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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
LINCOLN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

3:18 P.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, Charley Thone, distinguished public officials, candidates, all of you wonderful, wonderful people from Lincoln, the State of Nebraska, and elsewhere.

I am just tremendously impressed with the size of the crowd, the enthusiasm and, naturally, I am deeply appreciative of the kind, kind comments made concerning my wife, Betty. She is doing great and it is the prayers and the good wishes of literally thousands and thousands of people, not only in America but elsewhere, that have made her recovery faster and better. And I thank you on behalf of her.

This has been a wonderful day and we are three-quarters of the way through it. I started in Kansas City this morning with a breakfast. We had a wonderful meeting in South Dakota.

We are here in Lincoln. We are going to Indianapolis for a dinner and a meeting tonight, and back to Washington and the White House this evening.

Now I don't know what my scheduler wants for Christmas, but let me tell you I am going to give him, a map so that he understands what travel means.

I am delighted to see Bob Devaney here. You know we Michiganders think we have some impact on the great success that Bob has brought to the State of Nebraska, the success that the cornhuskers have had. And I watched, as a has-been athlete and a one-time football player, some of the great games Nebraska has played under his leadership.

Let me just say this -- and I pass no judgment because there is nothing I dislike more than grand-standing quarterbacks or Monday morning experts, and I don't know what happened over there the other day in the last few minutes of that ballgame -- but I have learned, as an ex-football player and an ex-football coach a long time back when the ball was round, that there is a great relationship between football or athletic competition and coaching and politics.

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(OVER)

And if I might just say a word to Bob in that regard, I found that both as far as coaches and athletic directors are concerned, and politicians, that one day they will name a street after you and the next day they will chase you down it. (Laughter)

As Charley Thone said in the introduction, I was born in Nebraska, in Omaha just a few miles down the pike here, and I am proud of it, and I am delighted to be back here.

Now I left when I was about 18 months old, and depending on how you put it, I was either exported or deported, but I am glad to be back under any circumstances.

It is wonderful to see Charley Thone here. I understand Charley's campaign theme is "Thone works." Well, I can attest to that. For quite a few years I was the Minority Leader in the House of Representatives while Charley was in the House, and I can say without any hesitation, qualification, or reservation, that Charley Thone was one of the hardest, most conscientious, most dedicated workers in the House of Representatives. And if I was in this district, Democrat or Republican, I would vote for Charley Thone.

And he had two other fine, fine Nebraskans alongside of him in the House of Representatives -- John McCollister, an outstanding Member of the House, the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, the committee that has tremendous responsibilities that relate directly to the problems you have here in the State of Nebraska. And I am sure in this great crowd there are some people that can help John McCollister and, because I think so highly of him, I hope and trust that they will do everything they possibly can to see that Charley does come back to continue his fine work in the House of Representatives.

You do have in the State of Nebraska one of our senior statesmen leaving, leaving of his own free will. We have Dave Martin who served so ably and so well. Dave is coming back, but I hope and trust that the people of that Congressional district send to replace Dave Martin Mrs. Helen Smith who I am sure will carry on the fine tradition that Dave Martin established in the representation of that Congressional district.

And if Helen has friends here, go out and do the same thing for her that you have done for Dave Martin, and I would thank you for it.

It is Mrs. Haven Martin, Virginia Martin, and I apologize. (Mrs. Haven Smith)

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But let me at this point make one or two observations and comments concerning some of the problems we have in America. I know that this great State -- because I have visited many places in it. I traveled across a good portion of the State. North, south, east and west -- I know that Nebraska is one of the most vitally important producers of food in all 50 States.

And I know, from talking with some of the members of the Congressional delegation, that farmers have had some difficult times for a wide variety of reasons -- the elements, a lack of maybe fertilizer, and some other problems that I won't enumerate.

But I want to compliment the farmers of the State of Nebraska for the job they have done. They deserve your applause and your support because they are real inflation fighters that have and can contribute.

In return for the request that I have made to each and every one of them that they produce to full capacity, I think we ought to make some commitments to them.

And let me enumerate some commitments that I will make representing the Executive Branch of the Government.

Number one, I am committed to give them the fuel and the fertilizer for them to do the job. Even though we are going to cut back one million barrels of imported fuel oil every day, the farmers will get fuel and fertilizer if we have to allocate it arbitrarily.

Prior to my speech to the Congress a week or so ago, I was quoted extensively by a lot of people who thought they were reading my mind, and they were reading it on the belief that I was going to ask the Congress to pass an increase in the Federal gasoline tax.

Well, some of these oracle readers or people who thought they could read my mind, were 100 percent wrong. I did not ask for a gas tax. I am opposed to a gas tax, and I know the Congress won't pass one.

About a week ago Saturday, I was faced with a real tough decision. There had been some very substantial orders placed for wheat and corn for shipment overseas.

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Now I am against the export controls for our farm commodities, and I do not intend to impose them. But at the same time, because I do feel I have an obligation to protect adequate reserves, we are going to monitor those sales. We will permit the sales of reasonable amounts phased over a reasonable period of time so our farmers will be able to sell their commodities because those commodities are important as we, a great country, sell those things abroad that are necessary for our balance of payments. So the farmers can have full assurance from me there will be no blanket embargo on the products they produce on the land with their own toil.

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One day last week, Charley Thone and a number of other Congressmen, Democrats as well as Republicans, along with some dairy farmers, came to the White House to talk to me about the problems of the dairy farmer. I know the dairy farmer in America has been hit by rising costs. I know the dairy farmer has been hit with some of the problems of getting an adequate price in the market place.

The cost-price squeeze to the dairy farmer is a serious one. But I make a pledge here today as I did in Sioux Falls earlier -- we are not going to let subsidized foreign dairy imports destroy the American dairy farmers' domestic market.

Now, having made these pledges to the farmers who have done so much over the years, and who will do so much in the future, I feel obligated to make a comment on a sad and tragic incident that happened in Wisconsin yesterday.

Although I understand the frustrations of the farmers in Wisconsin who slaughtered their cattle yesterday, I am deeply concerned at this wasteful protest when we, as Americans, are trying to increase the supply of food for 213 million Americans and millions all over the world.

Unfortunately, these actions contributed nothing to the solution of the problem or to the problem of inflation which concerns all of us.

I am aware, as I said earlier, of the cost-price squeeze in which livestock producers and feeders and dairymen find themselves. And to do whatever I can, I am meeting with representatives from those groups in Washington within a relatively short period of time to find out what they recommend that their Government do in this very serious problem in this dilemma that they face.

I can only say that I hope and trust that what transpired in Wisconsin yesterday will not be duplicated. It didn't help them. It won't help solve the problem that they face and it won't help the problem that we face as Americans which is more food for all of us.

And so I urge, to the extent that you can, that you counsel with them, or with those who have any similar ideas. We are going to work with them. We are going to solve their problem and they should not do in the future what a few did yesterday.

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In conclusion, let me discuss very quickly these problems that I think we face here in Nebraska and others face around our 50 States. We have a problem concerning our economy. About a week or ten days ago, I submitted to the Congress, to the American people, a 31-provision program that is aimed at tightening up the screws on inflation and at the same time, giving us the strength to improve our economy.

This program requires certain actions by the Congress. This program requires certain individual efforts by volunteers throughout the country. I have faith in the Congress and faith in the American people. We are going to win the battle against inflation and we are going to have a strong, burgeoning economy so all of us will be better off.

The roll of the United States on a global basis is aimed at building peace not only for ourselves but for the world as a whole. I was in Kansas City this morning and I stayed last night in a hotel where a great Democratic President 20-some years ago signed a bill which was called the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill and that legislation was sponsored and promoted and guided through the Congress by a great Republican Statesman from Michigan, Senator Arthur Vandenburg.

And as a result of bipartisan leadership in the field of foreign policy and with a Democratic President and a Republican Congress, we laid the foundation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which has kept the peace in Western Europe for almost 30 years.

And this kind of bipartisanship is essential today as it was during the days of Harry Truman and Arthur Vandenburg. And I can assure you that as a Republican President, I will work with a Democratic Congress to continue a bipartisan foreign policy that is good for America and good for the rest of the world.

One final point: I was reading the polls the other day and the polls seem to indicate that the Republican Party is going to take some kind of a shellacking on November 5. I don't happen to agree with that, but that is what some of the experts were speculating and forecasting.

But let me tell you what could happen if they are right. They could end up with a veto-proof Congress and what does that mean? It means that the important balance between the Executive Branch, the Congress and the Judicial Branches of our Government will be upset and if we look back over the history of this country, we know that balance in Government has contributed significantly to the progress we have made, to the freedom that we have.

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A veto-proof Congress will upset that balance. The American people don't want a dictatorship in the White House, or in the Congress, or in the court. They want a system of checks and balances that protect their freedom and give to each and every one of us a better life.

And so I say, instead of a veto-proof Congress, I hope and trust that every one of you will work for an inflation-proof Congress on November 5.

And now, let me just conclude by thanking every one of you for being here. It is a thrill. It is a wonderful afternoon.

Charley, I thank you for the kind words in the introduction. I wish you well so you will be back to help us. I hope and trust that John McCollister is back, that Mrs. Smith is with us so that they can join your two great Senators, Roman Hruska and Carl Curtis with a good, strong Congress in 1975.

Thank you very, very much.

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(AT 3:38 P.M. CDT)