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PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NIXON LIBRARY
WASHINGTON HILTON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1992

Mr. President. Secretary Kissinger, Ambassador Annenberg.
Julie and David Eisenhower, Tricia Cox, distinguished guests,
ladies and gentlemen. / It is indeed a pleasure to be among good
friends, and to renew old ties. //

((Let me say how impressed I am by this audience. / I'm
especially glad to see Henry Kissinger. / I didn't always
understand Henry ~~because of his accent~~, but I've now spent enough
time around Arnold Schwarzenegger that I understand him
perfectly.)) //

A writer once said of Henry's boss, "His life was somehow
central to the experience of being an America in the second half
of this century." / I am proud tonight to salute a President who
made a difference -- not because he wished it, but because he
willed it. //

Richard Nixon was born in the house his father built. Like
Dwight Eisenhower, he had the "rare and priceless privilege of
growing up in a small town." // Later, as 37th President, he
founded the Environmental Protection Agency / revenue sharing /
and a ^{scholarship} pioneering cancer initiative. / More people voted for him
as President than any man in history. //

Yet as I said when his Library opened, Richard Nixon will be
remembered for another reason: Dedicating his life to the

noblest cause offered any President -- the cause of peace among nations / a cause told in his books -- now, nine of them -- each written out long-hand on his famous yellow legal pads. /

As Vice President, his Six Crises ranged from Caracas to the Kremlin. / His Memoirs told of great Leaders. / His goal was Real Peace -- Victory Without War -- the triumph of freedom over tyranny, plenty over want. / He achieved it by peace through strength -- a just cause which last year led America to the Persian Gulf. We went there to halt aggression. We stayed there until we did. / Ask any of the brave men and women about the legacy of the Gulf. They will tell you: No More Vietnams. //

For nearly half-a-century, Richard Nixon has been a man In the Arena -- believing of America what Montaigne said of France: "I love her so tenderly that even her blemishes are dear to me." / His crusade hasn't changed since as a boy he heard train whistles in the night: To Seize the Moment for the liberty which is America's essence, and message. / So let me speak tonight about the foreign policy lessons of his Presidency -- and how we can use his Generation of Peace to help build a New World Order.

The first lesson is that a President must heed the lessons of history. There is no substitute for a lifetime spent studying international affairs. / Richard Nixon knew this -- understood the nuances of world politics as perhaps no other President. Once he said, and I agree: "Even a small mistake in foreign policy can be the difference between life and death, peace and war." //

Look at the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda. You see a "World Leaders" Room of giants -- Churchill, Ike, Chou En-Lai, Charles DeGaulle. / RN not only knew the greatest statesmen of the 20th Century -- he became one of them -- like them, judged both by disasters averted and dreams achieved. / Crucial to the New World Order is preventing crises before they happen -- as President Nixon did, for instance, in 1970 in Jordan. Another part is stopping already bad crises from turning worse -- as RN did in 1973, airlifting arms to Israel in the Yom Kippur War. //

Former aide William Safire tells of how once President Nixon asked about a foreign policy speech. Safire shook his head.

"Frankly," he said, "it's not going to set the world on fire."

President Nixon shook his head. "That's the whole object of our foreign policy," he said almost to himself. "It's not to set the world on fire." //

This brings me to a second lesson of the Nixon Presidency. Presidents must look beyond tomorrow to the next decade or next millennium. //

Richard Nixon knew that even as America acknowledged the limitations of its power -- our adversaries must respect the power of its will. No Nation will believe another which lets its friends down. / That is why, Mr. President, you endured hate and obscenities to achieve a noble goal in a noble cause. I salute you for achieving "Peace With Honor" in Viet Nam. //

President Nixon knew that while Moscow and Washington might not be friends -- we could not afford to be enemies. So he

signed the first agreement to limit strategic nuclear arms. / He knew that nuclear war might especially erupt in the Middle East. So he and Dr. Kissinger pioneered a cease fire so that ancient foes could talk -- not die -- over differences. / He knew, too, that the world's most powerful nation could not ignore the world's most populous nation. So twenty years ago, he opened America to China / opened China to the world / and began the dialogue which events can not -- and will not -- sunder. // He did all of this while preserving a consensus at home in favor of continued engagement in world affairs. //

As a former President, Richard Nixon is a prolific author. As President, he wrote the opening chapter of the New World Order. / Today, we are building on roots planted in Tel Aviv and Cairo and Moscow and Beijing -- building not by shutting out -- but by bringing in through the personal diplomacy that must mark America's role in the emerging world. / Look at the lands of the former Soviet Union, reaching out toward Western ways. / Look at the fledgling democracies here in our own hemisphere. / Look at Cambodia and its neighbors in Southeast Asia, yearning for peace. At the historic peace process in the Middle East -- one that holds out hope of reconciling Israel and her Arab neighbors. / The success of each depends on U.S. support and leadership. // Look at the threats that know no boundaries: drugs, terrorism, disease, pollution -- and above all, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. They, too, will yield only to an America that is vigilant, and strong. //

Some, of course, ignore these truth -- demanding that we withdraw behind a wall -- militarily, and economically. Across the political spectrum they call -- in some cases, shout -- for America to "Come Home." / "Gut defense," they say. "Spend the peace dividend." / "Shut out foreign goods." "Slash foreign aid." / You all know the slogans -- the so-called solutions: Protectionism. Isolationism. America First. // Here is my answer: The real way to put America first is to put isolationism last. //

Remember: Imperial Communism is now a four-letter word: D-E-A-D -- because America was, and will remain, engaged. // We have the obligation -- the responsibility to our children -- to reject the siren songs of isolationism and protectionism. Allowing the world to become a worse place will not make America a better place. // In his 1968 acceptance speech, RN called for an open world, open sky, open hearts, open minds. / He knew that the New World Order does not mean an America which cuts and runs.

All this, in turn, means what Richard Nixon said as President: "America is not going to build protectionist walls to shelter us from fair competition. We are not going to live in our own cocoon while the rest of the world passes us by." / The way to bring down barriers abroad is not to raise them at home. / In trade wars there are no winners, only losers -- prices go up, quality and choice go down. / We did not win the Cold War to make the world safe for trade war. And we don't want a trade war -- for America can outwork / outcompete / and outproduce anyone,

anytime. So we welcome peaceful competition -- and we will win it, as we have before, through American ideals which have helped change the world. Ideals which today form the basis of the New World Order: A world of liberty, prosperity, and freedom without war. //

To achieve this will require perhaps the greatest foreign-policy lesson of the Nixon Administration: A President must have the courage to do right, and achieve good. / During the Gulf War, a true heroine, Margaret Thatcher, said to me, "Now George, this is no time to go wobbly." -- and because we didn't, Desert Storm became a triumph for all time. / So it is of tonight's guest. Agree with him -- disagree with him: I have never known a more courageous President than Richard Milhous Nixon. //

Twenty years ago, I was reading a Nixon campaign brochure. "For the first time," it said, "we are spending more of our resources on human needs than military needs." / Today, that is more true than ever. We will cut defense spending, but not our national defense. We will turn resources to meeting human needs -- but still retain an effective nuclear deterrent, forward-deployment, capacity for rapid response, and rebuild our forces. // The Cold War is over -- and America won. // Freedom will win the peace only if America's President commands the respect of the world. / This, too, we learned from Richard Nixon.

The historian, Theodore White, once wrote how the 37th President's "virtuoso personal diplomacy" rearranged "the world with exquisite skill." No wonder he had a profound effect on

those who served him. ((Still, I can't help wondering whatever happened a former Nixon speechwriter who seemed to have higher ambitions.)) / America's President acted for freedom's sake -- and for what Bulgaria's former president, Todor Zhivkov, told him years later. He asked RN how many grandchildren he had. Told three, Zhivkov said, "You are a very rich man. Having grandchildren is the greatest wealth a man can have." //

Mr. President, there have been literally millions of words written about you. / As President Reagan said, some even have been true. / But let me close with words that you used 33 years ago, in the kitchen in Moscow, with former Premier Khrushchev. //

You describe the scene memorably in your latest book, Seize the Moment. When Khrushchev bragged that, "Your grandchildren will live in Communism" -- you responded that his grand-children would live in freedom. / He was wrong, but at the time you were not sure you were right. Today, we know you were -- just as you were right in helping build a safer, more peaceful world. /

As President, you made a difference -- showing how we must act for our grandchildren and grandchildren all around the world. // Some people talk of the Old or New Nixon. Go to Prague or Paris or Budapest or Bombay. The real Nixon has always been good enough for them. / Thank you for inviting me to address this conference. God bless you, and the United States of America.

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