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From the White House:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2009

Remarks of President Barack Obama – As Prepared for Delivery

National Academy of Sciences

Washington, DC

April 27, 2009

It is my privilege to address the distinguished members of the National Academy of Sciences, as well as the leaders of the National Academy of Engineering and the Institute of Medicine who have gathered here this morning.

I'd like to begin today with a story of a previous visitor who also addressed this august body.

In April of 1921, Albert Einstein visited the United States for the first time. His international celebrity was growing as scientists around the world began to understand and accept the vast implications of his theories of special and general relativity. He attended this annual meeting, and after sitting through a series of long speeches by others, he reportedly said, "I have just got a new theory of eternity." I'll do my best to heed this cautionary tale.

The very founding of this institution stands as a testament to the restless curiosity and boundless hope so essential not just to the scientific enterprise, but to this experiment we call America.

A few months after a devastating defeat at Fredericksburg, before Gettysburg would be won and Richmond would fall, before the fate of the Union would be at all certain, President Lincoln signed into law an act creating the National Academy of Sciences.

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