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(Smith/Blessey)
April 3, 1990
8 A.M.
PAPER

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NEWSPAPER EDITORS
MARRIOTT HOTEL
FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1990

Members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. //
This marks my second appearance President before the cream of the
Fourth Estate. And since I love that numbers thing // I am
grateful for the chance to address you on the 300th anniversary
of the American newspaper.

((Last year I spoke for nearly half-an-hour. I thought I'd
do something a little different this year and make my speech the
same length as the average story in USA Today. // So thank you
and good-day.)) //

((Seriously, it is a pleasure to be here with the most
exclusive of the major journalistic professional societies. //
// And to once again mingle with the editors of America's finest
newspapers. // And also those who carry Doonesbury.)) //

((Let me begin with a confession. I'm a newspaper junkie.
// I say that even though you keep saying I have no vision.
Sorry, I just don't see it. // But maybe there's a simple reason
we don't see eye to eye. Here I am traveling around planting
trees, and you're cutting them down to make newspapers.)) //

Don't worry: I still love papers. After all, when I was a
little kid, my mother made me read them. // And now that I'm
President of the United States, I intend to keep reading them.

// Why? Casey Stengel put it best when he said, "you can look it up": Never have newspapers been more crucial than in this past year -- what I call the Revolution of '89. //

Today, that revolution is sweeping the globe -- demanding rights like freedoms of assembly, religion, press, free speech. // Rights that were at the heart of America's Revolution of 1776. // Even then, the printed word was its catalyst -- as it is now for those abroad who demand the freedoms we long ago sought, and won. // Think of how America's first paper -- Publick Occurrences -- began in 1690. // Or how the writings of Madison and Paine electrified an age. Recall how a man who was imprisoned but never conquered -- Peter Zenger -- demanded the liberty that would not be stilled. //

Jefferson said, "If I had to choose between a government without newspapers and newspapers without a government, I would choose the latter." And most Americans have agreed. // Not merely because papers helped link the colonies, push back the wilderness, and preserve the Republic so that, united, we stood. // But because Americans love papers even more for what they mean than what they do. Upholding what free men have always sought: Free markets // free elections // and free will unhampered by the State. //

Over the last year, that idea has spread from Hungary to Romania to Nicaragua to East Germany. Showing that freedom of expression is mankind's greatest weapon, and shield. // This concept is as old as the tablets of Mt. Sinai. A concept best

described, perhaps, by the first Presidential candidate I ever voted for. Said Tom Dewey: "You can't shoot an idea with a gun." // You have helped that truth become ever-stronger -- and our world thus ever-smaller. Until today, our global village has become a global family -- your medium a link between one member and another. //

Look at the brave peoples of Asia and Central America, Africa and Eastern Europe -- the true heroes of the Revolution of '89. They prove what Lincoln said: "Let the people know the facts, and the Republic will be saved." // Except that as they came to know -- and act upon -- the facts, not only a Republic but liberty itself was saved. // For the world's emerging democracies, freedom of the press has been the heartbeat that pumped life into the democratic dream. //

Let me suggest three reasons for newspapers' growing importance. First, the state of modern technology. // Ben Franklin wrote on parchment; Louis L'Amour on wax paper. By contrast, even typewriters now seem arcane. Yes, in China handbills were handed out detailing that horrible day in Tiananmen Square. // And who can forget how in Czechoslovakia, copies of Vaclav Havel's manuscripts were passed from one reader to another? // But mostly, it is fax machines, computer terminals, and other high-tech equipment which have linked Nations, and peoples, during the last tumultuous year. // If freedom is the essence of journalism, technology has also made it

the message of journalism -- carrying its demand for human dignity to every corner of the globe. //

Consider, next, the second reason for the print media's impact on the Revolution of '89: The drama of the events you've covered. // Look at Poland, where Solidarity's struggle has borne fruit in free elections. // Or Panama -- where Operation "Just Cause" has advanced the noble cause of democracy. -- a noble cause. Look at Hungary -- where last year thousands greeted me in a downpour. Tears running down their faces -- cheering human liberty. // You've heard of those who cancel a newspaper subscription. Ask anyone that rainy night in Budapest. None of them would ever cancel freedom of the press.

In Leipzig last October -- 70,000 workers marched peacefully for liberty through the streets and squares. And in Prague two months later -- still another victory for the idea of free expression. For years, police chased carolers from its King's Road. Last Christmas, carols warmed the heart of the city. There was wonder in the air. // Newspapers have been called the first draft of history. In more countries than we dared dream possible, they are also becoming the first breath of democracy.

Finally, there is a third reason why the print media has never mattered more. I refer to the caliber of the editors, reporters, and commentators who cover the news -- going over the years from instruments of the state to servants of the people: Editors, reporters, and commentators. ((I was only kidding recently when one of my grandkids asked me the difference between

my job and yours'. // I said it was my job to solve America's problems // and it's your job to make sure no one finds out about it if I do)). //

The fact is that it's your job to tell the truth -- informing the public as fairly and responsibly as possible, and letting the chips fall where they may. // Raymond Price is former editorial page editor of the New York Herald Tribune. And once he wrote: "The role of the media is neither to promote the government nor to promote the government's adversaries." // America's print media has long filled that role brilliantly, and courageously. Joined in the Revolution of '89 by journalists abroad now free - - as well as able --to write the truth without censorship or fear. //

Who can think of 1989 and '90 without marveling at the men and women who have upheld -- and honored -- a free and fearless press? In Czechoslovakia, a playwright becomes President. His foreign minister and chief spokesman are journalists who had been jailed for years. // And in Columbia, a bomb injures over 70 employees of the newspaper El Espectador. Its building is virtually destroyed. But the next day, an edition hits the streets -- printed by a competing paper's facilities. The front-page headline says, "We Will Continue." They do. And let me commend those U.S. papers which bought ads in El Espectador to show support. // In Poland, the former editor of Solidarity Weekly is named Prime Minister. // And in Nicaragua -- perhaps ultimate proof that you "can't shoot an idea with a gun."

Violeta de Chamorro, former editor and wife of a murdered publisher, becomes president of the land he loved. Freedom of the press begets freedom of the people. //

As more countries of the world are following in the footsteps of democracy, print journalists are leading the way. Exactly twenty years ago on this date, two reporters -- Sean Flynn and Dana Stone -- became the first journalists captured by the Viet Cong. They were imprisoned for freedom of the press. // The British journalist, __, was an authentic hero. He gave his life for freedom of the press. // So that tyranny would crumble, and despots fall. Just as editors have sought for hundreds of years -- and do more than ever, today. //

For that, I thank you -- as your Nation does. And salute you -- as free men do around the globe. // Newspapers propeled the American Revolution. And now spur today's Revolution of '89. // Together, let's keep both alive and well -- for the sake of everything we believe in. // Thank you for this occasion. Hats off on this wonderful anniversary. And God bless the United States of America.

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(Smith/Blessey)
April 5, 1990
2 P.M.
PAPER

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NEWSPAPER EDITORS
MARRIOTT HOTEL
FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1990
2:28 P.M.

President Ghilione [^{40 new}Gill-OWN-ee], Foreign Minister Genscher,
Dr. Armand Hammer, Governor Blanchard, Senator Bradley, Burl
Osborne, Susan Miller, ladies and gentlemen, honored guests.
This marks my second appearance as President before the American
Society of Newspaper Editors. I am happy for the opportunity to
address you on the 300th anniversary of the American newspaper.

((Last year I spoke for more than twenty minutes. This year
I thought I'd do something a little different and make my speech
the same length as the average story in USA Today. // So thank
you and good-day.)) //

((Seriously, I do have a confession. I'm a newspaper
junkie. // Each day I turn first to The Washington Post. Start
out with the funnies. Then, leaving the editorial page . . // I
read newspapers the way Barbara eats broccoli // avidly, with
gusto // whether it's good for you or not.)) //

((And the thing is: I've always been that way. When I was
a little kid, my mother made me read them. // And now that I'm
President of the United States, I intend to keep reading them. //
The reason is simple -- as Casey Stengel said, "you can look it
up": Never have newspapers been more crucial than over this past
year -- what I call the "Revolution of '89." //

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Today, that revolution is sweeping the globe -- demanding rights that were central to America's Spirit of '76: Rights like freedom of assembly, religion, press, free speech. // For while much has changed since America's first paper -- Publick Occurrences -- published its one and only edition in 1690. // What has not changed -- even in today's age of visual images -- is the power of the printed word to secure the freedoms we Americans long ago sought, and won. //

Jefferson said if he had to choose between a government without newspapers and newspapers without a government, he would choose the latter -- and most Americans would agree. // Not merely because newspapers helped write America's first draft of history. But because -- in more countries than we dared dream possible -- they are also inspiring the first breath of democracy.// Proving that what I've termed "the idea called America" is taking hold worldwide.

Over the last year, the printed word has helped liberty spread from Nicaragua to the heart of Central Europe. Encouraging free markets // endorsing ballots over bullets // upholding free will unhampered by the State. The printed word has helped our global village become a global family -- your medium a link between one member and another. It has helped bring the truth to one Nation from another -- becoming an instrument of democracy in our new Information Age.

In Poland, for instance, Solidarity's strength has borne fruit in free elections. // And in Germany, a wall collapses --

uniting families and lifting hearts. // To the south, Hungary stages its first multi-party parliamentary elections since 1945 -- here, too, the printed word prevails. And in the Soviet Union -- its first multi-candidate elections at the local or Republic level. // Events undreamt of a mere twelve months ago, and which show -- as Thomas Dewey said -- that you can't "beat down ideas with a club." // Events showing how the printed word has been the heartbeat pumping life into the democratic dream. //

Such a heartbeat, of course, demands advocates. And let me first note the dissidents and educators -- private citizens -- concerned individuals -- all who have acted as couriers of freedom. // Confucius wrote on bamboo strips; Ben Franklin on rag paper. Like them, today's advocates have defied the odds, and often the authority, to print the truth that sets men free.

Recall how in China, students handed out dazibao -- handbills printed on mimeograph machines -- detailing that horrible ^{time} day in Tiananmen Square. // Or how in Czechoslovakia, workers risked imprisonment by passing faded copies of Vaclav Havel's manuscripts from one reader to another. // In the USSR, officials were once so afraid of information that photocopiers were regulated. So brave citizens went underground -- printing dissident writings -- "samizdat" -- a hundred carbons at a time. // Today, "samizdat" is ebbing -- for protest has gone above the ground. //

If freedom is the essence of the printed word, these heroes have also made it the message of the printed word -- carrying its

demand for human dignity to every corner of the globe. // And today -- perhaps more than any time in history -- they march with journalists who know freedom of expression to be mankind's greatest weapon, and shield. //

For centuries, America's newspapers ^{-as we all, must have to well} have seen as their job to tell the truth -- informing the public as fairly and responsibly as possible, and letting the chips fall where they may. You have done that ~~job~~ brilliantly, and courageously. And I know that the best example of a free press will continue to come from you. // What makes the ^{1A} Revolution of '89 ¹¹ so unprecedented is that at last ³ increasing number of foreign journalists are also free -- as well as able -- to write the truth without censorship or fear. // Reporters, commentators, and editors abroad who have gone from instruments of the State to servants of the people. //

((Let me take a moment to note one journalist who is not free -- and who is in our thoughts. Terry Anderson. We hope, and pray, that he will soon be back among us.)) //

^{Ac} Who can think of 1989 and '90 without marveling at the men and women who have upheld -- and honored -- the tradition of a courageous free press? In Czechoslovakia, a playwright becomes President. Both his foreign minister and chief spokesman are former journalists who had been persecuted by the oppressive Communist regime for years. // In ^o Columbia, the respected editor of El Espectador is slain by assassins who shoot from a speeding motorcycle. But the murdered editor's brother becomes publisher,

and vows to fight -- and does. "It is a decisive moment in our history," he says. "We cannot back down."

In that country, a bomb last year injures over 70 employees of the same newspaper. Most of its facilities were destroyed. But the next day, an edition hits the streets -- printed by a competing paper's facilities. The front-page headline says, "We will continue." They do. And let me commend those U.S. papers which bought ads in El Spectador to show support. // In Poland, the former editor of Solidarity Weekly is named Prime Minister. // And in Nicaragua -- perhaps ultimate proof that you can't "beat down ideas with a club." Violeta de Chamorro, former editor and wife of a murdered publisher, becomes president of the land he loved. Freedom of the press begets freedom of the people.//

The printed word propelled the Spirit of '76. And now spurs the Revolution of '89. As more countries of the world are following in the footsteps of democracy, print journalists are leading the way. // Writing that first draft of history -- and breathing new life into democracy. //

For that, I thank you -- as free men do around the globe. Congratulations to all of you on this wonderful anniversary. And God bless the United States of America.

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