

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT A RECEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS OF  
THE YOUNG REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

THE EAST ROOM

4:34 P.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much.

At the outset, let me express, on behalf of Betty and our daughter, Susan, how glad we are that all of you are here. We hope you are going to enjoy the White House and relax and have a good time.

We think this is a great home. It is a great home. (Laughter.) And Betty does not like to move very often. (Laughter.)

I guess that leads to the conclusion that I am going to undoubtedly, without any question of a doubt, at the proper time, be a candidate, and I intend to be a candidate for a political party that is devoted to the basic principles that have built this country from a small Nation of some three million to a strong, vigorous, effective Nation of over 213 million people.

We are a party that believes in a strong national defense program, a program that will keep the peace and give us the opportunity to negotiate for a more permanent and a better environment around the world. But we have to have a national defense program that is adequately funded, that has a sufficient amount of money to buy the weapons, train the people, give the direction to our Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, so that they can keep the peace for us and the rest of the world.

The Republican Party that I believe in is a party that also, in addition to maintaining the peace, is a party that believes in the free enterprise system and an economy that is strong and that will grow and get stronger.

Now we, in 1968 and 1972, had good party platforms. We did, in those years, seek to implement those platforms, and I intend to do my utmost to implement those platforms and those programs between now and the next election. And if we do, we will win in 1976.

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Unfortunately, in 1974 we had a bad election year. An awful lot of Republicans did not vote. Far more Democrats, percentage-wise, participated in that off-year election.

Our Republicans did not go to the polls. Our organization was not as effective and we had some problems. The economy was beginning to deteriorate and we had other difficulties that were very adverse to the Republican candidates all across the country.

We are going to have a good program in our platform in 1976. It will be based on the concepts of the free enterprise system, continuation of a strong national security program, and a maximum effort to improve and make wholesome and healthy our economy.

Now if we do that -- and I believe we will achieve those results -- all of you in this organization -- and you are the young, vigorous people who can be effective -- can help us tremendously because you will be out there working at the grassroots level. And I say to you that our party can and will challenge those who are in the Democratic party who do not agree with what we are trying to do.

A long time ago I started in the Young Republicans. I was proud of my affiliation then. I am proud of my dedication to the Republican Party today, and I think you, as you move in the political mainstream, can also achieve great success, perhaps for yourself, perhaps for the party, but more importantly for the country.

Now we do have some problems. We do not control the Congress of the United States. We did very badly in the last elections, only 28 percent, as I recall, actually got out and participated, or 38 percent -- I am sorry -- in the last election. It is a pretty dismal performance. I don't know whether we worked hard enough; I don't know whether we failed with our economic problems or the other difficulties that beset us, but 1976 is going to be a different year.

It is my honest judgment that we are going to have great progress in the further pursuit of peace. We are going to have a great improvement in our economy. We are going to be fielding strong candidates for the House as well as for the Senate.

And if we have the kinds of results that I anticipate, then we can look forward to great success in 1976 and a Republican President for the next four years, and hopefully a Republican Congress come January, 1977.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 4:45 P.M. EDT)