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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE
VOLUNTEERS' RECEPTION

OLD McCOY OFFICERS' CLUB
ORLANDO JETPORT

5:30 P.M. EST

First, I want to thank Lou, Skip, Phil, Paula, and I want to thank all of you. I can't express my appreciation and gratitude adequately. I have heard rumors to the effect that I did not have any volunteers, that we had a hard time finding people who were interested in going out and working hard on a voluntary basis.

I have heard rumors that our organizations just did not exist. I never believed it in the first place, and this is the best proof right here that we have got it. So, let me just say thanks again.

Now, I know this is a hard job. It takes a lot of time making phone calls, going door to door, distributing material and all the footwork that you have to do. I have done it. In fact, I was thinking as we drove over here, I got involved in a Presidential campaign first in 1940 on behalf of Wendell Willkie.

I did on that occasion just what a lot of you are doing, and so I know that a little shoe leather and all the other things, it does make a difference, and what you are doing and what you have done and what you will do will make a difference, and I thank you very much for just the fact that you are, but even more importantly the fact that you are interested in good Government and you are interested in good programs and you are interested in the future of that country.

Now, if I might take just a minute, I was also thinking flying down here back to August 1974. It was a great responsibility that fell on my shoulders. We had a traumatic experience in this country. We had to re-establish public trust and faith. We had to meet the problems of a domestic economy where prices were going up and everything else was going down -- employment, all the other industrial problems that we face.

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We had the problem of our allies not being certain or positive what kind of job a new President would do, and the solidarity of our alliances around the world involved the peace and security of this country.

It has a big impact on the peace and security of the world. But, ever since August of 1974 I have been very fortunate. A good many Americans prayed, a good many Americans understood the traumatic experiences we have had. A lot of fine Americans went to work.

So, we are coming out of all those sad experiences, we are making great headway, whether it is in getting more people employed--some two million one hundred thousand more Americans employed today than last March--with the unemployment going down and the employment going up.

We had some great news today. You know inflation is an insidious factor in our society. We got a report today that the Wholesale Price Index showed no upward movement at all, so for the last three months we have actually had a downward trend in wholesale prices.

This is the kind of news we want to have -- a strong economy. It will add to the public confidence that is returning generally. So, I think we can look down that road and say that the path is going to get rosier and rosier for 215 million Americans, but if we are going to have a strong society and a strong economy at home, we have to be strong as we meet our challenges abroad.

As Lou and Skip and Bill know, I have submitted to the Congress the biggest, the best defense program this country has ever had. Bill helped me get it through the Congress. Then we can continue a policy of peace with strength, which is what has been successful as we have reassured our allies, whether they were in Western Europe or in the Pacific, and have kept our negotiating capability with our adversaries, whether they are the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China.

So, we are really making headway. But, we have got some other problems that I think have to be faced, too. We recognize that we have to have Government -- local, State, as well as Federal -- but I want to get the Government off your backs to the extent that we can and yet have the Government do the job that it has to do.

One of the guiding things that has always affected me can be summarized in a sentence or two. Some of my staff give me a bad time because I use it, but I think it really says in a few words what it is all about. I feel it very strongly and very deeply, and let me put it this way:

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We should never forget that a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

So, as we move our private sector -- that is where the jobs are -- as we get a handle on inflation, as we meet the challenges internationally, I think we can say America has a great future, as it has had a great past. The things that are going to come, whether it is in science or technology, the things that are going to come through individual initiative, the things that are going to be good for the young people here will be much better than the things we had in my day and age.

We made a lot of progress, but our kind of Government stimulates progress, and we have got to keep this Government so that we can give to these generations, our children and their children, a good America.

As I close, let me just say this: We have gone through difficulties, we have had some hard decisions to make, we have to work extra hard, all of us, and all of you, when you come right down to the bottom line, I am proud to be an American, and I am proud of America just like you are.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 5:40 P.M. EST)