

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

THE HOWARD JOHNSON HOTEL

11:00 P.M. EST

Thank you, John Malloy and Lou Frey and all of you wonderful people.

Let me, at the culmination of a day and a half or almost two days of a tremendous visit to the great State of Florida, thank you on behalf of all of the people who have been so kind, so generous, so friendly and so nice -- it is just wonderful. Happy Valentine to you and everybody else.

Let me just take a few minutes -- I know you have waited and I appreciate your patience. When I was up in Washington the last month or so I heard terrible stories that the President didn't have any friends, he didn't have any organization, he was not going to win -- you know, all the dire pessimistic predictions. I have been here almost 24 hours and I don't believe any of them. (Laughter)

I think I have a lot of friends, I think we have a good organization, and I think we are going to win.

We are going to win for two reasons: Number one, all of you and literally thousands like you throughout the State of Florida are really dedicated, unselfish and believe that what is good in this cause is good for America, and I thank you for that dedication and that support.

Let me now talk about what we can talk about -- I am going to talk about it and I hope you will talk about it. We have good programs -- they are good for America and they are going to be implemented for the benefit of 215 million Americans all over this country.

Let me summarize it very quickly. Number one, we were faced with a terrible recession, lots of high inflation. Inflation is going down, employment is going up and unemployment is going down and that is good for America, and we are going to do better and better.

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Number two, this country is still the leader in the world. We have a great responsibility. We can keep peace with strength and we are going to have the strength to keep the peace -- period.

Our allies in Western Europe know it and support us. Our allies in the Pacific know it and support us. Our potential adversaries know we have it and they respect it.

As I came through this wonderful group tonight, I had the privilege of shaking hands and saying a hello to many, many who are in the Cuban-American population. Let me say categorically and emphatically, the United States will have nothing to do with Castro's Cuba.

And let me make another comment or two. The United States has to have a strong military capability, and we do with the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. We are going to have the money out there, we are going to have the weapons, we have wonderful people and through them and what they stand for we can keep the peace through strength. But there is another thing that ought to be emphasized. It is the best insurance in peace as well as in war -- America needs the finest intelligence capability any place in the world and we are going to have it. We can't let those who want to dismantle our intelligence community prevail and I'll be darned if we are going to let the leakers ruin our intelligence community.

John, I want to thank you. I want to thank all of you. I am proud to be a part of you. I am proud of what you have done and I am most grateful, but what I am most proud of, as you are most proud of, we are all proud to be Americans and we are proud of America.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 11:04 P.M. EST)