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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT
GREENVILLE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

2:01 P.M. EDT

Distinguished guests at the head table, all of you wonderful South Carolinans:

It is just a wonderful experience for me to be here in South Carolina. We arrived early, had a fine airport reception at Spartanburg, we had a delightful meeting down in Anderson, and we had a fantastic meeting in Rock Hill.

It is just wonderful to be here in Greenville, and I thank you all for your hospitality, your enthusiasm, and I like all of you wonderful people from South Carolina. Thank you very much.

I wish Betty were with me. She had planned to come, but we had a little problem develop. But let me say, as I left this morning, she said to say hello to everybody from South Carolina. She is feeling great. Thank you very, very much.

We had an interesting experience over at Rock Hill. They had a little seven- or eight-year-old girl come up and give the Pledge of Allegiance. I was sitting next to Len Phillips, and on Len's right was Senator Thurmond.

This young lady, after leading the Pledge of Allegiance, came by and I thanked her and Len Phillips thanked her and then Strom Thurmond, he kissed her. (Laughter)

Well, this sort of makes me think of the motto of the great sovereign State of South Carolina: "Prepared in Spirit and Resources." You know, Strom Thurmond certainly exemplifies that. (Laughter)

I think there are two days in particular every year which prove that Strom has really been prepared in spirit and in resources. One is election day and the other is Father's Day. (Laughter)

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(OVER)

But all kidding aside, one of the great experiences that I have enjoyed in the 26 years that I have been in Washington, almost all of it in the Congress, was getting to know an outstanding Senator like Strom Thurmond -- courageous, a man of character, dedication, devotion. You are lucky to have him in the State of Carolina.

Well, it is great, especially to be here in Greenville. They tell me it is the textile capital of the world. On the other hand, I would have been not at all surprised if I had found nobody here today. I thought everybody would be at the Clemson homecoming, and I apologize if I have kept you from it.

I am grateful for the sacrifice that you have made, and I am also indebted to you for being here to join with me in paying tribute to one of your fellow South Carolinians, the Secretary of Commerce, Fred Dent, who has done a superb job as the head of the Department of Commerce.

Fred, we are grateful.

Next Monday I understand the Southern Textile Exposition opens here in Greenville, which will be another reminder of the great contribution that this area, this State, makes to a healthy American economy.

The textile industry, the apparel industries, are important to this State, but they are equally important to our country as a whole. And I am fully aware of the competitive situation that is facing the textile industry and the apparel industry. But let me say that if we win the battle against inflation, if we get through the Congress with the help of the American people, the economic program that I submitted to the Congress and to the American people about ten days ago, the textile and the apparel industry in this State will thrive even better than it ever has in the past and will make an equally great, if not greater, contribution to the industrial well-being of our great country.

I am confident that that program is good. I believe the Congress recognizes it, and I trust when they get back from this next election, they will adopt it. It will be good for all of us.

I have already said to you what a friend and what a great Congressman I think Strom Thurmond is. He sort of bridges that generation gap, and he gets the support, as he deserves it, from young and old, from all segments of our society, or your society, in South Carolina, and I congratulate you for having the wisdom of having Strom represent you for so long and so well.

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But to go along with Strom, I think that you need a strong State government because Strom and Floyd Spence and Ed Young and your new Republican Congressman you are going to elect, are going to continue to transfer the power from Washington back to the States and back to local units of government, which is where we can have the best government because it is closer to the people.

If you are going to implement that program of seeking to get Government at the local and State level, you need a person like Jim Edwards as the next Governor of the great State of South Carolina.

Jim has had the experience in the State legislature. He is a mover. He is a reform-oriented individual in politics, and this is what you need and what South Carolina needs if we are going to achieve the concept to implement the program of New Federalism.

There is always better Government at the local and State level, particularly if you have people like Jim Edwards and his running mate, Carroll Campbell, as Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the State of South Carolina.

It has been my observation in some 26 years in politics that a political monopoly, one party in absolute power too long is never a good thing, statewide or nationally. Jim Edwards can clear away the cobwebs and bring some new light, new dedication to State government here in South Carolina.

Obviously, he has Strom's and my full support, and I hope and trust that you will give it from yourself to him. And I can't help but be impressed by the fact that in Gwen Bush you have a mighty fine candidate for the United States Senate.

And as I have traveled around the State today and as I have been here before, I am proud to have on our ticket the quality candidates that I have seen and talked with. Of course, you are familiar with Floyd Spence up here, one of those real fine, strong, dedicated Members of the House of Representatives.

Then Ed Young, he joined us at the time of the 1972 election, strong, tough, able, dedicated. When I was the Minority Leader of the House, he was great, he was wonderful, he helped me tremendously and I hope that you send Ed back, along with Floyd.

Marshall Parker was with me up in Anderson. Fantastic. We dedicated a new building for the two newspapers up there. I expected maybe a couple, 300 or 500 people. How many were there, Strom? Ten thousand, ten thousand people. I think Marshall Parker is going to win, and he will be a great Member of the House of Representatives.

Then we just came from Rock Hill. How many people were there, Strom? Ten or twelve thousand in Rock Hill, a tremendous crowd. The enthusiasm convinces me that Len Phillips is going to win that election in that Fifth Congressional District.

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Bob Watkins, who I met for the first time today in the Fourth District -- Bob is a good candidate. I certainly wish him the very, very, very best.

A few moments ago, I mentioned the need and the necessity for the two-party system, how it has grown and thrived under the leadership and the guidance, the inspiration of Strom Thurmond. I happen to think that a two-party system brings competition to the political arena.

I know from my own experience that competition in athletics is good for the players, the spectators. I know that competition in business is good for the businessman, for the consumer. I know in education or law or any other field of endeavor, competition is a necessary ingredient if we want the best produced for those who will be the beneficiaries.

And it is exactly true in politics. A two-party system generates that kind of competition. It gives individuals who go into that sacred voting booth a choice. And, gee, we want a choice.

And that brings up something that I would like to speak on, if I might. A choice today as far as the battle against inflation ~~is~~ concerned is a choice on the one hand between the big spender or the savers. And I happen to believe from personal observation -- and I watched it for 25 years in the House of Representatives -- the Republican Members of the House and the Senate are primarily the savers, and their opposition are the spenders.

And if we are going to win the battle against inflation, we have to have more savers than spenders. That is why I ought to have Republicans.

I know what some of the people who want a different kind of a Congress are saying, because they have read some of the polls, they have listened to some of the political seers, they are just wringing their hands for the opportunity of getting in their grasp what they call a veto-proof Congress.

Veto-proof Congress. What does that mean? It means that it will totally upset the basic concept that has been so good for America -- balance. Our forefathers, particularly yours from South Carolina, when they joined with others and met in the City of Philadelphia to draft our Constitution, wove into our Constitutional balance, checks and balances.

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They didn't want a dictator in either the Congress, or the White House or the courts. And they had this system of checks and balances, and because of it, we have ended up with freedom and opportunity and material blessings beyond any expectation.

But if they get in their grasp a veto-proof Congress, they will upset that balance. I don't think we want a veto-proof Congress which would be a legislative dictatorship. You want balance so the President has an input, the Congress has an input, the Supreme Court has an input.

So we have a mission, in my humble judgment, between now and November 5, to maximize our efforts to make sure, to make positive that they don't get this legislative dictatorship which some of them want.

If I have my choice -- let's forget the veto-proof Congress, let's get an inflation-proof Congress. Doesn't that make a lot more sense?

I can't help but say a word or two at this point about a conversation I had not too many months before he died with the late, great President, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Obviously he was a hero to literally millions of Americans, beloved by all. He came into the Presidency with the massive support of people from all over the country, both political parties.

I don't think Ike really considered himself a politician. No one, on the other hand, knew better than General Eisenhower how vital a two-party system is to the future of this country.

Just a few months before his death at his farm in Gettysburg, I had an opportunity to talk to Ike. He shared with me his own personal views and convictions on the two-party system. And what he told me is even more timely today than it was then.

And if I can paraphrase his words, this is roughly what he said: We are tending too much in the direction of a one-party system in the United States. We are awfully close to a political monopoly of power in America.

Ike went on to explain, as only he could say it -- he said that if we have an approximately equal balance, an approximate equality in the Congress in both political parties, it will keep one political party from running away with the things. It will keep one political party from bowing to the extremists.

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But if we lack this balance in the Congress, if one party stays in power far too long, it will become increasingly difficult to stop its successes.

And this is what has been happening for far too long on Capitol Hill in the House as well as in the Senate. We have a party controlling the Congress today that has controlled the national legislative process for 38 out of the last 42 years, and for the past 20 straight years.

It is a Congress, in my judgment, that is stacked against fiscal responsibility. And if they increase their power instead of lose, if they multiply their strength, let me just make one observation: With a veto-proof Congress of the kind of membership they will get, tighten your seatbelts, folks. They will spend the dome of the Capitol right off Capitol Hill.

So what I am urging you to do here in a great State like South Carolina, to make sure that you contribute -- Floyd Spense, Ed Young -- reelect them. Make sure that you add to the South Carolina delegation -- and you have got some outstanding candidates that can serve that will avoid, will roadblock, will hamstring that kind of a veto-proof Congress.

That kind of reputation in the House of Representatives will fight a legislative dictatorship, will preclude it. And so what I am saying to you is, do your best to send us some more troops. If you do, we can save the two-party system. And if you send us those new Congressmen, then I think the chances are very good that you will have Jim Edwards and Carroll Campbell running your State here in South Carolina.

What we want are people who are strong, effective, dedicated, honest, men of experience, men who will truly represent the kind of philosophy in which all of you believe.

And now let me simply conclude with this observation. You know I think it is more than just whatever material interest you might have. I think you have a far broader reason to make a maximum effort. And the fact that you are here at a fund-raising lunch, is indicative of your concern.

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But you have roughly a few more days than two weeks to do more. And it is not just a personal satisfaction. You have almost an honor and a duty to do something about it.

I happen to think the chips are down. It really results in a sacred duty.

Robert E. Lee once said, and I quote: "Duty is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less."

That admonition from a great American ought to be your motto between now and November 5.

That is what I ask of each and every one of you. Do your best. Yes, your best for your party, your State, and your Nation. And if we all do it, we can transform these difficult days, the problems at home, and our challenges abroad, and instead of looking at America from the dim eyes of the prophets of doom, we can look at the future of America that will be the America of our fondest visions.

And we have that obligation--an obligation to ourselves, yes, but more importantly, to those generations to come. That is what you want. That is what I want. That is what we must do.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 2:22 P.M. EDT)