

Remarks, in Paris, on the Death of President Ronald Reagan June 6, 2004

This is a sad hour in the life of America. A great American life has come to an end. I have just spoken to Nancy Reagan. On behalf of our whole Nation, Laura and I offered her and the Reagan family our prayers and our condolences.

Ronald Reagan won America's respect with his greatness and won its love with his goodness. He had the confidence that comes with conviction, the strength that comes with character, the grace that comes with humility, and the humor that comes with wisdom. He leaves behind a nation he restored and a world he helped save.

During the years of President Reagan, America laid to rest an era of division and self-doubt. And because of his leadership, the world laid to rest an era of fear and

tyranny. Now, in laying our leader to rest, we say thank you.

He always told us that for America, the best was yet to come. We comfort ourselves in the knowledge that this is true for him too. His work is done, and now a shining city awaits him.

May God bless Ronald Reagan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:41 a.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The related proclamation and Executive order of June 6 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. The related proclamation of July 2 is in the *Federal Register* at 69 FR 41179.

Remarks on the 60th Anniversary of D-Day in Colleville-sur-Mer, France June 6, 2004

Mr. President and Mrs. Chirac; Secretary Powell and Secretary Principi; General Myers; Members of the United States Congress; my fellow Americans; and ladies and gentlemen: It is a high honor to represent the American people here at Normandy on the 6th of June, 2004.

Twenty summers ago, another American President came here to Normandy to pay tribute to the men of D-day. He was a courageous man himself and a gallant leader in the cause of freedom. And today we honor the memory of Ronald Reagan.

Mr. President, thank you for your gracious welcome to the reunion of Allies. History reminds us that France was America's first friend in the world.

With us today are Americans who first saw this place at a distance, in the half-light of a Tuesday morning long ago. Time

and providence have brought them back to see once more the beaches and the cliffs, the crosses and the Stars of David. Generations to come will know what happened here, but these men heard the guns. Visitors will always pay respects at this cemetery, but these veterans come looking for a name and remembering faces and voices from a lifetime ago. Today we honor all the veterans of Normandy and all their comrades who never left.

On this day in 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt addressed the American people, not with a speech but with a prayer. He prayed that God would bless America's sons and "Lead them straight and true." He continued, "They will need Thy blessings. They will be sore tired, by night and by day, without rest—until victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame.

Men's souls will be shaken with the violences of war."

As Americans prayed along, more than 12,000 Allied aircraft and about 5,000 naval vessels were carrying out General Eisenhower's order of the day. In this massive undertaking, there was a plan for everything, except for failure. Eisenhower said, "This operation is planned as a victory, and that's the way it is going to be."

They had waited for one break in the weather, and then it came. Men were sent in by parachute and by glider. And on this side of the Channel, through binoculars and gunsights, German soldiers could see coming their way the greatest armada anyone had ever seen. In the lead were hundreds of landing craft carrying brave and frightened men.

Only the ones who made that crossing can know what it was like. They tell of the pitching deck, the whistles of shells from the battleships behind them, the white jets of water from enemy fire around them, and then the sound of bullets hitting the steel ramp that was about to fall. One GI later said, "As our boat touched sand and the ramp went down, I became a visitor to hell."

Hitler's Atlantic Wall was composed of mines and tank obstacles, trenches and jutting cliffs, gun emplacements and pillboxes, barbed wire, machinegun nests, and artillery trained accurately on the beach. In the first wave of the landing here at Omaha, one unit suffered 91 percent casualties. As General Omar Bradley later wrote, "Six hours after the landings, we held only 10 yards of beach." A British commando unit had half its men killed or wounded while taking the town of St. Aubin. A D-day veteran remembers, "The only thing that made me feel good was to look around and try to find somebody who looked more scared than I felt. That man was hard to find."

At all the beaches and landing grounds of D-day, men saw some images they would spend a lifetime preferring to forget. One

soldier carries the memory of three paratroopers dead and hanging from telephone poles "like a horrible crucifixion scene." All who fought saw images of pain and death, raw and relentless.

The men of D-day also witnessed scenes they would proudly and faithfully recount, scenes of daring and self-giving that went beyond anything the Army or the country could ask. They remember men like Technician Fifth Grade John Pinder, Jr., whose job was to deliver vital radio equipment to the beach. He was gravely wounded before he hit shore, and he kept going. He delivered the radio and, instead of taking cover, went back into the surf three more times to salvage equipment. Under constant enemy fire, this young man from Pennsylvania was shot twice again and died on the beach below us.

The ranks of the Allied Expeditionary Force were filled with men who did a specific assigned task, from clearing mines to unloading boats to scaling cliffs, whatever the danger, whatever the cost. And the sum of this duty was an unstoppable force. By the end of June 6th, 1944, more than 150,000 Allied soldiers had breached Fortress Europe.

When the news of D-day went out to the world, the world understood the immensity of the moment. The New York Daily News pulled its lead stories to print the Lord's Prayer on its front page. In Ottawa, the Canadian Parliament rose to sing "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise." Broadcasting from London, King George told his people, "This time the challenge is not to fight to survive but to fight to win." Broadcasting from Paris, Nazi authorities told citizens that anyone cooperating with the Allies would be shot, and across France, the Resistance defied those warnings.

Near the village of Colleville, a young woman on a bicycle raced to her parents' farmhouse. She was worried for their safety. Seeing the shattered windows and partially caved-in roof, Anne Marie Broeckx

called for her parents. As they came out of the damaged house, her father shouted, "My daughter, this is a great day for France."

As it turned out, it was a great day for Anne Marie as well. The liberating force of D-day included the young American soldier she would marry, an Army private who was fighting a half a mile away on Omaha Beach. It was another fine moment in Franco-American relations. [*Laughter*]

In Amsterdam, a 14-year-old girl heard the news of D-day over the radio in her attic hiding place. She wrote in her diary, "It still seems too wonderful, too much like a fairytale. The thought of friends in delivery fills us with confidence." Anne Frank even ventured to hope, "I may yet be able to go back to school in September or October."

That was not to be. The Nazis still had about 50 divisions and more than 800,000 soldiers in France alone. D-day-plus-1 and D-day-plus-2 and many months of fierce fighting lay ahead, from Arnhem to Hurtgen Forest to the Bulge.

Across Europe, Americans shared the battle with Britains, Canadians, Poles, Free French, and brave citizens from other lands taken back one by one from Nazi rule. In the trials and total sacrifice of the war, we became inseparable Allies. The nations that liberated a conquered Europe would stand together for the freedom of all of Europe. The nations that battled across the Continent would become trusted partners in the cause of peace. And our great Alliance of freedom is strong, and it is still needed today.

The generation we honor on this anniversary, all the men and women who labored and bled to save this continent, took a more practical view of the military mission. Americans wanted to fight and win and go home. And our GIs had a saying: "The only way home is through Berlin." That road to V-E Day was hard and long and traveled by weary and valiant men, and history will always record where that road

began. It began here, with the first footprints on the beaches of Normandy.

Twenty years after D-day, former President Eisenhower returned to this place and walked through these rows. He spoke of his joy of being a grandfather, and then he said, "When I look at all these graves, I think of the parents back in the States whose only son is buried here. Because of their sacrifice, they don't have the pleasure of grandchildren. Because of their sacrifice, my grandchildren are growing up in freedom."

The Supreme Commander knew where the victory was won and where the greatest debt was owed. Always our thoughts and hearts were turned to the sons of America who came here and now rest here. We think of them as you, our veterans, last saw them. We think of men not far from boys who found the courage to charge toward death and who often, when death came, were heard to call, "Mom," and "Mother, help me." We think of men in the promise years of life, loved and mourned and missed to this day.

Before the landing in Omaha, Sergeant Earl Parker of Bedford, Virginia, proudly passed around a picture of Danny, the newborn daughter he had never held. He told the fellows, "If I could see this daughter of mine, I wouldn't mind dying." Sergeant Parker is remembered here at the Garden of the Missing. And he is remembered back home by a woman in her sixties who proudly shows a picture of her handsome, smiling young dad.

All who are buried and named in this place are held in the loving memory of America. We pray in the peace of this cemetery that they have reached the far shore of God's mercy.

And we still look with pride on the men of D-day, on those who served and went on. It is a strange turn of history that called on young men from the prairie towns and city streets of America to cross an ocean and throw back the marching, mechanized

evils of fascism. And those young men did it. You did it.

That difficult summit was reached, then passed in 60 years of living. Now has come a time of reflection, with thoughts of another horizon and the hope of reunion with the boys you knew. I want each of you to understand, you will be honored ever and always by the country you served and by the nations you freed.

When the invasion was finally over and the guns were silent, this coast, we are told, was lined for miles with the belongings of the thousands who fell. There were lifebelts and canteens and socks and K-rations and helmets and diaries and snapshots. And there were Bibles, many Bibles, mixed with the wreckage of war. Our boys had carried in their pockets the book that brought into the world this message: Great-

er love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

America honors all the liberators who fought here in the noblest of causes, and America would do it again for our friends. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. at the World War II Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. In his remarks, he referred to President Jacques Chirac of France and his wife, Bernadette; and Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Jacques Chirac. The D-Day National Remembrance Day proclamation of June 5 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters at Sea Island, Georgia *June 8, 2004*

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome my friend and a strong leader, the Prime Minister of Japan, to Sea Island, Georgia. I've really been looking forward to this lunch because every time I meet with the Prime Minister, we have a constructive and important dialog.

The first thing, of course, I will do is congratulate him on the fact that the Japanese economy is improving under his leadership. We will talk about security issues. We'll talk about our mutual desire to fight terror. We will talk about North Korea. We will talk about Iraq, and in doing so, I know I'm talking with a leader I can trust and a leader who has got good, sound judgment.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Koizumi. First of all, I would like to express my condolences to the pass away of President Reagan. I would

like to pay respect to his numerous achievements, especially in strengthening our Japan-U.S. bilateral relationship.

Today I was very much looking forward to meeting with President Bush in order to discuss Iraq, North Korea, and those issues from a viewpoint of Japan-U.S. alliance in the global context. As the international community has to cooperate in order to reconstruct Iraq, I would like to pay respect to his strong leadership of President Bush in meeting this international coordination.

And also on the North Korean issue, President Bush has strongly supported the Japanese policy, and we would like to—Japan and the U.S. would like to coordinate together, consult together in the issue of North Korea in order to come up with a peace in Korean Peninsula.