

**CLOSING REMARKS  
STANLEY A. WEISS  
BENS 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER  
WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 9, 2007**

WHAT A NIGHT!

WHAT LARRY *DIDN'T* TELL YOU WAS THAT FOR *MOST* OF THESE 25 YEARS, HE HAS BEEN THE SOURCE OF MANY OF THE NEW IDEAS AND INITIATIVES WE CELEBRATED TONIGHT. LARRY—FOR YOUR *WORDS*, BUT EVEN MORE, FOR YOUR COUNSEL AND DIRECTION—THANK YOU.

AND *THANK YOU*... I GUESS... FOR SO *KINDLY* SHARING THAT OLD STORY OF MY *FIRST* TERRIBLE SPEECH. ALTHOUGH—FOR MY *LAST* SPEECH TONIGHT—YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SET THE AUDIENCE'S EXPECTATIONS QUITE *SO LOW*.

THERE'S SO MANY PEOPLE TO THANK...

- SECRETARY ENGLAND, FOR THIS TREMENDOUS HONOR, AND FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE YOU PROVIDE OUR NATION;
- SIDNEY, FOR WORKING YOUR MAGIC AT SO MANY BENS DINNERS AND BOARD MEETINGS OVER SO MANY YEARS;
- CHUCK, FOR LEADING BENS TO A MUCH HIGHER AND MORE INFLUENTIAL LEVEL;
- TOASTERS, FOR TELLING SUCH BEAUTIFUL LIES;
- FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE COME FROM AROUND THE WORLD;
- BENS MEMBERS;
- MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT DIGNITARIES;
- *WAIT A MINUTE, THIS ISN'T THE OSCARS!*

GEORGE WASHINGTON. DWIGHT EISENHOWER. GENERAL MACARTHUR. SO MANY FAMOUS FAREWELLS.

SO I TRIED TO COME UP WITH ONE MYSELF...

WE MUST GUARD AGAINST "THE UNWARRANTED INFLUENCE... OF A HOLLYWOOD-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX."

OR... "OLD BENS CHAIRMEN NEVER DIE... THEY JUST KEEP FUNDRAISING."

IN FACT, I PLAN TO REMAIN VERY ACTIVE IN BENS FOR ANOTHER 25 YEARS. I FEEL LIKE LARRY KING... I'VE ASKED 40,000 BUSINESS EXECUTIVES FOR MONEY... *AND I'M JUST GETTIN' STARTED!*

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AS I REFLECT ON THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY... AS I LOOK ACROSS THIS AUDIENCE TONIGHT... I SEE WHAT I IMAGINED BACK IN 1982: THE SPIRIT OF BENS—BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY

COMING *TOGETHER* TO SOLVE *COMMON PROBLEMS* WITH *COMMON SENSE*—REPRESENTING AN IDEAL THAT OUR COUNTRY SURE COULD USE MORE OF TODAY.

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DURING MY LIFE I’VE EXPERIENCED MUCH OF WHAT’S BEEN CALLED “THE AMERICAN CENTURY”...

DURING THE DEPRESSION, WATCHING MY FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS IN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA STRUGGLE JUST TO MAKE ENDS MEET...

DURING WORLD WAR II, SEEING AMERICANS SACRIFICE AND RALLY TOGETHER TO *LITERALLY* SAVE THE WORLD FROM TRYANNY...

DURING THE POST-WAR BOOM THAT MADE AMERICA A GLOBAL SUPERPOWER, TRYING TO *STRIKE IT RICH*...BUT OFTEN, *STRIKING OUT*...AND THEN, THE OCCASIONAL HOMERUN...

DURING THE 1968 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION IN CHICAGO, BEING *CLUBBED BY A POLICEMAN* AS POLITICAL DIFFERENCES TURNED TO VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS—AMERICA AT ITS *WORST*...

DURING MANY BENS TRIPS AROUND THE WORLD, MEETING OUR MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN, LIKE THESE HEROES WE CELEBRATED TONIGHT—AMERICA AT ITS *BEST*.

ALONG THE WAY I’VE LEARNED SOME SIMPLE TRUTHS.

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OUR COMMON DEBT.

IF WE ARE A SUCCESS IN LIFE, IT IS BECAUSE WE ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE IN A NATION THAT GIVES US THE CHANCE TO LIVE OUT OUR DREAMS. AND SO TO THIS NATION, EACH OF US OWES A PROFOUND DEBT.

AND IF *BENS* HAS BEEN A SUCCESS, IT IS BECAUSE OF SO MANY OF *YOU*, TO WHOM *I* AM INDEBTED...ESPECIALLY TO MY WIFE, LISA.

OUR COMMON DUTY.

IT’S NOT A FADED VIRTUE FROM ANOTHER TIME. AND IT’S NOT JUST FOR AMERICANS WHO WEAR THE UNIFORM. DUTY IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF A FREE SOCIETY. AND ALTHOUGH WE CAN NEVER *FULLY* REPAY THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE WE OWE OUR COUNTRY, EVERY CITIZEN HAS A DUTY TO TRY.

AS WE’VE ALWAYS SAID AT BENS: “OUR NATION’S SECURITY IS *EVERYBODY’S* BUSINESS”—A SPIRIT EMBODIED BY OUR *NEXT* CHAIRMAN, AN ENTREPRENEUR OF PASSION AND PATRIOTISM.

WHEN I ASKED JOE ROBERT WHY HE WANTED TO TAKE ON THIS RESPONSIBILITY, HE TOLD ME: “SINCE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR, EVERY MALE IN MY FAMILY—INCLUDING MY SON, WHO SERVED AS A MARINE IN IRAQ—HAS SERVED IN THE MILITARY... *EXCEPT ME*. BENS IS A WAY THAT I CAN SERVE MY COUNTRY.”

JOE, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SENSE OF DUTY...WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND.

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OUR SHARED SERVICE.

OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM FULFILL THIS DUTY TO COUNTRY EVERY DAY. BUT *WE* FAIL TO DO OUR DUTY AS A NATION WHEN JUST ONE PERCENT OF US—THE MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES—BEAR 100 PERCENT OF THAT BURDEN.

YES, 99 PERCENT OF US ARE TOLD, “WE ARE AT WAR, BUT PLEASE DON’T INCONVENIENCE YOURSELF. HAVE A GOOD DAY.” BUT WE ARE AT WAR—WITH RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISTS WHO SEEK TO STRIKE US WHERE WE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY—SO ALL AMERICANS SHOULD ENLIST IN THIS EFFORT.

TONIGHT, I’D LIKE TO THINK THAT OUR MILITARY IS A *LITTLE STRONGER*...AND OUR NATION A *LITTLE SAFER*...BECAUSE OF THE WORK BENS HAS DONE.

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AND FINALLY, OUR SHARED MISSION.

IN THIS NEW WORLD OF NEW THREATS, GOVERNMENT ALONE CANNOT PROTECT US. BUSINESS ALONE CANNOT PROTECT US. REPUBLICANS ALONE CANNOT PROTECT US. DEMOCRATS ALONE CANNOT PROTECT US.

THE SECURITY WE WANT FOR OUR COUNTRY...THE IDEALS THAT AMERICA REPRESENTS TO THE WORLD...WILL COME APART...UNLESS WE COME TOGETHER.

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SINCE THIS IS THE EISENHOWER DINNER, ALLOW ME TO CLOSE WITH A STORY IKE USED TO TELL. IT WAS 1953 AND A NEW FEDERAL WORKER HAD JUST ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON. RIDING DOWNTOWN IN A TAXI, HE PASSED THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND NOTICED THESE WORDS INSCRIBED ON THE BUILDING: “WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE.”

NOW, HE’D HEARD THAT WASHINGTON CABBIES WERE FAMOUS FOR KNOWING EVERYTHING. SO HE ASKED THE DRIVER WHAT THE WORDS MEANT. “OH, THAT,” SAID THE DRIVER, “THAT’S JUST BUREAUCRAT TALK. WHAT IT REALLY MEANS IS... ‘*YOU AIN’T SEEN NOTHIN’ YET.*’”

TONIGHT, BECAUSE OF THE SPIRIT IN THIS ROOM...THE SENSE OF DEBT AND DUTY TO COUNTRY...THE SHARED SERVICE AND MISSION TO OUR SECURITY...I AM CONFIDENT THAT...

FOR BUSINESS EXECUTIVES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY...

AND FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA...

“YOU AIN’T SEEN NOTHIN’ YET!”

GOOD NIGHT. GOOD LUCK.

AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.