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Excerpts From Ford Address at Tulane

NEW ORLEANS, April 23 (UPI)—Following are excerpts from the text of a speech by President Ford, as prepared for delivery last night to the student body of Tulane University:

On Jan. 8, 1815, a monumental American victory was achieved here, the Battle of New Orleans. Louisiana had been a state for less than three years. But outnumbered Americans innovated and used the tactics of the frontier to defeat a veteran British force trained in the strategy of the Napoleonic Wars.

We had suffered humiliation and a measure of defeat in the War of 1812. Our national capital in Washington had been captured and burned. So the illustrious victory in the Battle of New Orleans was a powerful restorative to national pride.

Yet the victory at New Orleans took place two weeks after the signing of the armistice in Europe. Thousands fled although a peace had been negotiated. The combatants had not gotten the word. Yet the epic struggle nevertheless restored America's pride.

Today America can again regain the sense of pride that existed before Vietnam. But it cannot be achieved by re-fighting a war that is finished — as far as America is to look forward to an agenda concerned. The time has come for the future, to unity, to binding up the nation's wounds and restoring it to health and optimistic self-confidence.

In New Orleans a great battle was fought after a war was over. In New Orleans tonight we can begin a great national reconciliation. The first engagement must be with the problems of today—and of the future.

I ask tonight that we stop re-fighting the battles and re-criminations of the past. I ask that we look now at what is right with America, at our possibilities and our potentialities for change, and growth, and achievement, and sharing. I ask that we accept the responsibilities of leadership as a good neighbor to all peoples and the enemy of none. I ask that we strive to become, in the finest American tradition, something more tomorrow than we are today.

Instead of addressing the image of America, I prefer to

consider the reality of America. It is true that we have launched our bicentennial celebration without having achieved human perfection. But we have attained a remarkable self-governed society that possesses the flexibility and dynamism to grow and undertake an entirely new agenda—an agenda for America's third century.

I ask you today to join me in writing that agenda. I am determined as President to seek national rediscovery of the belief in ourselves that characterized the most creative periods in our history. The greatest challenge of creativity lies ahead.

We are saddened, indeed, by events in Indochina. But these events, tragic as they are, portend neither the end of the world nor of America's leadership in the world. Some seem to feel that if we do not succeed in everything, then we have succeeded in nothing anywhere. I reject such polarized thinking. We can and should help others to help themselves. But the fate of responsible men and women everywhere, in the final decision, rests in their own hands.



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President Ford being welcomed by the Olympia Brass Band as he arrived at the Fairmount Hotel in New Orleans