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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
ALPHA TRIVETTE
NATIONAL PRESIDENT
OF THE
FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA
THE ROSE GARDEN

9:28 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary, Mr. President,
and all of you from the Future Farmers of America:

It is just nice to see you in the White House,
in the Rose Garden particularly, and I know that you
look forward to the opportunity of actually going through
the White House and having a tour of that wonderful
building.

Let me thank you for the opportunity of meeting
with a number of you about a year or so ago when I was
over in the EOB as Vice President, and thank you very,
very much for the warm welcome that you all gave me out
in Kansas City when some 17,000 of you Future Farmers
gave me a wonderful welcome on that occasion.

The 100 of you here represent almost 500,000
fine young farmers who believe in a great profession and
who can contribute significantly to a better America.

I would also like to welcome the representatives,
as I understand it, from Wales, Scotland, Italy and
Colombia. We are delighted to have all of you here.

As I travel around the country and see people
from all walks of life, and as I meet with many, many
young people, such as the Future Farmers of America, I
believe that the American people have great hopes, wonder-
ful expectations for a better America in the future. And
each and every one of you can contribute very significantly
to the kind of America that we believe our country
represents and the future that we need for younger
generations.

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The farmers of America representing some six percent of our population are a tremendous force for a better America. The productivity of American agriculture is one of the wonders of this century. But American agriculture can do even better with the kind of young people that are here today, and those that you represent.

Agriculture is vitally important in the future of America. We have many problems. We are faced with an oil shortage. We are faced with an energy problem, and the productivity of agriculture can help us immeasurably in trying to resolve some of these international differences that we have.

Agriculture, and what is produced by the farmers of America, can be extremely important as we try to work out some of these delicate relationships in the many commodities of the world.

I happen to believe that young people such as yourselves are the real hope for the America that we want now and in the future. You have done a great job in being elected State Presidents or State officers, and you are here to learn how our Government works so that you can go back and instruct your associates in your respective States that our Government is a good Government, but it can be improved and we are working at that.

But we need understanding that we are working at making our Government the kind that is responsive in agriculture, in industry, in business, in labor. This Government can work better and it will work better, but we need understanding in the process.

And as you spend your time here meeting with many, many people--people in the Government, people outside of it--become an expert so you can go back and talk about what we are trying to do in the Executive Branch, what the Congress is seeking to do in the Legislative Branch and what the Judicial is seeking to do in its role as a part of the Government.

But I think there is another benefit from your visit here. I hope you will get an inspiration to be a part of the Government as you grow older and mature. We need the kind of leadership in Government that each of you can give, and what you learn here in this experience will be tremendously significant in how you pattern your life in the months and years ahead.

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It is not inconceivable; in fact, it is very possible, that at some time in the future one of you, as president of your State organization, can be President of the United States. And all that you have learned and all that you will experience in the future can help prepare you for that great opportunity.

So I urge you to absorb everything you can and I urge you to take back with you this great experience of being in Washington representing some 500,000 other Future Farmers of America so that you can tell them about the National Capital, the Government, and the opportunities to make it better.

I have a lot of faith in all of you. And I have a great belief that the United States can continue to be a leader in the world, not only for ourselves but for all mankind.

Thank you and good luck.

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MR. TRIVETTE: Mr. President, I am sure we all remember and hold very fond memories of the meeting we had with you in Kansas City. It is hard for us to conceive the real impact of your being with us and visiting with us on that night had for all vocational education; more specifically, the FFA and the industry of agriculture.

On that night, you also received the Honorary American Farm Degree, and we want to welcome you now, officially, as a member of probably the largest group of squares in all the world.

In Mark Twain's time, square was completely a different term than it is today. If you fed someone well, you gave them a square meal. If you treated him right, you gave him a square deal. You stood foursquare if your debts were paid and you stood square against everything that was wrong.

Mr. President, we feel that this term "square" fits you aptly because you stand square for everything that is right in America.

We would like to present to you this flag set that bears all the flags that have flown over our country, and also in the center the American flag, which stands next to the Future Farmers of America flag, for we feel that the ideals represented in both of these flags are very similar and the ideals that you stand for as President of our country bear out these ideals more perfectly than anyone else could.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me express my very deep appreciation and gratitude for your kind words, and I will do my utmost to justify the compliments and to live up to the ideals that you have expressed.

I think they are sound. I think they are good, and you represent them. I will do my best to follow in those footsteps.

I thank you for this gift of the flags that have flown over the United States, and I especially thank you for the meaning and significance that comes with this gift, and I am deeply grateful.

I just said to Alpha that as you leave the Rose Garden, if you would like to go into the West Wing and go through the Cabinet Room, you might have an opportunity to see what the Cabinet Room looks like and get some of the atmosphere that comes from that historic room.

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As I look out through here, as I said earlier, I am sure that you have some potential Presidents of the United States, and obviously you have some potential candidates for Secretary of Agriculture.

I think Earl Butz does a great job as Secretary of Agriculture, and it may take a couple of years for you to come along and occupy that position.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 9:40 A.M. EDT)