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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
NATIONAL MEDAL OF SCIENCE AWARDS CEREMONY

THE EAST ROOM

12:10 P.M. EDT

Dr. Stever, distinguished award recipients,
Members of Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

The world was very late in recognizing that men and women of science and technology are the true movers and shapers of human events. Our Founding Fathers drew up a Constitution that gave the Congress the powers to promote the progress of science and the useful arts.

Although a great deal of Federal support flowed from that mandate in the Constitution, it was not until 1959 that the National Medal of Science was created to honor those who have distinguished themselves in this important field.

Since 1962, 89 distinguished scientists and engineers have been awarded this medal. It is our proud and honored privilege today to honor 13 more outstanding men of science and engineering with this distinguished award.

These awards, the Nation's highest honor to its men and women of science and engineering, are of particular significance as we approach this Bicentennial year.

As we look back over 200 years of the Nation's history, we see the profound influence science and technology have had on our Nation's development. We owe a great debt to science and to all the men and women who have carried on the scientific enterprise of this country.

Beyond this, the whole spirit of science, one that urges us here in the United States to innovate, to explore the unknown, to answer the unanswered, is the true spirit of America.

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Today, more than ever, we need to maintain, to flourish that spirit and to do it in every facet of our national life.

The 13 men whom we are privileged to honor today have contributed to the spectrum of scientific advances in many, many ways. Their work in the physical and biological sciences and in mathematics and engineering has touched and enriched the lives of all of us.

Wide-ranging Federal support of scientific research and technology became a national policy after World War II. Since then, support has grown both in dollars and the percentage of the Nation's total effort.

In the coming year, this amount and percentage will again grow. Total Federal funds for civilian research and development will rise to over \$7.3 billion, an increase of 12 percent over 1975.

Throughout all the years of Federal support for research, there has been a continued debate over the issue of what fields of inquiry should have priority. As the Nation's needs have changed, the priorities have changed, which is as it should be and is as it will be.

In recent years, Federal research and development support has been particularly responsive in the fields of energy and environmental conservation. From 1969 to 1976, energy research and development has grown at an average annual rate of more than 21 percent; environmental support has grown at a rate of 17 percent.

Nonetheless, the Nation's commitment to that most fundamental of all inquiries -- basic research -- has not diminished. We recognize that it is such research that forms the base upon which all understanding in all fields of human inquiry must build.

That is why we will increase basic research funding in 1976 by 11 percent.

It is impossible to measure accurately the benefits of our research efforts to the Nation and to the world. We do know, however, that our achievements will be far reaching and profound. We can be absolutely certain that new products and improved productivity will flow from them.

Our Nation's future and that of the world depends on the creativity and the genius of men and women, such as these we honor today.

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For your contributions, gentlemen, for what you have given to our country, to science and to humanity, we thank you all. We are grateful, and we are proud to honor you today.

It is now my pleasure to call upon Dr. Guy Stever, Director of the National Science Foundation, to read the citations for each awardee.

Guy, will you come forward, please?

END (AT 12:15 P.M. EDT)