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Michael A. Scully

It is not as Republicans or Democrats, liberals or conservatives, it is not from party or cause that we assemble. Rather, it is to bear witness, on behalf of a world ravenous for liberty, a world starved for stability through fellowship, that we gather -- as one party, as one point of view -- and hail this peaceful transfer of authority, this evidence that the nation born of liberty endures.

All else pales this day before the testimony of our presence, before its loving whisper to those now gone, that we are here and that the nation they so loved lives on. It is their day, too: loved ones and friends departed, our countrymen generations gone, our soldiers who died defending just such days as this -- and Washington's, and Jefferson's, Hamilton's and Lincoln's, Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt's.

Even as they live today through us, so in time will their legacy and ours pass to those yet unborn. Thus nations, like the families which are their strength, are happiest when helping build the future. And so the greatness of our past cheers great deeds yet undone.

President Jefferson declared in his First Inaugural Address: "...a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government...."

Perhaps, indeed, to Jefferson's calculation some things can be added. But from this "sum of good government" nothing can be deleted. No government whose laws are harrying or slipshod, where enterprising effort is choked by legalistic nuisances, where labors are taxed on regular time, taxed higher on overtime, and taxed again at savings time, can long enjoy the affections of a free people.

For they know that rapidly-changing laws punch a ticket for the wily that is paid for by the populous. They believe in reward for those willing to risk, to innovate, to try. They believe in a country where regulations and taxes leave room for dreams to breath -- because they know that aspiration precedes invention, and ambition lays the surest claim to tomorrow.

Michael A. Scully

In the end, there is only one resource. It is the bearer of our horn of plenty. It can be dispirited, but it can never be exhausted. It is the ever-present resource of human ingenuity.

We drive to work in vehicles uninvented a century ago, propelled by the brainpower that put to work a never-before-utilized black slime. We fly from city to city in machines that were dreamers' dreams when the century began, when a brother crouched behind an odd contraption in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. A million Archimedes could not calculate with the speed of computers we hold in the palms of our hands. Our televisions carry pictures from a satellite crossing Saturn's rings, and the news of our gathering here today criss-crosses the world, riding piggy-back on laser beams.

These are but a handful of our legacies, but a few of the countless gifts that proceed from the efforts of free people who strive and who believe. Wherever a gifted people is allowed to excel, there grows up a climate of confidence, and innovation, and genius. Wherever individuals benefit from improving the general welfare, there follows the wealth of nations. Where there is dedication and spirit and faith in free men and women, new tomorrows are ever dawning, ever more brightly.

What Faith brought forth this epoch's dawning?

That with God's help, we shall prosper!

-- Never in history had there existed self-government in a large and populous land. Americans said, "our size is our strength." Americans said, "we shall prosper!"

-- Never had democracy survived the eternal clash of class. Americans said, "where there is little, we will make more." Americans said, "we shall prosper!"

-- Never had a nation made harmonious the discord of strange tongues. Americans said, "Their voices are the music of our cities' streets." Americans said, "we shall prosper!"

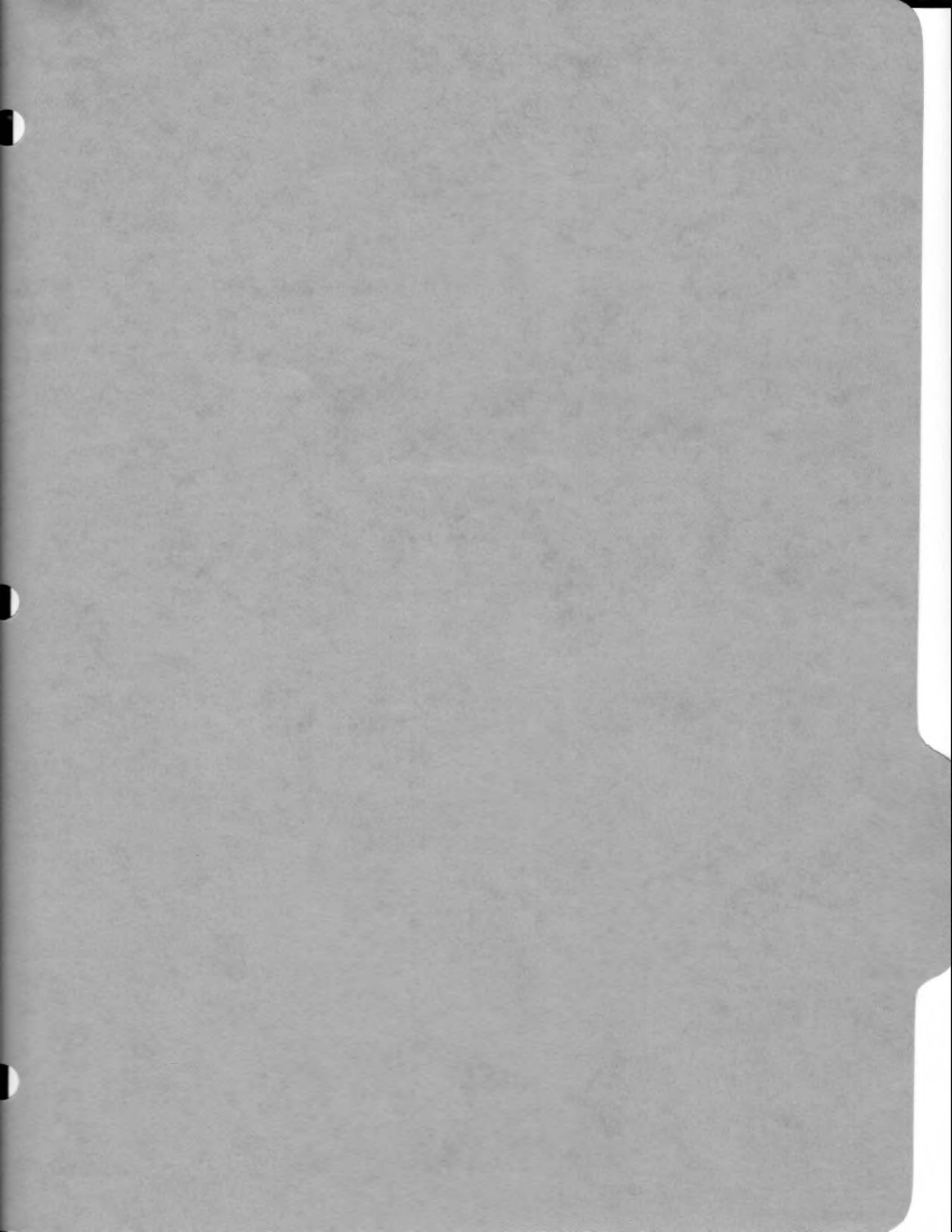
To the skeptics, to the critics, to the doubters and analysts, to the head-shaking friends and the fist-waving foes, our answer was, and is: With God's help, we shall prosper!

-- Others said, they cannot feed themselves. Our farmers filled our fields with grain, to answer "we shall prosper."

-- Others said, they cannot house themselves. Our builders hammered their reply: "we shall prosper!"

-- Others said, they cannot clothe themselves, or heat their homes. Their trucks will sit empty, their factories close. Their resources will run out, their spirit will falter.

To all the litanies of doubt and fright, an echo from Jamestown and Plymouth and Independence Hall, from the Alamo and Appomattox, from times of war as well as peace, from eras of hardship and eras of plenty, answers: "With God's help, we shall prosper."



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National Urban League, Inc.

The Equal Opportunity Building
500 East 62nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021
Telephone: (212) 644-6500

DRAFT A

Our goal is a strong, prosperous America, at peace with itself and with the world. To reach that goal, we must enlist the efforts of every American. All of our citizens must have an equal opportunity to share in the productive work of making America great again. And all of our citizens must have an equal opportunity to share in the bounty of a revived economy.

In the common effort to build a strong, prosperous nation we must unlock the doors of opportunity for all of our people, and especially for those who face discrimination and economic disadvantage. By unlocking those doors of opportunity, we can harness the productive energies our nation needs; we can harness the idealism and sense of fair play that is the core of America's strength.

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DRAFT B

Our objective must be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy
that provides equal opportunities for all Americans. For too
long minorities and poor people have been forced to bear the
heaviest burdens of our nation's economic problems. For too
long, we have tolerated barriers to equal opportunity such as
discrimination and economic disadvantage.

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Putting America back to work means putting all Americans
back to work. Ending inflation means freeing all Americans
from the terrors of runaway prices. An economy that unleashes
the productive energies of the American people is an economy
that will also provide equal opportunity. The best anti-poverty
program of all is a revived economy that ends the inflation and
unemployment that hits poor people hardest.

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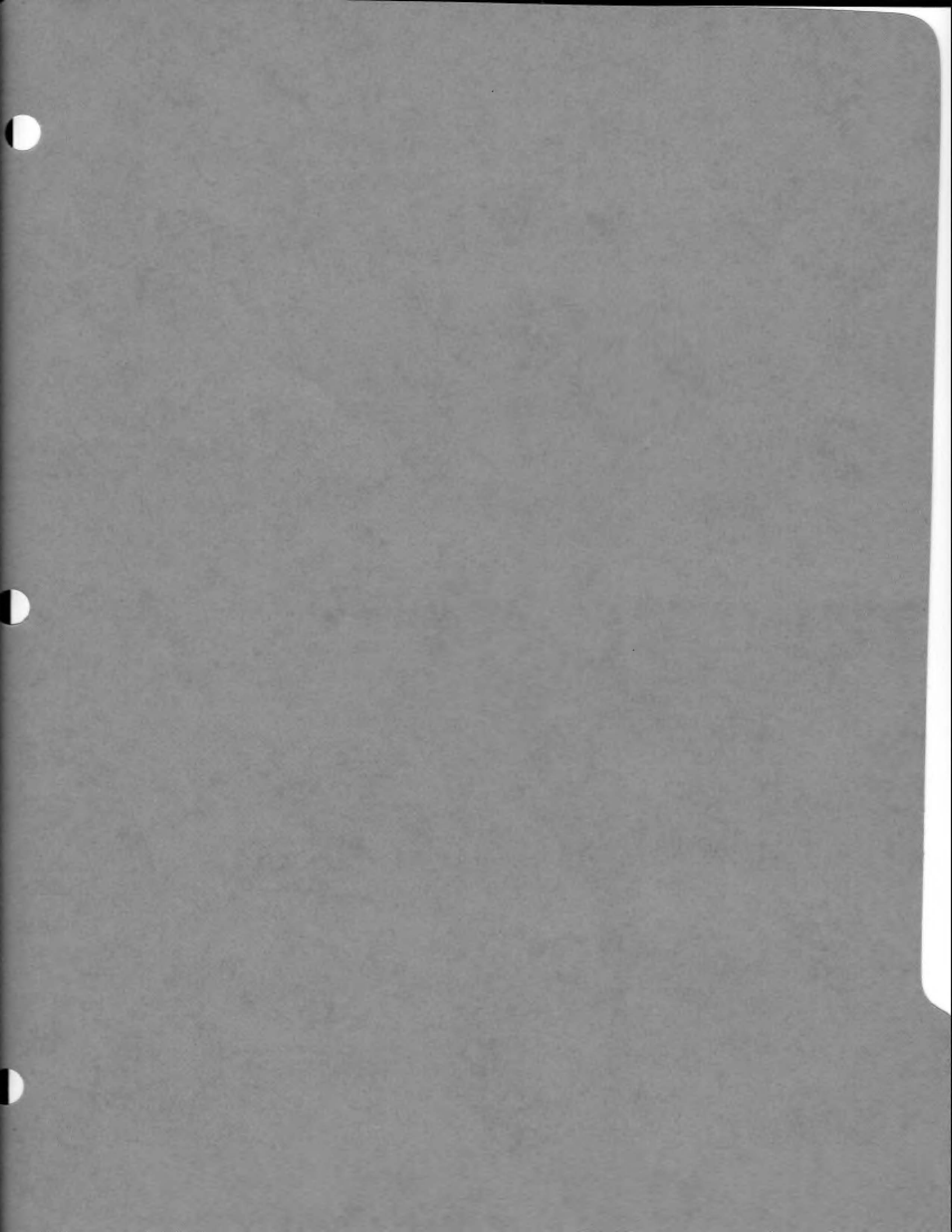
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DRAFT C

A strong, united America is an America finally free from the racism and discrimination that robs so many of our citizens of their right to equal opportunity. I firmly believe in equal opportunity -- in the God-given right of each and every human being to develop himself or herself to the fullest. If some of us are chained to limited aspirations and victimized by discriminatory practices, then all of us are kept from realizing our full potential.

My Administration will be intolerant of discrimination and racial prejudice. It will be compassionate toward the victims of poverty. It will be committed to fostering racial harmony and equal opportunity. It will be an Administration devoted to progress for all Americans.

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29 December 1981

MEMO FOR: The President-Elect
FROM: Ray Price *RP*
SUBJ: Inaugural address (Memo #2)

My apologies for missing the pre-Christmas batch of materials. What I had last Monday wasn't worth sending; but over Christmas weekend I've had a chance to spend more time on it. This will include some thoughts about content, in memo form, and also a collection of "scratchings" -- disconnected bits and pieces of the sort that might themselves fill a few holes in the speech, or else that might spark thoughts leading to alternative ideas.

You might, somewhere in the speech, tick off six or eight or ten or whatever "principles," "guidelines," "touchstones" -- something that can be taken out as a capsule (like Fourteen Points, Four Freedoms, etc.). Nobody knows what Wilson's 14 Points were, but everyone knows that he had 14 of them, and that therefore he was a Good Thing. This illustrates my own thesis that reporters may not be able to think, but they can usually count. Number your sentences, and they'll report it as a "five-point program." Leave them unnumbered, and they'll report that you didn't say anything.

The attached scratchings will include an example or two of how this might be done.

It's important to include something that catches the crest of a current mood; if possible, something that articulates an unspoken yearning that much of the public shares; that gives voice to the listener's own gut reaction to some of the ills he sees around him, or to the rhetoric to which he senses he's been over-exposed. The plea to "lower our voices" did this in 1969. Among the attached scratchings are a few fragments aimed at speaking to what may be some of the festering discontents of 1981:

-- The "common sense" theme. I think a lot of people are beginning to realize that they've been snookered by the academic unrealists, the abstractionists; and I think they intuitively perceive common sense to be one of your own strengths. Using this theme has the added virtue of conferring presidential recognition on the basic wisdom of the ordinary American. It may be no accident that in the Truman revival, "plain speaking" was what he was principally lauded for.

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-- The "let's stop playing games" theme. This is related to the "common sense" theme. I think there may be -- and there certainly should be -- a gathering resentment of the extent to which the public has been trifled and toyed with, not only by politicians but by all those vying for celebrity, ratings, or secular sainthood. Serious questions of public policy are lost in the moral posturing and hyped-up drama; the Carter presidency becomes a four-year media event, and the evening news becomes the Six O'Clock Soap Opera. The public deserves better. The country needs better.

-- A gentle shot across the bow of the courts, and also of the news media. These happen to be pet hobby-horses of my own, and therefore my judgment should be discounted accordingly. But I do feel that, substantively, it's going to be vital in the 1980s to pull in on the reins of judicial imperialism, and also that we need a much sharper public debate on the corrosive effects of soap-opera journalism. These are both delicate matters to handle in a context such as that of an Inaugural, and perhaps -- probably -- out of place. But I've included some bits on them anyway. Done in the right way, one or both might strike a sufficiently responsive chord to be worthwhile.

-- The "we won't be pushed around any more" theme. This of course has to be handled with discretion, in view of our diminished capacity to resist being pushed around. But it's useful to send a clear signal that other countries will attempt to do so at their own risk; and the notion that we're at least not going to sit passively by and take it any longer should strike a very responsive chord.

-- A determination to regain control of events. Part of the public anxiety is the sense (which has more than a grain of validity) that "events are in the saddle, and ride mankind."

The address can soar a bit at the end, but my own feeling is that the rhetoric should be fairly lean in the beginning and middle: lean, that is, in the sense of avoiding the too-flowery or the overstated -- building a sense of realism that can then sustain the hope, of credibility that bolsters the confidence.

It's true that there are very few simple answers to the complex problems we confront. But there are a few simple principles that will guide this administration as we search for answers. Let me spell out for you ___ of those simple principles:

- Less government interference is better than more government interference.
- Less inflation is better than more inflation.
- Lower taxes are better than higher taxes.
- Less regulation is better than more regulation.
- Fewer laws are better than more laws.
- Smaller government is better than bigger government.
- Faster growth is better than slower growth.
- More productivity is better than less productivity.
- More jobs are better than fewer jobs.
- More freedom is better than less freedom.

For more than 200 years, this country has been a beacon of freedom -- even through the darkest nights of tyranny, war and oppression in other parts of the world. We will keep that beacon shining.

America was born in crisis; it has never faced a crisis that it hasn't overcome. We can do it again.

Nearly 80 years ago, Theodore Roosevelt warned, "It is difficult to make our material condition better by the best laws, but it is easy enough to ruin it by bad laws." Of the thousands of laws passed since then, a good many bad ones have come close to fulfilling his prophecy.

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We are in what may be a long, gray, time of testing -- testing our resolution as a nation, testing our perseverance as a people, testing our commitment to freedom and our faith in our ideals.

When I took that sacred oath just a few moments ago, it meant to me that I will do everything in my power to ensure that we meet that test -- so that whatever dark days there may be in the years ahead will be the dark before the dawn.

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America is an idea. It is also an experience.

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Sometimes, as I watch the Pacific Ocean lapping the shores of California, I think of the vastness of it all, and of how far it is to the other side. And then I think of the daring of those who set out across the oceans in their wooden sailing ships, now knowing what they were going to find -- but driven by a hope, a dream, an ambition, a curiosity -- knowing the dangers but defying those dangers, daring to dream, daring to do.

We need the world. The world needs us. We depend on the world. The world depends on us.

Any government that trifles with us must know that it does so at its own peril. Any government that tests us must expect that we will meet that test.

We will not be belligerent, but we will be firm. Firm for the right, as we see the right. Firm in defending America's vital interests. Firm in honoring our commitments. Firm in our friendship with those who choose to be our friends. Firm in our response to those who threaten the peace, who commit aggression, who abuse our citizens or who challenge our honor.

Other nations will find us a steadfast ally, or a determined adversary -- depending on their own respect for the rules of international conduct, for the independence of their neighbors, and for the sovereign rights of the United States.

We have fought wars to defend liberty, to repel aggression, to ensure peace. Liberty is still incomplete, aggression still threatens, the peace is still fragile. The world is still imperfect. Our own country, like every other one on earth, is still imperfect -- though far better than most.

But we are proud of our record, and we are not going to apologize for that record. We are not going to be turned away from the defense of liberty.

It's been nearly half a century since the start of the New Deal. Then, a desperate nation turned to the Federal government to lead it out of crisis. But what began then as an experiment in response to an emergency became a habit. We've gone too far, threatening to upset that delicate balance between what people are required to do together and what they are allowed to do individually.

The result is that now, half a century later, we face a different kind of crisis. In this crisis, government isn't the solution. Government is the problem.

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Instead of always looking first to government as part of the solution, we will start looking at government as part of the problem.

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We will pursue a forward strategy in the world, neither belligerent nor acquiescent.

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We seek no confrontation, but neither will we flinch if others seek to confront us.

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We will do whatever is necessary. If peace is secure enough so that we can turn swords into plowshares, we will do so. But if peace is so threatened that we must turn plowshares into swords, that too we shall do.

It may seem crass on such an occasion to talk about money. But you know, I know, we all know, that what has been happening to the value of money threatens us all -- as a nation, and individually.

I view the government's currency as a sort of sacred compact between government and people. It represents a standard of value we all have a right to rely on. In recent years, that standard has collapsed. Instead of talking about dollars, we talk about 1981 dollars or 1979 dollars or 1970 dollars. We've got to return to a situation in which a dollar is a dollar, not a hyphenated dollar; in which it holds its value, rather than having that value eroded at an accelerating rate, month by month and year by year.

This will not be easy. It may at times be painful. But so is the surgery that saves a patient's life.

We will not sit passively by and watch our currency collapse.

I pledge a return to common sense.

It's fashionable in some quarters to disparage common sense, because common sense belongs to the common people.

But too often when America has gone wrong in the past, it has been because we refused to believe what we saw with our eyes or to listen to the voice of our common sense.

This nation was built by people determined to shape their own destinies, who had faith that they could.

The question today is whether we shape events, or let events shape our lives.

We can get so consumed by running from our fears that we neglect to pursue our hopes.

The world may forget, and some of our young people may not remember, but America is no stranger to adversity. This nation was born on the rocky edge of an untamed continent, with 3000 miles of ocean on one side and 3000 miles of wilderness on the other.

Those of us who have lived through two world wars and the great depression know the costs of diplomatic failure, and the costs of economic failure.

One of the first requirements of government is to establish and maintain priorities. No matter how much we may desire each of a dozen different goals, when they come into conflict we have to place one ahead of another.

The first domestic priority of this new administration will be to bring inflation under control.

Unless we control inflation, in the long run we will not be able to maintain our defenses, to provide jobs for our workers, to provide security for the elderly or hope for the young.

The dollar represents a compact between the government and the people. When the government fails to maintain its value, it breaks faith with the people.

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No one institution -- not the presidency, not the Congress, not the courts, not the news media, not business or labor or the academy -- has an exclusive charter to define our agenda or to pass judgment on our performance. We are a diverse, pluralistic nation. Each of us has something to give, something to receive; each of us must expect to win some and to lose some. Each of us must learn to be forbearing, and to respect the role of the other.

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In the 1980s we will confront serious issues, close choices, difficult decisions. There has been a tendency in the United States in recent years to treat politics as a sporting event, to measure the importance of issues according to their entertainment value, to personalize debates and to keep a sort of public scorecard of wins and losses.

It's time to stop playing games with the American people. And it's time to stop treating these serious issues as if they were a game.

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Each of us is equal before the law. Each is equal before God. Each is equal in the eyes of our government.

I happen to have spent most of my own working life in the entertainment industry. As a result of that experience, I have a special, very personal respect for that industry, and for the importance of entertainment in American life. But I also believe that it has its place. As we move through the 1980s, it is going to be vital that we -- all of us -- learn better to distinguish clearly between entertainment and news, between serious issues and soap opera, between political contests and sporting events.

To the leaders of the Soviet Union, I would say this: We in the United States want to live at peace with you, as we do with all nations. We do not want to build ever larger arsenals of ever more powerful weapons. But we will do what we have to do -- whatever that proves to be -- to ensure our own security. We will not let any other nation arm itself into a position to dictate to us the terms of our own future existence.

Together with our allies, we will work toward a stable peace resting on the firmest of all foundations: a situation in which those who might be tempted to break it will not have the power to do so, and those with the power will not be tempted.

We will not be belligerent. But there will be limits beyond which no nation can press with impunity.

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We will seek to weave tighter the fabric of peace,
and to weave it so that no one thread will unravel it.

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We will restore America's strength to defend itself,
and to defend peace and freedom in the world.

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Re the hostages: The United States does not buy
and sell human beings at slave auctions.

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Woodrow Wilson: "I believe in democracy because
it releases the energy of every human being."

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Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1790 that "one insult
pocketed soon produces another."

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We seek no territorial expansion, we seek no
unfair advantage, we have no desire to dominate other nations
or dictate to other peoples. We do seek to build a stable
world in which all nations are secure, in which those peoples
that have freedom can keep it and those that want freedom
can seek it.

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If there be any in the world that wish us ill, and
that choose to test our determination, let them know that we
can also turn plowshares into swords.

The oath that I have just taken is a sacred commitment.

In making that commitment, I intend to do my very best to be true to the trust that you have placed in me.

I also intend to place a great deal of trust in you.

I give you my hand in the spirit of common purpose, and I ask for yours in that same spirit.

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Lincoln spoke of government of the people by the people and for the people. But he never imagined that government would get as big as it has, or that it would attempt to do as much as it does, or that it would rule our individual lives to the extent that it does.

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For the close: Thank you -- and now, together, let's get on with the job.

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Let the word go out, clearly, precisely, and unambiguously, that this nation's honor is not for sale.

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Emerson wrote that "governments have their origin in the moral identity of men."

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If each of us, in his own life, pledges to turn his portion of the world over to his successors in better condition than he found it, then America will be true to its destiny.

Time and again, we have seen the power of belief -- whether it be religious faith or political passion or simply the power of an idea. America has the physical resources, it has the human resources, it has the demonstrated capacity to use those for the benefit of our own people and of all mankind. What we need is to harness that capacity to a renewal of belief: belief in the inherent strength of America, belief in the goodness of America, belief in the rightness of our purposes at home and abroad -- and belief that, yes, we can do what we need to do.
