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REMARKS OF MINORITY LEADER GERALD R. FORD
PERMANENT CHAIRMAN
OF THE
1972 GOP NATIONAL CONVENTION
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

8/23/72

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5 over 70 percent of the delegates here today and 85 percent
6 of the alternate delegates with us are participating for the
7 first time in a national convention. Only a very few of you
8 were here when I banged down the gavel to adjourn our 1968
9 convention four years ago. No wonder I got elected today
10 so easily.

11 I want to express my deep appreciation and to thank
12 the old timers and also the first termers. We need both and
13 we want both in this great campaign in 1972. (Applause)

14 Furthermore, I am very proud to be the choice of
15 delegates freely selected through the open door policy of
16 our Republican Party. (Applause)

17 Republicans have done this without the heavy hand
18 of arbitrary quota, without discrimination or drumming anybody
19 out of our ranks, and I might add without highest pretensions.
20 We have gathered here a greater and more representative con-
21 vention than ever before in the history of the Republican
22 Party. (Applause)

23 Thirteen percent young, five percent black, thirty-
24 four percent of the sweeter and the stronger sex. More

25

1 (Applause and standing ovation)

2 CHAIRMAN FORD: Once more I am deeply honored to
3 have been chosen the Permanent Chairman of the National
4 Convention of the Republican Party. The record shows that
5 over 70 percent of the delegates here today and 85 percent
6 of the alternate delegates with us are participating for the
7 first time in a national convention. Only a very few of you
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22 Party. (Applause)

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24 four percent of the sweeter and the stronger sex. More
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1 importantly, we are all 100 percent dedicated to a better
2 future for all Americans. (Applause)

3 Yes, there is a very big difference here in Miami
4 in 1972. If I might, let me say something quite personal.
5 There is also a very big difference in my own feeling as I
6 assume this responsibility this afternoon. Four years ago
7 I presented our candidate to the cheers that shook this
8 convention hall. I felt then that his election in 1968 was
9 essential for the survival of the Republican Party. This
10 year, my fellow Americans, I feel with all my heart that
11 the re-election of Richard Nixon is absolutely essential to
12 the survival of the United States of America. (Applause)

13 There is a big difference in 1972 to our party but
14 an even bigger difference to our country and millions and
15 millions and millions of Americans know this -- Democrats,
16 Independents and Republicans.

17 Four years ago we campaigned on promises as Repub-
18 licans. This year we campaigned on performance, on promises
19 President Nixon has kept to the American people. (Applause)

20 Four years ago we had a fine candidate with long
21 experience in government and world affairs. This year we
22 have a proven candidate, a proven President, the seasoned
23 statements of the world as a whole. (Applause)

24 Recently I returned from a 19,000 mile journey to
25 the Great Wall of China following the peace making path set

1 by President Nixon and our wonderful First Lady. There was,
2 however, one part of China, that part which we used to call
3 Manchuria, where we, our party, were the very first official
4 Americans as visitors for 24 years.

5 In the seal making center in far northeast China
6 one afternoon I took a casual stroll after lunch. I came
7 upon a row of bulletin boards along the sidewalk displaying
8 photographs of current events. The Chinese call this display
9 the people's newspaper. The crowd was clustered tightly
10 around just one of the many boards and I as a stranger pressed
11 closer to see what caused their curiosity, to see what they
12 were looking at. Can you imagine what they were looking at?
13 They were looking at the pictures of President Nixon's historic
14 visit to Peking. They turned to me, a lone American, with
15 smiles that shattered the language barrier and defied a full
16 generation of suspicion.

17 At that very moment, it was a very funny thing for
18 me to think of but I did. Surrounded by Chinese of all ages
19 in a far away city I thought back to January 3, 1949, when I
20 had just lowered my right hand after being sworn in as a
21 freshman member of the House of Representatives. One of the
22 first hands that grasped mine was that of a very, very, very
23 senior Congressman from California -- he had been in the
24 House one full term. He said to me, "Jerry, I'm Dick Nixon;
25 we are glad to have you here."

1 And there was Richard Nixon, President of the United
2 States, on a Chinese bulletin board 23 years later, making
3 friends for me in the middle of Manchuria.

4 My fellow Americans, I have had the privilege of
5 seeing first-hand what tremendous things Richard Nixon has
6 done for all of us at home or abroad. Let me speak now for
7 just a minute quite freely. From my vantage point in the
8 Congress and specifically in the House of Representatives, I
9 have also seen what he has tried to do for America but unfor-
10 tunately could not do. President Nixon could not do it
11 because, for the last four years, he has had to work with a
12 majority of the other party in control of the House of Repre-
13 sentatives and the same problem in the Senate with a whole
14 fistful of would-be Presidents and self-appointed Secretaries
15 of State. (Applause)

16 Let me ask all of you Delegates and Alternates and
17 guests a question. Doesn't President Nixon deserve a Republi-
18 can Congress for the next four years? (Applause)

19 Really, truly, that could be the biggest difference
20 of all between 1968 and 1972. This year a Republican Congress
21 is not an impossible dream. Let's do it, starting right
22 tonight. (Applause)

23 As Republicans, we seek not power but responsi-
24 bility to finish the work we are in to bind up the Nation's
25 wounds, to return problem-solving to the people themselves,

1 to serve the common causes of order as well as justice, to
2 increase the opportunity and the prosperity of all, and to
3 make certain a full generation of peace worldwide, and we so
4 pray. In this task, we welcome the help of all Americans, and
5 we pray for the blessing of Almighty God.

6 Thank you very much. (Applause)

7 (Musical interlude)

8 (Showing of film of President Nixon arriving at
9 Miami International Airport)

10 CHAIRMAN FORD: Delegates, Alternates, and guests,
11 wasn't that a fabulous welcome for a great President to the
12 State of Florida? (Applause)

13 Delegates and Alternates, at this point Mrs. Ranny
14 Riecker, National Committeewoman for the State of Michigan,
15 has requested permission for a special presentation to the
16 Republican Party.

17 MRS. RIECKER: Thank you, all of you.

18 Mr. Chairman, a special gavel has been carved this
19 year from a limb of an oak tree growing at the site and time
20 of the first Republican Convention, on July 6, 1854, at
21 Jackson, Michigan. A month ago, Michigan Republicans dedi-
22 cated ground, "Under the Oaks," in Jackson for a political
23 museum.

24 We would like this gavel, deep with historical sig-
25 nificance, to become the permanent gavel for all future