

The original documents are located in Box 26, folder “First Debate, 9/23/76: Closing Statements” of the Michael Raoul-Duval Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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HIGH PRIORITY

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debate*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 21, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Richard A. Cheney
FROM: Dave Gergen
SUBJECT: Closing Statement



Jamie Humes has come up with a very good, emotional closing statement that I think ought to be considered. I find the closing Eisenhower anecdote particularly appealing.

cc: Mike Duval ✓
Foster Channock

Attachment

DRAFT CLOSING STATEMENT

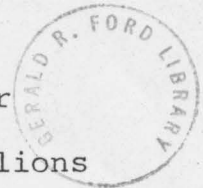
I did not seek this job. I was happy as a Congressional Leader in the House. I didn't seek to be Vice President. When I was called, I met my responsibility. I had no desire to be President, but when the constitutional crisis developed, I again faced my responsibility.

Taking office at a difficult time, I have tried to do my level best as your President.

I think you will agree times are happier today. You saw it last 4th of July when millions of people of all ages and races spontaneously came out without riot or incident to show the love of their country. More than a voyage to Moon or Mars, the world saw a country that had regained her faith as guardian of democratic hopes and dreams.

No, I don't claim that this was due to any dramatic program of mine. You the people reached back into the roots of your past and rekindled the hopes for the future.

No President by enacting a program or signing a bill lifts the spirit of a nation. He can only



hope by charting the right legislative course and setting the proper Presidential tone, he helps renew confidence and restore the faith.

This I have tried to do. I have tried to heal the wounds of War and Watergate. I have tried to check the inflation and revive the economy.

But there is much yet to be done, and I want the chance to finish the job. To do that I need your support, I also need your prayers.

Shortly after the war, my good friend General Eisenhower bought a farm in Gettysburg. At the closing, a clerk in the courthouse said, "General, why when you live in New York did you buy this farm in Pennsylvania?" And General Eisenhower replied, "I want to take of piece of land and return it to God better than I found it."

With God's help I ask that you join me in making this land a brighter and happier place to live and work and dream.





Two years ago, the Nation was in a state of turmoil, Americans had almost lost their historic respect for the Presidency, our economy had been through a severe battering by inflation and was on the brink of slipping into the severest recession since the 1930's.

Regrettably, too often over the previous years our leaders had bombarded us with hollow rhetoric, with great promises and massive federal programs to solve the Nation's ills. Every problem had to be confronted with a new federal solution with great promise and fancy titles. Too often we found that they had over promised to the American people and this has lowered the respect of both Congress and the Executive branch.

I set as my first goal the restoration of integrity in the Presidency and a restoration of confidence in government. It was essential that we move away from our emphasis on finding quick cures for long term problems. As a result of this patchwork approach to domestic problems, the patient's condition deteriorated because we were taking the wrong medicine.

In January 1975, I set into motion a series of proposals and I've followed these basic principles during the past year and a half.

In the economic area it's very clear that while we are still far from our goal of restoring full employment and a vital economy,



we have made very significant progress. The Nation has been healing during the past two years. We have reduced inflation and restored confidence so that both consumers and businessmen invest in the future of the country. We have added almost 4 million jobs during the past year and a half and all evidence points to continued improvement throughout the rest of this year and into the future. I am convinced that if we stay on the steady policies which I've initiated, we will reach our goal, which is a job for every American who wants one.

It is important to look ahead to the next four years and begin to focus on the types of problems which are still likely to persist in overall economy. While restored economic health will enable us to bring inflation fully under control, reach an adequate level of capital investment and continued job creation, there remain problems which economists call structural. Eventhough the economy will have been restored to health, we will find that there will exist continued pockets of unacceptably high levels of unemployment. We are likely to find that teenage unemployment, especially amongst black teenagers, will continue too high and we must now start to focus on programs which we will need then ~~while~~ broad economic recovery policy initiated

restores a much higher level of overall employment and prosperity.

Accordingly, I will propose to the next Congress that they strongly focus upon a proposal which I believe was given short shrift in the political atmosphere of the last year, namely, the proposal to encourage capital investment and job creating plant investment in areas of exceptionally high unemployment.



SUGGESTED CLOSING REMARKS



When I became President of the United States in August of 1974, my fellow Americans, you know as well as I the difficult situation we inherited. The economy was sliding into the worst recession in forty years. The nation was in the grip of the worst political scandal in a century. We were a divided, embittered people.

Every decision I have made was done so in the hope to lead this country out of the dark night into the sunshine of the Bicentennial Year of our Independence---a year when the spirit of America is visbly re-awakening, when the old pride in our nation is visibly returning.

What I want now is your confidence, your vote, to lead us into a better future, and way of life for our children.

Unlike Mr. Carter, I will not slash seven billion dollars out of your defense budget because that is the kind of false and foolish savings which would risk the security of this country, and indeed the peace itself. This is the first election in 16 years in which Americans have not been fighting and dying somewhere, and I do not intend to risk that.

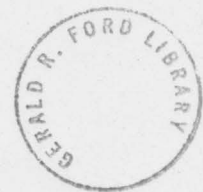
Also, I am not going to go to Congress and demand all the new agencies, new bureaucrats, new spending schemes that are called for in the platform of Mr. Carter. For three reasons. The American people can't afford them. They are the same old failed solutions of the sixties. And because this

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nation does not need more and bigger Government in Washington---
it needs better Government and less Government interference
in the lives of our people.

The decision this November is whether in her Third
Century, America will travel the road of freedom---being led
by free men and free institutions. Or whether we wish to
follow the path of so many of our European friends and opt for
more and more Government. It is not too stark I believe to
say that the choice this country is rapidly coming to face is
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