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PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

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REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF

CONGRESS ON MARCH 7, 2024--PM 41

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message

from the President of the United States which was ordered to lie on the

table:

To the Congress of the United States:

Good evening. Mr. Speaker. Madam Vice President. Members of Congress.

My Fellow Americans.

In January 1941--President Franklin Roosevelt came to this chamber to

speak to the Nation. He said---``I address you at a moment

unprecedented

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in the history of the Union''. Hitler was on the march. War was raging

in Europe. President Roosevelt's purpose was to wake up the Congress

and alert the American people that this was no ordinary moment. Freedom

and democracy were under assault in the world.

Tonight--I come to the same chamber to address the Nation. Now it is

we who face an unprecedented moment in the history of the Union. And

yes--my purpose tonight is to both wake up this Congress and alert the

American people that this is no ordinary moment either.

Not since President Lincoln and the Civil War have freedom and

democracy been under assault here at home as they are today. What makes

our moment rare is that freedom and democracy are under attack both at

home and overseas at the very same time.

Overseas--Putin of Russia--is on the march. Invading Ukraine--and

sowing chaos throughout Europe and beyond. If anybody in this room

thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine--I assure you--he will not.

But Ukraine can stop Putin--if we stand with Ukraine. And provide the

weapons it needs to defend itself. That is all Ukraine is asking. They

are not asking for American soldiers. In fact--there are no American

soldiers at war in Ukraine. And I am determined to keep it that way.

But now--assistance for Ukraine is being blocked by those who want us

to walk away from our leadership in the world. It wasn't that long ago

when a Republican President--Ronald Reagan--thundered--``Mr.

Gorbachev--tear down this wall''.

Now--my predecessor--a former Republican President--tells Putin--``Do

whatever the hell you want.'' A former American President actually said

that--bowing down--to a Russian leader. It's outrageous. It's

dangerous. It's unacceptable.

America is a founding member of NATO--the military alliance of

democratic nations--created after World War II to prevent war and keep

the peace.

Today--I've made NATO stronger than ever. We welcomed Finland to the

Alliance last year. And just this morning--Sweden officially joined

NATO--and their Prime Minister--is here tonight.

Mr. Prime Minister--welcome to NATO--the strongest military alliance

the world has ever known.

I say this to Congress--we must stand up to Putin. Send me the

Bipartisan National Security Bill. History is watching. If the United

States walks away now--it will put Ukraine at risk. Europe at risk. The

free world at risk--emboldening others who wish to do us harm.

My message to President Putin is simple. We will not walk away. We

will not bow down. I will not bow down. History is watching.

Just like history watched 3 years ago on January 6th.

Insurrectionists stormed this very Capitol and placed a dagger at the

throat of American democracy. Many of you were here on that darkest of

days. We all saw with our own eyes these insurrectionists were not

patriots. They had come to stop the peaceful transfer of power and to

overturn the will of the people.

January 6th--the lies about the 2020 election--and the plots to steal

the election--posed the gravest threat to our democracy since the Civil

War.

But they failed. America stood strong--and democracy prevailed. But

we must be honest--the threat remains--and democracy must be defended.

My predecessor and some of you here--seek to bury the truth of

January 6th. I will not do that. This is a moment--to speak the truth

and bury the lies. And here's the simplest truth. You can't love your

country--only when you win.

As I've done ever since being elected to office--I ask you all--

without regard to party--to join together--and defend our democracy!

Remember--your oath of office--to defend against all threats--foreign

and domestic. Respect free and fair elections! Restore trust in our

institutions! And make clear--political violence--has no place in

America! History is watching.

And history is watching another assault on freedom. Joining us

tonight--is Latorya Beasley--a social worker from Birmingham, Alabama.

14 months ago tonight--she and her husband welcomed a baby girl--thanks

to the miracle of IVF. She scheduled treatments to have a second child.

But the Alabama Supreme Court shut down IVF treatments across the State

unleashed by the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade. She

was told her dream would have to wait. What her family has gone through

should never have happened. And unless the Congress acts--it could

happen again.

So tonight--let's stand up for families like hers! To my friends

across the aisle--don't keep families waiting any longer. Guarantee the

right to IVF nationwide!

Like most Americans--I believe--Roe v. Wade got it right. And I thank

Vice President Harris for being an incredible leader defending

reproductive freedom and so much more.

But my predecessor--came to office determined to see Roe v. Wade

overturned. He's the reason it was. In fact--he brags about it. Look at

the chaos.

Joining us tonight is Kate Cox--a wife and mother from Dallas. When

she became pregnant again the fetus had a fatal condition. Her doctors

told Kate that her own life--and her ability to have children in the

future--were at risk. Because Texas law banned abortion Kate and her

husband had to leave the State to get the care she needed. What her

family has gone through should never have happened as well.

But it is happening to so many others. There are State laws banning

abortion--criminalizing doctors--and forcing survivors of rape and

incest to leave their States as well.

Many of you in this chamber--and my predecessor--are promising to

pass a national ban on reproductive freedom. My God--what freedoms will

you take next?

In its decision to overturn Roe v. Wade--the Supreme Court majority

wrote--``Women are not without electoral or political power.'' No

kidding. Clearly those bragging about overturning Roe v. Wade have no

clue about the power of women in America.

They found out though--when reproductive freedom was on the ballot

and won--in 2022--2023--and they will find out again--in 2024. If

Americans send me a Congress that supports the right to choose--I

promise you--I will restore Roe v. Wade--as the law of the land--again!

America--cannot go back. I am here tonight--to show the way forward.

Because I know how far we've come. Four years ago next week--before I

came to office--our country was hit by the worst pandemic and the worst

economic crisis in a century. Remember the fear. Record job losses. A

record spike in murder. A raging virus that would take more than 1

million American lives and leave millions of loved ones behind. A

mental health crisis of isolation and loneliness. A President--my

predecessor--who failed the most basic duty any President owes the

American people--the duty to care. That is unforgivable.

I came to office determined to get us through one of the toughest

periods in our Nation's history. And we have. It doesn't make the

news--but in thousands of cities and towns--the American people are

writing the greatest comeback story never told. So let's tell that

story--here and now.

America's comeback is building a future of American possibilities--

building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up--not the top

down--investing in all of America--in all Americans--to make sure

everyone has a fair shot and we leave no one behind!

The pandemic no longer controls our lives. The vaccines that saved us

from COVID are now being used to help beat cancer. Turning setback into

comeback. That's America!

I inherited an economy that was on the brink--now our economy is the

envy of the world! 15 million new jobs in just 3 years--that's a

record. Unemployment at 50-year lows. A record 16 million Americans are

starting small businesses and each one is an act of hope. With historic

job growth and small business growth for Black--Hispanic--and Asian-

Americans.

800,000 new manufacturing jobs in America and counting. More people

have health insurance than ever before. The racial wealth gap is the

smallest it's been in 20 years. Wages keep going up and inflation keeps

coming down! Inflation has dropped from 9 percent to 3 percent--the

lowest in the world!

And now--instead of importing foreign products and exporting American

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jobs--we're exporting American products and creating American jobs--

right here in America. Where they belong! And the American people are

beginning to feel it.

Buy American has been the law of the land since the 1930s. Past

administrations--including my predecessor--failed to Buy American. Not.

Any. More. On my watch--Federal projects like helping to build American

roads--bridges--and highways will be made with American products--built

by American workers--creating good-paying American jobs!

Thanks to my CHIPS and Science Act--the United States is investing

more in research and development than ever before. During the

pandemic--a shortage of semiconductor chips drove up prices for

everything--from cell phones to automobiles. Well--instead of having to

import semiconductor chips--which America invented I might add--private

companies are now investing billions of dollars to build new chip

factories here in America! Creating tens of thousands of jobs--many of

them paying over $100,000 a year and don't require a college degree.

In fact--my policies have attracted $650 billion of private sector

investments in clean energy and advanced manufacturing--creating tens

of thousands of jobs here in America!

Thanks to our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law--46,000 new projects have

been announced across your communities modernizing our roads and

bridges--ports and airports--and public transit systems. Removing

poisonous lead pipes--so every child can drink clean water without risk

of getting brain damage.

Providing affordable--high speed Internet for every American--no

matter where you live. Urban--suburban--and rural communities--in red

States and blue. Record investments in tribal communities.

Because of my investments--family farms are better able to stay in

the family--and children and grandchildren won't have to leave home to

make a living. It's transformative.

A great comeback story--is Belvidere, Illinois. Home to an auto plant

for nearly 60 years. Before I came to office--the plant was on its way

to shutting down. Thousands of workers feared for their livelihoods.

Hope was fading. Then I was elected to office and we raised Belvidere

repeatedly--with the auto company--knowing unions make all the

difference.

The UAW worked like hell to keep the plant open and get those jobs

back. And together--we succeeded! Instead of an auto factory shutting

down an auto factory is re-opening--and a new state-of-the art battery

factory is being built to power those cars. Instead of a town being

left behind--it's a community moving forward again! Because instead of

watching auto jobs of the future go overseas--4,000 union workers--with

higher wages--will be building that future--here in America!

Here tonight--is UAW President Shawn Fain--a great friend and a great

labor leader. And Dawn Simms--a third generation UAW worker in

Belvidere. Shawn--I was proud to be the first President in American

history to walk a picket line. And today--Dawn has a job in her

hometown providing stability for her family and pride and dignity.

Showing once again Wall Street didn't build this country! The middle

class built this country! And unions built the middle class!

When Americans get knocked down--we get back up! We keep going!

That's America! That's you--the American people! It's because of you

America is coming back! It's because of you our future is brighter! And

it's because of you--That tonight--we can proudly say--the State of our

Union is strong and getting stronger!

Tonight--I want to talk about the future of possibilities that we can

build together. A future where the days of trickledown economics are

over and the wealthy and biggest corporations no longer get all the

breaks.

I grew up in a home where not a lot trickled down on my dad's kitchen

table. That's why I'm determined to turn things around so the middle

class does well--the poor have a way up and the wealthy still does

well. We all do well. And there's more to do to make sure you're

feeling the benefits of all we're doing.

Americans pay more for prescription drugs than anywhere else. It's

wrong and I'm ending it. With a law I proposed and signed and not one

Republican voted for--we finally beat Big Pharma!

Instead of paying $400 a month for insulin--seniors with diabetes

only have to pay $35 a month! And now--I want to cap the cost of

insulin at $35 a month for every American who needs it!

For years--people have talked about it--but I finally got it done--

and gave Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for prescription

drugs--just like the VA does for our veterans. That's not just saving

seniors money. It's saving taxpayers money--cutting the Federal deficit

by $160 billion--because Medicare will no longer have to pay exorbitant

prices to Big Pharma.

This year--Medicare is negotiating lower prices for some of the

costliest drugs on the market that treat everything from heart disease

to arthritis. Now it's time to go further and give Medicare the power

to negotiate lower prices for 500 drugs over the next decade. That will

not only save lives--it will save taxpayers another $200 billion!

Starting next year--that same law caps total prescription drug costs

for seniors on Medicare at $2,000 a year--even for expensive cancer

drugs that can cost $10,000--$12,000--$15,000 a year. Now--I want to

cap prescription drug costs at $2,000 a year--for everyone!

Folks--the Affordable Care Act is still a very big deal. Over one

hundred million of you can no longer be denied health insurance because

of pre-existing conditions. But my predecessor--and many in this

chamber--want to take that protection away by repealing the Affordable

Care Act. I won't let that happen! We stopped you 50 times before--and

we will stop you again!

In fact--I am protecting it and expanding it. I enacted tax credits--

that save $800 per person--per year--reducing health care premiums for

millions of working families. Those tax credits expire next year. I

want to make those savings permanent!

Women are more than half of our population but research on women's

health has always been underfunded. That's why we're launching the

first-ever White House Initiative on Women's Health Research--led by

Jill--who is doing an incredible job as First Lady. Pass my plan for

$12 billion--to transform women's health research and benefit millions

of lives across America!

I know the cost of housing is so important to you. If inflation keeps

coming down--mortgage rates--will come down as well. But I'm not

waiting. I want to provide an annual tax credit that will give

Americans $400 a month--for the next 2 years--as mortgage rates come

down--to put toward their mortgage when they buy a first home or trade

up for a little more space.

My Administration is also eliminating title insurance fees for

federally backed mortgages. When you refinance your home--this can save

you $1,000 or more. For millions of renters--we're cracking down on big

landlords who break antitrust laws by price-fixing and driving up

rents. I've cut red tape--so more builders can get Federal financing--

which is already helping build a record 1.7 million housing units

nationwide. Now pass my plan to build and renovate 2 million affordable

homes--and bring those rents down!

To remain the strongest economy in the world--we need the best

education system in the world. I want to give every child a good start

by providing access to pre-school for 3- and 4-year-olds. Studies show

that children who go to pre-school are nearly 50 percent more likely to

finish high school and go on to earn a 2- or 4-year degree no matter

their background. I want to expand high-quality tutoring and summer

learning time and see to it that every child learns to read by third

grade.

I'm also connecting local businesses and high schools so students get

hands-on experience and a path to a good-paying job whether or not they

go to college. And I want to make college more affordable. Let's

continue increasing Pell Grants for working- and middle-class families

and increase our record investments in HBCUs and Minority-Serving

Institutions.

I fixed student loan programs--to reduce the burden of student debt

for nearly 4 million Americans--including

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nurses--firefighters--and others in public service--like Keenan Jones--

a public-school educator in Minnesota--who's here with us tonight. He's

educated hundreds of students so they can go to college--now he can

help his own daughter pay for college. Such relief is good for the

economy because folks are now able to buy a home--start a busines--even

start a family. While we're at it--I want to give public school

teachers a raise!

Now--let me speak to a question of fundamental fairness for all

Americans. I've been delivering real results in a fiscally responsible

way. I've already cut the Federal deficit by over one trillion dollars.

I signed a bipartisan budget deal that will cut another trillion

dollars over the next decade.

And now--it's my goal to cut the Federal deficit $3 trillion more by

making big corporations and the very wealthy finally pay their fair

share. Look--I'm a capitalist. If you want to make a million bucks--

great! Just pay your fair share in taxes. A fair tax code is how we

invest in the things that make a country great--health care--

education--defense--and more.

But here's the deal. The last administration enacted a $2 trillion

tax cut that overwhelmingly benefits the very wealthy and the biggest

corporations--and exploded the Federal deficit. They added more to the

national debt than in any Presidential term in American history. For

folks at home--does anybody really think the tax code is fair? Do you

really think the wealthy and big corporations need another $2 trillion

in tax breaks? I sure don't. I'm going to keep fighting like hell to

make it fair!

Under my plan--nobody earning less than $400,000 will pay an

additional penny in Federal taxes. Nobody. Not one penny. In fact--the

Child Tax Credit I passed during the pandemic--cut taxes for millions

of working families and cut child poverty in half. Restore the Child

Tax Credit--because no child should go hungry in this country!

The way to make the tax code fair is to make big corporations and the

very wealthy finally pay their share. In 2020--55 of the biggest

companies in America made $40 billion in profits and paid zero in

Federal income taxes. Not anymore!

Thanks to the law I wrote and signed--big companies now have to pay a

minimum of 15 percent. But that's still less than working people pay in

Federal taxes.

It's time to raise the corporate minimum tax to at least 21 percent

so every big corporation finally begins to pay their fair share. I also

want to end the tax breaks for Big Pharma--Big Oil--private jets--and

massive executive pay! End it now!

There are 1,000 billionaires in America. You know what the average

Federal tax rate for these billionaires is? 8.2 percent! That's far

less than the vast majority of Americans pay.

No billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than a teacher--a

sanitation worker--a nurse! That's why I've proposed a minimum tax of

25 percent for billionaires. Just 25 percent. That would raise $500

billion over the next 10 years.

Imagine what that could do for America. Imagine a future with

affordable child care--so millions of families can get the care they

need and still go to work and help grow the economy.

Imagine a future with paid leave--because no one should have to

choose between working and taking care of yourself or a sick family

member.

Imagine a future with home care and elder care--so seniors and people

living with disabilities can stay in their homes and family caregivers

get paid what they deserve!

Tonight--let's all agree once again to stand up for seniors! Many of

my Republican friends want to put Social Security on the chopping

block. If anyone here tries to cut Social Security or Medicare--or

raise the retirement age--I will stop them!

Working people who built this country pay more into Social Security

than millionaires and billionaires do. It's not fair. We have two ways

to go on Social Security. Republicans will cut Social Security and give

more tax cuts to the wealthy. I will protect and strengthen Social

Security--and make the wealthy pay their fair share!

Too many corporations raise their prices to pad their profits--

charging you more and more for less and less. That's why we're cracking

down on corporations that engage in price gouging or deceptive pricing

from food to health care to housing.

In fact--snack companies think you won't notice when they charge you

just as much for the same size bag--but with fewer chips in it. Pass

Senator Bob Casey's bill to put a stop to shrink-flation!

I'm also getting rid of junk fees--those hidden fees added at the end

of your bills without your knowledge. My Administration just

announced--we're cutting credit card late fees from $32 to just $8. The

banks and credit card companies don't like it. Why? I'm saving American

families $20 billion a year with all of the junk fees I'm eliminating.

And I'm not stopping there. My Administration has proposed rules to

make cable--travel--utilities--and online ticket sellers tell you the

total price upfront--so there are no surprises. It matters. And so does

this.

In November--my team began serious negotiations with a bipartisan

group of Senators. The result was a bipartisan bill with the toughest

set of border security reforms we've ever seen in this country.

That bipartisan deal would hire 1,500 more border security agents and

officers. 100 more immigration judges to help tackle a backload of 2

million cases. 4,300 more asylum officers--and new policies so they can

resolve cases in 6 months instead of 6 years. 100 more high-tech drug

detection machines to significantly increase the ability to screen and

stop vehicles from smuggling fentanyl into America.

This bill would save lives. And bring order to the border. It would

also give me--as President--new emergency authority to temporarily shut

down the border when the number of migrants at the border is

overwhelming.

The Border Patrol Union endorsed the bill. The Chamber of Commerce

endorsed the bill. I believe that given the opportunity--a majority of

the House and Senate would endorse it as well.

But unfortunately--politics have derailed it so far. I'm told my

predecessor called Republicans in Congress and demanded they block the

bill. He feels it would be a political win for me--and a political

loser for him.

It's not about him or me. It'd be a winner for America! My Republican

friends--you owe it to the American people to get this bill done. We

need to act. And if my predecessor is watching--instead of playing

politics and pressuring Members of Congress to block this bill--join me

in telling Congress to pass it!

We can do it together. But here's what I will not do. I will not

demonize immigrants--saying they ``poison the blood of our country''--

as he said in his own words. I will not separate families. I will not

ban people from America because of their faith.

Unlike my predecessor--on my first day in office I introduced a

comprehensive plan to fix our immigration system--secure the border--

and provide a pathway to citizenship for DREAMERS--and so much more.

Because--unlike my predecessor--I know who we are as Americans.

We are the only Nation in the world with a heart and soul--that draws

from old and new. Home to Native Americans whose ancestors have been

here for thousands of years. Home to people from every place on Earth.

Some came freely. Some chained by force. Some when famine struck--like

my ancestral family in Ireland. Some to flee persecution. Some to chase

dreams that are impossible anywhere but here in America.

That's America--where we all come from somewhere--but we are all

Americans. We can fight about the border--or we can fix it. I'm ready

to fix it. Send me the border bill now!

A transformational moment in our history happened 59 years ago

today--in Selma, Alabama. Hundreds of foot soldiers for justice marched

across the Edmund Pettus Bridge--named after a Grand Dragon of the

KKK--to claim their fundamental right to vote.

They were beaten--bloodied--and left for dead. Our late friend and

former colleague John Lewis was at the march. We miss him. Joining us

tonight are other marchers who were there--including Bettie Mae Fikes--

known as the--``Voice of Selma''. A daughter of gospel singers and

preachers--she sang songs of prayer and protest on that Bloody Sunday

to help

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shake the Nation's conscience. Five months later--the Voting Rights Act

was signed into law.

But 59 years later--there are forces taking us back in time. Voter

suppression. Election subversion. Unlimited dark money. Extreme

gerrymandering.

John Lewis was a great friend to many of us here. But if you truly

want to honor him and all the heroes who marched with him--then it's

time for more than just talk. Pass and send me the Freedom to Vote Act

and the John Lewis voting Rights Act!

And stop denying another core value of America--our diversity--across

American life. Banning books. It's wrong! Instead of erasing history--

let's make history!

I want to protect other fundamental rights! Pass the Equality Act--

and my message to transgender Americans--I have your back! Pass the PRO

Act for workers' rights! And raise the Federal minimum wage--because

every worker has the right to earn a decent living!

We are also making history by confronting the climate crisis--not

denying it. I'm taking the most significant action on climate ever in

the history of the world.

I am cutting our carbon emissions in half by 2030. Creating tens of

thousands of clean-energy jobs--like the IBEW workers building and

installing 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations. Conserving 30

percent of America's lands and waters by 2030. Taking historic action

on environmental justice for fence-line communities smothered by the

legacy of pollution.

And--patterned after the Peace Corps and Ameri Corps--I've launched a

Climate Corps to put 20,000 young people to work at the forefront of

our clean energy future. I'll triple that number this decade.

All Americans deserve the freedom to be safe. And America is safer

today than when I took office. The year before I took office--murders

went up 30 percent nationwide--the biggest increase in history.

That was then. Now--through my American Rescue Plan--which every

Republican voted against--I've made the largest investment in public

safety ever.

Last year--the murder rate saw the sharpest decrease in history. And

violent crime fell to one of the lowest levels in more than 50 years.

But we have more to do. Help cities and towns invest in more

community police officers--more mental health workers--and more

community violence intervention. Give communities the tools to crack

down on gun crime--retail crime--and carjacking. Keep building public

trust--as I've been doing by taking executive action on police reform

and calling for it to be the law of the land! Directing my Cabinet to

review the Federal classification of marijuana and expunging thousands

of convictions for mere possession--because no one should be jailed

just for using or possessing marijuana!

To take on domestic violence--I am ramping up Federal enforcement of

the Violence Against Women Act that I proudly wrote--so we can finally

end the scourge of violence against women in America!

And there's another kind of violence I want to stop. With us tonight

is Jazmin--whose 9-year-old sister Jackie was murdered with 21

classmates and teachers at her elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Soon after it happened, Jill and I went to Uvalde and spent hours

with the families. We heard their message--and so should everyone in

this chamber--do something.

I did do something by establishing the first-ever Office of Gun

Violence Prevention in the White House that Vice President Harris is

leading. Meanwhile--my predecessor told the NRA he's proud he did

nothing on guns when he was President. After another school shooting in

Iowa--he said we should just ``get over it.''

I say we must stop it. I'm proud we beat the NRA when I signed the

most significant gun safety law in nearly 30 years! Now we must beat

the NRA again! I'm demanding a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity

magazines! Pass universal background checks! None of this violates the

Second Amendment--or vilifies responsible gun owners.

As we manage challenges at home--we're also managing crises abroad--

including in the Middle East. I know the last 5 months have been gut-

wrenching for so many people--for the Israeli people--the Palestinian

people--and so many here in America.

This crisis began on October 7th with a massacre by the terrorist

group Hamas. 1,200 innocent people--women and girls--men and boys--

slaughtered--many enduring sexual violence. The deadliest day for the

Jewish people since the Holocaust. 250 hostages.

Here in the chamber tonight are American families whose loved ones

are still being held by Hamas. I pledge to all the families that we

will not rest until we bring their loved ones home. We will also work

around the clock to bring home Evan and Paul--Americans being unjustly

detained all around the world.

Israel has a right to go after Hamas. Hamas could end this conflict

today by releasing the hostages--laying down arms--and surrendering

those responsible for October 7th. Israel has an added burden because

Hamas hides and operates among the civilian population. But Israel also

has a fundamental responsibility to protect innocent civilians in Gaza.

This war has taken a greater toll on innocent civilians than all

previous wars in Gaza combined. More than 30,000 Palestinians have been

killed. Most of whom are not Hamas. Thousands and thousands are

innocent women and children. Children also orphaned. Nearly 2 million

more Palestinians under bombardment or displaced. Homes destroyed--

neighborhoods in rubble--cities in ruin. Families without food, water,

medicine. It's heartbreaking.

We've been working non-stop to establish an immediate ceasefire that

would last for at least 6 weeks. It would get the hostages home--ease

the intolerable humanitarian crisis--and build toward something more

enduring.

The United States has been leading international efforts to get more

humanitarian assistance into Gaza. Tonight--I'm directing the United

States military to lead an emergency mission to establish a temporary

pier in the Mediterranean--on the Gaza coast--that can receive large

ships carrying food--water--medicine--and temporary shelters. No U.S.

boots will be on the ground. This temporary pier would enable a massive

increase in the amount of humanitarian assistance getting into Gaza

every day.

But Israel must also do its part. Israel must allow more aid into

Gaza--and ensure that humanitarian workers aren't caught in the cross

fire. To the leadership of Israel, I say this--humanitarian assistance

cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip. Protecting

and saving innocent lives has to be a priority.

As we look to the future--the only real solution is a two-state

solution. I say this as a lifelong supporter of Israel--and the only

American President to visit Israel in wartime.

There is no other path that guarantees Israel's security--and

democracy. There is no other path that guarantees Palestinians can live

with peace and dignity. There is no other path that guarantees peace

between Israel and all of its Arab neighbors--including Saudi Arabia.

Creating stability in the Middle East also means containing the

threat posed by Iran. That's why I built a coalition of more than a

dozen countries to defend international shipping and freedom of

navigation in the Red Sea. I've ordered strikes to degrade Houthi

capabilities and defend United States Forces in the region. As

Commander in Chief--I will not hesitate, to direct further measures to

protect our people and military personnel.

For years--all I've heard from my Republican friends--and so many

others--is that China's on the rise--and America is falling behind.

They've got it backward. America is rising. We have the best economy in

the world. Since I've come to office--our GDP is up. And our trade

deficit with China is down to the lowest point in over a decade.

We're standing against China's unfair economic practices. And

standing up for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. I've

revitalized our partnerships and alliances in the Pacific. I've made

sure that the most advanced American technologies can't be used in

China's weapons.

Frankly--for all his tough talk on China--it never occurred to my

predecessor to do that. We want competition

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with China--but not conflict. And we are in a stronger position to win

the competition for the 2lst Century against China--or anyone else for

that matter.

Here at home--I've signed over 400 bipartisan bills. But there's more

to do to pass my Unity Agenda. Strengthen penalties on fentanyl

trafficking. Pass bipartisan privacy legislation to protect our

children online--harness the promise of A.I. and protect us from its

peril--ban A.I. voice impersonation--and more!

And keep our one truly sacred obligation: To train and equip those we

send into harm's way and care for them and their families when they

come home--and when they don't. That's why I signed the PACT Act--one

of the most significant laws ever--helping millions of veterans who

were exposed to toxins and who now are battling more than 100 cancers.

Many of them didn't come home. We owe them and their families.

And we owe it to ourselves to keep supporting our new health research

agency called ARPA-H--and remind us that we can do big things like end

cancer as we know it!

Let me close with this. I know I may not look like it--but I've been

around a while. And when you get to my age--certain things become

clearer than ever before.

I know the American story. Again and again--I've seen the contest

between competing forces in the battle for the soul of our Nation.

Between those who want to pull America back to the past and those who

want to move America into the future.

My lifetime has taught me to embrace freedom and democracy. A future

based on the core values that have defined America. Honesty. Decency.

Dignity. Equality. To respect everyone. To give everyone a fair shot.

To give hate no safe harbor.

Now--some other people my age see a different story. An American

story of resentment--revenge--and retribution.

That's not me. I was born amid World War II--when America stood for

freedom in the world. I grew up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and

Claymont, Delaware, among working people who built this country.

I watched in horror as two of my heroes--Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy--

were assassinated--and their legacies inspired me to pursue a career in

service. A public defender--county councilman--elected United States

Senator at 29--then Vice President to our first Black President--now

President with our first woman Vice President.

In my career--I've been told I'm too young--and I'm too old. Whether

young or old--I've always known what endures. Our North Star. The very

idea of America--that we are all created equal and deserve to be

treated equally throughout our lives.

We've never fully lived up to that idea--but we've never walked away

from it either. And I won't walk away from it now.

My fellow Americans--the issue facing our Nation isn't how old we

are--it's how old are our ideas? Hate--anger--revenge--retribution--are

among the oldest of ideas. But you can't lead America with ancient

ideas that only take us back.

To lead America--the land of possibilities--you need a vision for the

future of what America can and should be. Tonight--you've heard mine.

I see a future where we defend democracy--not diminish it. I see a

future where we restore the right to choose and protect other

freedoms--not take them away.

I see a future where the middle class finally has a fair shot--and

the wealthy finally have to pay their fair share in taxes.

I see a future where we save the planet from the climate crisis and

our country from gun violence.

Above all--I see a future for all Americans! I see a country for all

Americans! And I will always be a President for all Americans! Because

I believe in America! I believe in you--the American people. You're the

reason I've never been more optimistic about our future!

So let's build that future together! Let's remember who we are! We

are the United States of America. There is nothing beyond our capacity

when we act together!

May God bless you all.

May God protect our troops.

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

The White House, March 7, 2024.

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