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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE STATEWIDE FUND RAISING DINNER
FOR INDIANA REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES

INDIANA CONVENTION-EXPOSITION CENTER

9:05 P.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, Mayor Dick Lugar.

I must say it is an unbelievable audience, tremendous in size, and overwhelming in enthusiasm. And I thank you not for whatever impact I might have had, I thank you because you are here to elect Dick Lugar to the United States Senate. And to pay tribute to an outstanding Governor of the State of Indiana, Doc Bowen. And to elect, re-elect those fine members of the Republican delegation in the House of Representatives in Washington like Bill Hudnut and the rest on November 5.

And may I say to the wonderful people who are blocked out by the news media -- and they are all my friends -- I am for an open Administration, and I apologize to the good friends, and the news media inadvertently, unavoidably are precluding me from looking at you, but I will be talking to you as much as I am to the others.

Governor Bowen, members of your administration, my former colleagues in the House of Representatives, Dick Lugar, of course, who I can't wait to be in the United States Senate, and all of you who participated in this great affair, I thank you from the very bottom of my heart.

But let me say, I particularly appreciated the invitation to be here tonight because I had a suspicion that I wouldn't be among enemies, I would be among friendly Americans.

Frankly, I wanted to be visible, and I want to be an accessible President. And obviously I need it.

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Let me tell you why. As I was walking through the lobby, a very friendly lady came up to me, shook my hand, and said, "I know you from somewhere. (Laughter) But I just can't remember your name." (Laughter)

So in a friendly way, I tried to help her out. I said, "I am Jerry Ford." She said, "No, but you are closer." (Laughter)

It is a pleasure to be with all of you here tonight -- so many enthusiastic Republicans, discerning Independents, and wise Democrats. It has been my privilege to visit Indianapolis many times, and I have loved every visit. But I still come away, and particularly on this occasion, more impressed, more enthusiastic about the great future of this city and this great State, and I compliment you.

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Obviously, one of the reasons why I feel so optimistic about Indianapolis is here with us tonight, Dick Lugar.

As I traveled around the country for seven or eight years -- maybe a bit longer -- I traveled some 200,000 miles a year and I had many, many opportunities to meet mayors, other public officials, and I can say without any hesitation or qualification that you in Indianapolis, as many of you claim, a vast majority, you have got the best darned mayor in the United States.

But, you know, the good thing about it is that Dick Lugar will do as much for Indianapolis and the State of Indiana and the country as he has done for this city and that is a darned good recommendation why he ought to be the next United States Senator.

Dick has got a tough fight on his hands. I don't think we ought to gloss it over. I think we ought to be pragmatic and realistic about it. There is a lot of hard political muscle out to beat him. There is a lot of out-of-State money involved in trying to defeat Dick. But with your help, Dick Lugar can make it, and he deserves it.

And if I might add just a little personal note, I think we -- when I say "we", I mean us Michiganders and all of the rest of us around the country -- need a person like Dick representing Indiana and the country in the United States Senate -- a man who will support economy in Government and fight inflation year around, not just in election time. He will vote in Washington as he talks in Indiana.

Let me just conclude this comment or two that I have made about Dick, but I think this represents my firm conviction and I would be remiss if I didn't say it. Dick is young, dynamic, honest, smart, he does his homework, he will be a full-time Senator for Indiana who will represent the responsible, the common sense approach to the issues that Hoosiers believe are important for your State and for our country.

And Dick, I am looking forward to seeing you be sworn in on January 3, 1977 (1975).

I want to add one point that I have indicated at the outset. I have great respect and admiration for Doc Bowen. Again, I have met many mayors and Governors and other public officials, and as I travel around the country I see the good ones and the bad ones.

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It seems to me that you have got one of the best, but you know, I had planned to meet with Doc at the White House a few weeks or a month or so ago, but I found out that like so many doctors these days, he doesn't make house calls any more. (Laughter) So, I have come to see Doc in Indiana.

Well, he is popular. He is hard-working, a great inspiration to the Republican Party and I know I speak for everyone here when I say how grateful Republicans and all other Hoosiers are for his tireless campaigning, for a great candidate, Dick Lugar in this election in 1974.

Thank you very much, Doc.

If I can take just a minute or two and speak from personal experience from the bottom of my heart and the appreciation that I really feel. I served 25 years-plus in the House of Representatives in Washington. It was the greatest experience of my life for many reasons.

But one of the reasons that it meant so much to me was the opportunity to be associated with, to depend on, to rely on the Indiana delegation. And I want to express my utmost gratitude and appreciation to people like Bill Bray, Earl Landgrebe, John Myers, Roger Zion and Dave Dennis -- men I can count on as President to win the battle against inflation. They are good fighters for good programs and they deserve your support down the line.

But there are some that are right in this area. I have spoken about those that are a little further away from Indianapolis -- right in the Marion County area -- you have a special obligation, you who come from this particular part of this great State.

Bill Bray -- gosh, he is a great guy and a first-class Congressman. Bud Hills, a relative newcomer but a darned fine Member of the House and one you should send back. And then we are right in the heartland of Bill Hudnut's district, and believe me, he deserves to be re-elected, and I mean it.

Whether it is Bill Bray, Bud Hills or Bill Hudnut, they are real inflation fighters and they deserve your entire, your total dedication if we are going to win this battle against inflation in the years ahead.

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You know, speaking of Bill Hudnut, Bill is a great friend of mine, but you also know he is an ordained minister, which isn't a bad thing in politics today. (Laughter)

Frankly, I never knew Bill Hudnut was a minister until one day I saw him pick up a phone and call "Dial-A-Prayer," collect. (Laughter)

Well, in Bill's first term in the House of Representatives, he and I developed a very special relationship because our oldest son is going to theological school and I was trying to get some advice and counsel. Yes, in the time that I served with Bill as a Member of the House when he was, I learned to have that sort of inward rapport, that close feeling that here was a person who had all the qualifications to be a first-class Member of the Congress.

And so I am particularly pleased to be in Indianapolis, which is the heartland of his district, and to add my voice -- and if I could vote here -- my vote for Bill Hudnut to be re-elected to the Congress of the United States.

And, Bill, I understand this is your 42nd birthday. Congratulations.

Now, speaking of birthdays, I can't help thinking back to my 42nd. Some of us, including myself, hate to think back that long. It was 19 years ago, in 1955. There is an old saying that many of us recollect, from time to time, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

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Looking back for a moment to 1955, there seems something to it. In 1955, if you will refresh your memories, violence in Cyprus was making headlines. People were worried about peace in the Middle East, and threats of inflation and recession weighed heavily on the minds of a lot of worried Americans.

Here we are 19 years later -- strife in Cyprus, the Middle East is on a very difficult balance right at the moment. On the front page, of course, the economy in America is again a worry.

Americans have been rediscovering a lot of other things, too. In the wake of Vietnam, Watergate, the energy crisis, and the economic challenge, we are learning some of the very basic things that help to build America into the great country it is.

I have in mind, for example, things like the need for integrity in Government, a need for fiscal responsibility to fight inflation, the timeless balance created by founders, those great founders of our country almost 200 years ago between the three branches of Government, and the need for a balance in Congress through a viable two-party system.

I think it is the need for this balance and the challenge it faces in this election that I would like to say a few words about tonight.

A great English statesman of a few decades ago, Lord Acton, once said -- it is a frequently, but I think appropriately, quoted comment from him -- it goes like this: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Again and again the truth of those words has been well proven. Whenever any one branch of Government, any one person, or any class or faction in a country enjoys monopoly of power, corruption and extreme mismanagement are the inevitable result.

Only checks and balances, the free play of different ideas and the vital competitive two-party system in my judgment can preserve a nation's freedom and deal adequately with corruption and wrongdoing in any part of our Government.

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We need the built-in protection now and in the future of a strong, two-party political system in the United States, and the public must stand for it and fight for it and defend it.

Oh, I have listened to the forecasts and the speculation of people who look at the polls and say our party is going to take a shellacking, a licking, on November 5. Well, I don't happen to agree with that. But I do add this, and I say it to every one of you in this tremendous audience -- one of the most impressive audiences I have seen in my many travels and many gatherings: Make no mistake. That is exactly what you are not going to get if you and other responsible citizens stay home on November 5.

You won't have that balance, you won't have that check and balance. If you stay home and do nothing -- which I can't imagine you all doing here -- you will only blindly penalize good Republican candidates for the unfortunate misdeeds of others.

And so such a development, as I see it, would be dangerous at any time, but today perhaps more than perhaps any other time in my political career. We need the maximum effort by all of you and all the people you can enlist and all of the people that you can persuade.

I think if you do that we will have people in Congress willing to work with us, people who will have a vision, people who will have determination, people who will have the vigor to do the right thing on the problems that we face at home and abroad.

Frankly, speaking of inflation, we need people on the Hill who won't go over the hill on the battle against inflation.

If we end up with a lopsided veto-proof Congress, as some people are saying they are going to get or they demand or they insist will be the result of the voters on November 5, let me say this: You will end up with a legislative dictatorship which is totally contrary to the concepts of a free government.

Our forefathers so wisely decided almost 200 years ago that we needed a strong President in the White House. We needed a strong Congress in the Legislative Branch. We needed a strong judicial system headed by the Supreme Court.

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But they were all co-equal, coordinates, and they were to be a check and balance, one against the other. And because we had that balance, we have had freedom and the greatest material benefits and blessings of any nation in the world.

But, if because of negligence, if because of a lack of enthusiasm or participation we end up with a veto-proof Congress, that delicate balance, that finely tuned relationship between the three branches of our Government, will be destroyed, and we will have a legislative dictatorship. And believe me, if we have a legislative dictatorship, tighten your seatbelts, folks, the spending will go right out of the top of the dome of the Capitol.

What I am saying, don't elect the spendthrift Congress. Don't elect a veto-proof Congress. Fight inflation and send back to the House as well as the Senate those individuals in favor of an inflation-proof Congress. That is what will save America.

You know I arrived in town, and as we flew in, I couldn't help but see the Indianapolis Speedway, and gee, that is a great thrill. Somebody said to me, a veto-proof Congress to fight inflation makes about as much sense as going into the Indianapolis Speedway -- or the 500, I should say -- on a skateboard. (Laughter)

In the economic program that I submitted to the Congress, we have 31 different provisions and proposals. It was a package finally put together with the best brains, the best talents, the greatest cooperation and participation by people all over the country.

We had some 12 or 15 mini-summits and we had two or three summits in Washington, and then after all these ideas came from so many, many people, we tried to discard the ones that wouldn't work, and we decided to incorporate those that we thought will.

It was done for this particular purpose. We are faced with high inflation. We had to tighten the screws. On the other hand, in some areas of our country, we have got economic problems. Some people call them a recession, some people describe them otherwise, but the problem is, we do in some areas of this country face difficulties.

So we had to devise a plan or a program that meant a dual challenge, a challenge that could be met if we had the right approach. One of those approaches was to hold down Federal spending. And believe me, that is an awfully important part of our program.

I said to the Congress, "You agree with me that we won't spend more than \$300 billion in this fiscal year, and I will find a way to do it." And we can.

And the kind of people that we have here in Congress on our side of the aisle and the kind you are going to send to Congress with Dick Lugar will help us find those ways.

But there also is another part of that program and I would like to talk about it. I suggested that the Congress ought to bite the bullet. Some people said that I only suggested they take a marshmallow bite. Well, if the Congress doesn't like what I suggested, we will give them some real tough turkey talk very soon.

Now, let me speak, if I might, about one aspect -- the tax suggestions that I made. Let me, at the outset, say I am against, I won't recommend, I will oppose any addition to the gasoline tax as far as the Federal Government is concerned.

Now, let me just speak quite frankly. I think if we are going to be compassionate, we are going to balance the budget, we have to find some new areas of revenue. And there are, I am sure, some people who say I was not the wisest person to recommend some increases on certain elements of our population and taxes.

Well, I wonder if all of you know the real impact of that proposal. Five percent on personal income for everybody who files an income tax with taxable income of over \$15,000. And if it is that, you don't pay any additional tax. If you have a family of four and a \$20,000 income, you pay \$42 more a year or 12 cents every day. Aren't you willing to make that sacrifice to win the battle against inflation?

I just happen to think that the American people at this critical time, at this serious period in our American history, are willing to do battle today if we are going to preserve our form of Government, if we are going to win the battle against inflation and keep a healthy economy. Hoosiers have never backed away from anything and they are not going to back away from this struggle.

And you have the opportunity in this great State, as I look at the eyes of the people out here, to be the leaders, to be the leaders in meeting this challenge. Yes, I think this inspirational group here tonight can be what all of us hope for and seek for, a group of 5,500 people who have got the courage and the wisdom, the vision, the imagination to meet the challenges -- the challenges that are important to the preservation of those things that we think so dear -- that have been given to us by the sacrifices of so many before us.

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And let me conclude, if I might, by reminding Democrats, Independents and Republicans, and the like, November 5th is just a few days away. It is closer than you think. And Congressional elections for the Senate and for the House are really what it is all about in 1974.

I think you have to sit back and take a close look at the stewardship of people who are candidates for re-election and candidates who seek election. I have no doubt that you can support the people who have served you on our side of the aisle, because they are first-class. I have no doubt that as you reflect in your home or in that voting booth, that you can support a person like Dick Lugar.

If I were a Hoosier, believe me, I could support him with vigor and vehemence and with a good, clear conscience.

There is nothing in America really like the sanctity of the voting booth. That is where you have an opportunity to reflect on what is best for America. And as I talk to Dick and as I have worked with our candidates and our incumbents from Indiana, my reflection in that voting booth would give me a clear message, they are the kind of people that will lick inflation. They are the kind of people that will give America the leadership in trying to preserve the peace. They are the kind of people that will fight for and preserve the two-party system. They are the kind of people that you will be proud of on the basis of personal integrity and Government service dedication. And they are the kind of people that will be a part of this great bipartisan effort that we have to have if we are going to solve our problems, either at home or abroad.

Yes, your support for them, not just for you individually, not just because of what they can do for your Congressional district or your city, or your State, but more importantly, what they can do for what is good for America and what is good for people around the world.

They will be a part of a strong and responsive Congress.

And as one commentator put it on television last week, and let me quote, "I am looking for a Congress that will praise the Lord and pass the legislation."

Thank you very, very much.

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(AT 9:30 P.M. CDT)