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APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(El Paso, Texas)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

EL PASO CIVIC CENTER

1:28 P.M. CST

Thank you very, very much John Tower. As John was speaking, I could see very obviously that you are the tops in quality, the tops in quantity, and by gosh, nobody beats you in energy. Congratulations.

We were talking on the way out from Dallas that I was here in El Paso in 1969 and made a speech on behalf of the Republican Party trying to raise some money for the Congressional candidate, as I recall the State ticket, and I had a wonderful experience, a great opportunity to meet, I am sure, some of you at that time.

I am honored and privileged to be back here to speak, as I did to the Green organization a few minutes ago, to have an opportunity to shake hands and speak to all of you here and then to participate in a memorial ceremony for some Vietnam veterans.

This is a great opportunity for me because I know that you can, as John indicated, with the effort that can come out of this group, elect those four delegates to the national convention in Kansas City.

We start out, I think, in Texas an underdog, but we have got a great leader in Senator John Tower, and as I travel around, I am convinced we have got a real fine organization, and I believe we have got the right policies for America, both at home and abroad, and with that combination we are going to win.

I know, as many of you man the phone banks or talk to your friends or discuss with some of your adversaries, you want some talking points that will give you the kind of convincing ammunition so that we can persuade people to support our delegates that are on the ballot.

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(OVER)

Let me give you very quickly some things that have helped Betty and me as we have gone to New Hampshire, to Florida, to other States and volunteered for a limited period of time to call people. The things that seem to have an impact are, number one, when I became President 20 months ago we were having inflation at the rate of 12 percent or more. Today it is 6 percent or less. That is a lot of progress.

It is not enough, but the trend is going down and we are going to keep it going down. Then the question arises about unemployment. I had no longer been President for 30 days or more when we were capitulated into the worst economic recession that this country has had in 40 years. Of course, the seeds for it had been planted before. But all of a sudden unemployment soared and employment plummeted and the net result was some people got panicky.

But, I decided that the right course of action for this country was not to load up the Federal payroll but to try and create an economic climate in this country so that the jobs that had been lost could be regained in the private sector under our free enterprise system, and it is working.

Here are a few statistics that might be helpful. In the month of this year, we regained 375,000 new jobs in America. Since last May, we have regained 2,600,000 jobs. From the depths of the recession to the month of March, and in the total number of jobs in the United States today, we have 86,700,000, an all-time record.

We are doing something right, and we are going to keep on doing it right, so we can keep that employment going up and unemployment going down.

Then, if somebody should say why doesn't President Ford balance the budget, let me tell you what we are trying to do. Since I became President, I vetoed 47 bills. That is an all-time record. If Congress is so unwise to keep sending down these bloated appropriations bills, we will veto them again and again and again.

It just might interest you to know that by the vetoing of those bills -- and the Congress sustained 39 of the 47 -- we have saved the taxpayers \$13 billion. That is a lot of dough.

Now, let me make a comment or two about where we stand internationally and in the defense of the United States. In January of 1975 I submitted to the Congress the largest military appropriations bill in the history of this country. Unfortunately, the Congress cut \$7.5 billion of it.

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In January of this year I submitted an even larger military budget of \$112.4 billion. I hope the Congress won't cut this one. All I am citing is that every year since I have been President we have sought to maintain and to strengthen our strategic and conventional forces. Let me assure you of one thing. Our military capability in the United States is unsurpassed by any other nation in the world, and we are going to keep it there.

When you add up our military capability, our industrial capacity, our agricultural production, our scientific and technological superiority and, most importantly, our morale and religious and spiritual leadership, the United States is number one, and we are going to keep it there, period.

I hope a few emphatic points like that will convince a few doubting Thomases so you can go out and get better than 51 percent votes for those four stalwart delegates that come from this Congressional district. I am going to be watching you. (Laughter) I am going to count on you, and we won't let you down.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 1:37 P.M. CST)