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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
GOP RECEPTION

HOSPITALITY INN

6:40 P.M. EST

May I say just a word, and it will be very, very short, because it has been a long day, but a wonderful day, and there is no way I can express in words or sentences or in paragraphs or a speech, the appreciation that I have for all of the wonderful people who are here.

I look at so many of you, and I cannot help but be appreciative of what you have done for Betty and for me over the 13 past elections where, you know, without your support, I could not have been in the Congress and therefore could not have been in a position where I finally got where I am today.

But without all that you have done -- and I don't mean financially, because I know how hard most of you have worked in the vineyards as precinct people, as party workers, as well as donors, and this kind of just deep feeling, whether you agreed with me on every issue -- and as I look around the room, I see some people who have written some critical letters from time to time -- but at least you had an open door then, and the truth is you will have an open door now.

So on behalf of Betty -- and I will say to you that she is deeply apologetic -- this is not quite the right word -- that she is not out here, but she is doing great -- she is just coming along fine. She is giving me a few harsh words, and I know that is the fact that she is getting better and better. And I am being silenced more and more, and that is a sign that I am noticing that she is better and better.

So on behalf of Betty and myself, I thank you all for coming.

Now let me make one quick observation. I used to be, as an outside observer, as Minority Leader in the House of Representatives, going down to talk with Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents. And I wondered how the Office operated. Well, I am learning.

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And as Harry Truman once said, "The buck stops here." And the trouble is that you have to say yes or no, you cannot say maybe. And the net result is that you have to disappoint some, and hopefully please a few others. But what I am pledged to do -- to you and to millions of others -- I am going to do it as I see best from the point of view of anybody and everybody.

I think most of you knew my working schedule when I was around Grand Rapids, and the surrounding area. It started very early and ended very late. It has not changed, and it is not going to change. I love it. I thrive on it. And the net result is that you can get a lot more work done in 12 and 14 hours than you can in 8, and we are going to keep working at it, and we are going to do the very best we know how. And we are going to call them as we see them.

There are some tough decisions, but I happen to believe, despite some of the comments, that we are making headway overseas. I have gotten not one but several reports from Henry Kissinger every day he has been gone. We are encouraged, whether it is in Moscow, whether it is in India -- and I am confident that we are going to continue to make progress in the solution of the difficult problems in the Middle East, between Greece and Cyprus and Turkey.

I am confident we are going to strengthen and solidify the Western Alliance. We are looking forward to the trip to Vladivostok to meet Mr. Brezhnev. We hope to have a successful, and I believe we will, meeting in Japan as well as South Korea.

All of this is aimed at peace, not only for this year, but for a long, long time. And that is what our objective is.

Now, I am not going to stand here in front of so many of you and deny that we are having some troubles, economically, at home. I never tried to kid anybody when I was campaigning on 13 different occasions. I am going to tell you the truth. We have some problems at home, economically, both because the economy is a little soft on the one hand, and inflation is a little high on the other.

But the program I submitted to the Congress -- if it is enacted, if it is implemented in its entirety -- will get over both problems, will strengthen the economy, and will whip inflation. So let's work for that kind of a program.

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Now, if I could conclude with one political observation. I have known the Goebel family a long time. I first knew that family when Paul Goebel, Sr. was officiating high school games around Grand Rapids and I was a beginner in the football arena in this area.

I have to tell you a personal story. Paul, one time when he was officiating a game -- this is Paul, Sr., who is about five inches taller than I -- I must have made some infraction of the rules and he grabbed me and said, "Ford, you did this." I did not argue with him. (Laughter)

But Paul Goebel, Sr. set a great example for his son, as my father did for me. As you know, my father, I think, was one of the great citizens of this community, our State, and the Nation.

And I think Paul Goebel, Sr. fits the same pattern and the same category, but he has got a great son in Paul, Jr. I hope and trust that Paul, Jr. will be elected to the Congress.

I know Paul. I have known him from his early youth. I watched his political progress. I have seen what he can do, and how he has made honest, conscientious, tough decisions.

I cannot imagine someone doing a finer job in this Congressional district than Paul Goebel, Jr., and I strongly urge you, from the depth of my conviction and dedication, urge you to maximize your efforts on behalf of Paul. He is the kind of guy I would like in Washington.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 7:07 P.M. EST)