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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
IOWA STATE HOUSE

11:50 A.M. CDT

Thank you very, very, very much, Governor Bob Ray, Lieutenant Governor Neu, my former colleagues in the House, Bill Scherle, Wiley Mayne, and I guess H. R. Cross is here someplace:

Let me say it has been a wonderful visit to Des Moines already -- the crowds on the highway, the tremendous group here, the enthusiasm, the warm welcome I can only say from a Michigander to a Hawkeye: Thank you very, very much.

On some occasions, Governor Ray, I have thought that having Iowa still a part of Michigan would be extremely helpful to us in Michigan, but I would be in a real tough spot now if Michigan and Iowa were somehow joined.

We have got a great, good Governor in Bill Milliken, and you have a great, good Governor in Bob Ray. It would be real tough to decide.

I know one contribution that was made by Michigan to Iowa a few years ago. As you know, I played football at the University of Michigan a long time ago when the ball was round, but in later years one of our great Michigan stars came to the University of Iowa, Forrest Evashevski, who did a great job. I have often wondered why we didn't keep him at Michigan because he was such a great competitor, a great football coach and a great contribution to our State.

Let me just say from my observation that the weather, the people, the candidates, the Governor -- you have a great State, and I think all of you should be very proud of it.

During the 25 years that I was in the Congress, I will say without any hesitation or qualification that I have always been impressed with the men, frankly, from both parties that were sent to the Congress of the United States.

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They have been strong men, independent individuals, men of integrity, men of action, like your Governor Bob Ray. I happen to believe that he has provided the sort of independence and the leadership that we have come to expect from Hawkeyes in whatever office they serve, and I congratulate you for the three terms that Governor Ray has already had, and I urge you from the bottom of my heart to make sure that he is your first Governor elected for a four-year term.

I think that you have in this great State something that the rest of us could well use. Iowa is solvent. You have a long history of stable Government, particularly under Bob Ray. You even have a balanced budget, which is progress by any standard.

I have to admit that I was a bit startled when the Governor told me that the budget was not only balanced, but had a substantial surplus of something like \$200 million. I was startled because it has been years and years and years since I have heard of a surplus back in Washington in the Federal Treasury.

Yes, these are open spaces out here in Iowa, which give all of you room to move to bring up your children. I think you have achieved in this great State that urban-rural balance that is the envy of every State in the Union.

I was most impressed with the figures that your Governor cited on stemming migration out of Iowa. For the first time since the 1890s, I am told, people are no longer pouring out of Iowa. They are no longer pouring off the farms, leaving the State, and this is a pattern that I hope we can develop -- that we can develop not only in a few States, but all States--a pattern that we can develop across the Nation.

The problems we have been experiencing with our economy since the end of the involvement in Vietnam--including shortages, including scarcities--have brought home, it is my judgment, some of the basic lessons that our people have to remember, have to recall and have to build on.

It is my judgment that we have to simplify our lifestyles. We must return to some of the basics. We must make the best use of what we have. We must cut out the waste. We must strip away the nonessentials.

In short, we have to return to the state of mind and the way of life that made us the greatest nation in the history of mankind.

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If we will sit back and look, reflect just a bit, we can see ourselves as part of a community with people directly influencing things that shape their individual lives.

If you take this time to reflect, I think you will find that people -- yourself and others -- can determine their own priorities, and that sense of community has not been lost here in Iowa.

In the coming years, we will continue to see Iowa under the leadership of Bob Ray, serving as model for the rest of the Nation. You have in this great State what so many people all over the United States are seeking.

You have the basic values upon which America was built over a period of some 200 years. I personally think of Iowa when I think of stability, of progress, and, just as importantly, balance.

I like the balance that you are achieving in Iowa between industry and agriculture. Some of my advisers in Washington have suggested that I should avoid the subject of agriculture here today. They said our Iowa farmers and farmers throughout the Midwest are especially frustrated this year.

I certainly and very deeply share the concern of farmers whose corn and soybean crops were stunted by drought and destroyed by early frost.

The trend, however, for urbanization during the past few decades resulted in the downplaying of the farmer's central role in American society. But recent problems have refocused our national attention on the farmer as one of our greatest national assets -- an asset we should be proud of.

It is my judgment that this is the time that we should be expanding farming in America. Let us encourage our young people to remain on the farms and others to return to them.

Iowa, your great State, for obvious reasons, is aware of the importance of agriculture, not only to your State but to our Nation and to the world. It is absolutely essential to the well-being of our total society here as well as around the world.

America can no longer expect the farmer to sacrifice so that others can live well. All Americans now realize that we are all in this problem together, and the farmer should not be called upon to make an extra sacrifice. It must be shared by all.

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We rely upon the farmer for the strength of the community. The American farmer can outplant, outgrow, and outmarket any farmer -- I don't care what Nation in the world.

However, if the farmer gets a fair shake, the American farmer cannot only feed the people of the United States, but human beings all over the world. And this in itself is something that we should appreciate and be grateful for.

In the immediate years ahead, American agriculture will be our greatest asset in the world trade market. In the last two or three years the availability of the production of the American farmer has been extremely helpful as we try to help those who are less well off than ourselves, for good humanitarian reasons.

As we try to use our food that is produced on the farms in America for reasons to benefit the United States, we should be so thankful that we are blessed with the land and the farms of America.

Food is, as we know, a basic key to world peace, and we in America hold that key. As I said in my speech last month to the United Nations General Assembly, the United States recognizes the special responsibility that we bear as the world's largest producer of food.

We recognize that responsibility and I think we will accept it. I know it as a matter of fact because of the people I see here in Iowa today, especially these attractive, enthusiastic, young people in the front of the audience -- the cream of Iowa's bountiful crop.

This group of some 600 -- as I said, the cream of Iowa's bountiful crop -- are delegates to the United Nations Youth Conference Day. I commend Iowa for its emphasis on the United Nations Day, and I thank all of you as young people for participating.

Yes, the decisions they make as citizens of this great food-producing State will directly affect the well being of the citizens of the world. I know that everybody in Iowa is very proud of each and every one of you, and the understanding that they are individually developing of the world situation will serve us all well in the future.

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I am convinced that the future is now, right here in Iowa, and I pledge to you today, and especially to all of you young people, whether you are in this group or any other group, that I will do everything in my power to make sure that the American farmer is fully rewarded for his services rendered.

America owes that to the American farmer and so does the world.

If I might, let me stress this point, and I speak to you on this point not as a political partisan but as a partisan of the American system of Government: Our system rests not only on the balance of urban and rural America, but also on the balance within our Federal Government.

The basic principle underlying our system is balance, a finely-tuned balance, the timely balance conceived by the founding fathers some 200 years ago among three branches of Government -- the delicate balance within the Congress and the country through the two-party system.

This year the polls are telling us that our delicately balanced, two-party system is in some trouble, some jeopardy. If one party upsets that balance and because members of the other party are apathetic, not concerned, and as a consequence won't get out and vote, then we stand guilty, as I see it, of abusing the American electoral process and forfeiting our hope for an effective Government.

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Therefore, with deep conviction I urge you to keep this very great balanced system intact. Let's not lose an integral, important, essential part of our Government by default. What concerns me very greatly is the inclination of the American people to consider politics something they would rather not become involved in, which is something in the minds of too many.

As a matter of fact, the sad fact is that less than one American out of 30 has anything to do with politics, with the selection of candidates, the working in a campaign, researching issues, with raising contributions for the election of the candidate or even running for office.

It is almost unbelievable that only one American out of 30 has any connection, direct or indirect, with politics.

My considered judgment is that what this Nation needs less than two years from the 200th year of our founding, the 200th birthday of this Nation, is more, not less, participation by the citizenry in politics.

To those who say that politics is a dirty word which should be eliminated from Government, let me respectfully remind each and every one of you that politics is Government. Politics is Government -- Government in action.

There is nothing wrong with the political system of ours that a massive injection of citizen involvement will not cure. You never win a football game by sitting on the sidelines. You never do well in your business, your profession, on your farm, by doing nothing, and it is precisely the same thing in politics of the local, the State or the Federal level.

If you want to make a contribution, if you wish to be a participant, get off the sidelines and into the ball game.

I have spent a quarter of a century on Capitol Hill as a Member of the House of Representatives, and I happen to believe that it is important to get out and away from Washington on occasions such as this.

I know there are some so-called experts who say the President ought to sit in the Oval Office and listen to bureaucrats telling him what to do, yes or no, or sitting in the Oval Office reading documents that are prepared by people in Washington. I reject that advice. It is more important that I come to Des Moines.

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This can be a two-way street. I want to discuss with you my policies and my program, and in turn, I beg for a reaction and recommendation from all of you as to whether we are doing things right or wrong, and if we are doing them wrong, tell us how we can do them better.

We solicit your participation. That is one reason I am here in Des Moines. I believe that it is vital, that this two-way communication exists.

May I conclude with one other observation. I am told by the political forecasters that in this election year, 1974, there will be less people, a lesser number of eligible voters, throughout the country voting on November 5 than at any time in any off-year election for the last 20 or more years.

I don't believe that is going to happen. You won't, through apathy, let a minority make a decision for the majority. I only hope that instead of the 42 percent that they are forecasting who will actually vote, that it will be 50 or 60 percent so that we get a true reflection of what people want done -- so the majority makes a decision, not the minority making a determination.

Yes, Congressional, State and local elections are what it is all about. I say as strongly and as sincerely as I can, there is no weapon so mighty, no force so powerful, as the silent vote in the privacy of the voting booth.

It is the duty as well as the opportunity of every eligible voter in Iowa and the other 49 States to balance the ledger sheet on good Government.

So, I say to all, this wonderful group of Iowa friends, get out this time, vote as you have never voted before. The future of our American political system depends on your participation. It does in 1974 and it will in the years to come.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 12:15 P.M. CDT)