

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PUBLIC FORUMS ON DOMESTIC POLICY
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOTEL
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

(AT 9:15 A.M. EST)

Thanks very much, Jack.

Governor, we are very grateful to you for your presence here and to the distinguished representative of the Mayor. I would like to thank all of you for coming. I came over here so I can see people. I can't see very well sitting down there. I can't see everybody in the room. So, I decided to come over here.

I would like to comment on Mr. Belinger's statement. I just want to say that in Texas, the Governor of Texas made a comment that I think is very appropriate of what Mr. Belinger said. He said, if we responded to Pearl Harbor the way we had with the energy crisis, we would all be speaking Japanese now.

(Laughter.)

I think this is not a bad statement. I think this will develop during the course of the discussions, one of the critical points of this whole question.

I would also like to thank Dan Snyder, who is the Mid-Atlantic Federal Regional Council Chairman who has done such a wonderful job. Here today on the panel up here, representing the White House, is the Secretary of Transportation, Bill Coleman, who is one of your own.

(Applause.)

Marjorie Lynch, who is the new Under Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, sworn in last week. Marjorie?

(Applause.)

The Under Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, John Rhineland.

(Applause.)

The Executive Assistant to the President for Economic Affairs and Executive Director of the Economic Policy Board, Bill Seidman, who just got back from Paris. If he looks a little sleepy during the meeting, you will understand.

(Applause.)

The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, a man that gets shot at from both sides, but who is a very dedicated and loyal American, who is doing his utmost to carry out the National objective of cleaning up our environment as rapidly as possible, Russ Train.

(Applause.)

Virginia Knauer, who is the Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs and also Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs of EIU.

(Applause.)

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Let me just say that I think all of us agree that there are no nit wit brains in Washington. The President feels very strongly in trying to review domestic policies and programs at this crucial moment in history in our country that we have got to get out and have the opportunity to exchange views and get the reaction of citizens all over the country. That is the purpose of this series of meetings.

We are just very grateful to all of you for your presence here. You will have a chance to speak before we are through.

The participation today represents not only Pennsylvania, but as has been mentioned, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia, and Connecticut. You can say it is a lot of States. It is. We have lots of problems.

We are having six meetings. This is the fourth. It is a big country, 50 States. So, we appreciate tremendously those of you who are here from Pennsylvania, and those of you who have come in from out of State.

Of course, as the Governor says, this is the historic site of the Founding Fathers who created the country. I don't think our confidence is going to last quite as long as theirs did. But I only hope the results are as good. I thank you again, Governor, for your presence.

Both liberty, the concept of liberty and industrial society really came to focus here in this extraordinary area.

The reason that the President is concerned about having these meetings is because of the state of the economy, because of high unemployment, the high cost of living, rapid growth of Federal expenditures, the size of the Federal deficit. These are the basic concerns. He is also concerned as to whether the social programs are truly meeting human needs and social objectives and he is concerned about the proliferation of Federal regulations in all areas and whether they are encouraging a healthy, self-reliance of citizens or increasingly dominating the lives of individual citizens or shackling the dynamism of the free enterprise system or the dynamism of the Federal system of State and local government.

These are some of the basic issues which we face. We want to get your reactions. And we have got some of our own.

President Ford is concerned that we are more dependent on foreign sources of energy than at any time since the Arab embargo. In other words, we have lost ground in the last two years, instead of gaining ground. Production is down and importations are up, up to 40 percent now, in terms of oil at a cost which I guess will run around \$30 billion in the coming year.

Just parenthetically, I might say, I just came back from a meeting of the Future Farmers of America. If it hadn't been for the Future Farmers of America, who put 60 million acres of land back in production and are now producing almost \$20 million of foreign exchange, we would be in a serious balance of payments bind right now because of the situation that exists.

He is concerned about the environment. He feels very strongly that our energy needs and our environmental needs can and must be met together. The economic growth is not enough. But we have the scientific technology to meet both. If we don't have jobs, then not only the present situation, but for the future, the whole pattern and the whole concept of our society would have changed because through these jobs, through this upward movement of people, this has been the opportunity of America.

The President recognizes that decisions that affect the destiny of every American cannot be confined to the limited perspective of Washington. Washington has no monopoly on ideas or wisdom.

The President wants to tap the common sense, the wisdom, the practical experience and imagination of the people of every part of the country.

The subjects today we are going to be discussing are, economic development and job development, number 1; resource development and environment, number 2; social policy and quality of life, number 3. We as a nation have got to address ourselves to these problems. The critical issues facing him and the people today are the concern of every American, household and family, farmer and worker, businessman and professional. These are unemployment, government bureaucracy, red tape, our vulnerability in energy, the growing food problems, problems affecting our environment. We can and we must overcome these problems. We have got to get our economy rolling.

We can and we must restore economic growth while protecting our environment. We can and we must take the full steps necessary to develop energy independently. We have the brains, imagination, technology, free enterprise and the national resources to do it.

Without replenishing them and without developing this domestic source of energy, our economy is not going to get off dead center. We have no assurance that we are not going to be faced with blackmail or boycott.

Most of us who live on the East Coast depend on 80 to 90 percent of the energy that comes from abroad. We are facing absolute crisis. Those who went through the blackout and the lines before, it is nothing to what is going to happen, if it happens again. There won't be any lines waiting because there won't be any gasoline to buy from the stations, anyhow.

So, what can happen is hard to even imagine. You can't sustain economic growth without energy. Without economic growth we can't have jobs. We can't produce the goods and services and we can't meet our responsibilities in the world. We are focusing in on some pretty basic problems right here.

The recovery of the last five months -- Bill can give more detailed figures. But it is about a million and a half new jobs, with still more than two and a half million jobs to go to get back to what is known as full employment. Then we have to produce a society of about 1.6 million new jobs every year to take and provide opportunities for the young people coming out of school and college. So that this is the basic thing we face.

Also, one should mention that the free enterprise system produces about 85 percent of the revenues of all the government. That is Federal, State and local, directly and indirectly through the taxes or from the corporations, the individuals, the withholding taxes and the taxes on the profits, the dividends. Therefore, the expansion of the economy is basic to the government's ability to meet the problems of the people and to meet their responsibilities.

Going on just briefly to get a panoramic backdrop to this discussion today, one has to say and say it very frankly, as from the Governor, Hilt Shapp over here, I think all of us who have been in public life have got to say we have in the past 15 years overpromised and underdelivered. We have spent more money than we have. We have overloaded the system of government. We didn't have the capacity to carry out the programs.

We now have over 1,000 individual programs of aid, all of which have to be matched by state and local funds. They are all tied up in restrictive Federal regulation and legislation. This system has been so complicated that I have to tell you that we have gone around the country. We are finding that the major concern of the American people is bureaucracy and red tape. And there is a growing feeling that government, rather than being the solution to the problem, is getting to be the problem.

This is a very sad situation to find in our country. The purpose of these meetings is to face these things, frankly and honestly. Tell it like it is. Say, "All right, these are the facts. Where do we go from here?" Not starting with some ideological concept of, "Don't confuse me with the facts. My mind is already made up." We have had that. Let's get the facts. Then let us find out what the answers are.

Maybe we won't do as well as the Founding Fathers. But we certainly ought to come up with some very important things. I would like to say that I feel very strongly that this is a unique moment. We have got problems.

You mentioned the City of New York --

I never should have mentioned New York City. I take it back.

(Applause.)

Let's stick with Philadelphia.

(Laughter.)

All I would like to say in conclusion is we have got to have the courage to face the fundamentals, the fundamental problems, get back to fundamental principles. I want to say, despite what the ladies are saying, I am optimistic about the future. I think the system is the greatest system in the world, if we give it a chance to work.

We have got to find out how to do that.

(Applause.)

Now, I am going to sit down and we will start the meeting. I will just get the agenda going. I did want to stand up so I could see the ladies when they spoke.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

END

(AT 9:35 A.M. EST)