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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PUBLIC RALLY FOR SENATOR DOLE
CENTURY II CONVENTION CENTER

8:37 P.M. CST

Thank you very, very much, Bob, Larry Winn, Garner Shriver, Keith Sebelius, Bob Bennett, other distinguished office holders and candidates, wonderful Kansans:

It is great to be here despite the weather. I love you. Thank you.

You know, it just came to my attention as I was sitting here that I have been at a good many cities, communities, in the last several months as I have tried to get out and meet people and talk to the American people. And we have had abnormally wonderful weather, until tonight. There were only two places where we had any rain -- one in Tucson, Arizona, where they are never supposed to have any, and the other in my home of Grand Rapids, Michigan, when I went back for a homecoming last week.

Well, they were great in both Tucson and Grand Rapids, and you are superb here in Wichita. And I thank you for your warm, friendly, enthusiastic welcome.

As Bob was going through the process of making the introduction, I tried to think of how many times, how many places I have been in Kansas in the last 25-plus years as a Member of the House, as Minority Leader, as Vice President and President.

And I wrote down, I think, most of them -- I am sure I missed some -- but we went out to Great Bend. Wasn't that wonderful out there last year? It rained there too, but that was all right. But I have been in Dodge City, and you know what they do to you in Dodge City.

And I have been in Kansas City, Kansas, just recently, and I have been in Wichita here several times. Well, I like Kansas.

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(OVER)

I like Kansas because of the people, but I have another good reason. It has been the home of one of the finest Presidents this Nation has ever known, the great Statesman from Abilene, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

As you look at the history of Ike Eisenhower, you know that he set a standard of integrity, achievement, that is everlasting, both to his country and to his State. Ike's record was unblemished and I pledge to you that I will do the very best of my ability to follow the path and the footsteps of that great American. If I can achieve just a bit of what he did, it will be worth every hour, every day of anything I can do in the years ahead.

I have another reason to enjoy coming to Kansas. The campaigns here always seem to have a little more fun than other States. You know, take the race for Governor. Somebody just told me the latest Republican slogan. It goes something like this: "Let's put Bob Bennett in the driver's seat and keep Vern Miller in the trunk." (Laughter)

It is obvious from the reaction that you have a great candidate in Bob Bennett. His honesty, reliability, complete and total integrity -- the only thing that Bob has ever covered up is his chin.

But speaking of things that, you know, get a little different perspective once in a while -- a long time ago when I was at the University of Michigan I played center on the football team and normally, of late at least, I have been getting some very stately and dignified introductions. But I can remember quite vividly an introduction I got about a month ago from an old teammate of mine. He was a quarterback and in the process of the introduction he said, "I played center on the same football team with Jerry Ford. I was a quarterback, but I want you to know I got a little different perspective of the President than most of you." (Laughter)

Well, as I have looked at the great Republican slate that the party has put up here for the Senate, State offices, Congress, I must say I am proud to be a Republican and I hope you will all support me.

Having said that, let me add this as a post-script. I am not here just because of party labels and as Bob said, I suspect there are many in this audience who are here who are Democrats, Independents, Republicans, but I am here to say a word of personal support for those individuals that I know and who I know, over the past years, have done a super job in working in the Congress for Kansas, for you, for our country.

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I come because of a personal affection that I have for everyone whose name I mentioned and a respect for a group of people that I have known since all of them came to the Congress because I came before any one of them.

And I have seen them come. I have seen them grow. I have seen them assume great responsibilities far beyond that of others in comparable seniority.

Bob Dole, for example, I got to know Bob when he came and spent eight years in the House of Representatives -- all of it I was not the Minority Leader, but a part of it was and the rest of the time I was a senior Member of the House Committee on Appropriations. And I learned then, in that capacity, in these responsibilities, that Bob was smart, hard-working, independent, and I can assure you that when he disagrees with you, it is firm; it is a little friendly, but it is firm.

He can disagree without being disagreeable. But what I want you to know is that his independence is predicated on conscience and his support, when he can and does, is based on teamwork. You just could not get a better combination. So, if I were in Kansas, I know who I would vote for.

I have talked about a personal relationship. Let me talk to you about a very pragmatic reason why you in Kansas should support Bob. Next year, with a new Congress, Bob will be the senior Republican Member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture.

You in Kansas have a great State. I won't get into the argument of whether seniority is right or wrong. The fact of life is that in the Senate of the United States, they will keep that system and Bob will be in that very influential position which has a great impact as far as your State is concerned.

But the combination of that responsibility on the one hand, and a Member of the Senate Finance Committee on the other, plus the added duty under a new set-up of being on the Senate Budget Committee -- I don't know how Bob is going to handle all these great responsibilities, except I know him, and I know he will do all three in a first-class way for Kansas, and the country. So, as a pragmatic reason, you darned well ought to vote for Bob for the United States Senate.

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I am told Bob is in for the political fight of his life. I suspect that is true. But Bob has been through those fights before. He did it in the service of his country. He has done it in one political campaign after another. And I say the test of the man is the achievement that he has accomplished.

And when I look at his record, believe me, you just could not do better.

So I am here to help in any way I can to say to Kansans, whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or Independents: You ought to keep something that is as good as Bob is, and he is great.

I have also gotten to know all of your House Members extremely well. After all, it was part of my duty as the Republican Minority Leader for almost ten years to try and corral votes to organize the minority, to do the best job we could despite the fact that we were outnumbered 240-something to 180-something.

The Kansas delegation always seems to have quality, and in Garner Shriver you have got one who has nothing but quality, and he comes from this great community, Wichita, in this great Congressional district.

Garner deserves your support.

And let me say again, going from what I would say would be maybe ideological reasons to pragmatic reasons. A little over a year ago, we had a fuel oil shortage. I can recall vividly in the process of allocating a shortage, the initial decision was to cut back the portion or the allocation for general aviation.

I was Vice President then. Larry Winn, Garner Shriver, Bob Dole, Joe Skubitz, Keith Sebelius -- all of them came and knocked on my door, but the ones who came first for good and sufficient reason, were Bob Dole and Garner Shriver. And the result was that you got a better break and therefore you ought to support them just on that grounds, if not for any other reason.

Well, I don't have to say a lot about Larry Winn, Joe Skubitz, Keith Sebelius. They all have tremendous records. They have done a great job. We are not in their respective districts. You just ought to be darned proud of the Kansas delegation. They are responsible and they are responsive, and how much better could you ask a delegation than to have that kind of a reputation?

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Now let me speak, if I might, about some issues. Our biggest problem is twofold. Our biggest problem is to keep a strong economy, to whip the problems of inflation, to save the energy that we have, and develop plans and programs to produce more.

That is our domestic issue. On the other hand we have a major responsibility of maintaining the peace and building and broadening and expanding it, working with our allies, trying to expand our relationship with any potential adversaries.

Yes, those are serious problems, and I know some have predicted that the United States is in worse shape than some of our partners in Europe.

Others say they are far worse off than we. And then they make allegations that the free world as a whole -- economically, militarily, diplomatically -- is in serious trouble, and that we should be cowed by and we should be fearful of those who have a different ideology or political philosophy.

Let me start out by making this one strong, categorical, firm statement. I have faith in America. We are going to make it, and our allies and our philosophy will prevail, both at home and abroad.

Now we have to do this with the help and assistance of Republicans, Democrats and Independents. I know in some instances partisanship has interjected itself, become a principal element in some of the Congressional or Senatorial or gubernatorial races.

Well, in the case of Bob Bennett, I don't know why it should, because you have a great candidate and he is going to win. I don't know why it should in the case of Bob Dole because he has a proven record, both at home and abroad.

I don't know why it should in the case of Larry Winn or Garner or Joe Skubitz or Keith or your fine new candidate, John Peterson. These are people who ought to be supported just on the basis of their backgrounds and experience and their dedication.

And I am not going to condemn a Democrat -- because there are some good ones -- but what I am concerned about is the kind of strength in programs and policies.

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Let me take the problem of inflation and strengthening our economy, saving energy, 31-point program.

I think it is good. I believe it will meet the challenges that we face. One of the important ingredients is to hold down Federal spending. There are other parts of it, but I know that Bob Dole, Larry, Joe, Garner, and the others are the kind of people who will be most effective in holding down unnecessary spending, and you and I know that Federal spending of the magnitude that we have had over the last 10 or 15 years has been a significant cause of the inflation that we have today.

So when you go into that voting booth next Tuesday, take a look at the voting record of those individuals on this issue. It is important to you if we are going to win this battle to save our economic system from the disasters of others historically, and to give us the strength to meet the challenges of some of the weaknesses in our economy.

But let us turn, if I might, to the problem of building, strengthening, expanding peace. When I went to the Congress 26 years ago, or almost that, a great, great Democratic President working with a fine Republican Congress--the Eightieth--laid the foundation for the rehabilitation of Europe and the broadening of our free world throughout the total globe.

It was started with the Greek-Turkish aid and the Marshall Plan, and some of the other programs implemented by a military capability and strength that is aimed at deterrents, not at aggression.

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And you in Wichita have a significant part of it with the Boeing operation here. Strength means peace and weakness means war.

Well, anyhow, this combination of strength in the diplomatic field and the military has given to us in this great country, and to our allies, this kind of opportunity worldwide. And it has given us the opportunity to open the doors of greater and broader relationships with some of our potential adversaries, whether it is the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China.

We, at this moment, have a unique opportunity, both at home and abroad, to do something to give us for the next decades -- not one, two or maybe three -- a brighter America and a better world. And when you look at this next election -- and I don't mean in a partisan sense -- what you have to decide is, who, what Members of the Congress, what candidates, are best qualified to give us strength here and vision and strength abroad.

I think you have got them in the kinds of people I have mentioned, and I know you have because I have worked with them. I have seen them under pressure. I have seen them do things that might not have been popular at the moment because they were right. I have seen them just perform as wonderful representatives of the people of Kansas and the people of the United States.

One of the great men of this, and any, century, of course, was Winston Churchill. He led, as we all know, Great Britain through a period of far, far greater danger than anything we face today. But he, too, like myself, was an optimist. When many, many in Great Britain, and some of the free world back in those dark days in the late 1930s, had given up, Winston Churchill would not succumb to tyranny or the dark era or age of defeat.

Churchill still -- and I can recall vividly because I was driving a car in, I think it was 1939, and I heard that wonderful blood, sweat and tears speech -- it was a great speech in an era, in a period, in a day of challenge to Britain.

Sometimes, maybe we ought to go back and listen to what Winston Churchill said in that hour of darkness for Britain and the free world. But he said then and not that precise day, but on another occasion, and I quote: "Do not let us speak of darker days. Let us speak of sterner days. There are not dark days. These are just the great days." I say to you in all sincerity, we are living in great days.

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We are going to have to work maybe a little harder and sacrifice just a bit more. But if we do our best, and keep the faith in ourselves and our values, America and all the other great things that we, as a country, stand for, our Nation will emerge stronger and better than ever.

I know there are some who wish to have the Government do something for everybody in massive amounts, but as they seek to promote these kinds of efforts in the short-haul, I do not think they really forecast what the long-pull means.

Let me put it this way: I think it is fair to say a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

So, as I close my participation in this great campaign -- and I have no apologies for traveling some 20,000 or more miles -- being away from the Oval Office, seeing people as I did in Los Angeles, in Fresno, in Portland, Salt Lake, and here in Wichita, being in many other places for the last month or six weeks -- I think the American people have the right to see their President and to have him discuss face-to-face with them his views and to get from them, by one means or another, their reactions, their views, their expressions. This is what I think America was built on.

The town hall concept may be a little out of date, but the town hall concept was good enough to take America through the Revolution and all the other trials and tribulations that followed, and if it was good enough in those days, I think it is good enough for a President to participate in 1974.

And so, as we move to that fateful day next Tuesday, not in a partisan sense, but in an objective sense, I think we should all say a little prayer before we go into the sanctity of that voting booth where you and your neighbors will make some decisions that will have a great impact on you individually and your community, on your State, on your Nation, and some four billion people all over this great globe.

So, do the best yourself and find literally hundreds of others to get them to do their best under these circumstances.

I ask you to pray, for the benefit of our country and all mankind, and to do your duty.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 9:05 P.M. CST)