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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
KANSAS GOP CAPITOL CLUB

RAMADA INN SOUTHWEST
OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

7:45 P.M. CDT

Governor Bob Bennett, and Mrs. Bennett, Jim Pearson, Larry Winn, Garner Shriver -- I think I have covered all the Congressional delegation. -- If I haven't I will hear about it, although the others -- Keith and Joe and Bob Dole, they are very close and dear friends of mine:

I do appreciate very much all of you being here. First, let me congratulate the Republican Parties of Kansas and Missouri for your success in working together to bring the Republican Convention to Kansas City next August.

I never let my feelings be involved in that, but I will say to you I couldn't have been happier. Betty and I, and I think most of our family, will be here, and we look forward very greatly to the Convention in 1976.

Since Governor Bennett and I have worked very closely together in the past on a number of matters, tonight I am going to make him an offer which I honestly don't think Bob can resist.

Bob, I will give you a bedspread for the Governor's mansion if you will get me a room for the Convention in 1976. (Laughter)

As I said, the opportunity for us as a party to come out to Kansas in 1976 is wonderful for our party and it is, I hope, going to be a shot in the arm for the Middle West, and Kansas, particularly.

I was told that yesterday on the floor of the House the Democratic Majority Leader of the House, Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts, got up and said in one of his tirades about how unwise it was for the Republicans to go to Kansas City because the last time that they had a Convention here Herbert Hoover was nominated. (Laughter)

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John Rhodes, who is a good Kansan, the Republican Majority leader of the House of Representatives, then got up and said he thought it was much wiser for us to go to Kansas City than for the Democrats to go to debt city, New York City. (Laughter)

I happen to agree that we have made a good choice, and I am looking forward to it, as well as Betty.

You in Kansas have a great heritage and a tradition of fine people, a wonderful economy, and you also have the tradition of superior people, such as Ike Eisenhower and William Alan White, men who have made history not only for your State, but for our country.

I might add that none has stood taller than my good friend Alf Landon. I understand that next week Alf will be celebrating his 88th birthday, and I am sure all of us wish him the very, very best, not only on the 88th, but for many, many more to come.

Let me just say a word or two about what I think of the Kansas delegation. You have, in the delegation that represents you in Washington in the Senate, two outstanding Senators -- Jim Pearson and Bob Dole.

I have worked with both of them over the years, and I think from my own experience of 25 years in the House of Representatives I can tell quality of either Senators or Members of the House, and I do wish to compliment you from Kansas for having two outstanding Members of the United States Senate.

I never had the privilege of serving in the Senate, except for an interim period as Vice President, and then they don't let you say anything. (Laughter)

But anyhow, I did have a great honor of serving almost 26 years in the House of Representatives, and during that time, I got to know Larry Winn, Keith Sebelius, Garner Shriver and Joe Skubitz.

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The Kansas delegation had a very unique -- I don't know whether it was an honor or not, but they had a responsibility. In 1965, in January, when I ran for Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, I was the Establishment, and the Kansas delegation unanimously, in the House of Representatives, supported me and therefore contributed significantly to the landslide victory that I had of 73 to 67. (Laughter) And it was your delegation in Kansas that really tipped the balance.

But as I look at the responsibilities that your House Members have representing the Republican Party in Kansas, you cover a broad spectrum with their assignments in committee and elsewhere so I can assure you on the basis of quality and talent and experience you, in Kansas, are well represented, and I hope you send every one of them back next year, and you add one. (Laughter) That would be very helpful.

We have some problems in this country. In the 13 months that I have been President we have had our ups and downs. We had some problems when I was sworn in -- we have some today -- but with the help of people like yourselves, with the help of people in Congress, mainly Republicans but a few Democrats, we have made a significant rate of progress in many areas -- we failed in some others.

I happen to feel that in the area of foreign policy we have made significant headway. We have made a giant step forward for peace in the Middle East. We have strengthened our alliance in Europe. We are seeking to make a good two-way street negotiated settlement for a strategic arms limitation.

At home we went through a terrible recession, but we are on the way out of it. We still have inflation that is far too high but if we can keep the irresponsibles in Congress from spending too much money, we can win that battle against inflation.

Let me mention a matter. Some of the columnists have been critical of me for vetoing a sizeable number of bills -- I think 37 as of the last count. Some so-called experts have alleged that a veto is a negative action. That is a total misconception of the veto power.

The Constitution gives to a President the Constitutional authority to veto and what it amounts to is by Constitutional authority a President can veto in order to give the Congress more time to think about whether they made the right decision or not.

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Let me give you two illustrations where a veto in one instance saved almost \$2 billion -- isn't that right, Garner? I recommended \$1 billion 900 million. The Congress added \$2 billion more. I vetoed it. The House sustained it, and the net result was that we ended up with about a \$2 billion savings. Isn't that constructive?

I would like to go through some others and do the same. I don't like to veto legislation but I have a responsibility, and fortunately with the help of good strong Members of the House and the Senate we have been able to sustain enough so that about \$6 billion in unnecessary expenditures have been saved.

A number of you have mentioned to me, as I have met you, the problem of energy. In January of this year I submitted a comprehensive 200-page energy program that would have conserved energy, produced new sources of energy in the United States, and taken us on a step forward, freeing us from the vulnerability of foreign oil cartels.

Most people don't realize that every day that goes by the United States becomes more and more vulnerable to foreign oil decisions -- not our decisions, their decisions. And we have been trying to stimulate production at home and conserve within our own country but so far we have not been able to move the Congress off dead center

I hope we will get some headway now in the last effort, but I have gone the last mile -- more than half-way. And if we don't get a solution on this occasion I think we have no choice but to take a very strong stand and say, "If you won't compromise, we can't either," because we have gone more than half-way. I think Garner and Larry and the others would agree.

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It is so simple, in my opinion. Do you know how much we have paid out in foreign oil? In 1972 or 1973 we were paying \$3 billion a year. This year we are paying \$25 billion a year. That is \$25 billion a year that goes to foreign oil producers, takes jobs away from Americans.

That money, if we had adequate production in America, would stay home. Wouldn't that be constructive?

I appreciate the help that Jim Pearson and Bob Dole and the House delegation have given. This ought not to be a partisan issue, and unfortunately, there are some aspects of it that appear to be that.

Let me add a special comment. Betty's and my daughter Susan was out here last summer, and she had a terrific time, and all of you from Kansas were so nice to her, and I thank each and every one of you.

The Governor and Mrs. Bennett were especially thoughtful and helpful, and for that, Bob, we are very grateful.

But let me add, concerning Bob, I have had a fair amount of experience with Governors, and I can say without any hesitation or qualification that all of you in Kansas are very fortunate to have Bob as your Governor.

Let me conclude with this final comment. 1976 is a big year, and a major part of that competition is going to be kicked off right here in your great State. I think we will have candidates, I think we have the workers, and obviously by your attendance here we have people who will help to support it in a financial way.

It is a combination of good candidates, good workers, good financial help, plus sound principles, and as I look at our policies, our principles, I think they are the ones that appeal to most Americans.

We believe in fiscal responsibility, both at the State as well as the national level. We believe that we should have a national defense program second to none in order to insure peace.

Thirdly, we believe that local Government, either at the local level or at the State level, is the best way to run our country. I don't think we need the bureaucrats in Washington telling Bob Bennett or the local mayors how to run their respective responsibilities. Local control, the people that you know are infinitely better prepared to do the job than somebody on the banks of the Potomac.

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I think it is important that we make a special effort to make certain and to make positive that individuals have a growth of freedom rather than the heavy hand of Government.

The third century of our country ought to emphasize the freedom of the individual. We are all different. We should not have mass education. We should not have mass Government. We should not have mass labor unions. We should not have ourselves computerized according to what some machine says.

The strength of America has been its diversity. The beauty of Joseph's coat is its many colors. That is the strength of America.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 8:01 P.M. CDT)