

The original documents are located in Box 30, “4/30/76 - Remarks at Abilene Jaycees' Special Happy Birthday USA Celebration, Abilene, Texas” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -- ABILENE CIVIC CENTER

- THANK YOU, **BILL TAYLOR**
~~SENATOR TOWER~~
- **SENATOR TOWER**
- MAYOR HUGHES

~~FILE IN 100-100000-100000)~~

- L. A. ANDERSON (Pres., Chamber of Commerce)
- DR. ~~FLAN~~ FLANNING
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE WITH YOU IN ABILENE

TODAY. YOU KNOW, AS A LONG-TIME FOOTBALL FAN, ONE

OF THE GREAT NAMES THAT CAME TO MIND AS WE LANDED HERE

IN ABILENE IS CLINT LONGLEY, / AN OUTSTANDING GRADUATE

OF ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY AND NOW AN OUTSTANDING

QUARTERBACK FOR THE DALLAS COWBOYS.

D.C.

I DON'T THINK ANYBODY IN WASHINGTON WILL

EVER FORGET CLINT LONGLEY, AND THAT LONG, \ LONG, \ LONG

PASS HE THREW TO BEAT THE REDSKINS IN THE LAST MINUTE OF

THAT THANKSGIVING DAY GAME IN 1974.

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BUT A WINNING TEAM ALSO DEPENDS ON A

GREAT COACH - - AND HERE IN TEXAS YOU HAVE ONE OF THE

GREATEST COACHES IN THE HISTORY OF THE GAME --

TOM LANDRY.

I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT WEDNESDAY TOM

LANDRY ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT FOR MY CAMPAIGN AND

ALL I CAN SAY TO TOM IS -- WITH HIS HELP AND THE HELP

OF MANY, MANY MORE CONCERNED TEXANS LIKE HIM,

WE'RE GOING TO WIN TOMORROW AND WE'RE GOING TO GO

RIGHT ON WINNING FOR AMERICA IN THE CHALLENGING

YEARS AHEAD.

I LOOKED FORWARD TO BEING WITH YOU

IN ABILENE TODAY, FOR I KNEW THAT HERE I WOULD BE AMONG

PEOPLE WHO ARE PROUD TO BE CITIZENS OF OUR GREAT COUNTRY.

AND I THANK THE ABILENE JAYCEES FOR GIVING ME

THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN WITH YOU IN SAYING:

I'M PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN. I'M PROUD
OF OUR COUNTRY, PROUD OF OUR HERITAGE AND PROUD
OF OUR PEOPLE. WE HAVE A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR
AND A LOT TO CELEBRATE IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR.
IN A RELATIVELY BRIEF HISTORY, WE'VE GROWN FROM A WEAK,
STRUGGLING NATION ON THE EDGE OF A CONTINENT
INTO THE RICHEST AND MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY ON EARTH.

WE HAVE GONE THROUGH WARS, SCANDALS, RIOTS

AND ASSASSINATIONS. WE HAVE PASSED THROUGH CRISIS

AFTER CRISIS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, AND EMERGED

STRONGER AND STRONGER EVERY TIME.

AFTER EACH CRISIS, WE HAVE CLOSED RANKS,

JOINED TOGETHER, AND GOTTEN ON WITH THE JOB.

AS A RESULT, WE HAVE ENJOYED UNPARALLELED ECONOMIC,

TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN AMERICA,

AND THROUGH IT ALL, WE HAVE HAD GREATER FREEDOMS AND

LIBERTIES THAN ANY OTHER PEOPLE IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

THAT'S WHY I TAKE PRIDE IN BEING AN AMERICAN.

BECAUSE I KNOW AS YOU DO THAT HERE AS NOWHERE ELSE
WE ARE FREE TO DO WHAT WE WANT TO DO, TO THINK AND SAY
WHAT WE PLEASE AND TO BE WHAT WE WANT TO BE.

THAT'S THE KIND OF COUNTRY WE HAVE AND SO LONG AS

I AM PRESIDENT, THAT'S THE KIND OF COUNTRY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP.

BUT IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN GOOD INTENTIONS

TO MAINTAIN OUR INDEPENDENT TRADITIONS AS WE ENTER

THE THIRD CENTURY OF OUR HISTORY. IT WILL REQUIRE

A VIGOROUS NATIONAL EFFORT TO PROTECT OUR WAY OF LIFE,

AND ONE OF THE GREATEST THREATS WE HAVE HAD TO FACE HAS BEEN

THE THREAT TO OUR FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

THE MOST RECENT ATTACK BEGAN WITH THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO

IN 1973.

THE EMBARGO DID MORE THAN CREATE LONG LINES

AT FILLING STATIONS AND INCREASE THE PRICE OF FUEL,

OR EXPOSE OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN SUPPLIERS FOR

PETROLEUM. AS MUCH AS ANY SINGLE FACTOR, IT CONTRIBUTED

TO THE MOST SERIOUS ECONOMIC RECESSION IN FOUR DECADES.

I'M HAPPY TO REPORT THAT MY ADMINISTRATION

HAS BROKEN THE BACK OF THAT RECESSION,

BUT OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL REMAINS.

IN FACT, WE ARE MORE DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN OIL NOW

THAN WE WERE WHEN THE EMBARGO TOOK EFFECT,

AND THAT IS BECAUSE THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES FAILED

TO ACT WHEN YOU DEMANDED THAT THEY ACT,

WHEN I DEMANDED THAT THEY ACT,

AND WHEN AMERICA'S ENERGY NEEDS DEMANDED THAT THEY ACT•

FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO, I RECOMMENDED DECONTROL
OF OIL AND NEW NATURAL GAS PRICES.

THE CONGRESS DELIBERATED AND DELAYED AND DEBATED
AND DAWDLED ALL THE WAY FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER
OF LAST YEAR, AND FINALLY SENT ME AN ENERGY BILL.

IT WAS A LONG WAY FROM PERFECT, BUT AT LEAST IT WAS A START.

IN THAT BILL, THE CONGRESS AGREED FOR THE FIRST
TIME TO REMOVE CONTROLS ON OIL PRICES. UNFORTUNATELY,
THE CONGRESS INSISTED THAT FULL DECONTROL BE CARRIED OUT
OVER A 40-MONTH PERIOD.

I INDICATED LAST DECEMBER THAT I WOULD ORDER
IMMEDIATE STEPS TO REMOVE CONTROLS ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS.
I ALSO PLEDGED THAT I WOULD USE ALL THE FLEXIBILITY AVAILABLE
IN THE LEGISLATION TO ALLOW THE INCREASES IN CRUDE OIL PRICES
THAT ARE NECESSARY TO STIMULATE DOMESTIC OIL PRODUCTION.

WE HAVE ALREADY SENT TO THE CONGRESS THE PLAN
FOR DECONTROL OF RESIDUAL OIL, AND THIS DECONTROL PLAN
WILL GO INTO EFFECT ON JUNE FIRST. PLANS ARE ALSO BEING
PREPARED TO DECONTROL DISTILLATES AND GASOLINE.

WE ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IN THIS AREA --

BOTH TO PROVIDE THE PRODUCTION INCENTIVES WE NEED

AND TO REDUCE THE CONTROL OF THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY.

BUT MY GOAL IS, HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE

THE REMOVAL OF ALL PRICE CONTROLS FROM OIL AND

NEW NATURAL GAS, AS THE BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE ENERGY

INDEPENDENCE FOR AMERICA.

LAST WEEK THE TEXAS INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS
AND ROYALTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION EXPRESSED ITS SUPPORT
FOR MY EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE.

I APPRECIATE THAT SUPPORT, FROM ONE OF THE
LARGEST PETROLEUM ASSOCIATIONS IN TEXAS, AND LET ME
ASSURE YOU I INTEND TO KEEP RIGHT ON WITH THESE EFFORTS
FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

MEANWHILE, MY ADMINISTRATION HAS PULLED US

OUT OF OUR WORST RECESSION IN FORTY YEARS.

WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT, THE CONSUMER PRICE

INDEX WAS AT A RUNAWAY RATE OF 12 PERCENT ANNUALLY.

IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1976 WE'VE CUT THAT RATE TO

LESS THAN THREE PERCENT

REDUCING THE RATE OF INFLATION

BY FULLY 75 PERCENT.

JUST LAST WEEK, THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT REPORTED

THAT THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT - REPRESENTING THE VALUE

OF ALL THE GOODS AND SERVICES PRODUCED IN AMERICA -

ROSE AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF SEVEN AND A HALF PERCENT.

THAT'S ABOUT 15 PERCENT BETTER THAN WE EXPECTED.

ON THE JOB FRONT, MORE AMERICANS ARE GAINFULLY

EMPLOYED THAN AT ANY TIME IN OUR HISTORY.

MORE THAN 86 MILLION, 700 THOUSAND AMERICANS

ARE IN THE WORK FORCE. AND CONSIDERING WHERE

WE STARTED FROM, THAT'S A DARN GOOD COMEBACK

BY ANY STANDARD.

TRY AS THEY MIGHT, EVEN MY OPPONENTS FIND

IT DIFFICULT TO DISPUTE THAT WE'VE MADE SUBSTANTIAL

ECONOMIC PROGRESS SINCE THE LOW POINT OF THE RECESSION.

WE'RE ON THE WAY TO A NEW PROSPERITY IN THE UNITED STATES,

AND I ~~DO NOT PLAN TO~~ ^{*will not*} REST UNTIL EVERY AMERICAN WHO WANTS

A JOB CAN FIND A JOB, AND WE PUT ALL OF AMERICA BACK TO

WORK.

AS PRESIDENT, I WANT MORE THAN PROSPERITY

FOR MY FELLOW AMERICANS. I WANT TO LEAD OUR COUNTRY

INTO A THIRD CENTURY OF PROGRESS ON ALL FRONTS.

I FORESEE A CENTURY OF INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL
FULLILLMENT; A CENTURY IN WHICH WE ADAPT AND PERFECT
OUR GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS SO THAT THEY MORE COMPLETELY
SERVE THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I WANT TO STRENGTHEN OUR TRADITION OF INDIVIDUALISM;
TO MAKE OUR INSTITUTIONS LESS REMOTE AND MORE RESPONSIVE
TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE.

I WANT OUR BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION TO MARK

THE BEGINNING OF AN EFFORT BY GOVERNMENT TO WIN BACK

disaffected
THE ~~LOYALTY AND~~ TRUST OF ~~DISAFFECTED~~ AMERICANS.

I WANT TO HEAL THE ANTAGONISMS AND DIVISIONS
THAT EXIST IN OUR SOCIETY, AND TO CONVERT CYNICISM AND
DESPAIR INTO ACTIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE CONCERN FOR OUR COUNTRY
WHERE SO MUCH STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE.

I WANT TO KEEP AMERICA STRONG MILITARILY,
TECHNOLOGICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AGRICULTURALLY, AND
MOST OF ALL MORALLY, FOR ONLY THROUGH STRENGTH
CAN WE MEET AND OVERCOME THE MANY CHALLENGES
TO OUR WAY OF LIFE.

I HAVE ENJOYED VERY MUCH THIS THREE-DAY VISIT
TO THE LONE STAR STATE. I'VE ENJOYED HAVING THE EYES
of my record
OF TEXAS ON ME DURING THIS VERY SPIRITED PRIMARY CAMPAIGN.

TOMORROW I'D APPRECIATE HAVING A LOT OF THE VOTES OF TEXAS
SUPPORTING ME, AND THE POLICIES OF PEACE AND FREEDOM
AND PROSPERITY FOR WHICH I STAND.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT