

This special day of remembrance has a significant and profound meaning to all of us gathered here today. This holiday more than any other symbolizes the great moral character of our country that is the very fiber of life that binds all of the diverse cultural and spiritual make-up of the people into one great pularistic society. On this day we recognize the great sacrifices that have been made in order to preserve our democratic form of government, by those who fought and died.

Freedom is a rare and precious commodity in our world today. The price some have paid to protect that freedom is the highest form of compensation for any commodity known to man.

These young men and women came from every religious background and economic condition. These people represented the diversity of our country and they were brought together for a common purpose. When they came together their diversity blended into a common bond and a feeling of comradary rarely experienced in any other endeavor. These people should be an inspiration for all of us to always know and remember what we are as a nation and why it was so important for some to pay that price.

We must be constantly mindful of the reasons we hold onto these abstract words of the Constitution so ridgedly that evolved into the greatest living document, next to the Bible, in our world today.

The many wonderful gifts that our forefatheres gave to us are confined within the pages of that sacred, ^{nealy 200 year old document} ~~200 year plus document~~, preserved in our National Archives. The Constitution represents

the absolute in truth and justice about the human condition. The framers knowing of the depravity and unscrupulous nature of other leaders wanted to protect for all times against that happening to their fledgling country, so they drafted very carefully every word and every phrase to protect themselves and their fellow citizens. And what a magnificent job they did.

The limitless opportunities we all enjoy that are available to us at any time as long as our's do not conflict with our neighbors. To know when we close our eyes at night just before sleep overtakes us, when we reflect on those secret thoughts that are important to each and every one of us----that we never have to worry about that the things keep over half of the world awake.

We are not kept awake because of the possibility of some law enforcement officer breaking into our house without going through many legal steps to gain the authority to do so.

We never have to worry about facing a criminal or civil litigation without the benefit of a trial by jury of our peers.

We are not tossing and turning because our form of government is unstable; and we may awake to a dictator who won't like our religion or politics or color of our hair.

We are not trying to focus our eyes and thoughts on some not really interesting book because the meeting that is scheduled for tomorrow will be considered illegal, or what we are going to say will be considered inflammatory or the church we belong to may draw some sort of persecution.

No ladies and gentlemen, these and many, many other fundamental rights that we all have guaranteed by that ~~drop of blood~~ ^{Sacred document} haven't cost us one lost moment of sleep.

We do have other worries that are very important to us individually and collectively that are of a serious nature. ^{in terms of our everyday life.} But the potential of these problems is dwarfed by the comparison when one considers what it would be like in a dictatorial society.

You know what? We ought to consider ourselves lucky that we have the luxury of having those kinds of worries; and not the worries of the other members of the human race that don't have the fortune of having not been born in this country or another democratic nation.

The true test of a great nation is not the quality of life or its standard of living but rather the right to allow our citizens the freedoms to develop those standards and qualities. We have a quality and standard that are unparalleled in the history of man and we got that way because our Constitution permitted our citizens the rights to develop unhindered in their pursuits; to succeed and to fail; to start anew and to enhance the old; to distribute and to accumulate; in short the freedom to do all that we wanted and was necessary ^{for us} without interference.

And further, our forefathers also taught us that we cannot be selfish about what we have. We as a nation among all the nations of the world have an obligation to help ~~many~~ other forms of democratic government which feels threatened by those who attempt to end it.

And so in time of danger and crises in all parts of the world, when it effects us directly and when it does not, our young men and

women could be counted on to be the vanguard of world freedom. And in many conflicts, over the last two centuries, the ultimate price was paid by our young people toward that end. The enemies of peace and freedom know that America stands prepared to always defend against those who would try to dominate and subjugate the peoples of the world.

We owe a debt to all our veterans that can only be repaid by never becoming complacent; by never failing to imagine what it would be like to live in a state that is totally regimented; by never failing to remember that freedom is an abstract concept with no basis in fact in a dictatorial society. And that the only real hope of economic or spiritual development of mankind rests with the freedom of men to express themselves and to let those thoughts expand to reach the fruition of ~~them~~^{their} meaning.

The lessons of history point the way, we must always be prepared to fight the forces of tyranny. As our first President said in 1790 so many years ago ^{which is as apropro today as then} "To be prepared for war is one one of the most effectual means of preserving peace".

We can never allow ourselves to be put into a position that permits us to become so complacent that we somehow justify the lack of a proper military committment. This must never happen! It would be a mockery to those valient veterans who paid the price. But I also say do not ever again ^{use} use our military as pawns to be sacrificed for the sake of some ill defined State Department strategy. By God, if we're going to send our troops into a hotspot then we must do so with the idea that they are going there to win; and we must give them

the means to do it both in terms of materials and political commitment.

We as a nation, are the strongest when we collectively recognize an apparent and obvious threat and then we can rally all of our citizens in doing our part toward the war effort. The two World Wars are prime examples of just how strong we can be on the battlefields and on the production lines when we sense this direct threat.

But in ~~the~~ Vietnam, Lebanon, El Salvador and Nicaragua that clear and direct threat is not as apparent. In fact, it becomes very muddled and unclear when it's aired in the spectrum of the light of our free society *in this part of the 20th century.* Was it proper and right for our troops to be in Vietnam for 10 years? - to be in Lebanon? Is it proper and necessary for us to send troops in order to preserve the government in El Salvador or topple the government in Nicaragua?

These and many other very important and necessary issues must be resolved by those who make the decisions - and those decisions implicitly may add to the number that we honor here next year.

We all have an opinion on those questions, but regardless of where we stand, that is not all the issue, in my mind.

If we have to honor more dead next year, *let us hope* those valiant men and women ~~hopefully~~ will have died with a given purpose and the support that they needed ~~to win~~. We've got the best trained, best supplied -- the most willing Armed Forces in the world, so don't send them some- where and ask them to be sitting ducks or clay pigeons *as in Lebanon* - don't say go ahead and fight, but you're not allowed to win *as in Vietnam* - Don't let us lose our young while some very unstable third world leaders argue around a table.

The men and women of the Armed Forces are not involved in the political dialogue that goes into reaching the decisions about where they should go, so they should not be treated so unfairly as to be asked to suffer if that dialogue did not produce majority consensus.

All it comes down to, in my humble opinion, is not to use our fighting men to perform any other function than to fight and to win. We should not hamstring them in terms of limited support and direction because of lack of political unanimity.

Our leaders in Washington should carefully consider the use of troops as it related to a clear and present danger to our's or an allies' way of life *and if a decision is made that troops should be sent* then there should be no question of our people's mission - to defeat the enemy; and we should use every means available to support that effort.

Lord, may we never forget why we stand for what we do or how we must preserve it.

So let ~~us~~ this day also remind us to rededicate ourselves, to always strive for the betterment of our society in every area---- for stagnation is not stability but instability. This is necessary because our country has never lead by propoganda, like our adversaries, but ~~for~~ *by* example of deeds and the hardwork and ingenuity of our citizens and the blood of our soldiers. Even though our country has abundant wealth our greatest resource remains the American people. The strong moral character and sense of fairness that is part of our national makeup has become since the birth of our nation an inspiration to the world. On this day of reflection we can best honor our fallen brothers and sisters by using it as a focal point to strengthen our resolve and

renew our determination in furthering the cause of peace and freedom. May the reverence that we feel here today for these men and women who have fallen in service to their country provide the strength and initiative in reaching an even greater destiny for that country and the world.