

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 13, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Chicago, Illinois)

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

THE MARRIOTT MOTOR HOTEL

8:14 A.M. EST

Frankly, I am just overwhelmed, to get this many wonderful people down at, what is it, 8:00 on a Saturday morning. I can't express deeply enough my appreciation for all of you, not only what you have done, the fact that you are here, but what you are going to do between now and next Tuesday, and after we win there, what you will do between now and next November 2, when we are darn sure going to win.

I can't really claim any credit. I saw some wonderful signs -- "I am for Betty's husband for President." I saw a couple of other signs -- "I am for Jack's Dad for President." Pretty soon it will come down to what I have done.

But, I am proud of them, and when we get the rest of the family moving, we are bound to prevail. (Laughter)

I thought it might be very helpful for all of you to have me give you a quick rundown, an assessment of what has happened, how we are doing, where we are going. I think earlier this year it was fairly well recognized that we were not moving as rapidly as some had hoped.

When we came to New Hampshire, there were many who were skeptical and were saying that we weren't going to win. We did win in New Hampshire. I might say parenthetically at this point I made a very conscious decision that we were going to enter every one of the 31 Presidential primaries. I wanted to disabuse once and for all that we could be a national candidate.

So, we entered New Hampshire, we won; we entered Vermont; we entered Massachusetts, and we won, and won very, very well. We went to Florida, and despite the forecast, the predictions that we were going to lose two to one, we ended up with a good win.

MORE

Now we are at the next battleground -- Illinois. I think we are going to win in Illinois. (Laughter) Let me assess why I think we are going to win in Illinois.

Number one, we have an outstanding organization and the attendance of this wonderful group this morning here proves it, and I thank each and every one of you here and the ones who are working in the 102 counties-- is that right, Dick--101 counties in the great State of Illinois. We are going to win, and win well in the State of Illinois.

I think winning will help to convince some people-- because the record will be clear and we will not have lost an election outside of the State of Michigan. (Laughter) But, I am most grateful to Dick Ogilvie, and I am very indebted to the Congressional delegation. I am unbelievably thankful to all of you who have done so much and who will do so much.

Let me assess the other 29 States. We have done very well in those convention States -- Iowa, Washington, Hawaii. We have done very well in some of the other areas where there are the beginnings of convention processes. So, our momentum is moving because of the people, the organization.

We are moving also because I happen to think we have some good policies, both at home and abroad. I don't have to repeat to you, you have all read the literature. We are making significant headway at home in meeting the problems of the economy.

We are making, I think, the right moves internationally to maintain the leadership of the United States, first with our allies and secondly with our adversaries. We have to be very careful to make sure that what is said in this campaign in the primary doesn't interfere with the capability of a Republican candidate to win in November.

The Republican Party, by all statistics, is the minority party. We have to heal our own wounds. We have to add to our strength as Republicans that vast number of Independents who make the difference between losing in November and winning in November. We have run our campaign, whether it is in Illinois or in any other State, on the basis that we had to talk affirmatively.

I have learned in a few political campaigns of the past -- and this one, too -- that you should not respond in kind to political charges that are made in the heat of a political campaign. You should talk about what you have done, what your record shows and what you are going to do.

MORE

This has led, in my previous experience in politics, to the opportunity for all Republicans to join the winner in the campaign against our major opposition -- the Democrats. We are going to try and keep the divisions in the Republican Party to the minimum, as long as this campaign goes on.

But, I can assure you when we are through and win in Kansas City, we want to embrace all Republicans so that we can join together to win the big ball game in November 1976.

Let me add a footnote to make certain you understand what I mean "winning the big game in November." A President of the United States needs a Congress that is understanding and cooperative. We have had our share of difficulties with this present Congress. What we need is a Congress that is significantly different from the one we have at the present time.

So, we have got to get good candidates. We have to support those Republican candidates for the Congress, and it is just as important that we likewise support our candidate for Governor, our candidate for the State Legislature, our candidate for local office, and I hope and trust that as we move toward November that each and every one of you will understand, yes, vote for the President, but let's make certain, let's make positive, that we do just as well for our Congressional candidates, for our gubernatorial candidates, for our legislative candidates and for our local candidates. This is a team.

Now we have the Irish for Ford. We can't lose.  
(Laughter)

Let me close this gathering with all of you from the great State of Illinois -- I have Illinois colors on (Laughter) -- by thanking you again. This has been a great trip on this occasion. It was a wonderful trip last week. If there is anything more you think we can do, let me know.

When we leave here, we head for the next primary-- North Carolina. The win here in Illinois will give us the kind of momentum that we got from Florida for Illinois. So, I urge you and I strongly ask you, do everything you possibly can between now and Tuesday so this momentum, this ball rolls faster and faster and more successfully.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 8:25 A.M. EST)