we give him power again.

Consider his explicit intent to set free the violent extremists who assaulted those law enforcement officers at the Capitol.

His explicit intent to jail journalists. Political opponents. Anyone he sees as the enemy.

His explicit intent to deploy our active-duty military against our own citizens.

Consider the power he will have— especially after the United States Supreme Court just ruled he would be immune from criminal prosecution.

Just imagine Donald Trump with no guardrails. How he would use the immense powers of the presidency of the United States. Not to improve your life. Not to strengthen our national security.

But to serve the only client he has ever had: Himself.
And we know what a second Trump term would look like. It's all laid out in "Project 2025." Written by his closest advisors. And its sum total is to pull, our country back into the past.

But America, we are not going back.

We are not going back to when Donald Trump tried to cut Social Security and Medicare. We are not going back to when he tried to get rid of the Affordable Care Act.

When insurance companies could deny people with pre-existing conditions.

We are not going to let him eliminate the Department of Education that funds our public schools. We are not going to let him end programs like Head Start that provide preschool and child care.

America, we are not going back. We are charting. A. New. Way. Forward.
Forward—to a future with a strong and growing middle class.

Because we know a strong middle class has always been critical to America's success. And building that middle class will be a defining goal of my presidency. This is personal for me. The middle class is where I come from. My mother kept a strict budget. We lived within our means. Yet, we wanted for little.

And she expected us to make the most of the opportunities that were available to us. And to be grateful for them. Because opportunity is not available to everyone.

That's why we will create what I call an opportunity economy. An opportunity economy where everyone has a chance to compete and a chance to succeed. Whether you live in a rural area, small town, or big city.
As President, I will bring together: Labor and workers, Small business owners and entrepreneurs, And American companies.
To create jobs. Grow our economy. And lower the cost of everyday needs. Like health care. Housing. And groceries.
We will: Provide access to capital for small business owners, entrepreneurs, and founders. We will end America's housing shortage. And protect Social Security and Medicare.

Compare that to Donald Trump. He doesn't actually fight for the middle class. Instead, he fights for himself and his billionaire friends. He will give them another round of tax breaks, that will add 5 trillion dollars to the national debt.

All while he intends to enact what, in effect, is a national sales tax—call it, a Trump tax— that would raise prices on middle-class families by almost 4 thousand dollars a year.

Well, instead of a Trump tax hike, we will pass a middle class tax cut that will benefit more than 100 million Americans.

Friends, I believe America cannot truly be prosperous unless Americans are fully able to make their own decisions about their own lives. Especially on matters of heart and home.

But tonight, too many women in America are not able to make those decisions. Let's be clear about how we got here.

Donald Trump hand-picked members of the United States Supreme Court to take away reproductive freedom. And now he brags about it. His words: Quote –“I did it, and I'm proud to have done it.” End quote.

Over the past two years, I have traveled across our country. And women have told me their stories. Husbands and fathers have shared theirs. Stories of: Women miscarrying in a parking lot...Getting sepsis...Losing the ability to ever have children again...

All—because doctors are afraid of going to jail for caring for their patients. Couples just trying to grow their family...cut off in the middle of IVF treatments. Children who have survived sexual assault, potentially forced to carry the pregnancy to term.

This is what is happening in our country. Because of Donald Trump. And understand, --he is not done.

As a part of his agenda, he and his allies would: Limit access to birth control, Ban medication abortion, And enact a nation-wide abortion ban with or without Congress.

And. Get this, he plans to create a National. Anti-Abortion. Coordinator. And force states to report on women's miscarriages and abortions. Simply put. They are. Out. Of. Their. Minds.

And one must ask: Why exactly is it that they don't trust women?

Well. We. trust. women.

And when Congress passes a bill to restore reproductive freedom, as President of the United States, I will proudly sign it into law.

In this election, many other fundamental freedoms are at stake. The freedom to live safe from gun violence—in our schools, communities, and places of worship.

The freedom to love who you love openly and with pride. The freedom to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live free from the pollution that fuels the climate crisis. And the freedom that unlocks all the others. The freedom to vote.

With this election, We finally have the opportunity to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom to Vote Act. And let me be clear. After decades in law enforcement, I know the importance of safety and security, especially at our border.

Last year, Joe and I brought together Democrats and conservative Republicans to write the strongest border bill in decades.

The Border Patrol endorsed it.

But Donald Trump believes a border deal would hurt his campaign. So he ordered his allies in Congress to kill the deal.

Well, I refuse to play politics with our security. Here is my pledge to you: As President, I will bring back the bipartisan border security bill that he killed. And I will sign it into law.

I know we can live up to our proud heritage as a nation of immigrants— And reform our broken immigration system. We can create an earned pathway to citizenship— And secure our border. America, we must also be steadfast in advancing our security and our values abroad.

As Vice President, I have: confronted threats to our security, negotiated with foreign leaders, strengthened our alliances, and engaged with our brave troops overseas.

As Commander-in-Chief, I will ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world. I will fulfill our sacred obligation to care for our troops and their families.

And I will always honor, and never disparage, their service and their sacrifice.

I will make sure that: We lead the world into the future on space and Artificial Intelligence. That America—not China—wins The competition for the 21st century. And that we strengthen—not abdicate—our global leadership.

Trump, on the other hand, threatened to abandon NATO. He encouraged Putin to invade our allies. Said Russia could—quote—“do whatever the hell they want.”

Five days before Russia attacked Ukraine, I met with President Zelensky to warn him about Russia’s plan to invade. I helped mobilize a global response—

over 50 countries—to defend against Putin’s aggression. And as President, I will stand strong with Ukraine and our NATO allies.

With respect to the war in Gaza. President Biden and I are working around the clock. Because now is the time to get a hostage deal and ceasefire done.

Let me be clear: I will always stand up for Israel’s right to defend itself and I will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself. Because the people of Israel must never again face the horror that the terrorist organization Hamas caused on October 7th. Including unspeakable sexual violence and the massacre of young people at a music festival.

At the same time, what has happened in Gaza over the past 10 months is devastating. So many innocent lives lost. Desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, over and over again. The scale of suffering is heartbreaking.

President Biden and I are working to end this war such that Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends, and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity. Security. Freedom. And self-determination.

And know this: I will never hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to defend our forces and our interests against Iran and Iran-backed terrorists. And I will not cozy up to tyrants and dictators like Kim-Jong-Un, who are rooting for Trump. Because they know he is easy to manipulate with flattery and favors. They know Trump won’t hold autocrats accountable—because he wants to be an autocrat.

As President, I will never waver in defense of America’s security and ideals. Because, in the enduring struggle between democracy and tyranny, I know where I stand—and where the United States of America belongs.

Fellow Americans, I love our country with all my heart.

Everywhere I go—in everyone I meet—I see a nation ready to move forward.

Ready for the next step, in the incredible journey that is America.

I see an America where we hold fast to the fearless belief that built our nation.

That inspired the world. That here, in this country, anything is possible. Nothing is out of reach.

An America, where we care for one another, look out for one another, and recognize that we have so much more in common than what separates us. That none of us has to fail for all of us to succeed. And that, in unity, there is strength.

Our opponents in this race are out there, every day, denigrating America. Talking about how terrible everything is. Well, my mother had another lesson she used to teach. Never let anyone tell you who you are. You show them who you are. America, let us show each other—and the world—who we are. And what we stand for. Freedom. Opportunity. Compassion. Dignity. Fairness. And endless possibilities.

We are the heirs to the greatest democracy in the history of the world. And on behalf of our children and grandchildren, and all those who sacrificed so dearly for our freedom and liberty, we must be worthy of this moment. It is now our turn to do what generations before us have done. Guided by optimism and faith, to fight for this country we love.

To fight for the ideals we cherish.

And to uphold the awesome responsibility that comes with the greatest privilege on Earth. The privilege and pride of being an American.

So, let's get out there and let's fight for it.

Let's get out there and let's vote for it.

And together, let us write the next great chapter in the most extraordinary story ever told.

Thank you. God bless you. May God bless the United States of America.

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Paid for by *Harris for President*