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REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

CALIFORNIA STATE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

THE LE BARON HOTEL, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

AT 2:10 P.M., SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 1974



For Release at 2:10 p.m., Saturday

The Democrats have announced their intention to turn the coming November election into a national referendum on President Nixon. Their strategy is to avoid direct confrontation with individual Republican candidates and to run against the President although his name is not on the ballot.

Let us resolve here today not to let the Democrats set the rules and call the signals.

The issue is not R.M.N. but is as simple as A.B.C.

It is whether Republicans can mobilize a return to the A.B.C.'s of politics on a personal and precinct level.

It is whether we can ring doorbells, organize meetings, and stand at factory gates.

It is whether we can explain to all fair-minded Americans why there is a world of difference between Republican principles and the philosophy of those who run the Democratic Party.

Let us answer the challenge in terms of our concern for our country, in terms of confronting problems, in terms of convincing voters why it is in their best interest to vote Republican. I am convinced

that any intelligent and open-minded voter will welcome an articulate explanation of why it is in his personal interest to elect Republicans to local, state, and national offices.

Our task is very difficult. The Democrats are seeking maximum exploitation on a national basis of what may be the greatest controversy ever generated about a President of the United States. That problem is being resolved by the Congress in accordance with our Constitution. If we permit ourselves to become endlessly embroiled in that issue, we will forfeit elections from coast to coast -- elections that should be decided on the individual merit of candidates and the basic differences between the two parties.

The Republican Party must openly and honestly offer its programs to voters in a spirit of fair play to all concerned. I am disgusted with political trickery of the CREEP variety or any other CREEPS who are looking for an easy but unethical or illegal road to victory. We must never again permit CREEP or any CREEPY successor organization to spoil the good name of the Grand Old Party.

As a Republican, I am naturally concerned when political prophets say we may lose as many as 100 seats in the House. As an American Vice President, whose duties lie in both the executive and legislative branches, I am even more deeply troubled over whether this is to remain a government of checks and balances. I am convinced that the survival of a viable two-party system was never more imperative.

I will join this year with all outstanding Republican personalities such as your dynamic Governor, Ronald Reagan, Gov. Connally, Gov. Rockefeller, and Sen. Percy to address groups throughout our Nation promoting the election of our candidates. We will rally Republicans and all those willing to listen. This year, 1974 - not 1976 - is the year of decision for the survival of the two-party system in the United States.

If the Democrats make a net gain of 100 seats in the House, we will be back where we were in 1936. It means that the Democrats would have 346 House members while Republicans hold only 87. It means a "veto-proof" 94th Congress next January -- a Congress that would be running the country through a lopsided power over the ability to legislate and spend. It means a Congress so deficient in internal balance through a huge influx of freshmen Democrats that a mandate will be seen for a new wave of inflationary spending and far-out social experimentation.

I recall all too vividly what happened in 1964. The Democrats gained 40 House seats -- giving them a total of 295 against 140 Republicans. We had two years of unsound legislation rammed through Congress by a vigorous President and a rubber-stamp House and Senate. The Pandora's box of inflation was opened. Interest rates began to climb. The value of the dollar began to decline. And we have been trying ever since to repair the damage.

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We recovered some ground -- but not enough -- in 1966.

We found good candidates. We eliminated party differences. We raised money. We went out and worked. And we made a net gain of 47 Republicans in the House. To the extent that this righted the imbalance, we prevented legislation that could have been even less desirable than some adopted.

Our Party faced adversity before. We are strong because we have sound principles that spring from American tradition and common sense. We have good people. And the ability to come back fighting.

I do not minimize the losses we have suffered in special elections of recent months. We have been taught a lesson. It is clear that we must resolve to stay in the game and put a winning team in the field. This cannot be done by pointing fingers and wringing hands. It can be done by organizing, unifying, mobilizing, and working together to draw a line of resolve -- a line that proclaims we will be pushed no further.

Let us begin by rallying around the outstanding candidates our party offers here in California and by explaining the true difference between Republicans and Democrats.

It is not enough to say that Congress is sitting on vital legislation or that the Democrats are waiting until next January when they feel they will no longer have to make compromises. We must pinpoint, for instance, the energy bills essential if we are to become self-sufficient. Out of 17 important energy measures, only one -- the Alaskan pipeline -- was approved.

Republicans can tell the people that even on the Alaskan pipeline bill, which provides more gasoline for California, there were negative votes by eight House members of the California Democratic delegation.

Let us look at some other areas where the President has tried to move us forward. We believe very strongly in local control and individual rights. We are seeking legislation for better schools, better communities, better transportation, better health. Our idea is to move decision-making processes away from the categorical generalizations of Washington bureaucrats back to neighborhoods and communities directly concerned.

Our philosophy of revenue sharing gives people more say in the use of their tax dollars. We can be proud of our domestic program. And we can warn that Democrats have all too often imposed such unfair and impractical policies as forced busing of school children and other measures that helped to deteriorate the quality of education and American life in general.

We must do more than cite the Democrats' deficiencies. We must also show what we are doing creatively to solve the energy problem and to deal with inflation. It is up to us to offer remedies for rising food prices. And it is up to us to explain how food production is being increased by Administration policies.

New Federalism means power at home -- not power on the Potomac. This is consistent with the national desire to renew our communities, to redeem America, to restore the quality of American life. It is a solid base from which to campaign.

I do not subscribe to those who peddle despair and defeat. I am proud to be a Republican -- and to be involved in this Administration. But that is not to say we are perfect. We must correct what is wrong, strengthen what is right, and move forward rather than backward. That will facilitate the modern domestic program essential to solve Federal, State, and local problems in the next decade.

American free enterprise and individual incentive have made the United States the greatest Nation on earth. Let us never forget the Republican component of American greatness.

This Administration has extricated us from the war in Vietnam. We achieved peace and liberated our brave men who suffered so long as prisoners of war. We are moving forward toward new and peaceful relationships with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

By a masterpiece of diplomacy, we separated the armies of Egypt and Israel, averting a catastrophe that could have inflamed the whole world. We are now using our good offices to bring about a disengagement of Syrian and Israeli forces.

Just as we have progressed in our dealings with other nations, we will maintain economic growth while winding down inflation. We will surmount the short-term impact of the energy crisis and achieve self-sufficiency for our long-term needs.

We will reduce Federal control and open a new era of achievement in State and local governments. The body politic of America is healthy. It contains the strength to heal itself and to find renewed vigor and energy. At the very moment that we are addressing ourselves to the grave problem involving the President, we are moving ahead both at home and abroad to assure a better life for all Americans.

We are entering, in this last quarter of the 20th century, an era of peace and progress. To have peace, we must be capable of defense to deter aggression. This is why we must not elect men to Congress who would invite war by undermining our capacity for self-defense.

Since becoming the first "instant" Vice President, I have done a lot of traveling. I have been to Massachusetts where the Republican Party was torn by dissension in 1972. It was inspiring to see Republicans of varying convictions dining together and conducting a unity march across the state.

Shortly thereafter, I went to New Jersey where Republicans suffered defeat last year in State elections. Now they have reunified and are planning to win in 1974.

I was in South Carolina -- a relatively new area for Republicans. We have two Republican Congressmen from South Carolina and are determined to elect two more in November.

In Colorado, the Republicans are full of energy and determination.

The Republicans throughout the United States are rallying. They are ready to win in November. As we organize and mobilize money and talent, we need to remember that we have the best candidates and the best policies.

I am not downhearted over the fate of the Republican Party -- or the fate of America. Adversity has sharpened our resolve. The time has come to advance, not retreat. The time has come to be more aggressive in selling our wares. The time has come to encourage others to believe in us -- because we have found new faith in ourselves.

I thank you.