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Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Dallas, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED
AT A PUBLIC FORUM
WEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY GYMNASIUM
CANYON, TEXAS

Texas is a proud state. It's a proud state because the people of Texas have always been tough, hard-working, and independent minded. You have the frontier spirit, and you can be rightly proud of it.

The guiding principle of our nation's greatness has not been a reliance on what the government does for the people -- but what the people have done for themselves.

Here in Texas you have never lost sight of one basic truth: That a government big enough to give us everything we want, is a government big enough to take from us everything we have.

Americans can only be successful, strong and proud if they are free -- and the duty of my Administration is to preserve that freedom. As your President for the last 20 months, that is the goal I have consistently pursued.

America's freedom takes many forms. The most fundamental freedom is the freedom from outside threats. Preserving that freedom through a strong national defense is one of the Federal government's most important responsibilities.

I have always, in my 27 years in government, stood for a strong defense capability. If I learned one thing from my experience in World War II -- that was it. My voting record on defense has been clear and consistent for 27 years, and I'm proud to stand on it.

As President I have to deal in facts -- and fact number one is, today our military strength is sufficient to keep us free and secure. Our national defenses -- our two million men and women in uniform and the strategic might they underwrite -- are the finest in the world.

Some countries -- the Soviet Union for example -- must protect their borders with large standing armies. But, fortunately, we have friends on both of our land borders.

We do have a fine army -- an all-volunteer army -- well equipped, well run, and well coordinated with the armies of our many powerful allies around the world.

But our basic strength in protecting our freedom lies in our abilities to protect our power by air and sea around the world.

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And in those categories where our military planners call for clear-cut superiority--the fact is we are first. The United States has the most accurate ballistic missiles. The United States of America has many, many more missile warheads than the Soviet Union. Furthermore, we also have a vast superiority in strategic bombers. We have aircraft carriers, and carrier task forces at sea.

There are those who would seek to raise false alarms--by saying, for example, that the Soviet Union has more ships than we do. But the fact is, you do not compare navies by numbers. You compare total firepower, you compare tonnage and combat capability--and you find we are on top.

Let me put it this way--would you say a football team was better than the Dallas Cowboys just because it had more players on the roster? Of course not. You have to know how good those players are. You compare the teams' talents, their strengths and their strategies. And in terms of quality and technological superiority, the national defenses of the United States of America are unsurpassed. And what is more, we are going to stay that way so long as I am your President.

It is the strength of our military forces which makes credible our diplomatic initiatives for peace and which provides the firm foundation of our leadership in the international community.

But let me add that our strength involves more than our military might. Our nation's real power is measured more completely by considering a combination of its military, agricultural, industrial, technological and moral strength. All these contribute to our national security. And in every one of these areas, the number one nation in the world is the United States of America.

But even within a physically secure United States, there can be other threats to freedom. Just think back to the state of our economy a year and a half ago, and you will see what I mean. When I became President 20 months ago, the national economic climate was bad--and getting worse. As a result, American citizens were losing their freedom to live the way they wanted to.

Consumers had less choice about what to buy, because inflation was eating up the value of their incomes. Businessmen had lost the freedom to invest, and to expand and improve their operations. And, tragically, many Americans had lost the freedom to earn a decent living, because our nose-diving economy did not need their services.

My Administration fought hard to regain America's economic freedom--and it is clear that we are winning. The figures show us that the rate of inflation has been cut in half. Incomes are once again rising faster than the cost of living. The March figures show us that not only have we recovered all the jobs we had lost to the recession--but there are more Americans working today than ever before in our history.

And most important of all, the figures show us that the confidence of the American people is rising, steadily and strongly. We are going to keep America's confidence rising. We are going to keep protecting your economic freedom just as steadfastly as we protect all of America's freedoms.

One way I will do that, with the cooperation of the Congress, is by sticking to the path of fiscal responsibility. Let me remind you of the budget I submitted this year--and those I plan to submit in the next four years. My plans will bring a balanced budget in 1979.

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And that will bring you another major tax cut. That will give you the freedom to spend more of your money the way you want to spend it. And finally, and most importantly, I will continue to protect your freedom by being honest with you. When I gave you my first state of the union message, I knew things looked bad for the economy, and I said so. I did not raise any false hopes, and I never will.

But I will not conjure up any false fears, either. Because irresponsible and misleading statements threaten our progress and your freedom--and my job is to protect them.

That is why America needs a realistic government. A government that promises only what it can deliver--and delivers everything it promises. A government that protects its people's freedoms by being strong, steady and responsible--without being afraid of the future--and without retreating into the past.

That is the kind of government we have given you for the last 20 months. And with your help next month and next November, that is the kind of government we will give you for the next four years as well.

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