

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 31, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
SENATE-HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE FUND RAISING DINNER

WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL

10:22 P.M. EST

Ted, my good friend Guy, my old colleagues in the House as well as in the Senate, all of you very distinguished guests:

Let me say that it is a great privilege and a very high honor for the opportunity of Betty and myself to see so many good friends at this annual Republican Senate-House dinner.

I could not help but notice when Betty and I came up that she seemed to get much more applause than I. I am getting used to that, I might say. (Laughter) In fact, we are lucky to have her here tonight -- she is out doing a lot of campaigning. The sole objective is to get my votes up to her polls. (Laughter) I thank you, and I can prove it that she does.

So it is nice to be here. Let me speak on behalf of both of us that we are deeply grateful for all of you, as friends and supporters of our distinguished Senators and Members of the House, for coming here this evening and helping to make this a very successful affair.

All of you, I know, from knowing most of you, are very faithful friends of the party and certainly the philosophy, and I thank you extremely, very, very much for the continuing commitment to all that our party stands for and the philosophy that I think all of us represent.

Of course, as I looked around the room and met some of the people that I have known in the House and the Senate for a good many years, it is great to have an opportunity in a friendly and warm atmosphere to see them.

As John Rhodes and as Barry Goldwater ticked off the Members who were leaving at either end of the Capitol, I can tell you from personal experience there will be a great void and I wish them all well even though I wish all of them were going to stay.

MORE

Let me say to the Members of the House and Senate who are here that I am deeply grateful for the outstanding work that they have done since I have been President, particularly in the 94th Congress where the odds were infinitely worse than they were even in the preceding Congress.

The record shows that despite the overwhelming odds against you -- those in the House as well as in the Senate, Republicans primarily -- you have built an outstanding record of innovation, farsightedness, restraint and responsibility in the affairs of Government. It is obvious to you that you are not to blame in any way whatsoever for the results of a recent survey which showed that only 9 percent of the American people have a great deal of confidence in the Congress as an institution, and I think that is a very, very bad situation in our country today.

However, it is just as obvious where the blame does lie -- with the two to one Democratic majority in the House as well as in the Senate. The record of that majority is a record of failure, it is a record of timidity -- it is a record of failure, and I hope and trust that the American people will repudiate that record and rectify the lopsided ratio on November 2, 1976.

The American people should be very, very grateful for the solid and responsible Republican votes in the United States Congress in 1975 and 1976. And let me say from a very personal basis -- without hesitation, qualification or reservation -- I am deeply grateful for the help and assistance that they have given me.

But I say it is high time the Republicans have a majority in the Congress once again, and you have my solemn pledge, every one of you who are seeking re-election, that I will do my very, very best in any way I can to make sure that we get that majority in 1977.

The Democratic Party has controlled the Congress 38 out of 42 years. Either Ted or Guy said 40 out of 44, but in either case it is much too much. On issue after issue after issue Democratic Congresses have failed to meet the needs of the American people. They have frustrated, in my own case, my attempts and your attempts to meet those needs.

Control, as we all know, carries with it responsibility and two-thirds control makes that responsibility inescapable. They can't avoid the fact with those kinds of majorities that they have the responsibility to do what is in the best interests of the American people across the spectrum, either domestic or international.

MORE

The legacy of 21 years of continuous Democratic control in the Congress is found in the layer upon layer of Federal bureaucracy, it is found in the multiplicity of Government regulations, red tape, and those 5,200 forms that have to be filled out by our fellow citizens. It is found in the heavy burden of taxes imposed on the American people, all segments of our economic society. It is found in higher and higher and higher levels of Federal spending for more than 1,000 Government programs.

The American people should know that it is useless to look to the controlling elements of the Democratic Party for relief from big Government. The Democratic Party is the cause of big Government -- the Republican Party is the cure.

As I see it, if the American people want limits on Federal Government -- and they do, as I see it -- they want a Republican majority in the Congress of the United States. If they are ready for an additional \$10 billion tax cut, which I propose to start July 1 of this year but which the Democrats refuse to give, then they are ready for a Republican majority in the United States Congress. If they are ready to support my budget proposal that cuts by 50 percent the rate of growth in Federal spending while the Democrats propose a budget which would be increased between \$20 billion and \$30 billion higher than the spending that I recommended, then they are ready for a Republican majority in the United States Congress.

I think most of you know that since August of 1974 I vetoed 46 bills in the past 19 months. Thanks to the strong and often courageous support of the Republican Senators and Members of the Congress and with the help from some discerning Democrats on the other side of the aisle, we were able to sustain 39 of those vetoes, and thanks to our going to the mat for fiscal integrity those 39 sustained vetoes will have saved the American people a minimum of \$13 billion.

But, I add parenthetically and with some sadness, the 7 vetoes that were overridden will cost the American taxpayers an extra \$7 billion and, just to bring it right close to home, that averages out \$32 extra tax dollars for every man, woman and child in the United States.

Now if the American people want sound fiscal management, they want a Republican majority in the United States Congress. If the American people want a balanced Federal budget in three years plus another additional tax reduction, they want a Republican Congress in 1977 and 1978.

MORE

Today, while Americans' dependence on foreign energy supplies continues to grow while we approach the point where we will import more than 50 percent of oil from foreign sources, the majority in this Congress are pushing or pursuing an energy policy of politics and delay. Their position on the energy crisis is to take the most politically palatable course and hope the problem will go away after election day.

The American people should know that it is a Republican Administration that has proposed every one of these major energy initiatives -- deregulation of natural gas, creation of an energy independence authority, the Nuclear Fuel Assistance Act, tax incentives for accelerated petroleum exploration and the budget proposals for increased energy research and development.

If the American people want energy independence -- and we must absolutely have it -- we need a lot more Republicans in the United States Congress.

MORE

I found that you do have to bite the bullet occasionally and sometimes you do it in programs or in areas where politics might dictate otherwise. But let me bring up one subject that I think ought to be mentioned very specifically, very categorically. Today while 32 million Social Security recipients wonder whether their Social Security Trust Fund will run out of money in the next few years, what are the Democrats in the Congress doing to maintain the integrity of the Social Security Trust Fund? Just because it is an election year, will they face up to the growing deficit in the Social Security Fund while there is still time to take a very positive action and do it so that the Fund will take in as much as it pays out?

If the American people want to be sure there is a strong and solvent Social Security Fund in the future, then they want a lot more Republicans in the United States Congress.

And, finally, today while the American people seek continued assurance that America's defenses are second to none, while I have proposed the two largest peace time defense budgets in the history of our country, to bolster that assurance and to guarantee our security, some Democrats in the Congress seek to cut the defense budget by some \$6 billion. In fact, over the last six years anti-defense majorities of the Democratic Congresses have slashed national defense programs -- expenditures, if you will -- by a total of \$32 billion and let me say we are not going to let that happen in 1976.

I am very encouraged by yesterday's actions by the House and Senate Budget Committees in substantially approving the defense requests that I had made -- a total availability of funds of \$112 billion plus and some \$100 plus billion in expenditures, and I compliment both Republicans and the Democrats who hung in there and voted for a strong national security program. But the record shows that those votes were very, very close and were a long way from final passage. If these early threats of major defense cuts are revived along the legislative way and Congress sends me a bill that fails to meet our essential national defense expenditures, I will veto that legislation without hesitation at all.

The American people know that we have no choice but to match strength with strength; that we must maintain our capability to deter aggression, to keep the peace and to protect our national security. If the American people truly want assurance that America's defenses are unsurpassed, they want a lot more people like what we find here tonight in the United States Congress.

MORE

In every single one of the issues that I have sought to mention tonight, and there are more that we could mention by name, the Democratic 94th Congress has demonstrated that it is out of step and out of touch with the American people. Our task in this election year, and it is a very crucial one, is to make sure that a lot more Republicans who are in step and in touch with the people in fifty States are in office when the 95th Congress convenes on January 3, 1977.

I have promised repeatedly, and I promise you again tonight, that I will do everything I possibly can to win a Republican majority in the United States Congress, the House and the Senate, in 1976.

Having served in the minority in the House of Representatives in the 25-plus years in every year except two and having had the honor to be the Minority Leader in nine years or thereabouts, always in the minority, I can assure you that it is not easy. John Rhodes put it very succinctly. It is not only the speakership, it is not only the power to control the programming, it is the power of every committee chairman, and people in this room that I have known a great many years know the power of a committee chairman.

And if we are going to get the kind of consideration for legislation that is needed and necessary for this country, both at home as well as abroad, we need that kind of leadership in every one of the 20-plus committees in the House and the 15 or so in the United States Senate.

And so I am willing to dedicate my time to the maximum to help in recruiting candidates, to raise money for them, to help elect them. And it was almost exactly two years ago tonight I made a speech as Vice President to the Midwest Republican Leadership Conference in Chicago. I said at that time, and I say with emphasis this evening, that the Presidency alone cannot insure the success of our cause if we do not win sufficient party support in the Congress for our programs or our policies. Furthermore, that support cannot be fully insured without strong Republican involvement and representation from the grass roots up, from the county courthouses to the city halls and to the State Legislatures.

I said two years ago, and I reiterate again with emphasis, that every Presidential candidate of the Republican Party should pledge to work within and for the benefit of the Republican Party, to campaign not only for himself or herself but for the whole Republican ticket from top to bottom, and I pledge that to you again here tonight.

I said then and I repeat now that I will never do or say anything to weaken or divide this Grand Old Party which all of us love so much and all of us believe has the right political philosophy.

MORE

I have always campaigned for the unity of our party, recognizing that conscientious men and women could differ on particulars without foresaking the basic Republican philosophies to which they are committed.

For the 36 years since I first took an active part in Republican politics, that has been my philosophy and it has been my practice and I will not abandon it in 1976.

Quite a few of you, I am sure, know that I have campaigned many, many times in all of the fifty States on behalf of candidates for the Congress and other offices that we all felt were significant and I am proud of the fact that I have met so many wonderful people in each of these fifty States, whether we won or lost.

As Guy has told me, in last year alone I sent a letter out that he had to raise some \$ 2 million plus for the Congressional Campaign Committee. I know it will be well spent and it will produce results. As Ted indicated tonight, I feel strongly that this same kind of a letter ought to go maybe to some of you and I hope you will respond for the Members of the United States Senate who are going to be candidates this year. Last year, because I think it is vital that we get our State party organizations and local party organizations strengthened, I traveled to some 23 States and raised approximately \$6 million for the National Committee and our State organizations. This is the way we have to build, from the grass roots up, a party organization so that we can actually execute our philosophy which we all believe in so very deeply.

I must say that as I have talked to many of the people like Guy and Ted and others, I don't think we seek to elect Republicans simply for the sake of our party's pride. More importantly, as I have seen it over the years I have participated, we seek victory to secure our country's future.

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "The future lies with those wise political leaders who realize that the great public is interested more in government than in politics."

That lesson has apparently been forgotten by too many of today's Democrats. In the last 15 months, far, far too many Democrats in this Congress have steadfastly refused to bite the bullet or to make the tough decisions on major issues facing our country today. The American people, as I travel around, are seriously concerned with these basic issues and they have every right to expect that Congress should deal with them very seriously and very effectively because they are of deep concern to them.

MORE

Expediency and complacency cannot really reflect the American mood in 1976. Our situation today demands a new birth of the creative spirit, the courage, the sacrifice and the determination with which other generations have met their challenges in America. That example should be set rightly by those of us in public life.

I am proud that the Republicans in the House and Senate have accepted this responsibility and set this example so forcefully during the 94th Congress. I am, too, proud of the record of peace and rising prosperity which this Republican Administration is presenting to the American people in 1976. A Republican majority in the Congress working with me would make progress for America so much easier and so much more certain in the years ahead.

It is not only our duty but our great opportunity to work together this year, 1976, our Bicentennial year, for a common victory -- a victory for the principles, for the programs that unite us as Republicans philosophically.

So I close with this comment. Let us work together and then walk together for the great American people, some 215 million of them, in the path of peace, on the road to prosperity and on the way to victory in 1976.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 10:47 P.M. EST)