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WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: NOON TODAY

SUBJECT: REMARKS: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION
 (5/3 7:30 p.m draft)

| | ACTION | FYI | | ACTION | FYI |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| VICE PRESIDENT | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | GERGEN | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| MEESE | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | HARPER | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BAKER | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | JENKINS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DEAVER | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | MURPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| STOCKMAN | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ROLLINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CLARK | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | WHITTLESEY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DARMAN | <input type="checkbox"/> P | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SS | WILLIAMSON | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DUBERSTEIN | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | VON DAMM | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FELDSTEIN | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | BRADY/SPEAKES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FIELDING | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ROGERS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FULLER | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | BAKSHIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | HENKEL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Remarks:

The attached has been forwarded to the President. Please provide any minor comments/edits directly to Aram Bakshian by noon today, with an information copy to my office.

Thank you.

Richard G. Darman
 Assistant to the President
 (x2702)

Response:

(Elliott)
May 3, 1983
7:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1983

President Gaffney, officers, honored guests, and may I add with great pride and pleasure -- my fellow members of the National Rifle Association.

I'm delighted to be here in Phoenix, in this great, good neighbor State of Arizona. And I'm delighted to be with all of you. It does my spirit good to be with people who never lose faith in America, who never stop believing in her future -- and who never back down one inch from defending the constitutional freedoms that are every American's birthright.

What an honor to be together on the 110th annual meeting of this great organization. Nowadays, I'm honored to belong to any organization that's been around longer than I have.

Not too long ago, I had a very memorable visit from your officials. They walked into the Oval office with some members of the "F" troop of the Texas army. Now when I saw how those fellows were dressed, and what they were packing, I didn't know whether to stretch out my hand, or make a run for it through the Rose Garden.

Well, it turned out they wanted to induct me into the Texas army, and to give me a beautiful, hand-crafted flintlock rifle. Thank you for taking such good care of it. And Chris Hirsch -- are you out there? -- I just want you to know again how much I appreciate it and look forward to using it someday.

Being a part of this group, you know that good organizations don't just happen. They take root in a body of shared beliefs. They grow strong from leadership with vision, initiative and determination to reach great goals. And what you've accomplished speaks for itself: more than 2½ million members and NRA's getting stronger every day.

May I just say we have great respect for your fine leaders in Washington: Harlan Carter, Warren Cassidy and your Institute for Legislative Action. Believe me, they're effective.

We saw proof of NRA's strength recently. Some of you share a special blessing with me -- you're Californians. And you shocked California last November when you mobilized to help send Proposition 15 down to defeat. You pointed out that police would be so busy arresting handgun owners, they would be unable to protect the people against criminals. It's a nasty truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun control laws. I happen to know this from personal experience.

You know, I've always felt a special bond with the members of your group. You live by Lincoln's words, "Important principles may and must be inflexible." Your philosophy puts its trust in people. So you insist individuals be held responsible for their actions. The NRA believes America's laws were made to be obeyed; and that our constitutional liberties are just as important today as 200 years ago. And by the way, the Constitution does not say Government shall decree the right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution says ". . . the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

I believe we share the same goal: a strong America, carrying the banner of freedom, and secure from threats to her domestic tranquility, economic well-being and national security.

No group does more to promote gun safety and respect for the laws of this land than the NRA, and I thank you. Still, we've both heard the charge that supporting gunowners' rights encourages a violent, shoot-em-up society. But just a minute. Don't they understand that most violent crimes are not committed by decent, law-abiding citizens, they're committed by career criminals. Guns don't make criminals. Hard-core criminals use guns, and locking them up and throwing away the key is the best gun control law we could ever have.

When I was Governor of California, we added 5 to 15 years to the sentence of any criminal who committed a crime with a firearm. I am even more convinced today that this is the right approach.

I've said many times that our Administration did not come to Washington to continue business as usual. Either we make fundamental reforms that change things for the better, or we aren't doing our job. We think it's time for our loved ones to walk the streets of America without being afraid.

So we have declared war on organized crime and the career criminal element in America. More than 100 prosecutors' offices are working with special teams around the country to throw the book at career criminals in court. And we are determined to cripple the drug pushers who are poisoning the minds and bodies of our children. We want mandatory sentences, we want firm and speedy application of penalties, and we want tougher parole laws.

But there is one thing we do not want: We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his or her family from fear and harm.

We are making headway in our crackdown on crime, while protecting the rights of legitimate gunowners. A recent U.S. News and World Report story said, "It may be no accident that the first dip in U.S. crime totals in 5 years coincides with a nationwide crackdown on 'career criminals.'" Serious crime dropped by 4 percent in 1982, after rising more than 21 percent since 1977 and 254 percent since 1962.

Longer prison sentences and tougher treatment are beginning to pay dividends. And make no mistake: this is happening because you the people are fed up with crime. "You're the ones who are organizing neighborhood patrols, supporting your local police, insisting that justice be carried out -- and every time you do that you keep the spirit of democracy strong in America.

We can't solve these terrible problems overnight. But since we established a Florida task force against drugs, under the Vice President's leadership, drug-related arrests have risen sharply. Just last week, our agents trailed then landed behind a suspicious plane near LaBelle, Florida. Two drug smugglers jumped out to run away. One of them swam across a canal and hid in the bushes. The alligators didn't get him, but our enforcement people did. They seized 625 pounds of cocaine valued at \$187½ million.

As we crackdown on criminals, we are trying to move forward on another front: to reform the firearms laws which needlessly interfere with the rights of legitimate gunowners like

yourselves. We are working closely with your leadership and Congressional sponsors of firearms legislation, such as Senators McClure and Hatch and Congressman Volkmer. I look forward to signing a bill that truly protects the rights of law-abiding citizens, without diminishing the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement against the misuse of firearms.

Your leadership's support has been important to us. Just last year, I signed two amendments into law: one eliminated unnecessary recordkeeping requirements on 22-caliber rimfire ammunition; the other saved many custom gunsmiths from financial ruin.

I want you to know that I am in favor of the Civilian Marksmanship Program. I support this idea because, clear back to World War I, one of the great talents of American soldiers has been their marksmanship. And it turned out they developed this from shooting at targets as young boys. So I am asking Secretary Weinberger to study ways in which the marksmanship program can be improved.

May I say a few words about conservation and the group I consider the foremost conservationists of our wildlife resources: America's sportsmen -- hunters and fishermen. As Teddy Roosevelt recognized, "The free, self-reliant, adventurous life, with its rugged . . . democracy; the wild surroundings, the grand beauty of the scenery, the chance to study the way and habits of the woodland creatures -- all these unite to give to the career of the . . . hunter its peculiar charm."

Unfortunately, there has been a kind of elitist attitude in Washington that vast natural resource areas must be locked up to

save the planet from mankind. I'm proud to say that Secretary of the Interior, Jim Watt, and I have a different philosophy -- one based on respect for both man and nature. We believe in the concept of stewardship, caring for the resources we have for the benefit of mankind.

Now let me be clear about those words: stewardship for the benefit of mankind. Our Administration favors economic development -- but not within our national parks or within our wilderness areas. We have not and will never propose that. What we do say is: When the last Administration arbitrarily closed 40 million acres of Alaskan land telling sports hunters to stay out, then, yes, you bet we think that was wrong and we're trying to correct it.

We're trying to correct something else, too. A 1980 General Accounting Office report warned of health and safety health hazards in our national parks. The previous Administration had cut the National Park Service budget for restoration and improvement every year. We have doubled it.

With the active support of NRA, we have also addressed one of America's most neglected and serious environmental problems -- the destruction of our wetlands. We have introduced in the Congress the most important wetlands protection legislative proposal in history.

Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, coastal barriers, wetlands, national forests and public lands are better managed today than they were 2 years ago -- and I think that story merits more attention than it's received.

Another point which should be better understood: The backbone of our conservation efforts begins with American sportsmen. For over 40 years, hunters have been paying a special excise tax on sporting arms and ammunitions through the Pittman-Robertson Act -- nearly \$1.2 billion since 1939. State wildlife managers have used these funds to preserve and enhance valuable wildlife habitats. Such wild creatures as the white tail deer, ruffled grouse, wild turkey and pronghorn antelope, which were threatened with extinction in many areas have been brought back, in some cases, to great abundance.

This past year alone, American hunters have paid more than \$107 million toward these conservation efforts. The money will fund important studies of game and their habitat; it will provide food and habitat projects for wildlife; and portions will go for hunter safety and education courses -- where our youngsters will be taught marksmanship, firearms safety, and some of the values and ethics of hunting and the outdoors.

I deeply appreciate your contributions to preserving our national treasures for the benefit of our people and future generations.

This idea of stewardship -- preserving and caring for what we have, bringing our economy back to health, so you, the people, can make us great again -- that's a crucial part of keeping America free and making her secure. I know the road to recovery has been long and hard. Too many people are still out of work. But I believe with all my heart that we have turned the corner, we are on our way back, and like that fighter, Rocky Balboa -- America is getting strong now.

You know, when I see inflation down, interest rates down, tax rates being cut, industrial production and productivity up, housing starts and auto sales up, and workers being called back, I wonder about something: Now that our program is doing what we said it would, how come they don't call it Reaganomics anymore?

Oh yes, some critics say nothing is right. They oppose budget savings, they oppose tax cuts. Despite the calamity they created, they continue to resist reform. Their attitude reminds me of a comment a great American made about a similar situation. "Those who are frightened," he said, "by boldness and cowed by the necessity for making decisions complain that all we have done is unnecessary and subject to great risks. Now that these people are coming out of their storm cellars, they forget that there ever was a storm."

Those words were spoken by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1934. Well, I haven't forgotten the storm that was raging around every family in 1980. With all due respect, may I remind our critics: those who saddled this Nation with double-digit inflation, 21½ percent interest rates -- the highest in more than 100 years -- and the worst tax burden in our peacetime history, they are the last people who should be giving sermonettes on fairness and compassion.

If inflation had continued as it was when they were in office, a family of four on a fixed income of \$20,000 would be more than \$1,500 poorer in purchasing power today. If their tax increases had stayed on the books, and our tax cuts had not been passed, a median-income family of four would be paying \$700 more in Federal income taxes this year. If this is the liberal idea

of fairness and compassion, may the good Lord be with you if Teddy and Tip ever get their Irish up.

President John F. Kennedy said in 1963, ". . . the largest, single barrier to full employment . . . and to a higher rate of economic growth is the . . . heavy drag of Federal income taxes on private purchasing power, initiative and incentive." Those wise words are just as true today. I will veto any attempt to tamper with the third year of your tax cut, or the indexing provision. Indexing is the best security middle-income families have against bracket creep -- inflation pushing you into higher and higher tax brackets. Those who would strip you of this protection are tax grabbers, pure and simple.

The United States did not run up a trillion dollar debt because you're not taxed enough. We got that debt because Government spends too much. We need spending restraint, not tax increases. I want to work with the Congress, but not at your expense, and not at the risk of sabotaging this recovery we worked so hard to achieve.

Nor must we gamble, ever again, with the security of this country by neglecting our defense readiness. The day I took office, our armed forces were in a shocking state of neglect. We had shortages of skilled manpower, faulty equipment, lack of spare parts, and insufficient fuel and ammunition for proper training. We had planes that couldn't fly, ships that couldn't leave port and helicopters that couldn't stay aloft.

I believe it is immoral to ask the sons and daughters of America to protect this land with second-rate equipment and bargain basement weapons. If they can put their lives on the

line to protect our way of life, then by golly we can give them the weapons, training, and money they need to do the job right. When it comes to keeping America safe and strong, when it comes to keeping America free, there should be no Republicans or Democrats, only patriotic Americans working together for the greater good.

We are doing that. We've begun to pay our soldiers a decent wage. We've increased pilot flying time, extended basic training and restocked spare parts inventories. The level and quality of recruits are up sharply.

By providing adequate compensation for our soldiers, by giving them the tools they need to do their jobs, we are restoring dignity, honor and pride to the uniform of the United States military -- and we dare not sacrifice that.

The people who disagree with our side rebuilding its military security don't seem to understand: Our side is the only side where people are permitted to disagree -- and that should make them nervous. It is not America that attacks and occupies other countries; we conduct no worldwide campaign of subversion and terrorism; we build no walls to keep our people in, or use armies of secret police and gulag prison camps to keep them quiet.

We are a free people, a democratic people; we believe in God and we love peace. But let us remember what George Washington warned in 1790: That to be prepared for war is one of the best means of preserving the peace.

There's nothing I want more than a verifiable agreement with the Soviet Union to reduce the levels of strategic weapons. In

the long run, that's the best way to lower the growth in defense spending. But the Soviets will only bargain in good faith if they understand we're determined to defend freedom -- and I'm determined they will understand that.

Now 9 days ago, I addressed the Congress on the subject of Central America, where the United States has fundamental and far-reaching interests. El Salvador is 10 miles closer to Phoenix than Phoenix is to Washington. The people of El Salvador are not perfect, they have made mistakes, as we have made mistakes. But they are trying, with great bravery and against tremendous odds, to build the dream of a society like ours.

They understand that government must rest on the consent of the governed; that only when people are free to worship, create and build, only when they are given a personal stake in deciding their destiny, and benefitting from their own risks -- only then will their society become dynamic, prosperous, progressive and free.

But El Salvador is under attack. Guerillas with contempt for democracy, and armed-to-the-teeth by Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviets, are determined to shoot their way into power. We have asked the Congress for a modest package of assistance for the region -- with three times as much economic aid as military aid.

But military aid is essential, because the guerillas are deliberately and systematically destroying El Salvador's economy -- blowing up bridges, railroads, water facilities, telephone and electrical systems. These are not the actions of people who love the common man and who seek to reform their

system. They are the actions of thugs who trample the common man in their quest for total power.

So we face a choice: will we give El Salvador her chance to walk beside us in the sunlight of democracy? Or will we turn our backs on a friend, letting her slide into a dark night of tyranny, rationalizing our inaction with detached lectures on morality?

Running away from this clear-cut responsibility would reward aggression and bring dishonor on the good name of the United States. It would swell the tide of political and economic instability in Central America, creating a new army of refugees and bringing danger closer and closer to home. I appeal to you today: tell your representatives they cannot remain indifferent to another Communist takeover on our doorstep.

Standing up for America also means standing up for the God who has so blessed this land. If we could remember that Moses brought down 10 Commandments, not 10 suggestions, and if those of us who live for Jesus could remember that He wants us to love our Lord and our neighbor, then there is no limit to the problems we could solve, or the mountains we could climb together as a mighty force for good.

The United States remains the last, best hope for a mankind plagued by tyranny and deprivation. America is no stronger than its people, and that means you and me. I believe in you. And I believe that if we work together, then one day, we will say: We have fought the good fight; we have finished the race; we have kept the faith. And to our children, and our children's

children, we can say, we did all that could be done in the moment that was given to us here on Earth.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

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May I just say we have great respect for your fine leaders in Washington: Harlan Carter, Warren Cassidy and your Institute for Legislative Action. Believe me, they're effective.

We saw proof of NRA's strength recently. Some of you share a special blessing with me -- you're Californians. And you shocked California last November when you mobilized to help send Proposition 15 down to defeat. You pointed out that police would be so busy arresting handgun owners, they would be unable to protect the people against criminals. It's a nasty ~~little~~ truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun control laws. I happen to know this from personal experience.

You know, I've always felt a special bond with the members of your group. You live by Lincoln's words, "Important principles may and must be inflexible." Your philosophy puts its trust in people. So you insist individuals be held responsible for their actions. The NRA believes America's laws were made to be obeyed; and that our constitutional liberties are just as important today as 200 years ago. And by the way, the Constitution does not say Government shall decree the right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution says ". . . the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Master

Al Sapia Boxer
356 Nancy

W. F. ...
2/68

(Elliott)
May 3, 1983
2:30 p.m.
Major 2150

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Office
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PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1983

President Gaffney, officers, honored guests, and may I add with great pride and pleasure -- my fellow members of the National Rifle Association.

I'm delighted to be here in Phoenix, in this great, good neighbor State of Arizona. And I'm delighted to be with all of you. It does my spirit good to be with people who never lose faith in America, who never stop believing in her future -- and who never back down one inch from defending the constitutional freedoms that are every American's birthright.

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~~So if I may just put in a little plug: I believe in your leaders, Harlen Carter and Warren Cassidy, and I hope they'll stay right where they are doing their great job.~~

You know, I've always felt a special bond with the members of your group. You live by Lincoln's words, "Important principles may and must be inflexible." Your philosophy puts its trust in people. So you insist individuals be held responsible for their actions. The NRA believes America's laws were made to be obeyed; and that our constitutional liberties are just as important today as 200 years ago. And by the way, the Constitution does not say Government shall decree the right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution says ". . . the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

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But there is one thing we do not want: We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his or her family from fear and harm.

We are making headway in our crackdown on crime, while protecting the rights of legitimate gunowners. A recent U.S. News and World Report story said, "It may be no accident that the first dip in U.S. crime totals in 5 years coincides with a nationwide crackdown on 'career criminals.'" Serious crime dropped by 4 percent in 1982, after rising more than 21 percent since 1977 and 254 percent since 1962.

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We can't solve these terrible problems overnight. But since we established a Florida task force against drugs, under the Vice President's leadership, drug-related arrests have risen sharply. Just last week, our agents trailed then landed behind a suspicious plane near LaBelle, Florida. Two drug smugglers jumped out to run away. One of them swam across a canal and hid in the bushes. The alligators didn't get him, but our enforcement people did. They seized 625 pounds of cocaine valued at \$187½ million.

As we crackdown on criminals, we are trying to move forward on another front: to reform the firearms laws which needlessly interfere with the rights of legitimate gunowners like

~~Make I like this opportunity to say how well you are represented in Washington. Your leadership under the direction of the Law Center and Warren Cassidy and the Institute for Legislative Action is both respected and effective.~~

yourselves. We are working closely with your leadership and Congressional sponsors of firearms legislation, such as Senators Hatch and McClure and Congressman Volkmer. I look forward to signing a bill that truly protects the rights of law-abiding citizens, without diminishing the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement against the misuse of firearms.

Your leadership's support has been important to us. Just last year, I signed two amendments into law: one eliminated unnecessary recordkeeping requirements on 22-caliber rimfire ammunition; the other saved many custom gunsmiths from financial ruin.

~~Today I'm pleased to announce that the Department of Defense will be reissuing guidelines for our military ranges. The ranges will be open for civilian use, provided there are no conflicts~~

~~with military priorities.~~ I support this idea because, clear back to World War I, one of the great talents of American soldiers has been their marksmanship. And it turned out they developed this from shooting at targets as young boys.

~~I'm also pleased to announce an increase in the sale of M-1 rifles through the Director of Civilian Marksmanship.~~

May I say a few words about conservation and the group I consider the foremost conservationists of our wildlife resources: America's sportsmen -- hunters and fishermen. As Teddy Roosevelt recognized, "The free, self-reliant, adventurous life, with its rugged . . . democracy; the wild surroundings, the grand beauty of the scenery, the chance to study the way and habits of the woodland creatures -- all these unite to give to the career of the . . . hunter its peculiar charm."

I want you to know that I am in favor of the civilian marksmanship program.
Secretary Weinberger to study ways in which the marksmanship program can be improved

Unfortunately, there has been a kind of elitist attitude in Washington that vast natural resource areas must be locked up to save the planet from mankind. I'm proud to say that Secretary of the Interior, Jim Watt, and I have a different philosophy -- one based on respect for both man and nature. We believe in the concept of stewardship, caring for the resources we have for the benefit of mankind.

Now let me be clear about those words: stewardship for the benefit of mankind. Our Administration favors economic development -- but not within our national parks or within our wilderness areas. We have not and will never propose that. What we do say is: When the last Administration arbitrarily closed 40 million acres of Alaskan land telling sports hunters to stay out, then, yes, you bet we think that was wrong and we're trying to correct it.

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This idea of stewardship -- preserving and caring for what we have, bringing our economy back to health, so you, the people, can make us great again -- that's a crucial part of keeping America free and making her secure. I know the road to recovery has been long and hard. Too many people are still out of work. But I believe with all my heart that we have turned the corner,

we are on our way back, and like that fighter, Rocky Balboa -- America is getting strong now.

You know, when I see inflation down, interest rates down, tax rates being cut, industrial production and productivity up, housing starts and auto sales up, and workers being called back, I wonder about something: Now that our program is doing what we said it would, how come they don't call it Reaganomics anymore?

Oh yes, some critics say nothing is right. They oppose budget savings, they oppose tax cuts. Despite the calamity they created, they continue to resist reform. Their attitude reminds me of a comment a great American made about a similar situation. "Those who are frightened," he said, "by boldness and cowed by the necessity for making decisions complain that all we have done is unnecessary and subject to great risks. Now that these people are coming out of their storm cellars, they forget that there ever was a storm."

Those words were spoken by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1934. Well, I haven't forgotten the storm that was raging around every family in 1980. With all due respect, may I remind our critics: those who saddled this Nation with double-digit inflation, 21½ percent interest rates -- the highest in more than 100 years -- and the worst tax burden in our peacetime history, they are the last people who should be giving sermonettes on fairness and compassion.

If inflation had continued as it was when they were in office, a family of four on a fixed income of \$20,000 would be more than \$1,500 poorer in purchasing power today. If their tax increases had stayed on the books, and our tax cuts had not been

passed, a median-income family of four would be paying \$700 more in Federal income taxes this year. If this is the liberal idea of fairness and compassion, may the good Lord be with you if Teddy and Tip ever get their Irish up.

President John F. Kennedy said in 1963, ". . . the largest, single barrier to full employment . . . and to a higher rate of economic growth is the . . . heavy drag of Federal income taxes on private purchasing power, initiative and incentive." Those wise words are just as true today. I will veto any attempt to tamper with the third year of your tax cut, or the indexing provision. Indexing is the best security middle-income families have against bracket creep -- inflation pushing you into higher and higher tax brackets. Those who would strip you of this protection are tax grabbers, pure and simple.

The United States did not run up a trillion dollar debt because you're not taxed enough. We got that debt because Government spends too much. We need spending restraint, not tax increases. I want to work with the Congress, but not at your expense, and not at the risk of sabotaging this recovery we worked so hard to achieve.

Nor must we gamble, ever again, with the security of this country by neglecting our defense readiness. The day I took office, our armed forces were in a shocking state of neglect. ~~We had~~ Shortages of skilled manpower, faulty equipment, lack of spare parts, and insufficient fuel and ammunition for proper training, ~~had left us vulnerable.~~ We had ~~too many~~ planes that couldn't fly, ships that couldn't leave port and helicopters that couldn't stay aloft.

I believe it is immoral to ask the sons and daughters of America to protect this land with second-rate equipment and bargain basement weapons. If they can put their lives on the line to protect our way of life, then by golly we can give them the weapons, training, and money they need to do the job right. When it comes to keeping America safe and strong, when it comes to keeping America free, there should be no Republicans or Democrats, only patriotic Americans working together for the greater good.

We are doing that. We've begun to pay our soldiers a decent wage. We've increased pilot flying time, extended basic training and restocked spare parts inventories. The level and quality of recruits are up sharply.

By providing adequate compensation for our soldiers, by giving them the tools they need to do their jobs, we are restoring dignity, honor and pride to the uniform of the United States military -- and we dare not sacrifice that.

The people who disagree with our side rebuilding its military security don't seem to understand: Our side is the only side where people are permitted to disagree -- and that should make them nervous. It is not America that attacks and occupies other countries; we conduct no worldwide campaign of subversion and terrorism; we build no walls to keep our people in, or use armies of secret police and gulag prison camps to keep them quiet.

We are a free people, a democratic people; we believe in God and we love peace. But let us remember what George Washington

warned in 1790: That to be prepared for war is one of the best means of preserving the peace. *(There's nothing I want more than a verifiable agreement with the Soviet Union to reduce the levels of strategic weapons. In the long run, that's the best way to lower the growth in defense spending. But the Soviets will only*

Now 9 days ago, I addressed the Congress on the subject of Central America, where the United States has fundamental and far-reaching interests. El Salvador is 10 miles closer to Phoenix than Phoenix is to Washington. The people of El Salvador are not perfect, they have made mistakes, as we have made mistakes. But they are trying, with great bravery and against tremendous odds, to build the dream of a society like ours. *bargain in good faith if they understand we're determined to defend freedom -- and if determined they will understand that.*

They understand that government must rest on the consent of the governed; that only when people are free to worship, create and build, only when they are given a personal stake in deciding their destiny, and benefitting from their own risks -- only then will their society become dynamic, prosperous, progressive and free.

But El Salvador is under attack. Guerillas with contempt for democracy, and armed-to-the-teeth by Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviets, are determined to shoot their way into power. We have asked the Congress for a modest package of assistance -- with *three times* ~~twice~~ as much economic aid as military aid.

But military aid is essential, because the guerillas are deliberately and systematically destroying El Salvador's economy -- blowing up bridges, railroads, water facilities, telephone and electrical systems. These are not the actions of people who love the common man and who seek to reform their system. They are the actions of thugs who trample the common man in their quest for total power.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

MAY 5 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Aram Bakshian
FROM: Lawrence A. Kudlow (Dinkelacker/Esposito) *EWD mma*
SUBJECT: Draft Presidential Remarks

I. National Rifle Association

Page 5. The National Security Division cannot confirm that DOD is opening military ranges for civilian use or even considering such a practice. In addition, it cannot confirm that the Army will increase sales of M-1s to high-power competitors.

These statements should be rechecked and confirmed with the Pentagon if they are to be used in the speech.

II. Cinco de Mayo Opening

Page 1. The second paragraph appears to place the President in a less than favorable light. Probably best to delete it entirely.

Page 5, last paragraph. The characterization of old jobs programs -- "where 80 percent of the money was used for administration" -- is at best misleading and could subject the Administration to attack. Stipends, for instance, have been subsumed under "administration" to reach such a total. Instead, it would be more effective to replace the sixth sentence with: "And while waiting for our policies to take hold, we replaced the old, inefficient CETA program -- where only 18 percent of the money was used for training -- with cost-effective programs."

Page 6. The last paragraph apparently announces a working group on South Texas economic problems of concern to Senator Tower. It is a policy issue that should probably be further discussed with OMB (John Cogan) since it cannot be dealt with well within the confines of marking up a speech. However, the following substitute language should be considered. To the third sentence, ending with "people of South Texas," add "and others in our Nation." Then, change the fourth sentence to read, "I am pleased to tell you that some of the best people in my Administration are examining how we might alleviate some of the hardship caused by economic uncertainty on the other side of the border."

cc: Richard Darman

OMB STAFFING OF WHITE HOUSE PAPERS

Doc Date: 5/2 Action: [check] Info: Paper from: DARMAN
Subj: DRAFT PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: CINCO DE MAYO OPENING

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*Please coordinate with and provide comments to Kudlow.

**Should receive first 2 page(s) only.

RESPONSE TO WHITE HOUSE

Lead responsibility for preparing response: Kudlow

Address response to BAKSHIAN for signature of Kudlow
CC: DARMAN

Response should arrive in Correspondence Unit by: 2:50 TODAY, 5/3

Concurrence: Initials: _____
Date: ___/___/___

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IF RESPONSE IS SENT DIRECTLY TO WHITE HOUSE, PLEASE SEND DAVID GERSON A COPY

BRIEFING MATERIAL PREPARATION

Lead responsibility for preparing for meeting: _____

Briefing material should be in Director's Office by: _____

Comments:

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

TUESDAY, MAY 2 3:00 P.M. 88

DATE: May 2, 1983 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: _____

SUBJECT: DRAFT PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: CINCO DE MAYO OPENING DIRECTOR'S CORRESPONDENCE UNIT

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| | | | HENKEL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

Remarks:

Please forward comments/edits directly to Aram Bakshian, with a copy to my office, by 3:00 tomorrow, Tuesday, May 3.

Thank you.

Richard G. Darman
Assistant to the President
(x2702)

Response:

(Rohrabacher/BE)

May 2, 1983

8:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: CINCO DE MAYO OPENING
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1983

Mayor Cisneros, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Buenas tardes.

Today we gather to celebrate a holiday that exemplifies the rich cultural diversity that is so much a part of our country. Having spent most of my life in California, I've almost forgotten when I didn't celebrate Cinco de Mayo. This holiday draws our attention, especially those of us from the Southwest, to neighbors and friends who have added so much to our way of life.

While I was Governor of California, I was asked on several occasions to represent the United States at functions in Mexico. At one of these, at which I spoke to a rather large audience, I made my speech and sat down to rather unenthusiastic and scattered applause. I was a little embarrassed, thinking that I might have said something wrong. I was doubly embarrassed when the next man up, speaking in Spanish, which I didn't understand, was getting enthusiastic applause almost every other sentence. So, to hide my embarrassment I started clapping louder and longer than anyone else. After a few minutes our ambassador leaned over to me and said, "I wouldn't do that if I were you, he's interpreting your speech."

On that occasion, just as on my many other visits to Mexico, I've always been struck by our remarkable ties, a cherished possession we should never take lightly. Understanding this, one of my first priorities as President was to reestablish and

solidify our relationship with Mexico, which had been permitted to erode in the years prior to my Administration.

The first head of state with whom I met after my election, even before my inauguration, was the President of Mexico. We established a personal rapport, a rapport that continues today with the current President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid.

Cinco de Mayo reminds us of the love of liberty found on both sides of the border; and in this love of liberty, you, the Americans of Mexican descent, link our two peoples. There is a bust here in San Antonio to Benito Juarez, the hero of the battle for independence that we celebrate today. On it is inscribed, in Spanish, his words: "Among men, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace."

Juarez, a contemporary of Lincoln, a man who found refuge in our country while struggling for the freedom of his own, embodied courage, idealism, and tenacity.

These traits not only helped him during the struggle for independence, but also through his many years of political leadership in his country. I think Mayor Cisneros will agree that coping with the frustrations of government, while not as acclaimed as struggling for independence, takes all the inner strength and hard work an individual can muster.

Our forefathers, men like Benito Juarez, gave us freedom. Today we must protect it and make it work. You here in San Antonio have much to be proud of in that respect.

The last time I saw Mayor Cisneros was in the Oval Office during a ceremony in which he received, on your behalf, the All

American Cities award. I've been to San Antonio on many occasions over the years. I know this city, its rich heritage, its pride, and its optimism. I can think of no better recipient of that award, because you surely represent the all-American spirit.

One of the earliest structures built in this city was a Catholic Mission, followed by Cathedrals and churches of many faiths. Today a number of these Cathedrals, precious landmarks of our heritage like the San Jose Mission, are still functioning as places of worship, living testimony that San Antonio is keeping faith with those who came before. I can think of no greater tribute to our forefathers than the respect of God so evident in your community.

Similarly, this city continues to be a beacon of enterprise. Hard-working people came to our country looking for freedom and a chance to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

We all recognize that for many years there was opportunity in our land, but not equal opportunity. It is a tribute to the character of Americans of Mexican descent that during this dark time of discrimination they not only maintained their dignity, but triumphed over their adversity. Today, dramatic advances are being made, Americans of Mexican descent are taking their places throughout the professions, as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business executives. San Antonio has spawned a whole new flock of entrepreneurs who are making their mark in the business world. In government, you are shouldering ever-increasing responsibility. I am proud that this Administration has been

able to appoint 130 Hispanics to high-level positions. One in particular you may be aware of is our deputy administrator at the Small Business Administration. His name is Eddie Herrera and he's from right here in San Antonio.

On June 29, 1982, I signed into a law a 25-year extension of the special provisions of the Voting Rights Act -- the longest since its enactment. The Voting Rights Act places a ban on literacy tests and other devices that have been used to discourage minority participation, and it requires that certain State and local jurisdictions provide assistance to voters who are not literate in English. Both before and after that signing, this Administration has worked vigorously to enforce the provisions of the Act. Today, in part because of our enforcement, the number of Hispanics elected and appointed to positions at the mid-levels of State and local government is higher than ever before.

Ultimately, of course, the upward mobility of all Americans depends on the vitality of our economy. During the last decade some thought that America's best days were behind her, that we'd lost our will to excel, and that we should resign ourselves to a lower standard of living. We were plagued by double-digit inflation, record interest rates, and over taxation, and the economic turmoil caused by irresponsible government policies.

Standing with you today, here in this city that doesn't know what it means to be licked, I can tell you that America is emerging from the economic troubles we inherited from the 1970's.

We've taken the tough medicine, and we're in for strong and sustained economic growth.

And I know that your city, instead of sitting back and complaining, waiting for someone else to do it for you, has been preparing for the opportunities ahead. You've been attracting high-tech companies and other corporations by removing tax and regulatory roadblocks. You went through the complicated process to have your city designated as a foreign trade zone, greatly increasing your potential. You've embarked on extensive renovation projects, like Avenida Guadalupe. This will revitalize San Antonio, while still preserving its heritage. City government, business, and community groups have been working closely together to keep San Antonio moving forward. And when I say working together, I know it is hard work.

We've done what we can at the Federal level. We've dramatically reduced the inflation that was ravaging your standard of living. We've cut personal tax rates. We've curbed runaway spending. We've cut in half the prime interest rate -- that not only helps you as individuals, but also helps your city by lowering its costs. And while waiting for our policies to take hold, we replaced old, inefficient job programs -- where 80 percent of the money was used for administration -- with new cost-effective training. In cooperation with organizations like Operation SER, which is the largest employment and training program in the Hispanic community, we are channeling resources into training workers for the skills that will be needed in tomorrow's job market.

I've always believed that the best thing the Federal Government can do to enhance progress in this country is to get out of the way and let the people get on with it. Consistent with this philosophy, we've done our best to return authority back to levels of government closer to the people.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank your Mayor for all he's done to support a new approach we've been taking to community developments: enterprise zones. The enterprise zone concept doesn't rely on more Federal taxing and spending; that approach failed. Instead, it harnesses the energy of the private sector, pumping new life into depressed areas. Rather than creating jobs in Washington, enterprise zones will produce results where they are needed -- right in local communities. Although we haven't managed to get the legislation through that puzzle palace called Capitol Hill yet, with the help of Mayor Cisneros and other articulate and aggressive local leaders, we hope to attract enough support to give this innovative idea a chance.

I am fully aware that, as economic recovery takes hold, there will be some areas that need special attention. Senator Tower has been in close consultation with the White House in recent months. We're both concerned about the impact the peso devaluation and the financial crisis in Mexico is having on the people of South Texas. Today, I am pleased to announce that I will soon be appointing a special interagency working group to investigate the situation and recommend specific actions to

alleviate some of the hardship caused by economic uncertainty on the other side of the border.

We are also trying to do everything we can to solve this problem at its source, in Mexico itself. We've offered the Mexican government our assistance. Secretaries Shultz and Regan have been personally involved, and every member of my Administration understands that now is the time to reaffirm to the people of Mexico that we are not just neighbors, we are friends.

You in San Antonio have long realized this kind of interdependence. Back in 1968, when you commemorated your 250th birthday, you did it with a HemisFair -- celebrating the community of nations which stretches from the Arctic regions of Canada to the tip of Cape Horn. Your "Tower of the Americas" still stands as a symbol of your hemispheric commitment.

We in the many countries of the Americas have potential limited only by our goodwill and imagination. We have two great continents, rich in resources and inhabited by 600 million hardy souls -- people from every corner of the world, people descended from pioneers with courage enough to leave the safety of the familiar and start fresh in a new world. We are, by and large, people who believe in the fundamental values of God, family, work, and justice.

When I visited Latin America a few months ago, I told the leaders with whom I met of my vision for the Americas-- building on our shared values, respecting our difference, but moving forward together to meet the challenges of the future.

Last week some of you may have heard my speech before the Congress concerning Central America. I hope you agree with me that the United States can no longer remain complacent about its relations to the south. We can no longer find excuses for doing nothing and then hope for the best. That is why I asked for bipartisan support in helping our Central American friends develop their economies and democratic institutions and protect themselves against aggression. What's going on in Central America relates directly to the security of the United States, and when it comes to that, we aren't Republicans and Democrats, we're Americans.

It's long been recognized that few of our fellow citizens can claim as honorable a record in defending their country as Americans of Mexican descent. San Antonio and South Texas have produced a number of true American heroes. One of them, who I understand still lives here, is Cleto Rodriguez. During the Second World War he was in the Army when, in the battle to recapture the Philippines, his unit was halted by severe enemy fire. On his own initiative he left his platoon, accompanied by a comrade, and moved forward to do battle. In 2½ hours of fierce fighting these two brave men killed more than 82 of the enemy, completely disorganized the enemy defenses, and paved the way for the overwhelming defeat of the enemy strong point. His comrade was killed, but Mr. Rodriguez lives, a personification of courage and inspiration to us all. For his efforts he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

When I first got to Washington, I learned of another citizen of Texas who deserved our country's highest award for his bravery and devotion to his country while in Vietnam. He had been kept waiting in limbo during the last Administration because there were some who felt that recognizing this hero, this gallant soldier, would stir up bad memories of that Southeast Asian conflict. Well, we are proud of those who defend this country. And if they place their lives on the line for us, we must make sure they know that we are behind them and appreciate what they are doing.

The American I'm talking about, of course, is Sgt. Roy Benavidez. This former farm boy from down in Texas was working at headquarters when some helicopters came in all shot up, their crews wounded. They'd been trying to rescue an American patrol totally surrounded by the Viet Cong. On his own he climbed into one of the helicopters going out to make another attempt to rescue these men.

Sgt. Benavidez dropped from the first helicopter that came in before it touched the ground, and made his way 75 yards under fire to the location of the surrounded patrol. There were only eight of them left alive -- all wounded. One by one he picked them up, and under fire he continued to carry them out to the helicopters that would come in and land to get them. At one point, they had men on a helicopter and the pilot of the helicopter was killed as it started to take off. It crashed back to Earth. He took them out of that helicopter and to another. He was shot four times while he was doing all of this.

Finally, bringing out the eighth man with four bullet wounds in him, he was attacked hand-to-hand by a Vietnamese with a rifle and bayonet. He put the wounded man down and then tried to get his own bayonet out of his belt; but, in the meantime, they are taught how to ward off a bayonet with their arm if they can. But, Roy said, you don't really think about that, so he grabbed the other man's bayonet under his arm. And his arm is totally disabled now from the sawing the man did trying to get that bayonet out. But when he told me about this particular incident on our way over to the medal presentation, Roy said, "That's when I got mad." And he did. He finished off his assailant, picked up the wounded man, and made it out.

At the presentation over at the Pentagon we brought out as many of the eight men that he had rescued as we could find, presenting them as guests at the ceremony. There wasn't a dry eye in the house when those men came to him in the receiving line, to see them throwing their arms around him, seeing their tears, and thanking him for saving their lives. And then they turned to tell me what their life was like and how much they owed to Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez.

Today our country is free and independent because of the dedication of such men as Cleto Rodriguez, Roy Benavidez, and all the others, of all races and religions and family backgrounds. What we have in America, perhaps San Antonio is a microcosm of this, is a noble experiment. Our forefathers came to the "New World" to become part of a new way of life, to a place where they

could better themselves but still be free to preserve their heritage and values.

So, today when you celebrate this holiday, all of your friends and neighbors join with you because we recognize this is part of our heritage as Americans as well.

Thank you for letting me be with you today. Vaya con Dios.

(Elliott)
May 3, 1983
2:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1983

President Gaffney, officers, honored guests, and may I add with great pride and pleasure -- my fellow members of the National Rifle Association.

I'm delighted to be here in Phoenix, in this great, good neighbor State of Arizona. And I'm delighted to be with all of you. It does my spirit good to be with people who never lose faith in America, who never stop believing in her future -- and who never back down one inch from defending the constitutional freedoms that are every American's birthright.

What an honor to be together on the 110th annual meeting of this great organization. Nowadays, I'm honored to belong to any organization that's been around longer than I have.

Not too long ago, I had a very memorable visit from your officials. They walked into the Oval office with some members of the "F" troop of the Texas army. Now when I saw how those fellows were dressed, and what they were packing, I didn't know whether to stretch out my hand, or make a run for it through the Rose Garden.

Well, it turned out they wanted to induct me into the Texas army, and to give me a beautiful, hand-crafted flintlock rifle. Thank you for taking such good care of it. And Chris Hirsch -- are you out there? -- I just want you to know again how much I appreciate it and look forward to using it someday.

Being a part of this group, you know that good organizations don't just happen. They take root in a body of shared beliefs. They grow strong from leadership with vision, initiative and determination to reach great goals. And what you've accomplished speaks for itself: more than 2½ million members and NRA's getting stronger every day.

We saw proof of that strength recently. Some of you share a special blessing with me -- you're Californians. And you shocked California last November when you mobilized to help send Proposition 15 down to defeat. You pointed out that police would be so busy arresting handgun owners, they would be unable to protect the people against criminals. It's a nasty little truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun control laws. I happen to know this from personal experience.

So if I may just put in a little plug: I believe in your leaders, Harlen Carter and Warren Cassidy, and I hope they'll stay right where they are doing their great job.

You know, I've always felt a special bond with the members of your group. You live by Lincoln's words, "Important principles may and must be inflexible." Your philosophy puts its trust in people. So you insist individuals be held responsible for their actions. The NRA believes America's laws were made to be obeyed; and that our constitutional liberties are just as important today as 200 years ago. And by the way, the Constitution does not say Government shall decree the right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution says ". . . the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

I believe we share the same goal: a strong America, carrying the banner of freedom, and secure from threats to her domestic tranquility, economic well-being and national security.

No group does more to promote gun safety and respect for the laws of this land than the NRA, and I thank you. Still, we've both heard the charge that supporting gunowners' rights encourages a violent, shoot-em-up society. But just a minute. Don't they understand that most violent crimes are not committed by decent, law-abiding citizens, they're committed by career criminals. Guns don't make criminals. Criminals use guns, and locking those criminals up and throwing away the key is the best gun control law we could ever have.

When I was Governor of California, we added 5 to 15 years to the sentence of any criminal who committed a crime with a firearm. I am even more convinced today that this is the right approach.

I've said many times that our Administration did not come to Washington to continue business as usual. Either we make fundamental reforms that change things for the better, or we aren't doing our job. We think it's time for our loved ones to walk the streets of America without being afraid.

So we have declared war on organized crime and the career criminal element in America. More than 100 prosecutors' offices are working with special teams around the country to throw the book at career criminals in court. And we are determined to cripple the drug pushers who are poisoning the minds and bodies of our children. We want mandatory sentences, we want firm and speedy application of penalties, and we want tougher parole laws.

But there is one thing we do not want: We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his or her family from fear and harm.

We are making headway in our crackdown on crime, while protecting the rights of legitimate gunowners. A recent U.S. News and World Report story said, "It may be no accident that the first dip in U.S. crime totals in 5 years coincides with a nationwide crackdown on 'career criminals.'" Serious crime dropped by 4 percent in 1982, after rising more than 21 percent since 1977 and 254 percent since 1962.

Longer prison sentences and tougher treatment are beginning to pay dividends. And make no mistake: this is happening because you the people are fed up with crime. You're the ones who are organizing neighborhood patrols, supporting your local police, insisting that justice be carried out -- and every time you do that you keep the spirit of democracy strong in America.

We can't solve these terrible problems overnight. But since we established a Florida task force against drugs, under the Vice President's leadership, drug-related arrests have risen sharply. Just last week, our agents trailed then landed behind a suspicious plane near LaBelle, Florida. Two drug smugglers jumped out to run away. One of them swam across a canal and hid in the bushes. The alligators didn't get him, but our enforcement people did. They seized 625 pounds of cocaine valued at \$187½ million.

As we crackdown on criminals, we are trying to move forward on another front: to reform the firearms laws which needlessly interfere with the rights of legitimate gunowners like

yourselves. We are working closely with your leadership and Congressional sponsors of firearms legislation, such as Senators Hatch and McClure and Congressman Volkmer. I look forward to signing a bill that truly protects the rights of law-abiding citizens, without diminishing the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement against the misuse of firearms.

Your leadership's support has been important to us. Just last year, I signed two amendments into law: one eliminated unnecessary recordkeeping requirements on 22-caliber rimfire ammunition; the other saved many custom gunsmiths from financial ruin.

Today I'm pleased to announce that the Department of Defense will be reissuing guidelines for our military ranges. The ranges will be open for civilian use, provided there are no conflicts with military priorities. I support this idea because, clear back to World War I, one of the great talents of American soldiers has been their marksmanship. And it turned out they developed this from shooting at targets as young boys.

I'm also pleased to announce an increase in the sale of M-1 rifles through the Director of Civilian Marksmanship.

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we are on our way back, and like that fighter, Rocky Balboa -- America is getting strong now.

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Those words were spoken by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1934. Well, I haven't forgotten the storm that was raging around every family in 1980. With all due respect, may I remind our critics: those who saddled this Nation with double-digit inflation, 21½ percent interest rates -- the highest in more than 100 years -- and the worst tax burden in our peacetime history, they are the last people who should be giving sermonettes on fairness and compassion.

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Nor must we gamble, ever again, with the security of this country by neglecting our defense readiness. The day I took office, our armed forces were in a shocking state of neglect. Shortages of skilled manpower, faulty equipment, lack of spare parts, and insufficient fuel and ammunition for proper training had left us vulnerable. We had too many planes that couldn't fly, ships that couldn't leave port and helicopters that couldn't stay aloft.

I believe it is immoral to ask the sons and daughters of America to protect this land with second-rate equipment and bargain basement weapons. If they can put their lives on the line to protect our way of life, then by golly we can give them the weapons, training, and money they need to do the job right. When it comes to keeping America safe and strong, when it comes to keeping America free, there should be no Republicans or Democrats, only patriotic Americans working together for the greater good.

We are doing that. We've begun to pay our soldiers a decent wage. We've increased pilot flying time, extended basic training and restocked spare parts inventories. The level and quality of recruits are up sharply.

By providing adequate compensation for our soldiers, by giving them the tools they need to do their jobs, we are restoring dignity, honor and pride to the uniform of the United States military -- and we dare not sacrifice that.

The people who disagree with our side rebuilding its military security don't seem to understand: Our side is the only side where people are permitted to disagree -- and that should make them nervous. It is not America that attacks and occupies other countries; we conduct no worldwide campaign of subversion and terrorism; we build no walls to keep our people in, or use armies of secret police and gulag prison camps to keep them quiet.

We are a free people, a democratic people; we believe in God and we love peace. But let us remember what George Washington

warned in 1790: That to be prepared for war is one of the best means of preserving the peace.

Now 9 days ago, I addressed the Congress on the subject of Central America, where the United States has fundamental and far-reaching interests. El Salvador is 10 miles closer to Phoenix than Phoenix is to Washington. The people of El Salvador are not perfect, they have made mistakes, as we have made mistakes. But they are trying, with great bravery and against tremendous odds, to build the dream of a society like ours.

They understand that government must rest on the consent of the governed; that only when people are free to worship, create and build, only when they are given a personal stake in deciding their destiny, and benefitting from their own risks -- only then will their society become dynamic, prosperous, progressive and free.

But El Salvador is under attack. Guerillas with contempt for democracy, and armed-to-the-teeth by Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviets, are determined to shoot their way into power. We have asked the Congress for a modest package of assistance -- with twice as much economic aid as military aid.

But military aid is essential, because the guerillas are deliberately and systematically destroying El Salvador's economy -- blowing up bridges, railroads, water facilities, telephone and electrical systems. These are not the actions of people who love the common man and who seek to reform their system. They are the actions of thugs who trample the common man in their quest for total power.

So we face a choice: will we give El Salvador her chance to walk beside us in the sunlight of democracy? Or will we turn our backs on a friend, letting her slide into a dark night of tyranny, rationalizing our inaction with detached lectures on morality?

I believe that to run away from this clear-cut responsibility would not only dishonor the good name of our country, it would open the door to more aggression, and greater danger for ourselves and our children. I appeal to you today: tell your representatives they cannot remain indifferent to another Communist takeover on our doorstep.

Standing up for America also means standing up for the God who has so blessed this land. If we could remember that Moses brought down 10 Commandments, not 10 suggestions, and if those of us who live for Jesus could remember that He wants us to love our Lord and our neighbor, then there is no limit to the problems we could solve, or the mountains we could climb together as a mighty force for good.

The United States remains the last, best hope for a mankind plagued by tyranny and deprivation. America is no stronger than its people, and that means you and me. I believe in you. And I believe that if we work together, then one day, we will say: We have fought the good fight; we have finished the race; we have kept the faith. And to our children, and our children's children, we can say, we did all that could be done in the moment that was given to us here on Earth.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

BEN
(Elliott)
May 3, 1983
9:00 a.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1983

President Gaffney, officers, honored guests, and may I add with great pride and pleasure -- my fellow members of the National Rifle Association.

I'm delighted to be here in Phoenix, in this great, good neighbor State of Arizona. And I'm delighted to be with all of you. It does my spirit good to be with people who never lose faith in America, who never stop believing in her future -- and who never back down one inch from defending the constitutional freedoms that are every American's birthright.

What an honor to be together on the 110th annual meeting of this great organization. Nowadays, I'm honored to belong to any organization that's been around longer than I have.

Not too long ago, I had a very memorable visit from your officials. They walked into the Oval office with some members of the "F" troop of the Texas army. Now when I saw how those fellows were dressed, and what they were packing, I didn't know whether to stretch out my hand, or make a run for it through the Rose Garden.

Well, it turned out they wanted to induct me into the Texas army, and to give me a beautiful, hand-crafted flintlock rifle. Thank you for taking such good care of it. And Chris Hirsch -- are you out there? -- I just want you to know again how much I appreciate it and look forward to using it someday.

Being a part of this group, you know that good organizations don't just happen. They take root in a body of shared beliefs. They grow strong from leadership with vision, initiative and determination to reach great goals. And what you've accomplished speaks for itself: more than 2½ million members and NRA's getting stronger every day.

We saw proof of that strength recently. Some of you share a special blessing with me -- you're Californians. And you shocked California last November when you mobilized to help send Proposition 15 down to defeat. You pointed out that police would be so busy arresting handgun owners, they would be unable to protect the people against criminals. It's a nasty little truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun control laws. I happen to know this from personal experience.

So if I may just put in a little plug: I believe in your leaders, Harlen Carter and Warren Cassidy, and I hope they'll stay right where they are doing their great job.

You know, I've always felt a special bond with the members of your group. You live by Lincoln's words, "Important principles may and must be inflexible." Your philosophy puts its trust in people. So you insist individuals be held responsible for their actions. The NRA believes America's laws were made to be obeyed; and that our constitutional liberties are just as important today as 200 years ago. And by the way, the Constitution does not say Government shall decree the right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution says ". . . the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

I believe we share the same goal: a strong America, carrying the banner of freedom, and secure from threats to her domestic tranquility, economic well-being and national security.

No group does more to promote gun safety and respect for the laws of this land than the NRA, and I thank you. Still, we've both heard the charge that supporting gunowners' rights encourages a violent, shoot-em-up society. But just a minute. Don't they understand that most violent crimes are not committed by decent, law-abiding citizens, they're committed by career criminals. Guns don't make criminals. Criminals use guns, and locking those criminals up and throwing away the key is the best gun control law we could ever have.

When I was Governor of California, we added 5 to 15 years to the sentence of any criminal who committed a crime with a firearm. I am even more convinced today that this is the right approach.

I've said many times that our Administration did not come to Washington to continue business as usual. Either we make fundamental reforms that change things for the better, or we aren't doing our job. We think it's time for our loved ones to walk the streets of America without being afraid.

So we have declared war on organized crime and the career criminal element in America. More than 100 prosecutors' offices are working with special teams around the country to throw the book at career criminals in court. And we are determined to cripple the drug pushers who are poisoning the minds and bodies of our children. We want mandatory sentences, we want firm and speedy application of penalties, and we want tougher parole laws.

But there is one thing we do not want: We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his or her family from fear and harm.

We are making headway in our crackdown on crime, while protecting the rights of legitimate gunowners. A recent U.S. News and World Report story said, "It may be no accident that the first dip in U.S. crime totals in 5 years coincides with a nationwide crackdown on 'career criminals.'" Serious crime dropped by 4 percent in 1982, after rising more than 21 percent since 1977 and 254 percent since 1962.

Longer prison sentences and tougher treatment are beginning to pay dividends. And make no mistake: this is happening because you the people are fed up with crime. You're the ones who are organizing neighborhood patrols, supporting your local police, insisting that justice be carried out -- and every time you do that you keep the spirit of democracy strong in America.

We can't solve these terrible problems overnight. But since we established a Florida task force against drugs, under the Vice President's leadership, drug-related arrests have risen sharply. Just last week, our agents trailed then landed behind a suspicious plane near LaBelle, Florida. Two drug smugglers jumped out to run away. One of them swam across a canal and hid in the bushes. The alligators didn't get him, but our enforcement people did. They seized 625 pounds of cocaine valued at \$187½ million.

As we crackdown on criminals, we are trying to move forward on another front: to reform the firearms laws which needlessly interfere with the rights of legitimate gunowners like

yourselves. We are working closely with your leadership and Congressional sponsors of firearms legislation, such as Senators Hatch and McClure and Congressman Volkmer. I look forward to signing a bill that truly protects the rights of law-abiding citizens, without diminishing the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement against the misuse of firearms.

Your leadership's support has been important to us. Just last year, I signed two amendments into law: one eliminated unnecessary recordkeeping requirements on 22-caliber rimfire ammunition; the other saved many custom gunsmiths from financial ruin.

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Thank you all, and God bless you.