Vice President Michael Pence’s Remarks  
Accepting the Hudson Institute Herman Kahn Award

Written Remarks  
Herman Kahn Award Dinner  
November 28, 2017  
The Essex House, New York

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rupert [Murdoch], for that overly generous introduction. I’m deeply humbled. And more to the point, thank you for all that you’ve meant to the cause of freedom, and free markets in America, and the difference that you have made for freedom on the airwaves, in the print media, and across the wider world. Would you all thank me one more time in thanking the incomparable Rupert Murdoch for all that he has meant to America and to freedom? (Applause.)

To my good friend Ken Weinstein; to Board Chair Sarah May Stern; to my friend, the Secretary of the Treasury, Steven Mnuchin; to Senator Joe Lieberman and members of the board of trustees; to all the distinguished scholars who are here; to all of the honored guests, my fellow Americans, it is a great honor to be here tonight to address what I have known for many years to be an extraordinary organization, an organization that knows American leadership is essential to “global security, prosperity, and freedom.” It is my great honor to be here tonight at the Hudson Institute’s 2017 Herman Kahn Award Dinner. Thank you for the honor. (Applause.)

And tonight I bring greetings from a tireless champion of freedom and American leadership in the world, the 45th President of the United States of America -- President Donald Trump. (Applause.)

It is deeply humbling for me to be here tonight. For 56 years, the Hudson Institute has played a leading role in American public life by “thinking about the future in unconventional ways,” as Ken just described. But I’ll also always be proud of the fact that part of Hudson Institute’s history took place in the state of Indiana. (Applause.)

And I can attest -- I don't know about all those personal things Ken tried to share -- but I can attest firsthand that during your two decades in Indianapolis, I came to know the great team at Hudson Institute, the matchless research of the intellectuals who are gathered here. And frankly, it greatly influenced me in my career.
Nearly 30 years ago, when I first ran for the Congress, I turned to the Hudson Institute for excellent policy advice on an array of topics. Nearly 20 years ago, when I ran for Congress and actually won an election -- (laughter) -- I knew I could pick up the phone at any time and call the Hudson Institute and get principled perspective and fresh ideas on some of the most pressing issues of our time.

And tonight, before my friends of so many years, it is my great honor to stand here today and receive this award named on behalf of the great Herman Kahn. I can think of no higher honor. Thank you. (Applause.)

For more than half a century, the Hudson Institute has advanced the idea that America occupies a “unique and central role” in world affairs, and that this nation “offers the best foundation for security, the defense of liberty, and economic growth.” And there were no truer words.

And tonight, let me assure you: President Donald Trump and I could not agree more, and our administration is working every day to restore American leadership across the wider world. (Applause.)

As Hudson Institute knows all too well, when the President and I took office, it was a time when American leadership was uncertain and unsteady. For eight long years, our nation actually boasted of “leading from behind.” Yet this essentially meant too often no American leadership at all.

Indecision replaced engagement. Red lines turned into retreat. And American confidence was jettisoned in favor of self-doubt and too often confusion across the world. There was a loss of will that was often dealt with and accepted and interpreted as weakness.

But as Hudson Institute knows and as history has proved, time and again, weakness arouses evil. In the absence of decisive American leadership, chaos and disorder spread in many parts of the world. Rogue regimes challenged our security as never before. The cancer of radical Islamic terrorism festered, and metastasized. And adversaries new and old arose to stake their claim on the future, freed from the steady and resolute hand of American leadership.

This is the world that President Trump inherited. But those days are over. (Applause.)

With President Trump’s leadership, our administration has taken decisive action to restore American strength. And American leadership is on the rise once again.

President Trump knows that American leadership abroad first and foremost requires a vibrant economy at home. Since the outset of our administration, we’ve fought tirelessly to reignite American growth.

As Hudson Institute’s own Chris DeMuth wrote in the Wall Street Journal earlier this month, President Trump is a “full-spectrum deregulator.” And we’ve been rolling back the hand of federal red tape all across America. (Applause.)
We’ve unleashed American energy, and we’ve made a strong commitment to restoring the rule of law, appointing strict constructionists to our federal courts at every level, like the newest justice to the Supreme Court, Justice Neil Gorsuch. (Applause.)

And the results speak for themselves. Nearly 1.5 million new jobs, a record-setting stock market that's literally created more than $5 trillion in new wealth for the American people in their retirements and their pensions, a renewed sense of optimism by job creators and consumers alike. And after eight years of less than 2 percent growth, the American economy is already growing at 3 percent or more, and we're just getting started. (Applause.)

And to unleash an era of sustained growth, President Trump and I are working with the Congress at this very hour with Secretary Mnuchin and other members of our Cabinet. And we're going to roll our sleeves up. We're going to work with the House and Senate, and we're going to cut taxes across the board for working families, small businesses, and free enterprise across America. (Applause.)

Now the House has already done its part. And earlier this afternoon, many of you may have already heard, the Senate Budget Committee passed their version of a tax cut bill, and now it’s headed to the full Senate for consideration later this week.

And I’m confident when I say with your support, with the support of the Republican leadership in the Congress, and with the strong leadership of President Donald Trump, we will pass the largest tax cut in American history, and we will pass it this year. (Applause.)

President Trump is renewing American prosperity. But as the Hudson Institute has long understood, security is the foundation of our prosperity, and I’m here tonight to tell you that President Trump has also taken decisive action to promote the safety and security of the American people from the very outset of this administration.

Now this organization has long made the case for a strong military, capable of defeating and deterring any enemy who dares threaten the people of the United States. As Herman Kahn himself once said, it was “immoral” to “refuse to defend yourself and others from very grave and terrible threats.” Immoral, indeed.

So I’m pleased to report to you that President Trump has been fighting tirelessly to make the strongest military in the history of the world stronger still. (Applause.)

As I speak to you today, President Trump has already signed the largest increase in defense spending in nearly 10 years. And before this year is out, we’ll work with the Congress and pass one of the largest investments in the national defense since the days of Ronald Reagan.

And we’ll make you a promise: Under President Trump’s leadership, we're going to rebuild our military. We're going to restore the arsenal of democracy, and we will once again give our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard the resources and the training they need to accomplish their mission and come home safe. (Applause.)
And with renewed American strength, President Trump has made it clear that America will once again stand with our allies and stand up to our enemies.

As the President said to the United Nations just over two months ago, our administration will engage the world based on in his words a “policy of principled realism, rooted in shared goals, interests,” and shared values. And guided by this policy, our administration is achieving real results on the international stage.

Earlier this year, the President addressed members of NATO in Europe, called on them to “contribute their fair share” for our common defense. And today, 23 of our 28 NATO allies have already responded to the call by increasing their commitment to our shared defense. (Applause.)

Earlier this month, in Asia, President Trump called on nations across the region to do more to confront the urgent threat posed to wider world by the rogue regime in North Korea. And today, North Korea is more isolated than ever before.

Just last week, President Trump declared North Korea a state sponsor of terror. And in the wake of today’s provocation, our administration is considering additional measures.

And the Kim regime in North Korea would do well not to test the resolve of this President or the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. As President Trump said today, we will take care of the situation. All options are on the table, and we will continue to marshal the full resources of the United States to bring economic and diplomatic pressure to bear until North Korea abandons its nuclear and ballistic missile programs once and for all. (Applause.)

And after President Trump’s historic visit to Israel last May, today I stood at the very grounds where, 70 years ago, the United Nations called for the creation of the Jewish State of Israel. I delivered the same message that I’ll deliver in Israel next month: Under President Donald Trump, if the world knows nothing else, the world will know this -- America stands with Israel. (Applause.)

The United States and Israel stand together to confront any threat to our people or our most precious values, and that includes combatting the menace of radical Islamic terrorism.

Terrorism is a hydra with many heads, inspiring violence in our homeland, striking the great capitals of Europe, and just this past Friday, in the Sinai Peninsula, in Egypt, radical Islamic terrorists murdered more than 300 innocent Muslims at prayer.

When I travel to Egypt next month, I’ll carry the condolences and prayers of the American people for the people of that country. I’ll also carry our resolve to work with Egypt and our allies and partners across the region to overcome this vile enemy.

As President Trump said in the wake of that attack, we “must defeat the terrorists militarily and discredit the extremist ideology that forms the basis of their existence.” And I can assure you tonight our administration is committed to drive the cancer of radical Islamic terror from the face of the Earth. (Applause.)
As a candidate, our President pledged to “crush and destroy ISIS.” Today, thanks to the courage of our armed forces and the resolve of their Commander-in-Chief, ISIS is on the run.

Three years ago, those barbarians celebrated in the streets of their self-declared capital in Raqqa and proclaimed the start of their so-called thousand-year caliphate. But last month, American and coalition forces liberated Raqqa. Across Syria and Iraq, their caliphate is crumbling. And tonight, I promise you we will hunt down and destroy ISIS at its source so it can no longer threaten our people, our allies, or our way of life. (Applause.)

And in Afghanistan, our President has re-committed our armed forces to stand with our Afghan partners to defeat the Taliban and terrorist groups across the region to secure our hard-won victories of the past and to create the conditions for a lasting peace.

And when it comes to the leading state sponsor of terrorism, President Trump has put Iran on notice. For decades, the fanatical regime in Tehran has spread its cancerous influence across the region and the wider world. It has shed blood and sown chaos from Argentina to the Arabian Peninsula, and increasingly, Iran has sought to dominate the entire Middle East.

As we speak, the Iranian regime aids and abets al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas, and other barbaric terrorist groups.

Even worse, the Iranian regime has pursued a clandestine nuclear program and is developing advanced ballistic missiles with the clear intent of using these weapons to threaten American interests and America’s allies, especially our most cherished ally, the Jewish State of Israel.

But rather than confront this growing threat, the previous administration compounded it when it lifted U.S. sanctions on Iran just as they were beginning to work and instead signed the disastrous Iranian nuclear deal.

That deal gave the regime more than $100 billion up front, money that could easily find its way to Iran’s terrorist proxies across the world.

Even worse, the deal doesn’t take Iran off the nuclear path at all. It literally keeps Iran on a nuclear path. It did nothing to prevent the regime from developing ballistic missiles, and it preserved Iran’s ability to quickly produce a nuclear weapons capability.

As the President has said when it comes to Iran, “the longer we ignore a threat, the more dangerous that threat becomes.” That's why President Trump made it clear that the United State will no longer certify the Iran nuclear deal, and we will no longer tolerate Iran’s support for terrorism around the world. (Applause.)

Our administration is actively working with the Congress to craft a stronger and more effective approach to derail Iran’s nuclear ambitions. We support legislation that would enact real international oversight and enforcement of Iranian activity, preventing Iran from developing intercontinental ballistic missiles and most importantly institute a permanent prohibition on an Iranian nuclear “break-out” of less than a year.
The President and I will continue to work with the Congress to craft a bill that achieves this objective. And as the President has said, so I say tonight, the United States will ensure that Iran will “never acquire a nuclear weapon.” That is our solemn promise to you and to the world. (Applause.)

My friends, as I close, let me simply say that in this time of widening challenges and unknowable threats, I believe American leadership is more essential than ever before. I’ve had the privilege to travel across the world on the President’s behalf. I see a reminder one after another of America’s indispensable role in the world.

I’ve stood on the frontlines of freedom on the Korean Peninsula, where the vibrancy of the South meets the darkness and tyranny of the North. I’ve spoken to soldiers from the Republic of Georgia, only miles from where Russian tanks illegally sit on Georgian soil. I’ve sat and prayed with Venezuelan refugees, not far from their once-rich homeland -- men and women who fled the poverty and starvation that plague the country of their birth.

And I’ve held hands with the families of those brave Americans who, 16 years ago on September 11th, lost their lives in a field in Pennsylvania when they stood without regard to their own safety face-to-face with terror and fought back.

Everywhere I go, I see the critical need for American leadership and the difference it makes, the need to confront the emergence of new evils, to comfort those who suffer under the weight of despotism, and to create the foundation of a future of peace and prosperity for our people and for the world.

And everywhere I go, I hear the call for American leadership, and President Trump has answered that call.

Our administration is committed to renew the promise of America in our time, to rekindle that confidence in the “shining city on a hill,” that inspires the world with its glow because we believe that truth of history that Hudson Institute has long understood and advocated, that American leadership lights the way.

And so I thank you for the honor of tonight. I thank you for your support of this great organization. And I’m confident with the continued work of the Hudson Institute, with the support of freedom-loving people across this nation, with the strong leadership of President Donald Trump in the White House, and with God’s help, we will make America prosperous again. We will make America strong again. We will make America safe again. And to borrow a phrase -- (laughter) -- we will Make America Great Again. (Applause.)

Thank you all very much. God bless you and God bless the United States of America. (Applause.)

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