

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL 4:30 P.M., E.S.T.

JANUARY 24, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED TO THE RADIO-TELEVISION
NEWS DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

Thank you for coming today. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss with you the programs I have proposed to the Congress -- for their success depends to a large extent on the understanding and cooperation of the American public.

The more information the public receives on what I have proposed, the better chance they stand of being implemented, in my opinion. Because of the power of the electronic media, your role therefore is an especially vital one.

In the past week, three aspects in particular of my State of the Union message have been stressed.

They are the tax rebate, the increase in the oil import tariffs, and the proposed ceiling on increases in government wages and Social Security and other benefits.

But these three are only part of a much more complex design for pulling this Nation out of the economic doldrums and the energy crisis -- a design which has been largely ignored in the arguments over parts of the overall plan. The important fact is that the energy plan, which has been reviewed by both Secretary Morton and FEA Administrator Zarb here today, goes far beyond trying to reduce consumption of imported oil through price levers. It tackles the need for more domestic sources, better use of energy, and research for new energy sources.

In short, what we need is to restyle the entire national approach to energy production and consumption. This is a complex topic, which our energy program is designed to meet and solve. But the public needs to better understand it -- and I hope you can help us provide this understanding.

Now, the one-time tax rebate is a matter of great concern because it deals directly with the manner and amount of money to be put back in the taxpayers' pockets.

This rebate has been integrated very carefully with the other tax proposals. We were not looking at just one segment of the economic picture. In drawing up the proposals, the emphasis was on the continuing economic health of all taxpayers -- low as well as middle income citizens.

But our economic recovery obviously cannot be accomplished simply by a one-shot tax rebate. If we are to return to a stable, balanced and growing business climate, we must pursue a program that treads a prudent line between economic stimulation and personal sacrifice.

Of course, a proposal such as the five-percent ceiling on Social Security increases for 1975 is a perfect target for irresponsible politicking. There is a legitimate national concern, which I share, about the impact of inflation on the fixed incomes of older Americans. The proposed ceiling on the size of these increases in Federal benefits is coupled with plans for a moratorium on new Federal spending and a ceiling on Federal salaries.

(MORE)

It may be good politics for some critics to suggest we start reducing the growth in Federal spending somewhere else. But the time has arrived when politically unpopular decisions must be made.

If we do not begin that task, we will be doing disservice to the people we most want to help.

Fortunately, there is something in our national character that summons strength when the country is confronted with difficult challenges. That is why I believe the American people will accept and respond to the economic and energy proposals we have laid before them and before the Congress.

I will continue to take my case directly to the American public. Just as I believe it is the President's duty to make the hard choices, I also believe the choices must be explained to the most important forum there is -- the citizens. Your help in accomplishing this task is vitally needed. I appreciate the concern you have shown by joining us here today.

Thank you.

#