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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD

CONFERENCE ON INFLATION

THE WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1974

At the first session of the Conference on Inflation, I asked that we get to work on a battle plan against Public Enemy No. 1. Important work has been done. Today, the climax of these efforts is at hand. I welcome the many distinguished Members of the Congress and citizens from all sectors of American society. I appreciate your commitment and involvement.

I am also pleased to welcome representatives from many foreign nations. This is an interdependent world. Inflation is an international problem. The efforts of each nation can be more effective if concerted action is achieved. The United States Government will consult with friends abroad as we move to combat an international threat.

I look forward to a productive series of discussions today and tomorrow morning.

In the tradition of the American town hall, this conference includes the widest range of views and opinions. Inflation concerns all Americans. This is a joint Executive-Legislative undertaking in response to bipartisan recommendations of the Congress. It demonstrates that Americans can still come together effectively to confront an immediate danger threatening every citizen.

There has been much talk at this month's sessions. But there has also been action and generation of ideas that will be used. We have taken a good look at many options. We are already narrowing some of the options to those which would appear most effective and command widest support.

I appreciate your willingness to work with me on the inflationary problem which transcends America's many special interests -- whether Republican or Democratic, labor or business, urban or rural. Nor does inflation respect age, sex, race, color or creed. And inflation certainly punishes most cruelly those least able to cope with it.

Today's conference, like the ones that preceeded it, is wide open. All views and opinions are invited. This Administration's commitment to visible and responsive Government remains intact. I might not like everything I hear. But it is my solemn duty as President of the United States to give fair consideration to all views and to carefully weigh the possible courses of action.

At the outset of this session, a word about expectations is appropriate. In searching for the best policies, let us recognize that there are no quick or easy solutions. No miracle cure has emerged from the pre-Conference meetings. Inflation is a problem which we must deal with patiently and persistently. In this battle there is no substitute for candor and hard work.

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Spokesmen from the specialized meetings will report areas of general agreement. I have also asked them to report areas of disagreement and alternatives which the Congress and I must consider in making the difficult decisions.

I have unlimited confidence in America. The battle against inflation will not be an easy one. It will require sacrifice and common effort. It will require discipline. But we will win.

This Administration will seek to ensure that burdens are distributed equally. No group should be called upon to carry an unfair share of the load.

American resourcefulness and ingenuity helped build this Nation and provide an abundance unknown by most other peoples of the world. Although America must increase its productive capacity, this by itself will not eliminate the scourge of inflation. Other actions and hard decisions are required. We cannot hope to satisfy all. But we will act in the interest of all.

I intend to constantly reassess policies and change those which are not working. My actions will not be set in concrete. As President, I will continue listening, with all the openness of which I am capable, and acting with all the decisiveness at my command. Together, with confidence in America's great capacity, let us begin.

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