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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED UPON THE SIGNING
OF THE BUDGET MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

No single act a President can take sets forth our national goals and priorities so completely -- so clearly -- as the annual budget message to the Congress. That is why I am particularly pleased to see here this morning so many of you who worked so long on this document -- to witness this signing ceremony which is the culmination of these efforts.

Both custom and good manners call for the Chief Executive to seek the cooperation of the Congress -- and to pledge his own -- as he submits the budget.

The size of the projected deficit requires me to go far beyond custom and good manners in pledging my utmost cooperation. Together, we must stimulate the economy and reduce the rate at which certain federal expenditures have been growing in the past ten years.

If these were normal economic times, the Congress would be receiving a budget in balance for the coming fiscal year rather than one with such a large deficit.

But these are not normal times, and the measures I propose -- to give the economy a boost with tax rebates and reductions, and to provide greatly expanded assistance to the unemployed -- are responsible for some of the deficit. Lagging receipts from tax revenues contribute to most of the remainder of this deficit.

Without question, our immediate task is the restoration of active growth in our economy -- and that goal is reflected in the projected budget deficit.

To sustain our economic growth over the long haul, we must begin now to set a new course that will bring our future national budgets into balance during periods of good economic growth.

Although this budget carries with it a fifty-two billion dollar deficit, this amount will be even larger if the Congress fails to go along with reductions totaling seventeen billion dollars which I have requested. If we are to achieve long-range economic stability in this country, free from ever-rising inflation, we must put into effect permanent reductions in program expenditures.

As I said at the press briefing on the budget last Saturday, it has become a commonly accepted view that some government expenditures are uncontrollable -- that they will continue whether we like it or not. I firmly reject that view. They are controllable if the Congress and the President join together to hold down excessive spending. This budget is designed to bring some of these so-called "uncontrollable" programs back into line. I ask the Congress to work with me toward this objective.

Despite the huge deficit we project, the budget being submitted today is a compassionate one. It has muscle as well. It has discipline and honest self-denial. It is a start in a new direction along the permanent road of fiscal integrity which Americans must achieve for the long-term economic good of our country.

(MOR E)

I am pleased that Roy Ash and some of his staff from the Office of Management and Budget could be here today -- because Roy is returning shortly to private life.

Like the good soldier he is, Roy stayed on to finish the job he began in putting this budget together. He stuck to it until the last comma and the final period were in place.

Roy may be one of the most unappreciated men in Washington -- but not by me. I will miss his "tough" instincts and sound counsel.

James Lynn will be taking over a tight ship from Roy, and I look to him to enhance further the capability of solid management so necessary to that office.

At times like this, a simple "thanks" may sound inadequate. But the dictionary defines the term as an expression of gratitude and appreciation. And that is what this administration -- and this President -- owes Roy Ash.

Roy, I hate to see you go but I must warn you: I have your unlisted telephone number in Los Angeles.

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