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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE

FAIRMONT HOTEL

6:18 P.M. CST

Thank you very, very much, John, and let me thank Trammell Crow, and let me officially thank Barney Young and Ed Haggar, but let me add a very strong thank you for all of you who have come here and given this support.

I am very, very grateful, and I can only tell you as strongly as I can you haven't let me down, and we aren't going to let you down.

I have really been talking so much today I have kind of gotten tired of hearing myself talk. But it's, I think, good every once in a while for us to take a minute or two and see where we were and where we are going. And I was thinking as I came down on the plane this afternoon, or this morning rather, in August of 1974, we were in real trouble. We had economic conditions that were unbelievable, inflation over 12 percent and on the brink of a serious economic recession, unemployment about to explode and employment to plummet.

And as I look back over this last year, I am very proud of the American people, and I am extremely proud of the kind of Government we have because, despite the worst recession in 40 years, the American people didn't panic, they didn't succumb to the blandishment of quick fixes and superficial proposals.

We tried to have a strong, steady, constructive course, which I think we did, and we got the kind of support that was needed and necessary from people like John Tower and others.

And the net result is, you know, the skies look pretty good now. Everything that is supposed to be going up is going up. And everything that is supposed to be going down is going down, and if we don't lose our cool, and we keep the same firm, steady progress in programs that we have, we are going to have the most prosperous country in the history of the world, and it will be permanent, not a lot of ups and downs, peaks and valleys. That is what we are aiming for, and that is what we are going to get.

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We have got other problems besides the economy, but let me just add one comment about where America stands in the world. I always thought I was the second best informed person in the Congress on military affairs -- I always conceded that John Tower was number one. (Laughter) But number two out of 535 isn't bad, so I had in the House of Representatives 12 years on the Defense Appropriations Committee that met five days a week, five hours a day, seven months a year, listening to Secretaries of Defense, Secretaries of Army, Navy, Air Force, Admirals, Generals, you have it, and I believe over a period of that many years, I understand what the programs and the policies are, both strategic as well as conventional.

And I can tell you without any hesitation or qualification that the military capability of the United States today is unsurpassed, period.

You take strategic forces, we have a superiority where our technicians and specialists and military leaders say we should have it. We have more warheads by far than the Soviet Union. We don't have more missiles, but missiles don't destroy targets. It's warheads that destroy targets.

So isn't it better to have more warheads than missiles? Our missiles and warheads are more accurate than theirs and accuracy is a very important thing in a weapons system that goes 5,000 miles. And our launchers are more survivable.

So in the areas where we want a greater strength than anybody, warheads, accuracy, survivability, we have got it, and we are way ahead.

Now, you can take strategic airplanes -- and all of you in this great State know all about them -- in our B-52s, we outnumber them -- what is it, three to one, John -- closer to four to one, I think, in strategic aircraft and our B-52s are being replaced on a responsible level with our B-1s, which is a great aircraft.

So what I am saying is, you have to look at the actual programs, and you have to compare apples and apples and not apples and oranges.

Now, I have heard somebody say that the Soviet Union has 4 million, 200 thousand men under arms and the United States has 2 million, 100 thousand -- that is right. But that doesn't really equate the reality.

We have Canada to the North, and we don't have a single soldier from the Pacific to the Atlantic. We have Mexico to the South. We don't have a single soldier that mans the border between Mexico and the United States.

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The Soviet Union, what do they have? On their Eastern border, they have the People's Republic of China with 800 million people and a thousand miles of border where there is controversy every day. So they have half, at least, or more of their military manpower there.

Their Western border is NATO, Western Europe. They have the rest of their forces there. You just can't take numbers, you have to understand, and all I ask of responsible people like all of you and your many friends in Dallas, listen to a fellow like John Tower, he knows what he is talking about.

Well, it's real nice to see you all. I guess the rest of the Ford family is coming down to the great State of Texas. I understand Betty is coming down. You know she always goes and campaigns in order to get my votes up to her polls. (Laughter)

And I guess Jack is coming down here, and we can get the rest of them down here if they will help the old man.

Thank you very, very much.

END

(AT 6:26 P.M. CST)