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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT SHAIN PARK

5:30 P.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much, Congressman Bill Broomfield, Governor Milliken, former Governor Romney, Senator Bob Griffin, distinguished Members of the House of Representatives, Mayor Staples, but, more particularly, all of you wonderful people from the City of Birmingham and Oakland County:

Thank you very, very much. You don't know how nice it is to come back home on a beautiful day in May and to see so many wonderful people who are here because they want to hear a story about what we have done and what we are trying to do and what we intend to do in the next four years.

Let me just quickly refresh what we faced when in August of 1974 I became President. This country had gone through some very serious economic times with inflation up to 12 to 14 percent. We were on the brink of a very serious economic recession, the worst in 40 years. We were on the precipice of unemployment going up and employment going down, but the facts are that what we did was to restore confidence. What we did was not push the panic button but to have faith in the American people that if we kept our cool in Washington this country would turn around and be what it is today: on the uphill, on the real movement toward the kind of prosperity that we must have and will have, and we did it because of you.

And then let me point out to you what we have done in that area. Employment is up three and a half million more than last year. The last report showed that we had 87 million 400 thousand people working in America -- the highest figure in the history of the United States.

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And instead of 12 or 14 percent inflation, we have cut it over 50 percent. For the first 3 months of 1976, it is less than 3 percent. So let me quickly summarize it. Everything that should be going up is going up and everything that should be going down is going down. America is on the verge of a boom and that is what we want and that is what we worked for.

But let me quickly refresh your memory to what was the circumstance in August of 1974 as far as peace. Yes, after the trauma of 1973 and early 1974 our allies abroad were worried about the will and the resolution of the American people: our adversaries were uncertain as to whether we were going to be weak or strong and whether they could or should exploit the situation here at home. But what the Ford Administration did was, first, to restore the faith of our allies in the strength of America and the resolution of 215 million Americans, strong: its deep believers in our form of government that is the best by any standards in the history of mankind.

And let me say this as we move ahead. There have been some individuals who have attempted to downgrade this country's capabilities in a military and a diplomatic way. But what is the standard by which you judge the way we handle our foreign affairs and the way we handle our military capability? The objective of all of it is the achievement and the maintenance of peace, and we have peace today. And I am proud to say to everyone of you that I am the first President in 20 years who can go to the American people seeking election or reelection who can say that America is at peace. The fact that we are at peace is because we are strong and because we are resolute and we are going to stay that way by strengthening our relations with our allies and convincing our adversaries that America means what it says.

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But let us turn now to the last fact that I think we ought to take a look at. In August of 1974, there had been a shocking series of scandals in the highest offices in our land and the American people had lost a lot of confidence in their Government, and the net result was we had to restore that confidence.

The Ford Administration has been open, it has been candid, it has been forthright, and I can look every American in the eye and say that we have worked at the restoration of confidence and the strengthening of integrity in the White House and I can be proud of the fact that as we travel around the country people have faith in the path of integrity and honesty that this Administration has tread for the last 21 months.

I have talked about the past, I have talked of where we are going, and the three main areas that seems to me is how you should judge how you vote on next Tuesday -- peace, prosperity, integrity or trust.

But what we have to do is to make sure that those policies are in our vision and will be our effort for the next four years. I can assure you that with your support on next Tuesday and with your support in November, we can continue those high, strong resolutions that we have had of peace, prosperity and trust.

But, why do we want to do it -- and I think that is a good question with so many wonderful young people here this afternoon. It has been the tradition, it has been the heritage of America that we do things for those that follow. Our forefathers did it for us -- they sacrificed and they made a better America for all of us. And those of you who can go to vote on next Tuesday, I think you ought to look at what you want for America for the next four years -- not for yourself, necessarily, but for these young people whose stake in the world is what you can strengthen and the opportunity for them which you can strengthen.

I ask you on the basis of performance, the achievement and the maintenance of peace, prosperity, a progress out of a recession toward a healthy and prosperous economy and the restoration of trust in your Presidency -- I ask for your help and assistance, performance versus promises, and what we have done in 21 months we can do even better for you and yours in the next four years.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 5:40 P.M. EDT)