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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
SOUTH DAKOTA REPUBLICAN STATE  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE RALLY

SIOUX FALLS ARENA

1:27 P.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, my good friend and former colleague in the House of Representatives, Jim Abdnor. And may I express from the bottom of my heart the tremendous welcome, the enthusiasm and warmth of this reception.

I cannot in any words in my vocabulary express my deep gratitude and appreciation. Thank you very, very much.

And if I might on a very personal note: A good many years ago I matriculated to the University of Michigan. This was back in 1931 and I didn't have much money but a woman here today and her husband made it possible for me to rent a room on the third floor -- the cheapest part of their rooming house -- at the cost of \$4.00 a week to go to the University. And I want to thank Elizabeth Van Wye, the widow of John Van Wye, who was connected with your University for a long, long time. Elizabeth, it is nice to see you.

It is good to be back in South Dakota. I have been here a good many times. And I especially enjoy it here in the Mount Rushmore area. There are four faces on that great, great national monument. One is a Federalist, one is a Democrat and two are historical pillars of the Republican Party. This is the kind of political scorecard that I like in South Dakota.

Naturally, I am delighted to be on the same platform with some truly fine, outstanding people who fit the tradition of Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, and other greats in our political system -- people like Jim Abdnor, Leo Thorsness, John Olson, Larry Pressler.

As you know better than I -- well, he mentioned as we were coming in that the hunting season opened in South Dakota last Saturday and by coincidence, you might have seen in the newspapers or on T.V. in the last week or so that the White House has a new addition.

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(OVER)

My daughter Susan and David Kennerly, the new White House photographer, got together and surprised me and my wife Betty with a new, eight month old Golden Retriever. The Fords had two Golden Retrievers in the last 20 years. Unfortunately, both had passed away. So, I would like to tell you a story about how David and Susan acquired this new White House tenant.

They called up a very highly recommended kennel and said they wanted to buy a Golden Retriever puppy. The owner of the kennel said, "Fine. Who will the owner be?" And they said, "It is a surprise. They would like to keep it a secret.

Well, the kennel owner said he didn't sell his fine dogs under those circumstances. He would have to know if the puppy was going to have a good owner, a nice home.

So, Susan and David assured the kennel owner that it would be, and that the parents were friendly, middle-aged and lived in a big white house with a fence around it. (Laughter) The kennel owner said, "Well, that sounded all right. Do they own it or do they rent it?" (Laughter)

Well, Susan and David thought a minute and said, "Well, I guess you might call it public housing."

Well, the kennel owner said that was all right. Now, he also added, "This is a big dog. It likes to eat. It will need a lot of food. Does the father have a steady job?" (Laughter)

Well, Susan and David were stuck with an answer to that question.

All I can say is I heard a lot about your great hunting out here. I sometime hope that I can come out and enjoy the great outdoor facilities and the great outdoor opportunities you have in South Dakota which I don't think are matched by any State in the Union.

Your fine Congressman, Jim Abdnor, flew with me from Washington and I can assure you from the time that I had the close opportunity to work with him in the House of Representatives -- he was sworn in in January of 1973 -- that you in South Dakota are fortunate to have someone who understands the problems of the farmers, the problems of balancing a budget, the problems of handling taxes in the right and the best way. I just think you in South Dakota have a great, great Congressman in Jim Abdnor.

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And having looked at a lot of Congressmen over 25 years -- some of them kind of coming and going like Greyhound buses -- Jim Abdnor is the kind of person I would vote to keep in Congress because he does a good job for his people at home.

Leo Thorsness -- I heard about Leo before he got into the political arena and his reputation then was one that I envied -- a reputation of total dedication to this country, a dedication to principles under the most adverse circumstances; a man with a strong background based on real deep conviction about the principles that are so essential to make our country an even better land in the future.

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I know that Leo will be a full-time fighter against inflation on a year-in and year-out basis instead of once every six years at election time.

And I happen to think that Larry Pressler can do a great job for you in the Congress.

Leo and Larry will bring you, when elected November 5, a full strength of sound people handling your money and your problems in the House as well as the Senate.

And, of course, under the theory that I believe in--that we don't have to make all the decisions and all the judgments in Washington, that we need sound, responsible, thoughtful people at the State and local level--we need John Olson to be the next Governor of the State of South Dakota.

And if I might, in a very personal way, explain to you why I am here in South Dakota. There has been some criticism that maybe the President ought to stay in the White House and work in the Oval Office and never leave the banks of the Potomac.

I don't agree with that. I happen to believe that the American people have a right to see their President and to hear him defend the kind of programs that he believes are in the best interest of our country, both at home and abroad.

I think I get a better understanding of what people in South Dakota want and believe by being right here in this great auditorium rather than peering out some window in the White House.

You can tell me with criticism, with comments, with endorsements of what we are doing right or what we are doing wrong, and I can get it better at the grass roots than I can from some ivory tower on the banks of the Potomac.

And I thank you for coming here just to give me that advice. I appreciate it.

As I see it, we have got two or three major problems in this country. One, we have got to lick the battle of inflation and keep our economy strong at the same time.

And I submitted to the Congress a week ago on Tuesday a 31-proposition package that, if enacted, if you support it, will give us a better handle and success against inflation and if enacted and supported by the American people, will keep us going on a steady, steady course upward to provide a better and better living for all our people.

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And I happen to think guys like Jim Abdnor, Leo Thorsness, are the kind of people that can work at helping in the problems not only at home but abroad.

What we need in this country is not a partisan foreign policy. Some 26 years ago it was my privilege to go as a brand new freshman Congressman to the Nation's capital, and I was engulfed by a bipartisan foreign policy with a Democratic President, Harry Truman, working with a Republican Congress in the 80th Congress. And those two people representing the Executive Branch on the one hand and the Congress on the other, gave us peace in Western Europe, helped us to build the kind of policy that has been good for us in Western Europe for almost 30 years.

What we need is a bipartisan foreign policy, and that can be supplied by Jim Abdnor, by Leo, by Larry Pressler. We need that kind of support if we are going to keep the peace and build the peace in the future. And I hope you support them for those two very, very good reasons.

I know the State of South Dakota is one of the greatest States in the Union for many reasons. But you have a particular pride, a special feeling about the contributions that this great State of South Dakota does in being a significant part of the bread basket of not only the United States but the world.

Now let me talk, if I might, about the part that farmers and those associated with them can do in this great struggle to win the battle against inflation.

I have assured the farmers of this and every State that they will have all the fuel, all the fertilizer that they need to harvest their bountiful crops this year and next year. They will be in your hands.

Let me add one other thing while I am talking about fuel. Prior to my speech a week ago, everybody else but myself was telling the American people what I was going to say about gasoline taxes. Well, I have now said or given my own views, but I want to reiterate it right here to you in South Dakota: I am vigorously opposed to any additional Federal tax on gasoline, and I will fight it as hard as I possibly can.

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We want to keep this country rolling, not parked on a dead-end street.

Let me add one special concern that I had for people of South Dakota when this issue was presented to me and I rejected it. I thought of the people of South Dakota and other States who have to travel not a couple of miles but many miles to go to the doctor or to the hospital. I thought about the people in South Dakota who have to go from their farms or their ranch to the implement dealer or to the community where they trade.

A gasoline tax would unfairly, in my judgment, penalize those people. And for that reason, among many others, I rejected it. And we are not going to have it as long as I am in the White House.

There are some other things that have to be done, not just in agriculture, but they have to be done in agriculture. We have got to increase productivity. But I also like to add, when talking about productivity, that the statistics show that in the last 20 or more years, the farmers of America have increased their productivity more than any other segment of our economy in the whole United States, and I applaud you for it.

But just because you are the champs doesn't mean you can't do better. So I am urging every one of you to make that little extra effort to make sure that we get the maximum from our soil and from the toil of all of you.

Now there is one question that is always raised that if the farmer produces more, responds to the demands of people in this country and around the world, what kind of protection, what kind of guarantee does the farmer who has made this special effort get?

Let me add this: I promise a fair return, a fully fair and adequate return to the farmers of America, a fair profit on what you put in on your time, your labor, your investment, and your facilities. This is what you deserve and this is what we have to guarantee.

Let me add, if I might, the problems and the concerns of the people of rural America will not be buried under the concrete of big city interests.

There is one comment I would like to make and it is somewhat a sad one. I am particularly disturbed by the wasteful protest, the protest resulting in the slaughtering of calves in Wisconsin just yesterday, at a time when we are trying to increase the supply of food.

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I fully recognize the frustration that prompted this shocking demonstration, but their actions, I think, even if they reflect on it themselves, will contribute nothing, nothing toward a solution to the problem that they face or the problems that our country faces.

I am aware of the cost price squeeze in which livestock producers and feeders find themselves. I have requested from the Department of Agriculture and every other department in the Federal Government the reports that I can look at and analyze, and I will meet very shortly at the White House with fair representation of the farmers and ranchers to get their solutions from them directly.

I am disturbed by the disparity between the reduced earnings of the cattle growers and the higher prices charged to consumers throughout the Nation on the shelves of the supermarkets. And I am asking the new Council on Price and Wage Stability to examine the reasons behind this gap which is paid to the farmer and what must be paid on the other end of the line by the individual consumer.

Something is obviously wrong, and I intend to do what I can to find out the cause and do something about it.

Our livestock producers here in South Dakota obviously cannot tolerate a situation in which calves cost more to raise than they bring at the market place, but there certainly is a better way of redressing these legitimate grievances than by the drastic and wasteful destruction of our food supply.

Now there is another problem which equally concerns me -- the tremendous cost price squeeze in which America's dairymen find themselves. I met last Friday in Washington in the Cabinet Room with a representative group of dairy farmers on the one hand and a group of Democratic and Republican Congressmen and Senators on the other. And they outlined to me the practical problems that the dairy producers in their respective States are faced with.

I am very sympathetic to the problem. I understand the concern of those dairy producers that the United States dairy price system should not be allowed -- and this is very important -- that this price system should not be allowed to be undermined by efforts of foreign dairy producers.

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Now some of these foreign dairy producers, as we know from the sampling that we have taken, are seeking to shift the burden of their own cost price problems to the United States market, aided by artificial incentives from their own Government.

And because of my own concern about the economic problems dairymen are facing, I intend today announcing that no action will be taken to change the present system of dairy import quotas without a thorough review of market conditions and full opportunity for our dairy producers to be heard at that time.

I think the record proves that our farmers can compete with any group of farmers, or the farmers from any nation throughout the world. And I am looking forward to those negotiations where we can equalize our opportunities to compete with foreign markets around the world.

Now these are some of the reasons I am here, to listen to what you have to say, to get your reactions to what I say. I have a button up here that says "WIN". Win now. And I see some signs and I see some buttons in the crowd here.

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People of the United States have always been strong. We have met adversity when we were challenged from abroad. We have met adversity when we were faced with internal difficulties -- the depression and the conflicts of one kind or another -- that have plagued us over some 200 years.

But we found one answer in the political arena that gives us the opportunity to present alternative solutions, to permit candidates who have one philosophy, candidates who have another, to meet in the political arena and we have developed over a period of some 200 years in this great country a two-party system that is wholesome and healthy and gives us in all 50 States the opportunity to participate.

Now, this system of a two-party arrangement protects us because it is an integral part of a system of checks and balances, a system that is not in the Constitution but it is one that has been developed as our political challenges have gone from almost 200 years ago to today.

But if we ever lose the two-party system, if we ever go to a one-party system, we will have the same problems that they have behind the Iron Curtain. If we ever go to a multi-party system with five or ten parties, we will lose that strength that comes from what we have today.

And so, as you proceed with this great election in the State of South Dakota on November 5, what you are really doing is participating in the continuation of a system that has given us so much materially and ideologically, that has made America a blessed Nation for some 213 million people. A country that gives you the freedom of choice in many, many ways as well as politically.

And this election that comes up gives you an opportunity in the solemnity of the ballot box a chance to make a choice, where you are the only judge, where you can decide what is best for your country.

Oh, I know there is no gun so mighty, no force so powerful as the quiet symbol of what you do and what others do throughout our country on November 5. It is the opportunity, it is the responsibility. Actually, it is part of your contribution to a greater America. You can balance the ledger sheets of good government.

I have just an unbelievable faith in the people of South Dakota, as I do the people all over America. We can strengthen the two-party system. You can pick the best candidates and we in America will be blessed by the good judgment of what you do in South Dakota and what your fellow Americans do in every State on November 5.

I thank you. It is a pleasure and a privilege to be here.

END.

(AT 1:54 P.M. CDT)