

a message from the President whereby he notifies the Congress of the death of Ronald Reagan.

With Best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk of the House.

THE DEATH OF RONALD WILSON REAGAN, THE 40TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read:

To the Congress of the United States:

By this Message, I officially inform you of the death of Ronald Reagan, the fortieth President of the United States.

Ronald Reagan was a great leader and a good man. 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.

Through his leadership, spirit, and abiding faith in the American people, President Reagan gave our Nation a renewed optimism. With his courage and moral clarity, he enhanced America's security and advanced the spread of peace, liberty, and democracy to millions of people who had lived in darkness and oppression. As America's President, he helped change the world.

The sun has now set on Ronald Reagan's extraordinary American life. Just as he told us that our Nation's best days are yet to come, we know that the same is true for him.

GEORGE W. BUSH,
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 8, 2004.

EXPRESSING PROFOUND REGRET AND SORROW OF THE HOUSE ON THE DEATH OF RONALD WILSON REAGAN, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 663) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 663

Resolved, That the House of Representatives has learned with profound regret and sorrow of the death of Ronald Wilson Reagan, former President of the United States of America.

Resolved, That the House tenders its deep sympathy to the members of the family of the former President in their bereavement.

Resolved, That in recognition of the many virtues, public and private, of one who served with distinction as President, the Speaker shall appoint a committee of the House to join with such Members of the Senate as may be designated, to attend the funeral services of the former President.

Resolved, That the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House be authorized and directed to take such steps as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of these resolutions, and that the necessary expenses in connection

therewith be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy of the same to the family of the former President.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the former President.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, he was a gift to us: the healthy, hearty child handed down from God to John and Nelle Reagan in Tampico, Illinois, in 1911; the strong, athletic young man handed up from the bustling, laughing, big-shouldered Midwest of his youth; the underrated actor, the underrated labor leader, the underrated politician; and the visionary who foresaw America's victory in the Cold War and brought about that victory with wit, will, and undaunted valor for 8 heroic years.

Everything that America is, and everything that mankind can be, was in our 40th President: wisdom, mercy, humor, honesty, honor, and courage.

In an hour of doubt and fear, Ronald Reagan rose in the West, reminded his Nation of its unique mission in history, and with the help of a few million friends, worked the great miracle of the age. And he did it all smiling through the condescending insults of his critics, who, bless their hearts, could never quite get past his infuriating optimism.

They said Ronald Reagan could ruin the economy, but in fact he led it to heights of strength and prosperity never before witnessed in history.

They said Reagan would provoke our enemies to war, but in fact he bent our enemies to surrender without firing a single shot.

They said Ronald Reagan was an "amiable dunce," but in fact he was a fearless intellectual warrior, who marshaled words like soldiers to fight battles of ideas across a table or across a continent, and won.

Which is why his death, even after a decade of slow, agonizing decline, comes as a shock to all of us. For Ronald Reagan was not just a man. He was the personification of an idea. And not just an idea, but the idea: the irreducible American idea that this Nation, founded by a generation of heroes upon the self-evident truth of equality under God, is possessed of a special commission in the affairs of men.

According to Ronald Reagan, and according to Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Kennedy before him, America is not just another Nation. Instead, we are the last, best hope on Earth; the torch of freedom guiding mankind through the darkness; the living promise to all times and men that despite the relentless march of tyranny, the ultimate victory of liberty is assured.

And people wonder where he got his optimism. Of course Ronald Reagan was an optimist. He was an American.

In his life, the United States pulled the world through the Great Depression, two great world wars, and back from the brink of nuclear holocaust. And all the while, despite all the hardship, indeed perhaps because of it, America got stronger, richer, and, as far as he was concerned, better.

Reagan's confidence and optimism in his country were simply extensions of his confidence and optimism in his countrymen. He knew the things Americans had done, repelling the British, freeing the slaves, settling the West, liberating Europe, shooting the Moon, and simply could not see this arc of history as anything but the irresistible advance of freedom against oppression; or as Reagan sublimely put it: "We win, and they lose."

"We" are those who seek to defend human dignity, and "they" are those who seek to stifle it. This was not a mere political calculation. To Ronald Reagan, the innate dignity of man was a spark of the Divine, a light created in God's image that the darkness could not overcome. He saw it as his role in our Nation and America's role in the world, for that matter, to liberate people from the shackles of government, so that they might first enjoy their right of self-determination, and then share with their neighbors the blessings of faith, hope, and charity.

Reagan knew these were the virtues that built our Nation and remain the essential ingredients of American achievement, the tonic that has sustained the United States for more than 200 years, in Emerson's words, as "the country of tomorrow."

Reagan loved that quote, and the idea behind it; that even as we stand today as the oldest democracy on Earth, we remain the youthful champion of liberty and justice, best poised of all nations to lead mankind in the uncertain future. He believed it was true because he knew it had to be.

He knew that without the American Nation, that is without the American people and their steadfast adherence to the true and the good, the West could fail in the Cold War and fail the cause of freedom around the world. And so he never let failure become an option.

From the earliest days of his administration, President Reagan stood before the world and proclaimed the United States' commitment to freedom. He called the Soviet Union the Evil Empire and declared that "regimes planted by bayonets do not take root." He met with Pope John Paul II and pledged to assist and equip the Solidarity movement in Poland. He called the Soviet's bluff at Reykjavik and went to the Brandenburg Gate to challenge Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall."

Around the world, his words and deeds filtered down to the oppressed citizens behind the Iron Curtain who knew, for the first time, that the American President and his people were coming to the rescue; that the truth about the evils of Communism