

REP. THOMAS TANGRETTI - REMARKS

FLAG DAY, JUNE 14, 1989

I AM PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY
ON THE DAY SET ASIDE TO HONOR OUR FLAG
AND, IN SO DOING, TO HONOR OUR COUNTRY.

OUR FLAG HAS BEEN GIVEN MANY NAMES
OVER THE YEARS ... THE STAR-SPANGLED
BANNER ... OLD GLORY ... THE STARS AND
STRIPES, JUST TO NAME A FEW.

BUT I THINK WE WOULD ALL AGREE THAT
BY ANY NAME, IT CERTAINLY IS A GRAND OLD
FLAG.

MORE THAN PERHAPS ANY OTHER FLAG IN
THE WORLD, THIS RED, WHITE AND BLUE
BANNER IS CLOSELY TIED TO THE HISTORY OF
THE COUNTRY IT REPRESENTS.

WHEN THE COLONISTS DECLARED THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM MOTHER ENGLAND AND FOUGHT TO PRESERVE IT, THEY CARRIED THE FIRST VERSION OF THIS FLAG.

AND WHEN WE HAD TO FIGHT AGAIN IN THE WAR OF 1812, THIS FLAG WAS THERE, BATTERED AND TORN, AND IT SO INSPIRED FRANCIS SCOTT KEY THAT HE WROTE DOWN THE WORDS OF "THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER".

AND DURING THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES, THIS FLAG STOOD FOR THE UNION, FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ONE SINGLE NATION UNDER GOD, WITH EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

WITH THE SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THAT CONFLICT, AMERICA STOOD READY TO TAKE ITS PLACE ON THE WORLD STAGE AND INDEED WAS FORCED TO WHEN THE FORCES OF REPRESSION AND MILITARISM TRIED TO OVERRUN EUROPE AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

BUT THOSE FORCES OF EVIL SAW A NEW FLAG ON THE HORIZON ... THIS FLAG, AND THEY FOUND THE MEN WHO FOUGHT UNDER IT TO BE THE MOST DETERMINED OPPONENTS THEY HAD EVER FACED.

AMERICA AND HER ALLIES WON BOTH OF THE WORLD WARS, AND IN THE YEARS SINCE THEN, THIS FLAG HAS STOOD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACEFUL ECONOMIC PROGRESS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

IT HAS FLOWN AT AMERICAN EMBASSIES IN SUCH WAR-TORN NATIONS AS NICARAGUA, EL SALVADOR, THE PHILIPPINES, AND EVEN NOW AS WE STAND HERE, THIS FLAG IS FLYING OVER THE U.S. EMBASSY IN BEIJING, CHINA, WHERE THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN STANDING UP FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE IN AND PAYING FOR IT WITH THEIR LIVES.

AS AN AMERICAN, I AM VERY TROUBLED BY WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN CHINA, BUT I AM GLAD TO KNOW THAT AT THIS VERY MOMENT, THE AMERICAN FLAG IS FLYING IN BEIJING.

IT IS A SYMBOL OF EVERYTHING THE STUDENTS THERE HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR ... FREE SPEECH, A FREE PRESS, FREEDOM TO ASSEMBLE ... THE BASIC RIGHTS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED HERE.

BUT THIS FLAG IS NOT JUST A WARTIME SYMBOL OF OUR COUNTRY. IT REPRESENTS ALL THAT WE STRIVE FOR IN TIMES OF PEACE AS WELL ... A STRONG ECONOMY, SAFE AND HAPPY FAMILIES, GOOD SCHOOLS AND GOOD JOBS, WHETHER YOU ARE A FARMER, A FACTORY WORKER, OR EVEN A STATE REPRESENTATIVE.

IN SHORT, THIS FLAG STANDS FOR ALL THAT IS BEST IN AMERICA.

BUT WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY, JUNE 14TH, AND NOT SOME OTHER DAY. THE REASON THIS DAY WAS ESTABLISHED AS FLAG DAY IS BECAUSE ON THIS DATE IN 1777 THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS ADOPTED THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES.

IN FACT, PENNSYLVANIA WAS THE VERY FIRST STATE TO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE FLAG DAY. MANY OTHER STATES FOLLOWED OUR LEAD, AND FINALLY IN 1949 THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MADE IT A NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

BUT EVEN THOUGH WE ARE CELEBRATING THIS SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY TODAY, I WOULD LIKE TO RECALL SOMETHING THAT PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON ONCE SAID ... "THERE ARE NO SPECIAL DAYS OF PATRIOTISM. THERE ARE NO DAYS WHEN YOU SHOULD BE MORE PATRIOTIC THAN ON OTHER DAYS, AND I ASK YOU TO WEAR EVERY DAY IN YOUR HEART OUR FLAG OF THE UNION."

SO I WANT TO SUGGEST THAT THE BEST WAY WE CAN HONOR THIS FLAG IS TO DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP OUR COUNTRY AND OUR FELLOW CITIZENS. BY INCREASING THE WEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THIS COUNTRY AND HER PEOPLE, WE WILL DO THE MOST TO HONOR OUR FLAG.

I HOPE WE WILL LEAVE HERE TODAY WITH A PROPER APPRECIATION OF THIS FLAG AND ALL THAT IT STANDS FOR. AND IF YOU ARE EVER FEELING DOWN, IF YOU LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR GOALS, IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT THE FUTURE MAY BRING, THEN I HOPE YOU WILL REMEMBER THE SONG BY THAT GREAT AMERICAN COMPOSER GEORGE M. COHAN, AND "KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE GRAND OLD FLAG."

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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SPEECH FOR FLAG DAY 1989

Rep. Tangretti, 6/14/89

Attached please find the last couple of pages of your Flag Day speech with 2 ¶'s inserted regarding the Elks Club's role. I hope this is useful.

Bill P.

P.S. Hope you have a good Flag Day!

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OF COURSE, THE ELKS CLUBS ALL ACROSS THIS COUNTRY WERE PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FORCE BEHIND THE PUSH TO HAVE FLAG DAY MADE INTO A NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

FOR YEARS THE ELKS LOBBIED CONGRESS AND THE STATES SO THAT WE COULD HAVE THIS SPECIAL DAY TO PAY PROPER RESPECT TO THE FLAG THAT SYMBOLIZES OUR BELIEFS.

BUT EVEN THOUGH WE ARE CELEBRATING THIS IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY TODAY, I WOULD LIKE TO RECALL SOMETHING THAT PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON ONCE SAID ... "THERE ARE NO SPECIAL DAYS OF PATRIOTISM. THERE ARE NO DAYS WHEN YOU SHOULD BE MORE PATRIOTIC THAN ON OTHER DAYS, AND I ASK YOU TO WEAR EVERY DAY IN YOUR HEART OUR FLAG OF THE UNION."

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