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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
CHANUTE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION RECEPTION

REDWOOD INN

2:25 P.M. CST

Thank you very, very much. It is wonderful to be here and I thank the Chairman, I thank the good Mayor, Mr. McJilton. It is delightful to have with us here the outstanding Secretary of Agriculture, Senator Chuck Percy, Congressman Ed Madigan, Congressman Paul Findley, my very good friend and your former great Governor, Dick Ogilvie. I hope I have not missed anybody.

The last two days in Illinois have been superb and, of course, this meeting here today is likewise a very wonderful experience for me and I thank all of you for coming out on a Saturday afternoon, whether you come from your farms or your business or Chanute Field.

And speaking of Chanute Field, we have an outstanding Secretary of Defense in Don Rumsfeld who comes from the great State of Illinois and I think Don ought to come down here and take a look at it.

I might add, I had a wonderful experience out there listening to that delightful chorus. They sang just the kinds of songs I like and I suspect all of you do, too, but I also understand that the bands from Rantoul High School postponed, at least, if not did not go, to the State Band Championship to play while I am here and if they delayed their departure, I am thankful and I am most appreciative, obviously, if they forewent the opportunity to go down to the Championship. That kind of dedication I am most grateful for.

Now let's talk about farm policy and let's say a word or two about defense. Let's take farm policy first. I, of course, have long believed in the kind of farm policy that Earl Butz has been promoting, full production, export of the greatest amount that the United States has ever done. We were checking some figures last night. Between our commitments to sell to Japan, to Eastern Europe, to Western Europe, to the Soviet Union, we are expanding America's greatest resource in a very responsible way and farmers will be prosperous and America will be prosperous because of the importance of agriculture to all of us.

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Let me assure you that we are going to support the exports to the maximum, and I can assure you of one thing -- farm exports will never be used as a pawn in international politics.

But let's take a minute to talk about national security. The United States today is second to none in military capability. That is because we have the best weapons, we have the best personnel, we have the best aircraft, we have the best trained people. The United States is strong, it can handle the problem of deterring aggression, it can handle the problem of protecting our national security, and through strength we can maintain the peace.

But I have to warn you that if the trend that has gone on for the last ten years where we are spending relatively less a percentage of our overall Federal expenditures for national security and a correspondingly greater percentage of our total expenditures by the Federal Government for domestic programs, we will be in jeopardy.

Ten years ago out of our total Federal expenditures we spent roughly 42 percent for national security and we spent about 31 or 32 percent for various domestic programs. Last year we spent about 24 percent for national security and about 51 percent for all other domestic programs. Now we can't tolerate that situation.

Domestic programs have been doing up at the rate of about 11 percent a year. And the military spending has been under pressure to hold the level or to go down. And the budget that I submitted a year ago at that time was the largest peacetime budget in the history of the United States. Congress cut it seven and one half billion dollars. They should not have done it, but they did.

In January of this year I submitted the biggest peacetime budget for the Defense Department in the history of the United States, \$112 billion 700 million, the largest peacetime military budget in the history of the United States, but it is important. And Congress had better not cut it. They just can't, because while we, for the last ten years, were spending a corresponding lesser amount of our wherewithal in national security, the Soviet Union was adding to their expenditures.

Now we are strong, we have the capability to deter aggression, to protect our national interest and to maintain the peace through strength. But I need your support to make sure that we get what we want, so the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines can continue to do the outstanding job with the best equipment, the best personnel, the best training, just the best.

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I need your help, and I must say I think the Members of the House and Senate here will support me. But keep your eye on them. (Laughter) Don't let them cut it. If they want to add to it, that is all right with me, but we have enough and we will be strong. We can reassure our allies and we can negotiate from strength with any adversary.

It is great to be here. It is just a wonderful day here in Rantoul. It has been a great day and a half in all of Illinois and I wish Betty were here but she wore herself out last week down in Florida trying to help get my poll up to hers so I might win. (Laughter)

I do thank you very much. It is great to be here with all of your fine Congressmen and I thank you very much for the chance to come to Redwood Inn.

Thank you.

END (AT 2:32 P.M. CST)