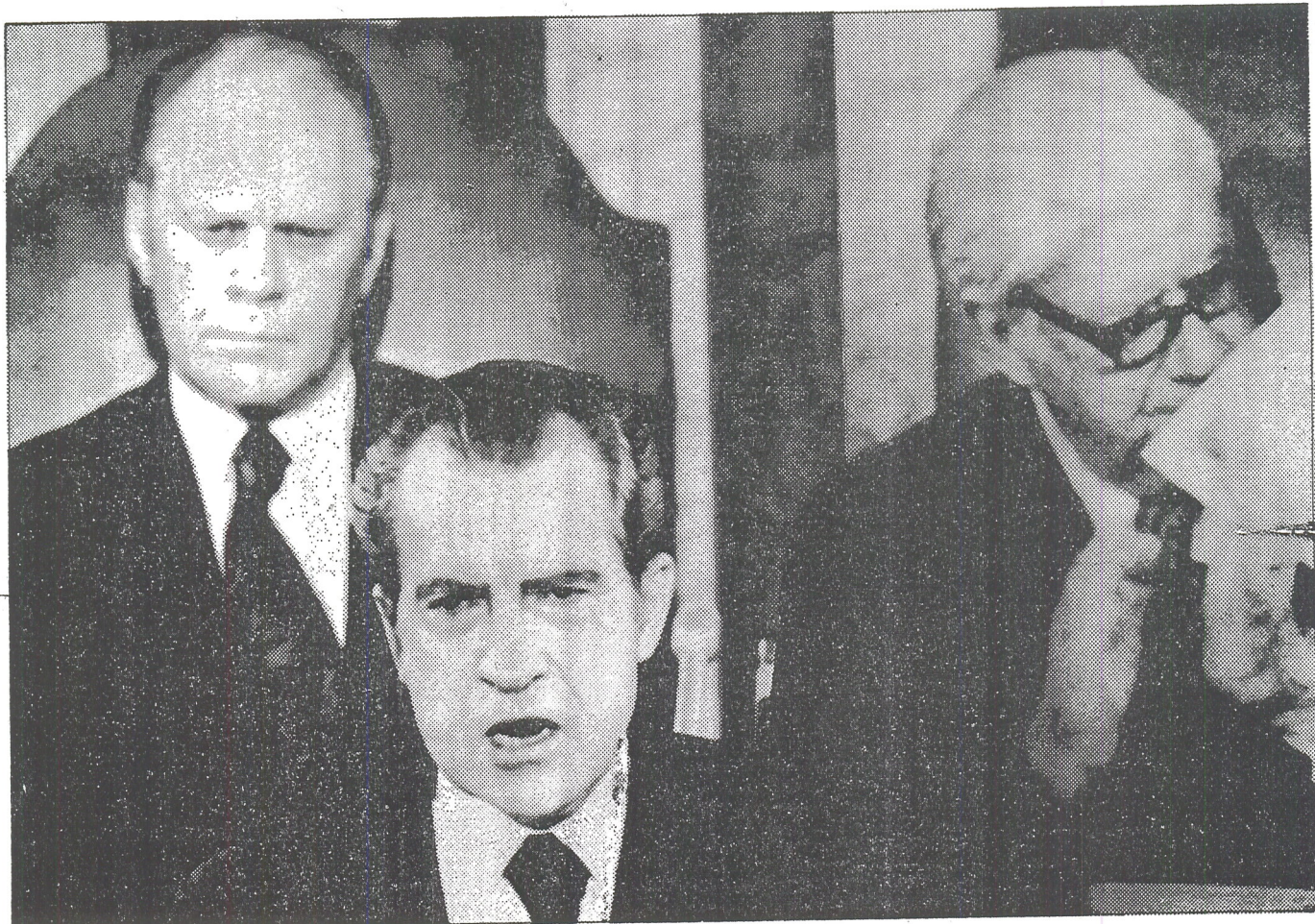


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## Mr. Nixon's '1977 Farewell Message' On the Accomplishments of 2 Terms



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IGHT YEARS ago, on a freezing cold day, I stood outside this chamber and took the oath of office as your President. That was a proud moment for me, the beginning of an attempt to scale what General Eisenhower called "the windy and dangerous slopes leading to excellence." Today, as I take my leave, is also a proud moment, as I report to you on the State of the Union, as I see it.

It is a proud moment because I can sum up the most important accomplishments of this Administration in two magnificent words: peace and freedom. America is at peace with herself and with the world, and that is a legacy that I am proud to leave my successor.

When I took office in 1969, more than 10,000 young Americans were being drafted each week, torn from their normal routine of life to serve in the armed forces. We had half a million men fighting in Vietnam. Many of those young men died, each and every day.

At home the campuses were ablaze. Universities had stopped serving as centers of thought and learning and became battlegrounds on which conflicting sides fought about our involvement in Vietnam. Parents were divided from their children, and communities split by the anguish of that conflict.

In the Middle East, Israel faced a sea of Arab states across a gulf of seemingly impenetrable hostility. Neither side would talk to each other. The seeds of a major international conflagration found fertile soil in the deserts of the Mideast.

One-quarter of the world's people lived in a country with which we had no relations, which we did not recognize, and with which we had no dialogue. The suspicions and anger of 20 years seemed intractably solid.

We were engaged in a costly and ultimately catastrophic nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. In a spiral that cost the American taxpayers billions of dollars, the United States and the Soviet Union built more deadly and more sophisticated weapons against each other while the level of security steadily



that no one would have thought possible eight years ago. For the first time, the dim outlines of a possible peace have become visible as the threat of war recedes.

China is no longer an isolated and dangerous mass.

My visits to China have opened up a new era of cooperation and mutual advantage between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Complete normalization of relations will not come quickly and we will not abandon our friends on Taiwan, though we have begun to re-establish contact with a major and important people.

In the field of strategic arms, we have begun the process of putting the genie back into the bottle. The two strategic arms limitation agreements we have reached have virtually ended the costly and dangerous competition in building and deploying nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Future talks will seek to actually reduce nuclear-weapons stockpiles and lessen the threat of mutual annihilation.

We have been able to make this progress toward the structure of peace because we were strong enough to negotiate. Only because I acted as the leader of a powerful and determined America were we able to build the first blocks of the structure of peace. In this world, negotiating out of weakness leads only to appeasement and war.

At home, we have built a new structure, too. It is a structure of freedom for the individual. Its parts are as varied as the farmer who can grow as much wheat as he wants without burden from Government controls and the black child who can now attend the school nearest to his home.

Through trial and error we have learned that we can cope with inflation and reduce it without the weight of price and wage controls.

More than 10 million more Americans are now at work than were at work when I took office. Through the family-assistance plan we have begun to treat poor people with dignity, giving them the money they need without telling them how to spend every penny of it.

At the same time, welfare reform assures that it will never be more profitable to get on the dole than to get down to work. Through the beginnings of Project Independence, which will end our dependence on foreign energy sources, we have started to free the American consumer from vassalage to foreign suppliers of oil.

All of this, the structure of peace, the freedom at home, is well begun but only begun and must be tended.

As I leave, I would like to take a few moments to pray with you for this country and the work that needs to be done.

And if you will accommodate me, I would like for this to be a silent prayer. And I will close with this thought: When we pray silently, we do it not to tell God what we want but so that He may tell us what He wants. I hope it will always be that way with America, that our voices will be low enough so that we can hear what He is telling us.

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*This hypothetical State of the Union address was prepared by Benjamin P. Stein, who was a speechwriter for Richard M. Nixon during the last year of his Presidency and who now lives and writes in Los Angeles.*

went down.

All of that was what America faced when I took office eight years ago. But America has left all that behind. Today we are building a structure of peace, one that will serve not only for us but for our children and their children. I told you what it was like when I took office. What is it like today?

Young men in America need not fear being drafted and sent to Vietnam to fight. No Americans are in combat anywhere in the world. The Republic of South Vietnam continues to fight for its freedom with American aid and moral support, but no Americans are fighting and dying there.

There is no draft. Young men can plan their lives without the nagging worry that they will be called away at any time by the Selective Service. While I recommend a military career to all young men, it is now a matter of choice not compulsion.

Our campuses are now quiet. Universities are once again places to study, to reflect, to learn. No buildings are burning on campuses now. Without the firebrand of Vietnam, the fires have gone out and the books are back in.

In the Mideast, Israel and the Arabs, after a short and bloody war, are facing each other in a climate of moderation