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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN 

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS TO

THE CONFERENCE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1975

PRESIDENT TROWBRIDGE, OFFICERS, MEMBERS AND GUESTS
OF THE CONFERENCE BOARD.

I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND SPEAK WITH THIS
LEADERSHIP GROUP REPRESENTING THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY --
TO DISCUSS OUR COMMON PROBLEMS.

IN THAT REGARD, YOUR INVITATION COULD NOT HAVE BEEN
BETTER TIMED.

LAST WEEK, I SPOKE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND
TO THE CONGRESS ABOUT THE STATE OF THE UNION. AND, IN THE
CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH WE LIVE TODAY, THE STATE OF THE UNION
REALLY BOILS DOWN TO THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY.

I OUTLINED A FAIR AND BALANCED PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC
MEASURES -- A SIXTEEN BILLION DOLLAR TAX CUT, A CEILING ON
INCREASES IN FEDERAL SALARIES AND COST-OF-LIVING-RELATED FEDERAL
PAYMENTS, AND A MORATORIUM ON NEW, NON-ENERGY GOVERNMENT
SPENDING PROGRAMS.

I URGE THE CONGRESS TO BEGIN THE ACTIVE CONSIDERATION
OF THESE PROPOSALS AT ONCE SO THAT THE JOBLESS, HARD-HIT
INDUSTRIES, AND THE BELEAGURED AMERICAN CONSUMER AND TAXPAYER
CAN BEGIN BENEFITTING FROM THEM AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

IN THIS CONNECTION, LET ME ADDRESS MYSELF TO ONE
OF THE ASPECTS OF MY PROGRAM THAT HAS STIRRED SOME CONTROVERSY.

I HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT THE MAIN BURDEN OF
RECESSION MUST NOT FALL UPON THOSE LEAST ABLE TO AFFORD IT --
OUR LOW INCOME CITIZENS. BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST
TAKE CARE NOT TO PENALIZE MIDDLE-INCOME CITIZENS JUST BECAUSE
THEY MAY HAVE BEEN MORE FINANCIALLY SUCCESSFUL THAN OTHERS.

I AM MINDFUL OF THE CRITICISM FROM SOME QUARTERS
OF MY PLAN FOR A PROPORTIONATE TAX REBATE FOR MIDDLE-INCOME
AS WELL AS FOR LOWER-INCOME CITIZENS. SOME CRITICS CONTEND
THAT REBATES SHOULD GO ONLY TO THOSE WITH LOW INCOMES.

I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO SEEK A SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEMS OF THE RECESSION BY PENALIZING MIDDLE-INCOME AMERICANS.

NOTHING WOULD MORE EFFECTIVELY PUT A LID ON THE AMBITIONS
AND ENTERPRISE AND HARD WORK OF THIS IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF
AMERICANS TO CONTINUE UP THE ECONOMIC LADDER -- FOR THE
SAKE OF THEIR CHILDREN, IF NOT THEMSELVES.

HERE ARE THE FACTS: HALF OF THE FAMILIES IN THIS
COUNTRY EARN BETWEEN TEN THOUSAND AND TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND
DOLLARS PER YEAR; ONE THIRD HAVE EARNINGS IN EXCESS OF
FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS. ALTHOUGH IT IS A LITTLE KNOWN
FACT, MORE THAN HALF OF THE PERSONAL INCOME TAXES IN THIS
COUNTRY IS PAID BY PEOPLE WITH INCOMES OVER TWENTY THOUSAND
DOLLARS.

WHAT I AM SAYING -- SO THERE WILL BE NO

MISUNDERSTANDING -- IS THIS:

WE NEED FAIR TAX RELIEF -- THE TAX RELIEF THAT WILL

HELP NOT ONLY THE POOR, BUT ALSO THE MIDDLE CLASS -- THE

SKILLED WORKERS, FARMERS, TEACHERS, REPORTERS, EDITORS,
SECRETARIES, SALESPeOPLE, TRUCK DRIVERS, POLICEMEN, FIREMEN

AND OTHER HARD-WORKING, MIDDLE INCOME AMERICANS WHO HAVE

SEEN THEIR EARNINGS AND FUTURE ERODED BY INFLATION AND RECESSION.

IN SHORT, LET US NOT STRIP INCENTIVES FROM THESE
UPWARD BOUND MILLIONS WHO ARE STRUGGLING TO IMPROVE THEIR
LIVES AND THEIR CHILDRENS' LIVES BY SERVING NOTICE THAT AMERICA
NO LONGER REWARDS THOSE WHO MAKE IT FROM LOW TO MIDDLE INCOME
STATUS -- AND BEYOND.

HOWEVER, I DID NOT COME HERE THIS EVENING SIMPLY
TO REPEAT MY STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS. IN THIS FORUM,
I WILL NOT DISCUSS THE PAST. IT IS BEYOND OUR CONTROL.
INSTEAD, I WILL DISCUSS WHERE WE ARE HEADING -- BECAUSE
THERE, WE HAVE A REAL CHOICE.

TO USE AN ECONOMIC TERM, I BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE
SEVERAL VITAL TREND LINES RUNNING THROUGH THE AMERICAN
GOVERNMENT AND THE AMERICAN ECONOMY THAT ARE HEADED IN THE
WRONG DIRECTION. AND THE TIME TO REDIRECT THEM IS NOW.

THAT IS WHAT I MEANT WHEN I REFERRED TO NEW DIRECTIONS
IN THE ECONOMY -- A SERIES OF CRITICAL, LONG-RANGE CHANGES
THAT CAN PUT OUR DOMESTIC HOUSE IN ORDER AND PREPARE US FOR
THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE.

TONIGHT, I WILL ADDRESS MYSELF SPECIFICALLY TO THREE

OF THE MANY AREAS WHERE THE TRENDS NEED TO BE REDIRECTED:

FEDERAL SPENDING, \ DEFENSE POLICY, \ AND PROFITS AND INVESTMENT.

ALL THREE ARE CLOSELY RELATED. ALL THREE, AND

THE WAY WE APPROACH THEM, WILL VITALLY AFFECT THE QUALITY

OF LIFE AND GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

FOREMOST AMONG THESE IS FEDERAL SPENDING.

MORE THAN A GENERATION AGO, A TREND WAS SET IN MOTION BY

POLITICIANS AND PUNDITS WHO BEGAN TO ADVOCATE MASSIVE

FEDERAL SPENDING AS A SURE WAY TO SOCIAL PROGRESS.

THIS MASSIVE SPENDING TOOK THE FORM OF INCOME
REDISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS SUCH AS FOOD STAMPS, SOCIAL SECURITY,
FEDERAL RETIREMENT BENEFITS AND SO FORTH -- PROGRAMS UNDER
WHICH A QUALIFIED CITIZEN IS AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLED TO SPECIFIED
BENEFITS.

THESE PROGRAMS, SOMETIMES KNOWN AS "TRANSFER

138 billion

PAYMENTS," WILL TOTAL ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHT BILLION DOLLARS

44%

IN FISCAL 1975 AND CONSTITUTE FORTY-FOUR PERCENT OF OUR 1975

EXPENDITURES. IN TERMS ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION, THESE

9%

PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN GROWING AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF NINE PERCENT

FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS.

IN 1955 AND EVEN IN 1965, THESE PROGRAMS WERE STILL ONLY A

MODEST PART OF THE TOTAL FEDERAL BUDGET. BUT EVEN SMALL

NUMBERS BECOME LARGE AFTER COMPOUNDING TWENTY YEARS OF

NINE PERCENT PER YEAR.

THE CONTINUATION OF THESE PROGRAMS AT ANYWHERE

NEAR THIS RATE OF GROWTH -- WHICH IS MORE THAN TWICE THAT

OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT -- IS OMINOUS.

IN FACT, EVEN IF OTHER SECTORS OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET
AND STATE AND LOCAL EXPENDITURES GROW MODESTLY IN REAL TERMS,
THIS TREND WILL MEAN THAT WITHIN THE NEXT TWO DECADES GOVERNMENT
EXPENDITURES AT ALL LEVELS COULD EAT UP MORE THAN HALF OF OUR
GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT. THEY ALREADY ACCOUNT FOR CLOSE
TO ONE THIRD.

THINK OF WHAT THIS WOULD MEAN TO THE AVERAGE AMERICAN.

IF GOVERNMENT WERE TO TAKE MORE THAN HALF THE GROSS
NATIONAL PRODUCT, THIS WOULD BE A PROFOUNDLY DIFFERENT COUNTRY.
THE TAX BURDEN ON THE AVERAGE AMERICAN FAMILY AND BUSINESS
WOULD BE STAGGERING. TO CONTROL THE ECONOMY THAT MUCH,
GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO EXERT EVER INCREASING DIRECTION OVER
THE DAILY LIVES OF ITS CITIZENS.

MUCH OF OUR INCENTIVE AND ENTERPRISE AND FREEDOM
OF CHOICE WOULD BE STILLED AND PRIVATE BUSINESS EFFORTS WOULD
BE LARGELY STIFLED. OUR ECONOMY WOULD STAGNATE.

WE CANNOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN. WE MUST TURN
THIS TREND AROUND. THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO DO.

IN THAT REGARD, I REPEAT HERE THE PLEDGE I MADE TO
THE CONGRESS LAST WEEK -- EXCEPT FOR ENERGY, I WILL ASK FOR
NO NEW SPENDING PROGRAMS AND WILL FIGHT TO REDUCE THE GROWTH
OF FEDERAL SPENDING BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

THAT SOUNDS LOGICAL ENOUGH. IN PURELY ECONOMIC
TERMS, IT IS. BUT IN THE REAL WORLD, WHERE POLITICS,
IDEALISM, EMOTIONALISM AND CONFUSION ALL MIX TOGETHER WITH
ECONOMICS, IT IS NOT AS EASY AS IT SEEMS.

AMERICANS ARE A GENEROUS PEOPLE, A COMPASSIONATE
PEOPLE. WE HAVE ALWAYS PRIDED OURSELVES ON OUR
RESPONSIVENESS TO THOSE IN OUR SOCIETY LESS FORTUNATE THAN
OURSELVES.

BUT AS WE ARE NOW BEGINNING TO REALIZE, WE CANNOT
GIVE AWAY MORE THAN WE HAVE. THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT
OVERSPEND YEAR AFTER YEAR WITHOUT DOING DRASTIC DAMAGE TO
THE ECONOMY AND HARM TO EVERY CITIZEN.

NOW, I FULLY REALIZE THAT MANY IN THE CONGRESS
WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SUPPORT SPENDING LIMITATIONS IN
PROGRAMS THEY HAVE ADVOCATED AND BELIEVED IN OVER THE YEARS.
BUT IT MUST BE DONE.

AS A STARTER, I WILL INVITE TO THE WHITE HOUSE
AT THEIR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE MEMBERS OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEES
OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE TO CONFER WITH ME ON THE PROBLEMS
WE ALL FACE. TO CONTINUE THE COURSE WE ARE ON IS WRONG.
WE NEED RE-DIRECTION.

THIS BRINGS ME TO THE SECOND OF THE THREE TRENDS --
THE DIRECTION OF DEFENSE POLICY. THERE IS A FASHIONABLE
LINE OF THINKING IN AMERICA TODAY -- AS WIDESPREAD AS IT IS
FALSE -- THAT ALL WE NEED TO DO TO GET FEDERAL SPENDING BACK
IN LINE IS TO HACK AWAY AT OUR DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT.

THERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT THIS APPROACH.

UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS AN ERROR THAT SEEMS TO BE ENDEMIC TO WESTERN
DEMOCRACIES IN TIME OF PEACE. AGAIN AND AGAIN, WHILE
TOTALITARIAN POWERS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER HAVE MAINTAINED OR
EXPANDED THEIR MILITARY STRENGTH IN PEACETIME, THE DEMOCRACIES
OF THE WEST HAVE NEGLECTED STRONG NATIONAL AND ALLIED DEFENSE --
HOPING FOR THE BEST, BUT SELDOM PREPARING FOR THE WORST.

IN OUR OWN CASE, DEFENSE OUTLAYS HAVE REMAINED
VIRTUALLY LEVEL IN CONSTANT DOLLARS FROM 1969 TO 1974.
SINCE 1969, OUR MILITARY MANPOWER HAS BEEN REDUCED BY OVER
FORTY PERCENT.

IN 1968, AT THE PEAK OF THE VIETNAM WAR, PERSONNEL COSTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WERE ONLY FORTY-TWO PERCENT OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES. THIS FISCAL YEAR, PERSONNEL COSTS HAVE RISEN TO FIFTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE EIGHTY-FIVE BILLION DOLLAR DEFENSE BUDGET.

THIS DRAMATIC SHIFT IN HOW WE ALLOCATE OUR DEFENSE DOLLARS HAS PREVENTED US FROM DOING ALL WE SHOULD IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND PROCUREMENT OF MODERN WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT. IN MANY AREAS, AS A CONSEQUENCE, OUR MILITARY SERVICES ARE FACED WITH BLOC OBSOLESCENCE IN ARMS AND MATERIEL.

THE FASHION IS TO DERIDE EXCESSIVE DEFENSE SPENDING.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT DEFENSE OUTLAYS HAVE BEEN A
DWINDLING PART OF OUR GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT, FALLING FROM
EIGHT-POINT-NINE PERCENT IN 1969 TO LESS THAN SIX PERCENT BY 1976.

IF THE CURRENT DECLINING DEFENSE TREND CONTINUES, WE
WILL SOON SEE THE DAY, AND SO WILL OTHERS, WHEN OUR COUNTRY NO
LONGER HAS THE STRENGTH NECESSARY TO GUARANTEE OUR FREEDOM
AND SECURITY IN AN UNEASY WORLD.

WE CANNOT LET THIS HAPPEN. THE DEFENSE BUDGET

I AM ABOUT TO PROPOSE WILL NOT LET THIS HAPPEN.

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY THIRD AREA OF DISCUSSION THIS

EVENING. FOR JUST AS A STRONG DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT PROTECTS

OUR WAY OF LIFE, A STRONG, FREE ECONOMIC SYSTEM PROVIDES

THE GOODS, THE JOBS AND THE CHANCE FOR UPWARD MOBILITY

THAT HAVE MADE US A LAND OF OPPORTUNITY AND ABUNDANCE.

BUT IF OUR ECONOMY IS TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND PROSPER,
WE MUST ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT. A RISING STANDARD OF LIVING
IMPLIES RISING OUTPUT PER MANHOUR AND THAT REQUIRES EVER MORE
INVESTMENT PER WORKER. TO SUPPORT EVERY NEW JOB, INDUSTRY
MUST NOW ADD MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS OF
EQUIPMENT AND PLANT. THAT REQUIRES ADEQUATE PROFIT AND
ADEQUATE INVESTMENT.

PROFIT MARGINS HAVE BEEN GRADUALLY DECLINING
SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO. CASH FLOW, AS A
CONSEQUENCE, HAS BEEN LESS THAN ADEQUATE, ESPECIALLY IN
RECENT YEARS. THIS HAS MEANT THAT CORPORATIONS HAVE HAD
TO BORROW HEAVILY TO FINANCE CAPITAL INVESTMENT. THE
FINANCIAL CAPABILITY OF MANY CORPORATIONS HAS ACCORDINGLY
BECOME STRAINED.

ALL OF THIS IS ESPECIALLY DISCOURAGING SINCE

OUTPUT PER MANHOUR HAS FALLEN STEADILY FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS.

IF WE ARE TO MAINTAIN OUR PRODUCTIVITY, WE MUST

PROVIDE EACH WORKER WITH THE MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT HE NEEDS

TO DO HIS JOB WITH PRIDE AND EFFICIENCY. BUT IN ORDER TO

INSURE ADEQUATE INVESTMENT, WE MUST END THE DOWNWARD TREND

IN CORPORATE PROFITABILITY.

MY TAX PROGRAM MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION, BY
LEAVING MORE BUSINESS EARNINGS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHERE
THEY CAN BE INVESTED IN INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND NEW JOBS.

I CALL ON YOU TO JOIN WITH ME TO CHANGE THESE BASIC
TRENDS IN OUR ECONOMY. AND THE FIRST STEP IS TO GET THE
PROCESS OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION STARTED NOW. ONCE THE
MOMENTUM FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY BEGINS, WE CAN RESOLVE
DIFFERENCES IN DETAILS AS WE MOVE ALONG.

I DEEPLY BELIEVE THAT THE ECONOMIC AND ENERGY PROGRAMS I HAVE PROPOSED TO THE CONGRESS CAN TURN A PERIOD OF DANGER INTO AN ERA OF OPPORTUNITY. THROUGH IT, WE CAN CHANGE OUR COURSE -- WE CAN HELP PUT THE UNEMPLOYED BACK TO WORK, WE CAN SPUR INCREASES IN PRODUCTIVITY AND OUTPUT, WE CAN ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND, THROUGH OUR OWN RENEWED ECONOMIC VITALITY, WE CAN HELP BRING PROSPERITY AND STABILITY TO A TROUBLED WORLD.

WE HAVE FACED HARD TIMES BEFORE AND MET GREAT
CHALLENGES.

I CAN REMEMBER A FEW CHRISTMASSES IN MY OWN YOUTH
WHEN ABOUT THE ONLY THING WE HAD TO OFFER EACH OTHER WAS
THE LOVE WE FELT IN OUR HEARTS AND THE FAITH THAT, TOGETHER,
WE WOULD SEE THINGS THROUGH TO BETTER TIMES.

IT MADE US WORK HARDER, STUDY HARDER, AND IN A WAY,
I THINK IT BROUGHT OUT QUALITIES OF STRENGTH AND CHARACTER
THAT WE DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE WE HAD.

NOW THIS MAY SOUND LIKE AN EXERCISE IN NOSTALGIA
RATHER THAN ECONOMICS.

BUT IF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS COULD BE SOLVED BY DRY
THEORIES ALONE, THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
LEFT -- JUST A LOT OF SURPLUS THEORIES AND A LOT OF UNEMPLOYED
ECONOMISTS LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS TO PLY THEIR TRADE.

I BELIEVE IN OUR FREE ECONOMY. I BELIEVE IT
UNQUESTIONABLY HAS THE STAMINA AND THE RESILIENCY TO RECOVER
IF WE ACT SENSIBLY AND DECISIVELY AND PROMPTLY TO GET THROUGH
THIS CRISIS.

I SAID IN MY STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS THAT
THERE IS A VITAL NEED FOR PARTNERSHIP. THERE MUST NOT
ONLY BE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE
BRANCH, BUT ALSO BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE. I ALSO CALLED FOR A CONTINUING STRONG
PROGRAM OF VOLUNTARY ACTION.

I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT POINT AGAIN.

MY PLANS FOR ECONOMY AND ENERGY RELY ON FREEDOM OF CHOICE --

FREEDOM FOR EVERY AMERICAN TO DECIDE HOW TO CONSERVE WHILE

STILL MEETING BASIC NEEDS. WITHOUT THE VOLUNTARY

COOPERATION OF EVERY AMERICAN, NO GOVERNMENT PLAN CAN

REALLY WORK. IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

EACH OF YOU, AS AN OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE
AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY, HAS A KEY PART TO PLAY IN
THIS GREAT NATIONAL UNDERTAKING. WE NEED YOUR KNOWLEDGE,
YOUR RESOURCEFULNESS AND, MOST OF ALL YOUR FAITH AND CONFIDENCE.

WITH FAITH IN OURSELVES AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR
COUNTRY, WE HAVE PERFORMED WHAT AMOUNTED TO MIRACLES IN
THE PAST. WE NEED NO MIRACLE TODAY -- JUST THE KIND OF
CALM WILLINGNESS TO WORK AND SACRIFICE WHICH HAS CARRIED
UP THROUGH MUCH TOUGHER TIMES BEFORE. AND WILL AGAIN.

TOGETHER, WE CAN TURN THESE MISDIRECTED TRENDS
AROUND AND SEE AMERICA ON A NEW COURSE TOWARD PROSPERITY
AND PROGRESS.

THANK YOU.

END OF TEXT