

bodies the experience of all Americans. But I think the flag has a special significance to Marylanders because of a particular flag about which a particular song was written. In the minds and hearts of Americans, the Star-Spangled Banner means both a flag and a song — our National Anthem. Last year, you will recall, we celebrated in Maryland the 150th anniversary of the writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and in the observance we featured both the flag and the song. It was a year of tribute to the Americans who fought at North Point and Fort McHenry and saved our infant Republic from threatened destruction. It was the courage of these men, struggling to save this city, and with it this nation, that inspired the lawyer-poet Francis Scott Key to pen the verse that gave the name to our flag and our national song — “The Star Spangled Banner.”

There are those who will say that the world has changed substantially since the bombardment of Fort McHenry and the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner, and of course they are right. But the principles for which Armstead and Smith, and those who were with them, fought in 1814 have not substantially changed. As a matter of fact, they are at issue today — in Viet Nam, in West Berlin, in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. In his famous speech to the citizens of West Berlin, our late President John F. Kennedy said, and I quote:

“I hear it said that West Berlin is militarily untenable — and so was Bastogne and so, in fact, was Stalingrad. Any dangerous spot is tenable if men — brave men — will make it so.”

The British thought Fort McHenry was militarily untenable. So did many of the people of Baltimore. That Francis Scott Key was fearful that it was untenable is evident from the first line of his poem. Throughout the night he had expected that at the early light of dawn he would not see the starry banner. But men — brave men— made the dangerous spot tenable and preserved us a Nation.

I am happy to have the privilege to join with you here today to pay homage to a flag that embodies the lives of all Americans and symbolizes the lofty principles for which they have stood. The tattered banner that Francis Scott Key saw on that morning of September 14, 1814 was more than a mere flag. It was the very essence of our freedom.

During this Flag Week, let us resolve that the Star-Spangled Banner will continue to wave, and that the principles for which it stands will endure throughout the ages.