Little is more extraordinary than the decision to migrate, little more extraordinary than the accumulation of emotions and thoughts which finally leads a family to say farewell to a community where it has lived for centuries, to abandon old ties and familiar landmarks, and to sail across dark seas to a strange land. Today, when mass communications tell one part of the world all about another, it is relatively easy to understand how poverty or tyranny might compel people to exchange an old nation for a new one. But centuries ago migration was a leap into the unknown. It was an enormous intellectual and emotional commitment. The forces that moved our forebears to their great decision—the decision to leave their homes and begin an adventure filled with incalculable uncertainty,
risk and hardship—must have been of overpowering proportions.

Oscar Handlin, in his book *The Uprooted*, describes the experience of the immigrants:

The crossing immediately subjected the emigrant to a succession of shattering shocks and decisively conditioned the life of every man that survived it. This was the initial contact with life as it was to be. For many peasants it was the first time away from home, away from the safety of the circumscribed little villages in which they had passed all their years. Now they would learn to have dealings with people essentially different from themselves. Now they would collide with unaccustomed problems, learn to understand alien ways and alien languages, manage to survive in a grossly foreign environment.

Initially, they had to save up money for passage. Then they had to say good-bye to cherished relatives and friends, whom they could expect never to see again. They started their journey by traveling from their villages to the ports of embarkation. Some walked; the luckier trundled their few possessions into carts which they sold before boarding ship. Some paused along the road to work in the fields in order to eat. Before they even reached the ports of embarkation, they were subject to illness, accidents, storm and snow, even to attacks by outlaws.

After arriving at the ports, they often had to wait days, weeks, sometimes months, while they bargained with captains or agents for passage. Meanwhile, they crowded into cheap lodginghouses near the quays, sleeping on straw in small, dark rooms, sometimes as many as forty in a room twelve by fifteen feet.
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Until the middle of the nineteenth century the immigrants traveled in sailing vessels. The average trip from Liverpool to New York took forty days; but any estimate of time was hazardous, for the ship was subject to winds, tides, primitive navigation, unskilled seamanship and the whim of the captain. A good size for the tiny craft of those days was three hundred tons, and each one was crowded with anywhere from four hundred to a thousand passengers.

For the immigrants, their shipboard world was the steerage, that confined space below deck, usually about seventy-five feet long and twenty-five feet wide. In many vessels no one over five and a half feet tall could stand upright. Here they lived their days and nights, receiving their daily ration of vinegar-flavored water and trying to eke out sustenance from whatever provisions they had brought along. When their food ran out, they were often at the mercy of extortionate captains.

They huddled in their hard, cramped bunks, freezing when the hatches were open, stifling when they were closed. The only light came from a dim, swaying lantern. Night and day were indistinguishable. But they were ever aware of the treacherous winds and waves, the scampering of rats and the splash of burials. Diseases—cholera, yellow fever, smallpox and dysentery—took their toll. One in ten failed to survive the crossing.

Eventually the journey came to an end. The travelers saw the coast of America with mixed feelings of relief, excitement, trepidation and anxiety. For now, uprooted from old patterns of life, they found themselves, in Handlin's phrase, "in a prolonged state of crisis—
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危机，在某种意义上，他们是，而且仍然是，未定型的。”他们到达新土地时精疲力竭，由于缺乏休息、恶劣的食物、监禁和适应新环境的紧张。但他们不能停下来恢复体力。他们没有储备的食物或金钱；他们必须继续前进直到找到工作。这在他们已经不堪重负的时候意味着新的压力。

可能有那么多原因来到美国，就像有那么多来的人。这是一个非常个人的决定。然而，可以说，三大势力——宗教迫害、政治压迫和经济困难——提供了移民来美国的首要动机。他们在自己的方式上，响应了《独立宣言》的承诺：“生活、自由和追求幸福。”

对宗教自由的追求，从普利茅斯的开始到现代。例如，在我们自己的时代，希特勒的德国和共产主义帝国的反犹和反基督教迫害，将人们从他们的家中赶出来寻求在美国的庇护。并非所有人都立即找到了他们所寻求的东西。马萨诸塞湾殖民地的清教徒，谁迫使罗杰·威廉斯和安妮·哈钦森进入荒野，几乎像英格兰的盎格鲁人对待他们一样不宽容不同的信念。少数宗教教派，从贵格会和震教通过天主教和犹太人到摩门教和耶稣的门徒。

对自由的追求已经带来了人们对美国的追求，从新英格兰的清教徒到现代。在我们自己的时代，以希特勒的德国和共产主义帝国的反犹和反基督教迫害为例，把人们从他们的家园赶出来寻求在美国的庇护。并非所有人都立即找到了他们所寻求的东西。马萨诸塞湾殖民地的清教徒，谁迫使罗杰·威廉斯和安妮·哈钦森进入荒野，几乎像英格兰的盎格鲁人对待他们一样不宽容不同的信念。少数宗教教派，从贵格会和震教通过天主教和犹太人到摩门教和耶稣的门徒。
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Witnesses, have at various times suffered both discrimination and hostility in the United States.

But the very diversity of religious belief has made for religious toleration. In demanding freedom for itself, each sect had increasingly to permit freedom for others. The insistence of each successive wave of immigrants upon its right to practice its religion helped make freedom of worship a central part of the American creed. People who gambled their lives on the right to believe in their own God would not lightly surrender that right in a new society.

The second great force behind immigration has been political oppression. America has always been a refuge from tyranny. As a nation conceived in liberty, it has held out to the world the promise of respect for the rights of man. Every time a revolution has failed in Europe, every time a nation has succumbed to tyranny, men and women who love freedom have assembled their families and their belongings and set sail across the seas. Nor has this process come to an end in our own day. The Russian Revolution, the terrors of Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy, the Communist suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and the cruel measures of the Castro regime in Cuba—all have brought new thousands seeking sanctuary in the United States.

The economic factor has been more complex than the religious and political factors. From the very beginning, some have come to America in search of riches, some in flight from poverty and some because they were bought and sold and had no choice.

And the various reasons have intertwined. Thus
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some early arrivals were lured to these shores by dreams of amassing great wealth, like the Spanish conquistadors in Mexico and Peru. These adventurers, expecting quick profits in gold, soon found that real wealth lay in such crops as tobacco and cotton. As they built up the plantation economy in states like Virginia and the Carolinas, they needed cheap labor. So they began to import indentured servants from England, men and women who agreed to labor a term of years in exchange for eventual freedom, and slaves from Africa.

The process of industrialization in America increased the demand for cheap labor, and chaotic economic conditions in Europe increased the supply. If some immigrants continued to believe that the streets of New York were paved with gold, more were driven by the hunger and hardship of their native lands. The Irish potato famine of 1845 brought almost a million people to America in five years. American manufacturers advertised in European newspapers, offering to pay the passage of any man willing to come to America to work for them.

The immigrants who came for economic reasons contributed to the strength of the new society in several ways. Those who came from countries with advanced political and economic institutions brought with them faith in those institutions and experience in making them work. They also brought technical and managerial skills which contributed greatly to economic growth in the new land. Above all, they helped give America the extraordinary social mobility which is the essence of an open society.
In the community he had left, the immigrant usually had a fixed place. He would carry on his father's craft or trade; he would farm his father's land, or that small portion of it that was left to him after it was divided with his brothers. Only with the most exceptional talent and enterprise could he break out of the mold in which life had cast him. There was no such mold for him in the New World. Once having broken with the past, except for sentimental ties and cultural inheritance, he had to rely on his own abilities. It was the future and not the past to which he was compelled to address himself. Except for the Negro slave, he could go anywhere and do anything his talents permitted. A sprawling continent lay before him, and he had only to weld it together by canals, by railroads and by roads. If he failed to achieve the dream for himself, he could still retain it for his children.

This has been the foundation of American inventiveness and ingenuity, of the multiplicity of new enterprises, and of the success in achieving the highest standard of living anywhere in the world.

These were the major forces that triggered this massive migration. Every immigrant served to reinforce and strengthen those elements in American society that had attracted him in the first place. The motives of some were commonplace. The motives of others were noble. Taken together they add up to the strengths and weaknesses of America.

The wisest Americans have always understood the significance of the immigrant. Among the "long train of abuses and usurpations" that impelled the framers
of the Declaration of Independence to the fateful step of separation was the charge that the British monarch had restricted immigration: "He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that reason obstructing the Laws for the Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands."
I am transmitting herewith, for the consideration of the Congress, legislation revising and modernizing our immigration laws. More than a decade has elapsed since the last substantial amendment to these laws. I believe there exists a compelling need for the Congress to re-examine and make certain changes in these laws.

The most urgent and fundamental reform I am recommending relates to the national origins system of selecting immigrants. Since 1924 it has been used to determine the
number of quota immigrants permitted to enter the United States each year. Accordingly, although the legislation I am transmitting deals with many problems which require remedial action, it concentrates attention primarily upon revision of our quota immigration system. The enactment of this legislation will not resolve all of our important problems in the field of immigration law. It will, however, provide a sound basis upon which we can build in developing an immigration law that serves the national interest and reflects in every detail the principles of equality and human dignity to which our nation subscribes.

ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON NATIONAL ORIGINS

Present legislation establishes a system of annual quotas to govern immigration from each country. Under this system, 156,700 quota immigrants are permitted to enter the United States each year. The system is based upon the national origins of the population of the United States in 1920. The use of the year 1920 is arbitrary. It rests upon the fact that this system was introduced in 1924 and the last prior census was in 1920. The use of a national-origins system is without basis in either logic or reason. It neither satisfies a national need nor accomplishes an international purpose. In an age of interdependence among nations, such a system is an anachronism, for it discriminates among applicants for admission into the United States on the basis of accident of birth.

Because of the composition of our population in 1920, the system is heavily weighted in favor of immigration from northern Europe and severely limits immigration from southern and eastern Europe and from other parts of the world. An American citizen with a Greek father or mother must wait at least eighteen months to bring his
parents here to join him. A citizen whose married son or
daughter, or brother or sister, is Italian cannot obtain a
quota number for an even longer time. Meanwhile, many
thousands of quota numbers are wasted because they are
not wanted or needed by nationals of the countries to
which they are assigned.

I recommend that there be substituted for the national­
origins system a formula governing immigration to the
United States which takes into account (1) the skills of
the immigrant and their relationship to our need; (2)
the family relationship between immigrants and persons
already here, so that the reuniting of families is encour­
aged and (3) the priority of registration. Present law
grants a preference to immigrants with special skills, edu­
cation or training. It also grants a preference to various
relatives of United States citizens and lawfully resident
aliens. But it does so only within a national-origins quota.
It should be modified so that those with the greatest ability
to add to the national welfare, no matter where they were
born, are granted the highest priority. The next priority
should go to those who seek to be reunited with their rela­
tives. As between applicants with equal claims the earliest
registrants should be the first admitted.

Many problems of fairness and foreign policy are in­
volved in replacing a system so long entrenched. The
national-origins system has produced large backlogs of
applications in some countries, and too rapid a change
might, in a system of limited immigration, so drastically
curtail immigration in some countries the only effect might
be to shift the unfairness from one group of nations to
another. A reasonable time to adjust to any new system
must be provided if individual hardships upon persons who
were relying on the present system are to be avoided. In
addition, any new system must have sufficient flexibility to
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allow adjustments to be made when it appears that immigrants from nations closely allied to the United States will be unduly restricted in their freedom to furnish the new seed population that has so long been a source of strength to our nation.

PROPOSAL IN DETAIL

Accordingly, I recommend:

First, that existing quotas be reduced gradually, at the rate of 20 percent a year. The quota numbers released each year would be placed in a quota reserve pool, to be distributed on the new basis.

Second, that natives of no one country receive over 10 percent of the total quota numbers authorized in any one year. This will insure that the pattern of immigration is not distorted by excessive demand from any one country.

Third, that the President be authorized, after receiving recommendations from a seven-man Immigration Board, to reserve up to 50 percent of the unallocated quota numbers for issuance to persons disadvantaged by the change in the quota system, and up to 20 percent to refugees whose sudden dislocation requires special treatment. The Immigration Board will be composed of two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and three members appointed by the President. In addition to its responsibility for formulating recommendations regarding the use of the quota reserve pool, the Board will make a continuous study of our immigration policy.

ALL QUOTA NUMBERS USED

But it is not alone the initial assignment of quota numbers which is arbitrary and unjust; additional inequity re-
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sults from the failure of the law to permit full utilization of the authorized quota numbers. While American citizens wait for years for their relatives to receive a quota, approximately sixty thousand quota numbers are wasted each year because the countries to which they are assigned have far more numbers allocated to them than they have emigrants seeking to move to the United States. There is no way at present in which these numbers can be reassigned to nations where immense backlogs of applicants for admission to the United States have accumulated. I recommend that this deficiency in the law be corrected.

ASIA-PACIFIC TRIANGLE

A special discriminatory formula is now used to regulate the immigration of persons who are attributable by their ancestry to an area called the Asia-Pacific triangle. This area embraces all countries from Pakistan to Japan and the Pacific islands north of Australia and New Zealand. Usually, the quota under which a prospective immigrant must enter is determined by his place of birth. However, if as much as one-half of an immigrant’s ancestors came from nations in the Asia-Pacific triangle, he must rely upon the small quota assigned to the country of his ancestry, regardless of where he was born. This provision of our law should be repealed.

OTHER PROVISIONS

In order to remove other existing barriers to the reuniting of families, I recommend two additional improvements in the law.

First, parents of American citizens, who now have a preferred quota status, should be accorded nonquota status.

Second, parents of aliens resident in the United States,
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who now have no preference, should be accorded a preference, after skilled specialists and other relatives of citizens and alien residents.

These changes will have little effect on the number of immigrants admitted. They will have a major effect upon the individual hardships many of our citizens and residents now face in being separated from their parents.

In addition, I recommend the following changes in the law in order to correct certain deficiencies and improve its general application.

1. Changes in the Preference Structure. At present, the procedure under which specially skilled or trained workers are permitted to enter this country too often prevents talented people from applying for visas to enter the United States. It often deprives us of immigrants who would be helpful to our economy and our culture. This procedure should be liberalized so that highly trained or skilled persons may obtain a preference without requiring that they secure employment here before emigrating. In addition, I recommend that a special preference be accorded workers with lesser skills who can fill specific needs in short supply in this country.

2. Nonquota status for natives of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago should be granted. Under existing law, no numerical limitation is imposed upon the number of immigrants coming from Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the Canal Zone or any independent country in Central or South America. But the language of the statute restricts this privilege to persons born in countries in the Caribbean area which gained their independence prior to the date of the last major amendment to the immigration and nationality statutes, in 1952. This accidental discrimination against the newly independent nations of the Western Hemisphere should be corrected.
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3. Persons afflicted with mental health problems should be admitted provided certain standards are met. Today, any person afflicted with a mental disease or mental defect, psychotic personality, or epilepsy, and any person who has suffered an attack of mental illness, can enter this country only if a private bill is enacted for his benefit. Families which are able and willing to care for a mentally ill child or parent are often forced to choose between living in the United States and leaving their loved ones behind and not living in the United States but being able to see and care for their loved ones. Mental illness is not incurable. It should be treated like other illnesses. I recommend that the Attorney General, at his discretion and under proper safeguards, be authorized to waive those provisions of the law which prohibit the admission to the United States of persons with mental problems when they are close relatives of United States citizens and lawfully resident aliens.

4. The Secretary of State should be authorized, in his discretion, to require re-registration of certain quota immigrant visa applicants and to regulate the time of payment of visa fees. This authority would bring registration lists up to date, terminate the priority of applicants who have refused to accept a visa, and end the problem of "insurance" registrations by persons who have no present intention to emigrate. Registration figures for oversubscribed quota areas are now inaccurate because there exists no way of determining whether registrants have died, have emigrated to other countries, or for some other reason no longer want to emigrate to the United States. These problems are particularly acute in heavily oversubscribed areas.

CONCLUSION

As I have already indicated the measures I have outlined will not solve all the problems of immigration. Many
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of them will require additional legislation; some cannot be solved by any one country. But the legislation I am submitting will insure that progress will continue to be made toward our ideals and toward the realization of humanitarian objectives. The measures I have recommended will help eliminate discrimination between peoples and nations on a basis that is unrelated to any contribution that immigrants can make and is inconsistent with our traditions of welcome. Our investment in new citizens has always been a valuable source of our strength.