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APRIL 26, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT A
VIRGINIA GOP RECEPTION

MARRIOTT TWIN BRIDGES HOTEL
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

7:42 P.M. EDT

Senator Bellmon, Senator Bill Scott, I understand Senator Harry Byrd is here -- or was here -- the Republican Members of the House of Representatives -- and you have an outstanding delegation -- the members of the State Legislature, and your fine Lieutenant Governor, Dick Obenshain:

It just seems to me that the State of Virginia, under Governor Godwin, under the mantle of the Republican Party and its representation both in Washington, as well as in your State Capital, is in the best of hands, and I compliment you very, very much.

I am here for a very simple reason -- Virginia is for lovers. (Laughter) It would be my observation that there are a lot of lovers in the Republican Party in the State of Virginia.

I cannot help but speak with great conviction for your Governor. I have said it before, but I mean it. I believe it so deeply. It has been my observation as I have traveled around the country for the last ten or 15 years that in your Governor you have a man who is totally dedicated to what is in the best interests of your State, all of its people, and in the best interest of our country, and we are lucky to have him as a Republican.

We are very fortunate in the Republican Party organization at the national level to have Dick Obenshain. Dick has moved in, he is doing a superb job, and I thank you for making him available for this very important responsibility as the number two person in the National Committee.

Dick, I thank you for your availability, and I thank all of you for making it possible.

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There is nothing more important, once you get past the people who hold positions of responsibility, in a State government, than the individual who is in charge, or elected official in the party organization.

In George McMath you have an outstanding individual, and I compliment you for selecting him, and I thank him for the efforts that he is making.

George, we are most appreciative.

I could speak with great fondness and gratitude on behalf of the Republican Members of the House of Representatives. They are the kind of people I like, and they are the kind of people that do a great job for you and an especially fine job for the country. You should be appreciative of their efforts.

I only add one little postscript. We lost several very outstanding ones. I hope that we can recapture and regain those seats that we lost in 1974.

That brings me to 1976. In 1974 we had double-digit inflation of about 12 to 13 percent. We had the prospects of serious unemployment; at least the problem was obvious to many, many people. We had absolutely the worst political environment that I can recall in my 20 some years in active political life, and for the Republican Party to do as well as we did under those circumstances was remarkable.

In 1976 we have a very unique opportunity to recapture, to regain, the ground we lost, and even to do infinitely better. Let me tell you why. In contrast to 1974, when inflation was 12 to 13 percent, the rate of inflation is going to be half as much, if not better.

We are making tremendous headway in this battle. We are not totally successful, but there is significant progress. We are going to come out of this economic problem we are in, and I can assure you that by the end of this calendar year and moving into 1976, the picture economically throughout the country will be on the upswing.

The net result is our policies, the responsible policies of a Republican Administration, and those Republicans in the Congress, will be saleable to the American people.

Let me add this, because it is equally important. We are going to have in 1976 excellent results in the field of foreign policy. We have gone through some disappointments, some sad and tragic events. There is no use talking about the past in this regard. We must build for the future to make certain and to make positive that we build for peace with honor and respect and success in the future, beginning tomorrow.

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What I am trying to say is that the political environment will be good in 1976. I am looking forward to the campaign in 1976 because I think the polls that all of us believe in, including myself, are the right polls for this country.

I am going to be the person who will try to lead in this regard. It is my intention to be a candidate and it is my intention to be a successful candidate in November of 1976.

One State I would love to campaign in is Virginia. And I am making that commitment.

Now, we have got some problems, but I think Virginia is so far ahead of most of the States that I visited that I don't have to relate them to you. But if history is to be repeated -- and I think it is -- Virginia, because of its elections in a year prior to a national convention sort of tells the rest of the Nation the direction in which we ought to go as a country.

Now, you have got some extremely important elections coming up in 1975. Mills Godwin needs some more help down there in the State capital. You know, you just cannot have Mills and John Dalton do everything with a minimum of Republicans. He needs a lot more. So, I urge you from all over the great State to go to work and get some good candidates, get some election results and give your fine Governor the kind of help he needs.

But the important point, in addition to that, is the American people will be focusing on Virginia in 1975 as sort of a bellwether for what the rest of the country is going to do in 1976.

We are going to help in any way we can, but I am confident that the people of this great State traditionally have shown the vision that is necessary to give the rest of the American people the objective and the results they will have roughly a year later.

So, I thank you for what you have done. Betty and I have been taxpaying, nonvoting Virginians for about 25 years. (Laughter) And we think we made a good choice to come here to Virginia and we are not disappointed one bit. But let me add, if I might, you will hear a great address from Henry Bellmon, one of our outstanding Senators. Henry, last November, despite the odds against him, was re-elected. He was re-elected because he was an outstanding Senator and he went out and fought and prevailed.

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He struggled and fought for the principles that all of us believe in. And if we make that kind of a campaign in 1976 a campaign that relates to fiscal responsibility; a campaign that relates to building up State and local units of government, and cutting back and decreasing the responsibility of the Federal Government; a campaign that is predicated on what we can do in Government to expand, not cut back, the opportunity for the free enterprise system.

We have to cut back on all of these programs that some of our good friends across the political aisle try to thrust upon us.

Let me make one observation, if I might -- Bill Whitehurst, Ken Robinson, Caldwell Butler, Bill Wampler, and others who I served with in the House of Representatives -- know that it is just impossible to believe all of the things that some of our Democratic friends want to thrust upon the American people. They want to put more bureaucracy. They want to spend more Federal money.

I have talked to your great Senator, Bill Scott, about this. But as these people who we disagree with try to thrust these programs, one after another, on top of one another, I often used to sit back in the rear seat of the House of Representatives and ask myself, "Didn't they realize that a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have?"

As Republicans, we believe in the opportunity for individuals, in the responsibility for individuals. We believe in local and State government. We believe in a strong foreign policy with a policy of national defense that is sufficient to protect our interest and to help those who want to help themselves.

We do believe that the Republican Party is the only vehicle today that can give Americans in all 50 States the opportunity to express these basic, fundamental, philosophical views.

I thank you for helping with your presence and your contributions so we can continue the fight under the leadership of Mills Godwin, and others.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 7:57 P.M. EDT)