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Good morning. Good morning. Well, you have had a rocking good time! And I have to say that I did enjoy President and Mrs. Scruggs dancing their way onto the stage but decided not to try to compete myself in doing so.

It's a pleasure to be here with you, the Lions Club, for your 94th Annual Convention. I want to thank International President Scruggs, Immediate Past International President Wirfs, Vice President Tam, Vice President Madden, the Board of Directors, the Lions and the Leos, ladies and gentlemen.

I am especially gratified to be in the presence not just of the Lions Club members and leaders from here in the United States, but from the many leaders that I have met from all over the world. This truly now a wonderful international organization and thank you for your work.

Now, I have been asked many times, "What is it like now that you are out of government?" Indeed I have been out of government for two and a half years now, and I can tell you there is one really big difference. I get up in the morning, I get my newspaper, I read it, I say, "Isn't that interesting!" and I go right on to whatever else I am doing because I no longer have to do anything about what's *in* the newspaper!

But indeed, indeed, I am, as you are, concerned about the state of our world and indeed about the United States of America, and I am often reminded in these difficult and troubling times that we have to remember that today's headlines and history's judgment are rarely the same.

When I was Secretary of State, I kept four portraits of Secretaries of State near me to remind me that today's headlines and history's judgment are rarely the same because you see if you are too concerned about today's headlines, then you will not take the difficult decisions that you have to make in order to deal with history's judgment.

Now, one of the Secretaries of State that I kept was Thomas Jefferson. OK, everybody kept Thomas Jefferson. He was the first Secretary of State. He was a Founding Father. He was, I thought, a slightly-overrated Founding Father. I myself prefer Alexander Hamilton, but that's another talk that we can have someday.

I also kept George Marshall, probably the greatest Secretary of State of all time, the man who single-handedly saved two million starving Europeans and ushered the United States into post-war leadership. I kept Dean Acheson. When Dean Acheson left the position of Secretary of State, the only thing that was on anyone's mind was who lost China. But today Dean Acheson is remembered as the founding father of NATO and the foundational institutions that led to the Cold War.

And I kept William Seward. Now, why would anybody keep William Seward? Well you see, William Seward bought Alaska. Now, when William Seward bought Alaska and he came back to testify before the Congress, his hearings were just brutal. They said, "How can you pay seven million dollars to the Tsar of Russia for that icebox?" In fact, it was called "Seward's Icebox" and "Seward's Folly."

But a few years ago I was talking with the man who was then the Russian defense minister, and he said, "Oh, Condi!" He said, "I was just in Alaska. It is so beautiful! It reminds me of Russia." I said, "Sergei, it used to *be* Russia!" We're awfully glad that Seward bought Alaska. Today's headlines and history's judgment are rarely the same and so, what do we need to do to ensure history's judgment?

Well, first and foremost, we have to defend ourselves, and that's not so easy. Every day, the terrorists plot and plan to try and hurt us again, and really the only reason that we can sleep securely here in the United States and, in fact, abroad is because we have vigilant intelligence officers and vigilant homeland security officers who try to keep us safe, but most importantly the United States of America is fortunate to have men and women in uniform who volunteer, they volunteer to defend us at the front lines of freedom and we owe them our eternal gratitude.

And so we have to defend ourselves and we have to advocate for democracy. You see, around the world men and women are claiming their right to freedom. There is a strong moral case for the proposition that every man and woman and child has the right to live in freedom, not in tyranny. Those of us who are fortunate enough to be able to say what we think, to be able to worship as we please, to be free of the knock of the secret police in the night and from the arbitrary power of the state, those of us who are fortunate enough to have those privileges owe it to the people on the other side of the divide to advocate for their freedom.

But I will tell you that there is not just a moral case for democracy, there is a practical case for democracy, too, and we are seeing it play out in the streets of Cairo and Tunis and across the world. We are seeing in the Middle East that

freedom is a universal value, that every man, woman, and child desires. It is indeed a demand of human dignity that people live in freedom, and that practical case is as follows: If men and women do not have a way to peacefully address their grievances to their government, then they have nothing left to them but the street.

I was in Cairo in June of 2005 and I gave a speech about the need for Egypt to lead the world to democracy, but before I gave that speech I went to see Hosni Mubarak, the president of Egypt, and I said to him, “Mr. President, you need to free your people before they are in the streets.” And he said to me, “Give whatever speech you want, because you don't know the Arab people. They need a tough hand, a strong hand and the only thing standing between the extremists and my people is me.”

Well, today we see the effects of those policies, because you see when men and women are denied freedom, something happens. One day there is something that I call the “Ceausescu moment.” Now, what is the “Ceausescu moment”?

Well, Nicolae Ceausescu was the leader, the dictator of Romania, and in 1989, with revolution spreading across Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Ceausescu went into a square where he was exhorting the Romanian people for what he had done for them, and all of a sudden one old lady yelled, “Liar!” And then ten people ... and then a thousand people. And now 100,000 people are yelling “liar” and all of a sudden Ceausescu realizes that something has gone wrong and he tries to turn to run to freedom, but the young military officer that was supposed to deliver him to freedom, delivers him instead to the revolution and he and his wife Elena are executed.

You see, what happens when fear breaks down, is that is all that is keeping the authoritarian in power is the fear of his people, and one day fear is gone. An old woman yells “liar.” A soldier refuses to fire. A tank turret is turned the other way. And then all that is left between the authoritarian and his people is anger. And anger is a terrible, terrible way to make reforms.

And so we will have difficult times ahead of us in the Middle East, but I can assure you this: Whatever voices we hear in democracy will be better than the voices of tyranny, because authoritarianism is not stable and it is not right.

But as I look around the world, and I see the rising voices, the faces of people insisting on their freedom, as I was fortunate enough to be the Soviet specialist at the end of the Cold War (and it really doesn't get much better than that), I got to be

there for the liberation of Europe and the unification of Germany and ultimately of the breakdown of the Soviet Union.

So freedom is a powerful, powerful force and we are watching across the world, but as I watch across the world I have to ask myself, "What of our own great democracy here in the United States of America?" Because without the strength of our democracy, without our confidence, without our optimism, it will be hard for us to lead.

And what of that democracy? We all know the picture in the economy and we all know that we need to put people back to work, we need to reaffirm private sector lead growth, we need to find a way to heal, but I want to talk to you about something that is much more the essence of who we are.

When you are Secretary of State, you get to go around the world, and you get to see what people like about the United States and what they don't. You get to see what they admire and respect and what they don't. And sometimes people are somewhat resentful of our military power although they're awfully glad that there are American men and women who volunteer to do those hard-line jobs at the front lines of freedom. And sometimes people are a bit resentful of our economic prowess and our cultural penetration, but there is one thing that people universally admire, and that is what I have called "The Great American National Myth." It is the log cabin.

It is our belief that it doesn't matter where you came from, it matters where you're going. It is the belief that you can come from humble circumstances and you can do great things. And that has led people to come here for generations from all over the world just to be a part of that experiment. Just to believe and do the hard work so that they can be a part of a society that believes it doesn't matter where you came from, it matters where you are going.

That has led the most ambitious people to come here and sometimes, sometimes it's been the guy that comes here to make \$5 not 50 cents, and sometimes it's been somebody like Sergey Brin, whose parents brought him here at seven years old from Russia and he founded Google. But they are cut of the same cloth. They are ambitious, risk-taking and they enrich us.

This is a country of immigrants. We have to reaffirm that we are a country of immigrants, because it is our immigrants that revitalize us. We are a nation that has brought the best and the brightest here to us.

But you know it's not enough for that American Dream to be available to those who come here. It has to be available to those who are here, too. And you know we all have our family heroes, and President Scruggs mentioned that I wrote a book about my family called *Extraordinary Ordinary People*.

Well, the Rices and the Rays were in many ways ordinary people. My mom was a schoolteacher. Now, to be sure, one of her first students at Fairfield Industrial High School in Alabama was Willy Mays, and I asked Willy Mays if he remembered my mother and he said, "Oh yes, I remember Miss Ray," which was her maiden name, he said, "because she told me, 'Son, you're gonna be a ball player and if you need to leave class a little bit early to go to practice, you go right ahead and do that.'"

Now, to be fair, that doesn't sound like my mother, but I believe Willy Mays. My mother was a schoolteacher. My dad was a high school guidance counselor, a football coach, a Presbyterian minister on weekends. He had a lot of jobs.

But my parents, these ordinary people, were extraordinary in their dedication to one strong belief: If you could get an education, you could do anything. And that belief came from deep inside our family, and one of my family heroes is my grandfather on my father's side. I love to tell that story.

His name was John Wesley Rice Sr. and John Wesley Rice Sr. was a sharecropper's son in Eutaw. That would be E-u-t-a-w, I'm not kidding, Alabama. Now when John Wesley Rice Sr. was about 19 years old, he decided to get "book learning." So he asked people where a colored man could go to college and they said he could go to little Stillman College, a Presbyterian school about 30 miles away, and so he saved up his cotton and he went off to college.

And after one year, they said, "So, how are you going to pay for your second year?" And he said he didn't have any more cotton, he didn't have any more money, and they said, "Well, you're out of luck." But, thinking quickly, he said, "So, how are those boys going to go to college?" And they said, "Well, you see, they have what's called a scholarship, and if you wanted to be a Presbyterian minister, then you could have a scholarship, too." My granddaddy said, "You know, that's exactly what I had in mind!" And my family has been Presbyterian and college-educated ever since!

But you see John Wesley Rice, Sr. knew something. He knew that education was going to transform him into something he might never have been. He that with that college education he was going to pass it on to my father and to my father's sister

and to generations to come.

But I want to ask you a question. In today's America when I can look at your zip code and I can tell whether or not you're going to get a good education, can I still say that it doesn't matter where you came from, it matters where you're going? I don't think so. The crisis in K-12 education in this country may indeed be our greatest national security threat.

It's a threat not just because we will have generations of people who are unemployable. We will have that. If you can't read by the time you're in third grade, you probably won't read. So we're losing a generation of kids not every 18 years, every 3 or 4.

And it is a tragedy that those unemployable people will be wards of the federal government, wards of welfare, wards of a handout.

But the greatest tragedy may be not that we will be unable to employ people, and by the way, defend ourselves. Did you know that only 30 percent of the people who take the basic skills test to get into the military can pass it? We have a crisis. But we will have a crisis also in who we are, because we're not held together by blood or ethnicity or nationality or religion, we're held together by that belief that it doesn't matter where you came from, it matters where you're going, and if that's ever not true for some of our people, then the fabric of society will come apart.

And so we have a crisis, but we have marvelous ways to address our problems, and today sitting here with you, the Lions Club, we have evidence of the strongest way that we address our problems.

There is a paradox about the United States of America. That paradox is that we are the most individualist people in the world. We think of ourselves as individuals. We think of the power of the individual. We think of the rights of the individual. But we are also one of the most communitarian societies in the world. It is in the United States of America that philanthropy finds its greatest expression.

I teach at Stanford University. Stanford University was once the farm of Senator and Mrs. Stanford. They gave it so that it could be a great university. Americans give of their resources and they give of their time to make life better for those who are weaker than themselves.

We have, in organizations like this, evidence of one of democracy's greatest

supporters: civil society. Organizations that are not government, organizations that are groups of private citizens who give of their time, their resources, who volunteer, who make certain that there is a “hand up” for the weakest and that they themselves are that hand. These Americans do it not for the government, not for the state, but for the good of the society and the community as a whole. It is a powerful force, and I am happy to say that that powerful force is spreading across the globe as well.

Not only are there Lions clubs across the world, but there are Salvation Armies across the world, and there are Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts across the world, and there are civic societies that are forming the foundation for strong democracies. Without volunteers, without philanthropy, without the care of civil society, democracy can't flourish. It can't flourish because it has to depend on the state to help those who need help.

And the state can do many things. It can write laws, it can write a check, but it can never, ever deliver compassion. Compassion has to be delivered by the people. And you know, in delivering compassion, in delivering care, in delivering the message, you are not alone. We do something not just for those we are helping, but we do something for ourselves, too.

There is no more damaging force in any society than a sense of entitlement. Entitlement means that you have lost control. What are they going to do for me? They don't do enough for me. Why haven't they given it to me?

I learned as a child in Birmingham, Alabama, in the most segregated city in America, from parents who believed it strongly that actually you may not be able to control your circumstances, but you can control your response to your circumstances. And if you are entitled you give up that control.

And oh, by the way, it's not long after entitlement shows up that his twin brother aggrievement shows up, and aggrievement is even more damaging, because then it is, “Poor me, why don't I have more? Why do they have so much?” And then the fabric just starts to break down.

And so you see, as beneficial as it is to have citizens who will reach out and lend a hand and help those who have less than they do, as beneficial as it is to those that are helped, it is even more beneficial to the society and to those who actually do help, because when you see the condition of somebody who has so much less, you can't help but say, “Thank God that I have what I have and how dare I complain.

Complaint and entitlement are disempowering of individuals, of societies, of democracies.

Because we are so vibrant in a place like this, because your good deeds reach out to the country and beyond to the shores of many, many lands, I find myself with great optimism that despite our problems, we will prevail. We will defend the country and we'll advocate for democracy, we'll declare ourselves again a country of immigrants. We will educate the least of our kids so that they can feel that transforming power of education and make us stronger, and I'm optimistic because so many times I have seen the impossible look inevitable in retrospect.

Back in 2006 when things were going pretty tough for the Bush administration, I read the biographies of the Founding Fathers. By all rights the United States of America should actually never have come into being. What, against the strongest military power of the time, with one third of George Washington's troops down with smallpox, the Founding Fathers squabbling among themselves, we did, we came into being, and somehow, despite the fact that we fought a Civil War, hundreds of thousands of Americans dead across the boundaries of North and South, but also across the bonds of brother and brother.

We emerged from that a more perfect union, and a little girl growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, the most segregated big city in America, where you couldn't have a hamburger at a lunch counter, where you couldn't go to a movie theater or stay in a hotel, but somehow her parents had her convinced that she may not be able to eat at that lunch counter, but she could be President of the United States if she wanted to be and oh, by the way, she became Secretary of State.

So many times the impossible seems inevitable. Look across the globe. Look at India, where people, a billion people who don't speak the same language, don't worship the same God, nonetheless somehow manage to have an election and change their government peacefully. Look across the globe where great democracies have risen, in Japan and in Korea, places that people once said had no tradition, but now they are vibrant democracies and friends of the United States. Look across the globe to Baghdad and Basra, to Kabul and Kandahar, still troubled as people search for their democratic future, but where at least girls go to school and somehow people know that they have control of their future.

And look across the globe. Look at Europe, a place where great wars were fought for centuries, but today it is whole and free and at peace, a Europe where in 1991 on Christmas night, the hammer and sickle came down in the Kremlin for the last

time. A country with 30,000 nuclear weapons and five million men under arms and it is no more. Look across the globe, look to the United States of America, and you will see so many times that the impossible became the inevitable.

And so I'm an optimist. We will find a way to deal with our problems. And this, the most vibrant of democracies, the United States of America, will find a way to re-engage a world that so needs that beacon of hope, and it will be a good thing that we do, because it is vitally important that the freest, the most compassionate and the most generous country on the face of the earth is also the most powerful.