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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PALM BEACH MALL

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

1:10 P.M. EST

Let me thank every one of you -- let me thank young folk, and the middle-aged people and the older folks, every one of you -- for being here and giving me such a warm and gracious and generous welcome. I just can't express my gratitude sufficiently.

The only way that I can repay you for all that you have done, all that you will do, is to do the very best job I can for all Americans.

Let me take just a minute or two to give you some thoughts that I think reflect what is good for America. That is what we are all interested in.

I have one ideal, and that ideal is freedom for America. It is freedom from inflation, freedom from unemployment. It is freedom from an oppressive, irresponsible inconsiderate Government. It is freedom from the fear of war, and it is great power for peace and a good healthy economy.

Let me now take a minute and say in a few words what I think all of us -- Democrats, Republicans, Independents or otherwise -- ought to be thinking about.

We want an America that gives to everybody not only freedom but the responsibility that goes with freedom. We want a country where Government is responsive to you, each and every one of you. We want an opportunity for a job for everybody that wants to work.

We want an economy that is free from the ravages of inflation, and we want a Defense Department that is strong enough to make certain, to make sure, that this country deters war and is strong enough to protect us against any aggression.

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Listen very closely. Just outside that Oval Office in the West Wing of the White House there is a painting showing the signers of the Declaration of Independence. If you look at that picture most carefully, you will find that some of the faces in that picture are not clearly drawn out, are not identifiable, and people come into the Oval Office, and as I walk out with them, often times they will stop and look at that picture and they will say, "Why isn't that individual identifiable? Why hasn't his face been clearly drawn?"

Let me tell you the answer. I think that the portrait painter decided that those men who signed the Declaration of Independence weren't the only people who were going to make America free and strong. They knew they had that great belief and feeling that there would be millions and millions of other people who would come along and would continue the struggle for freedom and that they were only a small party.

What I am really saying is as I look across this great crowd, see some people I know and some I want to get to know, I know that everybody in this crowd here this afternoon wants to be a part of that crusade for freedom in the United States of America.

That freedom means, as I said at the outset, freedom from unemployment, inflation, freedom from a Government that doesn't take into consideration your legitimate needs and wants, freedom from the fear of war, but most of all a freedom of the soul and the heart, a freedom to pray and a freedom to speak and to write as only people can do in a free country.

Now let me close with this final comment: I was in Florida several weeks ago. I have been here many, many times because I love Florida, but in the trip that was several weeks ago, the momentum for a great, great success on March 9 was obvious, and we are down here today and tomorrow to ask for the help of all of you who believe in the principles that I have talked about and believe that I am the best person to succeed in achieving those high objectives.

I thank you very much. It is a great kick-off in West Palm Beach; It is a great kick-off for this side of Florida; it is a great kick-off for a victory on March 9 and, more importantly, a victory on November 2, 1976.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 1:17 P.M. EST)