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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
CUYOHOGA COUNTY FUND-RAISING DINNER

THE CLEVELAND SHERATON HOTEL

7:52 P.M. EDT

Jack Dwyer, Governor Rhodes, Senator Bob Taft, Representative Bill Stanton, Congressman Ralph Regula, Mayor Perk, my old friend Ray Bliss, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is wonderful to be back in Cleveland again and to be here with some of the fine people that I have known over the years and to be here with some of the fine people in my Administration, such as Jim Lynn, from the City of Cleveland.

First, I want to tell you how grateful I am that you made this evening so delightfully informal. The word "supper" has such a nice relaxed ring to it. People sometimes seem to get uptight at dinners; seldom at suppers.

In fact, I still feel for the master of ceremonies at Indianapolis last year when I attended a dinner which was one of those things. At the conclusion of the program, so that we could keep our schedule, the MC had to ask members of the audience to stay in their seats until the Presidential party left, but his actual words did not come out quite that way.

What he said was, and I quote precisely, "Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes our program, but would you please remain in your seats while the President is removed from the hall." (Laughter)

As I said at the outset, I am delighted to be in Cleveland in the great Buckeye State. As always, you have given me a very warm welcome, much warmer than you do some of those Wolverines once a year. (Laughter)

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I can feel that I am among good friends. Even though the Republican Party of Ohio and Cuyahoga County is sponsoring this great Independence Festival Supper, I understand from very good authority it really isn't supposed to be a political event.

So, I am not going to remind so-called political experts--ones who were saying not long ago that Republicans were an endangered species--that there are at least 1,200 to 1,300 Republicans here tonight, alive, well and darn enthusiastic. Thank you very much.

I am not going to take this particular opportunity to urge the people of Cleveland to re-elect Mayor Ralph Perk, who in his first year as Mayor reduced crime in this City by 26 percent, and who has restored financial stability to this city's Government.

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Tonight I am not going to endorse the re-election of other outstanding Republican mayors like Jack Hunter of Youngstown, John Ballard of Akron, Stanley Cmick of Canton, and Tom Moody of Columbus.

And far be it from me to say this evening what a great job Jim Rhodes is doing as Governor of this great State, or to compliment Jim on his outstanding program to bring new jobs to Ohio through new industry, increased housing construction, improved transportation systems and urban renovation.

And I am not even going to mention Bob Taft, one of the most effective and most respected Members of the United States Senate, a man who knows how to get things done whether it is a new national park for Ohio or reformation of the regulatory agencies of the Federal Government.

I am not going to speak any words of praise tonight for the magnificent representation of the people of Ohio, that which they are receiving in Washington from Members of Congress like Bill Stanton or Ralph Regula, both of whom are here tonight, and the 13 other outstanding Republican Congressmen from Ohio.

Under these circumstances it would not be appropriate to say on this occasion that the Republican Party stands for the same things that most Americans believe in -- personal freedom, local control over local concerns, a strong national defense, fiscal responsibility, free enterprise and responsive government. That is what we stand for and what we must sell around the country.

I am not going to predict tonight that this mutual understanding and this growing public support will give the Republican Party great victories in 1976, here in Ohio or all across the country.

No, sir. If you want to hear a political speech you are in the wrong place tonight. As I see it, and I have met many people, including Bishop Hickey, there is nobody here but a lot of good Americans celebrating their independence.

A century ago, in 1876, as America was observing its first 100 years of independence, a son of Ohio -- Rutherford B. Hayes -- was the Republican candidate for the President of the United States.

Hayes won that 1876 election, but the campaign was marred by bitter partisanship, with even the outcome of the election cast in doubt by political charges and countercharges.

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President Hayes, realizing that this kind of excessive partisanship could produce a stalemate in the Government as well as discord in the Nation, said in his Inaugural Address, and I quote, "He serves his party best who serves the country best."

Tonight, as we enter our 200th year of independence, we in this country have more than enough challenges to consume our great energies and our ambitions without getting bogged down in political stalemate and discord. We must be about the business of serving our country by getting things done, making the hard decisions in both domestic and foreign policy, moving this country forward.

Those hard decisions have involved a series, for example, of vetoes of unwise and overpriced legislation passed by the Congress.

I realize that each time I use the veto there will be some who complain; for instance, the various special interest groups, and there are literally thousands of them -- and their advocates in the Congress. But just as each Congressman has a responsibility to represent the interest of his State and his district -- and I have had the privilege and honor of doing that for better than 25 years -- I have now a duty to safeguard the broadest national interest.

I refer to the interest of 81 million Federal taxpayers who must pick up the tab for each of those new spending bills, either through more taxes or more inflation. In some instances, both.

I take that responsibility very seriously. The American people have a right to expect their President to protect their interests. That is one reason the veto power exists in the Constitution and why I will use it when necessary. In fact, my use of the Presidential veto over the last 10 months alone -- I had this checked and it is accurate -- in the last 10 months alone we have saved the American taxpayers \$6 billion by 1977.

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Let me add there is another important part of the Presidential veto which has not been adequately discussed -- the positive side. The veto is not a negative deadend device. In most cases, it is a positive means of achieving legislative compromise and improvement; better legislation, in other words.

For example, I recently asked the Congress to appropriate \$1 billion 900 million for summer jobs for young people and adequate funding for additional public service jobs to deal with temporary unemployment.

Congress, unfortunately, and unwisely, added \$3 billion on its own for a wide variety of miscellaneous programs. I considered these additions to be too inflationary. They could not be justified. So, I used the veto.

But that was not the end of the legislative process. After most Republicans joined with some discerning Democrats to sustain my veto in the House, the Congress worked out a mutually acceptable compromise, and the important ingredient in this whole process is this system of Constitutional checks and balances, which our founding fathers so carefully constructed, and is essential to good Government in this country.

In a larger sense, another basic tenet of our founding fathers' independence can be the inspiration for our policies here at home, just as interdependence is the foundation of our policies abroad.

As a first step, I sincerely believe it is time for us to declare our independence from governmental bureaucracies grown too large, too powerful, too costly, too remote and yet too deeply involved in our day to day lives.

Even though there are many things Government must do for people, there are many, many more things that people would rather do for themselves. With the depression of the 1930s -- and some of us can remember that -- began the policy of creating a new layer of Federal bureaucracy for every problem in America, and then spending millions and then spending billions in the hope that money alone would solve the problem

But the depression policies of the 1930s on which a Democratic-controlled Congress. have based their programs ever since, cannot solve the problems of the 1970s. If those policies were effective in their day, they are old and tired and completely ineffective in this decade.

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The greatest mistake this country can make is to turn its back on its own native genius, its creativity, its industry, its compassion and look solely to the Federal Government for solutions or salvation.

What we really need in this country in this decade and the rest of this century is not a new deal but a fresh start. What we need is not more Federal control, but the adventure of personal achievement in the rebirth of self-confident pioneering spirit that made America the great Nation that it is today.

The Government will do its part. Declaring our independence from too much Government does not mean sounding a retreat from the legitimate responsibilities which Government must and ought to assume. Quite the contrary. Tightened spending means more funds will be available for those absolutely essential programs.

Now, if we can put Government to work doing what we want it to do, we can keep it from doing what it has no business doing.

My aim is to declare America's independence from inflation spawned by decades of Government overspending, and as a part of the bargain, we can declare our independence from higher and higher and higher taxes and spend a little more of the money we earn the way we want to spend it, and maybe even save a little for a change.

If we can stimulate private enterprise without addicting it to continuous Government intervention, if we can establish guidelines for business without over-regulation, if we can unleash the great power of American free enterprise and get the great American labor force back to work at full strength in a sound and free economy, then we can honestly declare our independence from recession and high unemployment here in the United States.

I made some comments in Cincinnati this afternoon which might bear repeating here. I spoke about over-regulation in Government, and I spoke particularly about the Federal Power Commission and its strangulation of the natural gas industry, the transportation of it from Texas and Louisiana to Ohio to Michigan to Indiana, et cetera.

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I pointed out that 20-some years ago the Congress made a decision to regulate natural gas production and delivery, and the net result is that prices are so low that the producers in Louisiana and Texas won't send their natural gas, which they own, to States like Ohio and Michigan and Illinois and Indiana, because they can sell it in their State for \$2 -- whatever the criteria is -- and if they send it through the regulated pipelines it is 51 or 52 cents.

Now, what does that do? We have bad legislation and we have a Federal Power Commission that does not respond to reality and the net result is that you in Ohio, we in Michigan, others in Indiana, are going to have a very serious natural gas shortage this winter. You are going to have 50 percent -- I think the figure is -- less natural gas in our part of the Middle West this winter than you had last winter simply because the people in Louisiana and Texas won't bow down to the heavy hand of Federal control.

What are they going to do? Very simple. They got all this gas that produces energy, that provides production in factories, and provides jobs. They are going to get those factories from Ohio and Michigan and Indiana and Illinois down to Louisiana and Texas because some people have the mistaken stupid idea that regulation protects people.

In this case, it means that we in our part of this area will lose jobs, and I can't understand why the Congress does not move. If we want natural gas production and delivery in our part of the country -- Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, et cetera -- we have to free the heavy hand of regulation, of interstate transportation of natural gas. Otherwise, we are going to lose jobs, factories and productivity in our part of the country. It is just that simple.

So I urge you -- whether you have influence one way or another -- every Member, of Ohio, in the Congress, Democrat or Republican, must be told that they are responsible if we have interrupted gas distribution this winter, and we have a loss of jobs. It is just that serious.

I asked the Congress last fall to overcome this legislative bureaucratic problem. I asked them again in January. We kept presenting evidence of the facts and, I must say with sadness and despair, Congress has not acted. They have got a chance to move if they can ever stop fighting up there.

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But the problem is it will be disastrous for America. It will be disastrous in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, New Jersey, North Carolina. So use your influence to get the right decision in the free society in which we live.

Now I happen to think we can declare America's independence from the fear and the alarming growth of crime. As I said earlier, Ralph Perk, as your good mayor, has done a fine job and I happen to think if the Congress would move we can declare America's independence from foreign oil and energy sources.

I happen to be very confident -- I happen to be very confident -- and I say this with deep conviction -- that together we can bring forth rich, new harvests from this great land of opportunity.

We can invite all Americans, whatever their race, sex or station in life, to sit at the table of America's bounty and partake more fully of its great abundance. I truly see America's future as bright with hope and promise. I see a Nation that works.

I see people taking pride in their work, in their lives. I see a national Government that responds to people's needs, but does not order people's lives.

And don't forget that a government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.

I see a re-emergence of old values, values like simple honesty and common decency, as new natural resources with which to build a nobler, safer and more successful society.

There is no reason, as I see it, in the world today, why we can't live the kind of a life we want, a life of optimism and faith, a life of close kinship and good relations with our neighbors, a life with room for joy, a life of peace with ourselves, and with those about us.

I believe -- and as I look around this great room tonight, I think you believe -- in America. I believe in the American people, as you do, and I believe that as we start our third century of independence we can take renewed confidence in our future, a future that calls us -- every one of us -- to new achievement and glory and greatness.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 8:18 P.M. EDT)