

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 12, 1975

Office of the Vice President  
(Houston, Texas)

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REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
SOUTHERN REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE RECEPTION  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

(AT 7:45 P.M. CST)

Thank you very much.

In case you don't know it, that is my theme song, ladies and gentlemen, "Sweet Georgia Brown."

(Laughter.)

They play it everywhere I go. I want to tell you, it is my favorite. The next is "Mississippi Mud."

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

That is true. You don't believe me. But that is the truth. I want to first thank Bill, Clarke, Paula, and Mary Louise.

I want to tell you, to be here with two Republican Governors is one of the nicest experiences I can have. I was a Governor for a long time. I have got a tremendously nostalgic feeling about Governors, especially Republican Governors.

I am thrilled to be with those two, Jim Edwards and Jim Holshouser, two wonderful Americans. We are all grateful to Ray Hutchison. It has been a long time. I love to be with Republican leaders and Republican workers.

That is what is here tonight. Jim said that he was especially partial to southerners. I don't blame him. They are very attractive people. But I would just like to say there are wonderful Republicans all over America, in the Republican Party.

Let us be united as a Republican Party, north, south, east and west.

(Applause.)

We want a two-party system. We want it everywhere. We want it for all parts of the country. We want it for all over America. That is the strength and vitality of democracy, the two-party system.

Let's have the courage and integrity. We are a very small minority as far as registered voters are concerned. This is euphoric thinking. I don't want to pour cold water on it and I am not. I am here, excited, enthusiastic. I want to feel the enthusiasm in this room. But we have to be realistic. We have to analyze the facts. We have to plan to win. We are not going to do it just by enthusiasm alone.

We have to do it by getting the American people to understand the fundamental issues we face and the dangers they face. Then we have got to come up with more intelligent, effective answers to those programs, to those problems, that are going to result in the preservation, as both these distinguished Governors and your great Congressman from Texas have said, to preserve the basic American concepts on which this country grew to greatness.

(Applause.)

Let's not kid ourselves. The American people feel and know we got problems. We have got inflation. We have got unemployment. They come because we are increasingly interdependent in the world. We didn't raise the oil prices 500 and then 700 percent. It is the OPEC countries.

Why did the Arab countries do it? Because they got involved in the Middle East War. They are sore at us. So, they put on a boycott. What have we done since then?

We are in the great Lone Star State of Texas. I was in a meeting down here of the Domestic Council, holding hearings on domestic policies and programs. The great Governor of Texas came, Governor Briscoe. What did he say?

He said, "If America had responded to Pearl Harbor the way we responded to the energy crisis, we would all be speaking Japanese in America today."

(Applause.)

Politics is being played by the opposition with our basic economic factors. We can't afford it. He pointed out that Senator Vandenberg, after Pearl Harbor said, "Let's have politics stop at the water's edge. Let's have a bipartisan foreign policy to win this war."

I say, let's have a bipartisan policy to win the energy independence battle for this country so we are not vulnerable as far as our national security is concerned, and we are not vulnerable to price control by groups outside.

Don't forget, they are meeting in June of next year to raise the prices again. Ladies and gentlemen, this is an exciting time to live. We are blessed in this room, in this country. We live in a country where the greatest people in the world are, part of them in the south. They are very attractive in the south.

But believe me, there are great people in the north, the east and the west and there are great people all over America. We want to be united in the Republican Party.

(Applause.)

We have got great people with brains, imagination, intelligence, creativity, the free enterprise system. Private enterprise is the greatest invention that man ever made. Democracy, that is how we achieved the highest standard of living in 200 years that has ever been achieved by civilized people, anywhere in civilization itself.

There are others who want to destroy it. The

Republican Party is dedicated to preserve it. But the Republican Party cannot preserve it unless they elect Republicans to office. In order to elect Republicans to office, we have got to have the people of the United States with us. They have got to understand that we understand them, that we understand their problems. And that we have got more ability and more intelligence and more managerial experience to meet those problems than the Democrats.

(Applause.)

That is the truth. I have got to say, I come from a state -- I don't have to tell you -- that is not very popular. The city isn't very popular right now. I know it. Don't tell me. I have heard it.

(Laughter.)

A lot of people are taking a certain satisfaction in it. I would like to second what Bill said about the Congress. If you think New York City has been spending more money than they have income, and being irresponsible, and being responsive to pressure groups, ladies and gentlemen, just take a look at the Congress of the United States. They make New York City look like a piker.

(Applause.)

What is the difference? The only difference is, the Congress can have a deficit of \$60 to \$70 billion and they can print the money. New York City can't print it. That is all. That is the problem.

What happens when you print money? It debases the currency. You get inflation. What is inflation? It is the most vicious, insidious tax that ever happened. It hits the people who can least afford it, our senior citizens, those who built America, those on pensions, those who are on salaries. Their checks are eaten away, and they can't even see it.

That is why President Ford has had the courage to veto and to fight federal expenditures. I work for this man. I really didn't know him before I got into this job. How I got into it, I don't know and you don't know either. That is one of the problems.

(Laughter.)

Whatever it was, I got there. I didn't ask for it either, in case you didn't know. I changed my phone number and I didn't talk to anybody. I didn't want any part of it. I just left the Governorship. I wanted to get out of some of this stuff.

Let me just tell you this: This man, I have come to know. He has got the courage to study the tough problems and then to do what he thinks is right for the long term, best interests of America --

(Applause.)

-- regardless of the short term political implications. So, in today's papers you see a lot about him going down, in

terms of the polls. I want to tell you something. I ran four times. At this point, each time I averaged between 24 and 36 percent of support of the people of my state. The only one lower than that is the Congress.

(Laughter.)

They are under 17. But I didn't let it bother me. I stayed in there. I did what I thought was right. I said what I thought was right. The American people are nobody's fools. They are not kidded.

They understand. They may not like what you do sometimes. But they respect people with courage, people with integrity, people who believe in this country, people who will fight for this country, who want to see this country stay great and strong and keep freedom in the world.

That is what this President wants. He has done a lot of things, unpopular. He knew it. Of course, you would expect him to go down in the polls, when everybody else, all these wonderful candidates -- I preside over the Senate -- half of the Senate is running for the Presidency of the United States on the Democratic side.

(Laughter.)

I don't think very much is going to be done in the next year. It is a tragedy for the future of this country because everybody is trying to judge. It is like this energy bill. I don't know how the rest of you feel about the compromise between the House and the Senate, this conference committee.

What is this bill if you analyze it? They roll back energy prices, gasoline and oil prices, until everybody is reelected. Then they push them up. How dumb do they think the American people are?

It is just going to encourage more use of energy, more imports, discourage production. As the Governor of Texas said, we can't win by not facing the realities, which is what we need. Sure, we want to stick with the fundamental principles. But the fundamental principles lead us to the right solution. What we don't want to do is kid the American people.

They want to be told the hard facts. That is what the President is doing. It is not good at first. You get hurt in the polls. But in the long run, that is what this country is looking for, people of integrity and courage and who believe in America and are willing to take the stand.

(Applause.)

I say to you, I don't care what we do, as long as we fight for America, as long as we stay united as a party. I happen to love the south. There are a lot of people who maybe think that I don't, see. But they are wrong.

I found the most friendly people I find anywhere, in the south. I am thrilled to be here. I appreciate the invitation to be with you this evening and you are nice to have me.

(Applause.)

All I want to do -- and when the President was getting harassed by all this bickering about the election and whether I was going to hurt him in getting the nomination, the hell with it as far as I was concerned, ladies and gentlemen.

I am not interested in that. I am interested in the country. So, I wrote him a letter and said, "I am out. You don't have this stuff bothering you anymore. Concentrate on the real issues that are going to solve the problems of inflation, unemployment, energy, international peace, freedom. Let's stick to the real issues. Let's not worry about politics. You don't have to worry about me."

We have to stick together to help him. We have got to do it for the country. There are no finer Americans than who are right in this room.

I admire and respect each and every one of you. You are wonderful to give of your time and energy. You do because you love the country. But let's get more people in our party and with us or we are not going to win elections.

That is all I want to say. Thank you very much.

END

(AT 8:00 P.M. CST)