

Lanae' Hale

"Ballistic Statues"

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This is the 37th time I have spoken to you from this office, where so many Decisions have been made that shaped the history of this Nation. Each time I have done so to discuss with you some matter that I believe affected the National interest.

In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I have always tried to Do what was best for the Nation. Throughout the long and difficult period Of Watergate, I have felt it was my duty to persevere, to make every Possible effort to complete the term of office to which you elected me.

In the past few days, however, it has become evident to me that I no longer Have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continuing That effort. As long as there was such a base, I felt strongly that it was Necessary to see the constitutional process through to it's conclusion, that To do otherwise would be unfaithful to the spirit of that deliberately Difficult process and a dangerously destabilizing precedent for the future.

But with the disappearance of that base, I now believe that the Constitutional purpose has been served, and there is no longer a need for The process to be prolonged.

I would have preferred to carry through to the finish whatever the personal Agony it would have involved, and my family unanimously urged me to do so. But the interests of the Nation must always come

before any personal
Considerations.

From the discussions I have had with Congressional
and other leaders, I
Have concluded that because of the Watergate matter I
might not have the
Support of the Congress that I would consider
necessary to back the very
Difficult decisions and carry out the duties of this office
in the way the
Interests of the Nation would require.

I have never been a quitter. To leave office before my
term is completed is
Abhorrent to every instinct in my body. But as
President, I must put the
Interest of America first. America needs a full-time
President and a
Full-time Congress, particularly at this time with
problems we face at home
And abroad.

To continue to fight through the months ahead for my
personal vindication
Would almost totally absorb the time and attention of
both the President
And the Congress in a period when our entire focus
should be on the great
Issues of peace abroad and prosperity without inflation
at home.

Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency effective at
noon tomorrow. Vice
President Ford will be sworn in as President at that hour
in this office.

As I recall the high hopes for America with which we
began this second
Term, I feel a great sadness that I will not be here in
this office working
On your behalf to achieve those hopes in the next 2 1/2
years. But in
Turning over direction of the Government to Vice
President Ford, I know, as
I told the Nation when I nominated him for that office
10 months ago, that
The leadership of America will be in good hands.

In passing this office to the Vice President, I also do so
with the

Profound sense of the weight of responsibility that will
fall on his
Shoulders tomorrow and, therefore, of the
understanding, the patience, the
Cooperation he will need from all Americans.

As he assumes that responsibility, he will deserve the
help and the support
Of all of us. As we look to the future, the first essential
is to begin
Healing the wounds of this Nation, to put the bitterness
and divisions of
The recent past behind us, and to rediscover those
shared ideals that lie
At the heart of our strength and unity as a great and as
a free people.

By taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened
the start of that
Process of healing which is so desperately needed in
America.

I regret deeply any injuries that may have been done in
the course of the
Events that led to this decision. I would say only that if
some of my
Judgments were wrong, and some were wrong, they
were made in what I
Believed at the time to be the best interest of the
Nation.

To those who have stood with me during these past
difficult months, to my
Family, my friends, to many others who joined in
supporting my cause
Because they believed it was right, I will be eternally
grateful for your
Support.

And to those who have not felt able to give me your
support, let me say I
Leave with no bitterness toward those who have
opposed me, because all of
Us, in the final analysis, have been concerned with the
good of the
Country, however our judgments might differ.

So, let us all now join together in affirming that
common commitment and in
Helping our new President succeed for the benefit of
all Americans.

I shall leave this office with regret at not completing my term, but with Gratitude for the privilege of serving as your President for the past 5 1/2 Years. These years have been a momentous time in the history of our Nation And the world. They have been a time of achievement in which we can all be Proud, achievements that represent the shared efforts of the Administration, the Congress, and the people.

But the challenges ahead are equally great, and they, too, will require the Support and the efforts of the Congress and the people working in Cooperation with the new Administration.

We have ended America's longest war, but in the work of securing a lasting Peace in the world, the goals ahead are even more far-reaching and more Difficult. We must complete a structure of peace so that it will be said of This generation, our generation of Americans, by the people of all nations, Not only that we ended one war but that we prevented future wars.

We have unlocked the doors that for a quarter of a century stood between The United States and the People's Republic of China.

We must now ensure that the one quarter of the world's people who live in The People's Republic of China will be and remain not our enemies but our Friends.

In the Middle East, 100 million people in the Arab countries, many of whom Have considered us their enemy for nearly 20 years, now look on us as their Friends. We must continue to build on that friendship so that peace can Settle at last over the Middle East and so that the cradle of civilization Will not become it's grave.

Together with the Soviet Union we have made the

crucial breakthroughs that
Have begun the process of limiting nuclear arms. But
we must set as our
Goal not just limiting but reducing and finally
destroying these terrible
Weapons so that they cannot destroy civilization and so
that the threat of
Nuclear war will no longer hang over the world and the
people.

We have opened the new relation with the Soviet Union.
We must continue to
Develop and expand that new relationship so that the
two strongest nations
Of the world will live together in cooperation rather
than confrontation.

Around the world, in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, in
the Middle East,
There are millions of people who live in terrible poverty,
even starvation.
We must keep as our goal turning away from
production for war and expanding
Production for peace so that people everywhere on this
earth can at last
Look forward in their children's time, if not in our own
time, to having
The necessities for a decent life.

Here in America, we are fortunate that most of our
people have not only the
Blessings of liberty but also the means to live full and
good and, by the
World's standards, even abundant lives. We must
press on, however, toward a
Goal of not only more and better jobs but of full
opportunity for every
American and of what we are striving so hard right now
to achieve,
Prosperity without inflation.

For more than a quarter of a century in public life I have
shared in the
Turbulent history of this era. I have fought for what I
believed in. I have
Tried to the best of my ability to discharge those duties
and meet those
Responsibilities that were entrusted to me.

Sometimes I have succeeded and sometimes I have
failed, but always I have

Taken heart from what Theodore Roosevelt once said
about the man in the
Arena, "whose face is marred by dust and sweat and
blood, who strives
Valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again
because there is not
Effort without error and shortcoming, but who does
actually strive to do
The deed, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great
devotions, who spends
Himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the
end the triumphs of
High achievements and who at the worst, if he fails, at
least fails while
Daring greatly."

I pledge to you tonight that as long as I have a breath
of life in my body,
I shall continue in that spirit. I shall continue to work for
the great
Causes to which I have been dedicated throughout my
years as a Congressman,
A Senator, a Vice President, and President, the cause
of peace not just for
America but among all nations, prosperity, justice, and
opportunity for all
Of our people.

There is one cause above all to which I have been
devoted and to which I
Shall always be devoted for as long as I live.

When I first took the oath of office as President 5 1/2
years ago, I made
This sacred commitment, to "consecrate my office, my
energies, and all the
Wisdom I can summon to the cause of peace among
nations."

I have done my very best in all the days since to be true
to that pledge.
As a result of these efforts, I am confident that the
world is a safer
Place today, not only for the people of America but for
the people of all
Nations, and that all of our children have a better
chance than before of
Living in peace rather than dying in war.

This, more than anything, is what I hoped to achieve
when I sought the

Presidency. This, more than anything, is what I hope
will be my legacy to
You, to our country, as I leave the Presidency.

To have served in this office is to have felt a very
personal sense of
Kinship with each and every American. In leaving it, I do
so with this
Prayer: May God's grace be with you in all the days
ahead.

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