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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT TED STEVENS' BIRTHDAY PARTY
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ALASKA

ANCHORAGE WESTWARD HOTEL

8:07 p. m. AST

It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to be here in Anchorage and to participate along with Governor Hammond, Congressman Don Young, Secretary Kissinger, Mayor Sullivan, Betty, Susan, Mr. Tobin, and all of you honored guests. And, of course, my old friend Wally Hickel. It is a very nice kick-off for the trip that we are making to the Far East.

I have been in Alaska a number of times. I have reminisced as I have traveled through the audience here with some whom I saw in 1969 when I first had the privilege.

I understand that this is the time of the year in Anchorage when the sun rises at 8:40 in the morning, sets at 2:54 in the afternoon, the nights are 18 hours long. All I can say, what a great place to have a party. And of course what a great guy to honor on an occasion and a party such as this. Ted, congratulations.

I can say from personal experience Ted is one of the most conscientious, one of the most capable, and one of the most astute legislators in the United States Congress. I can also say that Ted Stevens is highly respected on both sides of the aisles, Democratic as well as Republican, and I understand there are a number of Democrats in the audience here tonight, and you are reflecting -- and by your presence here tonight you are reflecting the views and attitudes of the Democrats in the United States Senate and the House, because they respect him, they know he is a person of ability and fairness.

We are celebrating in America today, or soon will be, I should say, our 200th birthday, the year of Alaskan Statehood, and Ted Stevens' 52nd birthday. You know, that's a young country, and it is a young State, and I happen to think when you get right down to it, Ted Stevens is a dynamic young United States Senator.

Whenever I want to get the lowdown on the problems, or the issues involving Alaska, I go to Ted in the United States Senate, go to Don Young in the House of Representatives, I get the benefit of their good sound advice. But, I also get a broader perspective than just the Alaskan point of view. Ted is a leader in the United States Senate, one of the legislative leaders of the Republican Party, and in that capacity, as well as that of representing all of you, he has done a superb job, one of those in the forefront of making it possible for the Congress to enact the Alaskan Pipeline legislation.

He, of course, was out front and did a superb job in reference to the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement legislation. He has fought hard, and very successfully, in trying to build for us, when I say us, I mean those of

us in the Lower 48 as well as Hawaii, a sound energy policy. And that's not an easy job with all the cross-currents that we are faced with in the Congress, as well as elsewhere in the country.

For far too long this country has been dependent upon unreliable foreign sources of oil. And as our domestic production goes down, and it has been, we are increasingly dependent upon foreign oil. And that will be true until we get this great pipeline that I had the privilege of going out and seeing this afternoon up in Fairbanks. But, in the meantime, we have to do everything possible, by a wide variety of legislative proposals, to strengthen America's capability to have energy sufficiency and hopefully energy independence. And I can say that Ted is in the forefront of fighting for the kind of legislation that we need.

Let me say this, as we leave tomorrow for the trip to the Pacific Area, we are leaving tomorrow morning to visit the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, and the Philippines, coming back through Hawaii, I know that you in Alaska have probably a greater recognition of the need and necessity for the United States to be forward-looking, to have views that encompass the views of those who believe that we have to live in a world, not just within the United States. I don't believe that we have a trend towards isolationism in America. And I know that you in Alaska are those who are in the forefront trying to convince people that our interests are involved in the Far East. Let me say that our Asian neighbors we hope can and will be our friends. We, of course, count Indonesia and we count the Philippines as friends of the United States. We are opening, or have opened, several years ago a historic relationship with the People's Republic of China. For literally years the United States and China were friends. We had a period where the friendship was abruptly cut off. But, we are starting a new relationship, and with the 800 million people in China, and 214 million people in the United States, there is no reason why we can't agree in many instances. We don't have the same political philosophy, but there is no reason we can't work together, not to confront, but to consult. And it is in the best interest of us, as well as those in China, to broaden, to strengthen, to deepen this relationship. And my purpose in going on this trip is precisely for that reason. We have an interest in the Pacific, and we have an interest in making our relationship better than it has been in the past.

Let me say that we have gone through some tough days in the last few months. We had a setback or two in the Far East. We have had some economic problems at home. But, we have also had some successes. We have made great strides towards peaceful solutions in the long run in the Middle East. We have strengthened NATO. We are trying to build a better world.

And I am an optimist about the future of America. I happen to believe that the cynics and skeptics in America are not going to prevail. I believe very strongly in our fellow Americans. I believe in the kind of government we have. I feel that working together, with the character of our people, and the drive, and the energy, and the leadership, America can be all that we have had in the past and much, much more.

It is a privilege to be in Alaska, to be in Fairbanks and Anchorage, and to have an opportunity of participating in Ted Stevens' 52nd birthday. You know, that isn't so old, he is a lot younger than I am. So, Ted, we all wish you well. I have enjoyed the opportunity of being with you today, and we wish you many, many more days, months, and years, not only of health and happiness, but continued good service in the United States Senate.

Thank you very much.

They suggested, not knowing how badly I sing, that I get all of you to sing happy birthday.

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AT 8:17 p. m. AST