

Gentlefolk of the Commons and My Lords and My Ladies of this House:

We are met together at a most interesting period. The situation of the principal powers of Europe and Asia are singular and portentous. Connected with none by treaties and with all by commerce, no important event there can be indifferent to us. Such circumstances call with peculiar importunity for a disposition to unite in all those measures on which the honor, safety, and prosperity of our country depend and for the exertions of wisdom and firmness.

Government has a role, and an important role. Yet, too much government crowds out initiative and hard work, private charity and the private economy. **Our governing vision says government should be active, but limited; engaged, but not overbearing.**

Our citizens feel they've lost control of even the most basic decisions made about the essential services of Government. This must be rectified. **This Government will continue to return power and responsibility to the local Baronies where appropriate.**

Because one of the deepest values of our country is compassion, we must never turn away from any citizen who feels isolated from the opportunities of America. Our government will continue to support faith-based and community groups that bring hope to harsh places. I believe that we have an obligation to those in need, but that **government should not be the provider of first resort for things that the private sector can produce better.**

Because one of the main sources of our national unity is our belief in equal justice, we need to make sure Floridians of all races and backgrounds have confidence in the system that provides justice. **In British West Florida we must make doubly sure no person is held to account for a crime he or she did not commit.**

We can make Floridians proud of their government. Together we can share in the credit of making our country more prosperous and generous and just, and earn from our conscience and from our fellow citizens the highest possible praise: Well done, good and faithful servants.

This time of adversity offers a unique moment of opportunity, a moment we must seize to change our culture. Through the gathering momentum of millions of acts of service and decency and kindness, I know: We can overcome evil with greater good.

In all such measures you may rely on my zealous and hearty concurrence.

God save the Queen, and Bless this people.

Efforts have been made to highlight those portions of the Duke's speech that were spoken with added emphasis.