My first thought is that of deep appreciation for the help and cooperation which the Congress has given me and my associates in the Executive branch. The past eight years have been without precedent in the history of our government. At no time during that period did the party in control of the Executive branch have what could be called a clear working majority in the Congress. For the last six years the Administration faced Congresses dominated by the opposition in both houses. Yet the business of the country went forward. We did not fall out into bitter, unreconcilable failures and rebuffs. We did not fall out into bitter, unreconcilable factions which in other nations have paralyzed the democratic process. Despite our differences, we worked together, and the business of the nation went forward, and the fact that it did so is in large measure a credit to the forbearance, and sense of duty displayed by the gentlemen of the Congress. For all this I am deeply grateful.

By January 20, my service in the Government of the United States will have come to a little less than half a century. To any mortal, this is a great period of time, and vast changes have been wrought upon the landscape of history—changes both internal and external which go to the very roots of society.

One of the deepest concerns of the framers of our constitution was to make sure that no military group arose to challenge the civil authority, and that no segment of industry be allowed to develop which was permanently and exclusively concerned with building the weapons of war.
For a hundred and sixty years, our military posture was characterized very
by a small regular establishment, bolstered in time of emergency
by large contingents of militia and reserves, and quickly reduced on the return of peace. There was no armament industry. The same companies which provided the plowshares of peace also built the army. The Army which I joined in 1911 numbered 84,000— one tenth its present strength.

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For many reasons, this all changed. A great and continuing threat to our security made it impossible for us to demobilize after the Korean War in the way we had previously done. In seven and a half years of nominal peace we have spent a sum substantially greater than the cost of defense before taxes World War II, and our budget annually exceeds the net income of all U.S. corporations. And the direct result of this continued high level of expenditures has been to create a permanent armaments industry, of vast proportions, where none had existed before.

The conjunction of a large and permanent military establishment and a large and permanent arms industry is something totally new in American experience. No thinking citizen would deny the need for such a commitment in perilous world; yet none can fail to read its grave implications. For this is power— economic and political power —with a direct and tangible interest in both national policy and national strategy. Billions of dollars in purchasing power, and the livelihood of millions of people, are directly involved. Its influence is felt in every city, in every state house; and by every responsible official in the Federal government. We can take comfort in the knowledge that none of our basic safeguards has given way. But let us take nothing for granted.

We shall need all the organizing genius we possess to mesh the huge
machinery of our defenses with our peace-oriented economy so that liberty
It requires
and security are both well served. / Constant vigilance, and a jealous
precaution against any move which would weaken the authority control
of civil authority over the military establishment. We must be especially
careful to avoid any measures which would enable any segment of this vast
military-industrial complex to sharpen the focus of its own power at the
expense of the sound balance which now prevails. The potential for disastrous
abuse of power in this area is great. Let us watch it carefully.