I am aware of the tremendous honor being shown us by this joint session of congress. When I think of ~~the~~ past sessions that involved heads of state and not all persons, I can only be most humble to know you consider our efforts in the same class.

This has been a great experience for us all and I am glad to see that pride in our country and its accomplishments are not a thing of the past. I still get a hard-to-define feeling inside, when the flag goes by and I know most of you do, too. May we never lose that feeling.

The Flight of Friendship 7 on 20 Feb. involved much more than not only one man in the spacecraft in orbit. (Introduce Annie & folks)

Beyond that many thousands of people were involved. Contractors and subcontractors in many different fields, civilian, military and civil service, all joining their effort toward a goal. ~~The mood could not have been possible without the support of the American people as expressed through the Congress~~

There was, of course, the vision from your congressional area of responsibility that established this national program.

To even attempt to give proper credit to individuals on this team effort would be impossible. Let me say I have never seen a more sincere, dedicated, and hard working group. ~~in my life.~~

~~I can be the pardon of honor, but I~~

From your vision to conception of this orbital flight has been just over 3-years. This, in itself, eloquently states the case for the hard work and dedication ~~that has gone into this project one way. Now anything I can say of Bob Gilruth, Project Director, and the whole Mercury team.~~ of all members of the Mercury team. This has not been just another job. It has been a dedicated labor such as I have rarely seen. It has been a crowning of American effort with many different disciplines cooperating toward a common goal.

This ~~experiment~~ is just a beginning, a successful experiment. We are, in effect, just gathering the building blocks for more ambitious, and more productive portions of the project. As expected, not everything worked perfectly ~~on the~~ on this flight. Changes will be necessary and these will be tried out on subsequent flights, some this year. We hope to have

accomplished 18 orbit, 24 hour ~~at least one full day~~ missions by the end of this year. Beyond that we look forward to Gemini, a two man orbital vehicle with greatly increased capability for advanced experiments. There will be additional rendezvous experiments in space, technical and scientific observation missions, Apollo orbital, circumlunar and lunar landing flight. ~~[illegible] flights will~~

What did we learn from Friendship 7 that helps us attain these future goals? Specific items have been covered briefly in the news reports. ★ Further information from Friendship 7 is still being reduced and many more items will be added to our knowledge attained. ~~Number one~~ however is that the spacecraft and system design concepts are sound. ~~As of now, the most important thing is that~~ We proved also that man can operate intelligently ~~satisfactorily~~ in space and adapt rapidly to this new environment. ~~[illegible]~~ Zero G for this length of time, appears to be no problem. ~~[illegible]~~ Lack of gravity is a fascinating thing. Objects can be parked in mid-air. As an example, at one time during the flight, I was using a hand held camera. Another system needed attention, so it seemed quite natural to let go of the camera, perform the system function on the spacecraft, then return to use of the camera. ~~Adapting to this new environment seemed~~

★ It is of more than passing interest to all of us that information attained from these flights is readily available to all nations of the world. The launches are conducted openly and with the news media of the world in attendance, data is released as it is available and evaluated. This is certainly in sharp contrast with similar programs conducted elsewhere in the world and raises the peaceful intent of our program above suspicion.

There is little sensation of speed although the craft is travelling at 5 miles per second a speed ~~that I too find difficult to comprehend.~~

In addition to closely monitoring on-board systems, we were able to make numerous outside observations. ~~And The view~~

The view from ~~up there~~ that altitude defies description. The horizon colors are brilliant and sunsets are beautiful. Its hard to beat a day when you are permitted the luxury of seeing four sunsets.

Where does this leave us now? I feel we are on the brink of an era of expansion of knowledge about ourselves and our surroundings that is ~~also~~ beyond comprehension. Our efforts are but the building blocks. Questions are sometimes raised regarding immediate payoffs from our efforts. For money spent, what are we getting back? The major benefits are probably unknown today but exploration and the search for knowledge have always paid off far more in the long run than anything we expect at the outset. Experimenters with mold little dreamed of the effect their discovery of penicillin would have. The story has been told of Disraeli, Prime Min. of England, visiting the laboratory of Faraday, one of the early experimenters with basic electrical principles. After viewing various demonstrations of electrical phenomena, Disraeli asked, "But of what possible use is it?". Faraday replied, "Mister Prime Minister, what good is a baby?" That is our stage of ~~How [illegible]~~ development. We are just probing the surface and with a potential that makes the

Today I am the person being honored. My part in the program is known, but there are so many others who also played major roles ~~by their efforts~~ that it is impossible to think of the flight ~~accomplishment~~ as anything but a team accomplishment. On behalf of myself and the members of the Mercury team, accept our most heartfelt thanks for these honors.

of the greatest advancements in man's knowledge of his surroundings that have ever been made.

There are benefits to science across the board. ~~Knowledge of plastics has been advanced by heat shield work.~~ Any major effort such as this results in research by so many differing specialties that it hard to even envision the benefits that will accrue in many fields.

Knowledge begets knowledge. The more I see, the more impressed I am not with how much we know, but of how tremendous the areas are that are unknown.

Exploration, knowledge, and achievement are good only in so far as we apply them to our future actions. Progress never stops. We are on the verge of a great era. ~~I am but a figurehead, however, for all the~~ [illegible] We are proud to be privileged to represent our country in this effort. As our knowledge increases, ~~and our search for information and truth,~~ may God grant us the wisdom and guidance to use it wisely.