

The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/25/76 - Remarks at the Lutcher-Vacherie Ferry Landing, Lutcher, LA (Draft only, no reading copy)” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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(Butler)

September 23, 1976

~~THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN SEEN.~~

SOUTHERN STUMP SPEECH - II

Last month in Kansas City, I promised the American people that I would wage a national campaign for the Presidency of the United States.

I promised that I would concede not a single state, not a single vote, not a single region of the country -- from the snowy banks of Minnesota to the sandy plains of Georgia.

Some people didn't believe me. But here I am, to prove that I wasn't just whistling Dixie.

This trip will take me to Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida -- by car, by plane, and by the finest steamboat on the Mississippi River.

I hope to meet thousands and thousands of people and enjoy the Southern hospitality that never, never fails.

I am particularly glad to be running for President in 1976, America's Bicentennial year. Something really wonderful happened to this country on July the fourth, and the spirit still remains today.

After so many years of war, economic adversity and scandal in high places, the American people found themselves on even keel once again.

We found ourselves united as never before. We found that we were looking to the future again with faith, instead of fear. We felt proud to be Americans, proud of our country, and we feel that same way today.

We've been through some tough times, and we still have our share of problems. We still have goals we have not reached.

But we have found a basic strength in ourselves and in our national character that is more powerful than all our armaments, more precious than all our wealth, and as enduring as the United States Constitution.

We faced the worst recession in 40 years. We beat it. Four million new jobs have been added to America's economy in the past 17 months, and more Americans are on the job today -- almost 88 million of them -- more than ever before in the history of this country. But I won't be satisfied until every American who wants a job can find a job.

We faced the worst inflation in 50 years. By holding the line on government spending, by not being afraid to say "no" to the liberal big spenders in Congress, we cut inflation in half, and we saved you more than 13 billion dollars in the process.

We faced many challenges to peace in the world. We are still at peace. We will stay at peace because we will be as strong as we need to be, militarily and diplomatically, to deter aggression, protect our national security, and stand firm on the front lines of freedom throughout the world.

Two years ago we faced a crisis of confidence in our government. In my Administration, I have demanded the highest standards of integrity and candor. As a result, we have restored confidence, trust and faith in the White House.

Public officials have a special responsibility to set a good example for others to follow -- in both their private and public conduct. Personal integrity is not too much to ask of public servants. We should accept nothing less.

As we move forward into the third century of America's independence, we know that the challenges of the future will be even greater.

But we also know that we are prepared for those challenges. We are eager to meet them. We are ready to move ahead toward a better quality of life for all Americans and for all the world.

I have been proud to serve as your President for the past two years, and I will be proud to serve as your President for the next four years.

With your faith and your support, we will fill the future with hope, with great achievement, and the progress that will keep America number one for generations to come.

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