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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
PFC RECEPTION

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5:38 P.M. EST

John, Matt, and all of you wonderful Republicans here in this meeting in the Atlanta area:

Let me first express my deep appreciation and gratitude for John Savage's endorsement. I know it will be very meaningful, and I promise to you, John, as I promise to everybody here, I won't let you down.

Now let me thank all of you. This is the biggest Georgia Republican gathering I have seen in the many, many times I have been in Georgia on behalf of the Republican Party, so I think it augers well that come May 4 we may surprise some of those people who think they are going to win. I think we have a darn good chance of winning.

I want to thank some of the people that I know personally that I served with in the Congress, for the help and assistance and their support.

First, I want to thank Fletcher Thompson, who I understand has gone the length and the breadth of Georgia speaking out on my behalf. And if Mr. Fletcher is here, I want you to know, Fletch, thank you very, very much.

I want to thank another great Georgian for the help and assistance, the invaluable aid that he gave me during some tough times in this campaign, a very dear friend of mine, a very outstanding American, Bo Callaway. I think it is very unfair the kind of treatment he is getting from a committee in the United States Senate, and, doggone-it, they ought to do better in the handling of a matter of this kind to give Bo a fair shake.

Now let me, if I might, give you some ideas and suggestions that might be helpful in the 11 days between now and May 4. I know many of you will be at the telephone phone banks, many of you will be talking to your friends, many of you will be discussing who wants to be the Republican nominee in the fall of 1976.

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Let me respectfully give you some suggestions that I know have been helpful in the areas of this country where we have been successful and in those areas of the country where we are going to be more successful.

First, when I became President in August of 1974 we were experiencing some very serious economic problems. The rate of inflation was 12 to 14 percent. We were on the brink -- literally on the brink -- of the worst economic recession in this country in 40 years.

Well, my firm, constructive, I think, steady policies that put the emphasis on trying to get the private sector to meet the challenge rather than loading up the Federal payroll, we have come out of this in good shape.

Where do we stand? Where do we stand? Well, instead of 12 to 14 percent inflation, the rate of inflation for the first four months of 1976 was 2.9 percent. That is great success and we are going to keep working on it, and we will do even better.

Last May, the unemployment was at almost 9 percent, but since last May at the depth of the recession we have added 2,600,000 more people gainfully employed in this country. As of March, it was reported that we have 86,700,000 people gainfully employed in this country, the greatest number in the history of the United States. So we have met the challenge in the area of employment and we are going to do better and better and we are going to continue to lower the unemployment rate as we will with the kind of policies that we have.

We are on the road to the most sustained, best economic times that this country has had, and I think this Administration can claim a great deal of credit for it.

And what do we want to achieve as we move ahead? We want to achieve a balanced budget. But do you know how we are going to get it? We are going to cut the rate of growth of Federal spending from 11 percent to 5-1/2 or 5 percent.

And, at the same time, in order to stimulate the private sector of the economy I hope the Congress will approve the additional \$10 billion tax reduction that I recommended this year, and I hope and trust that they will follow on with the kind of a tax program that I will recommend the next year and all of those programs of holding the rate of growth of Federal spending and stimulating the private sector will give us a balanced budget in three years in the healthiest, vigorous economy.

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You know, another thing that I think we can talk about -- and I think it is dear to the hearts of the people here in Georgia -- I firmly believe that we ought to get the Federal Government, to the extent that we possibly can, off the backs and out of the pockets of the people of this country.

This Administration believes in one very basic truth, and let me state it: A Government big enough to give you everything you want is a Government big enough to take from you everything you have.

Now let me add another feature of what I think is a good selling point in Georgia, a good selling point in all 50 States. We want an even balance in labor-management so that without Government interference we can have those labor-management problems solved with labor and management doing it without Government interference. That is why I vetoed the common situs picketing bill.

And I might also say, talking about vetoes, (Laughter) since I have been President I vetoed 48 measures. That is an all-time record. Thirty-nine of those vetoes have been sustained even by this Congress. (Laughter) The net result is we have saved \$13 billion in Federal expenditures, and that is not a bad record.

But let me add a postscript. If they send down any more of this terrible legislation, we will veto it and veto it and veto it again.

Now let's talk for a minute about how we stand in our efforts to make sure that we maintain the peace. You know, I am very proud that I am the first incumbent President who is seeking election who can stand before the American people and say that our country is at peace -- the first one in 20 years. So we must be doing something right in our relations with our allies and with our adversaries.

All I am saying is the United States of America is number one. We have unsurpassed military capability, we are the greatest industrial nation in the history of the world, our agriculture out-produces anybody, we are ahead scientifically and technologically, and, most importantly, this country has a deep moral and spiritual and religious belief -- it gives us the inspiration to challenge anybody and to keep ahead of everybody, and that is where America is.

Now let me thank Matt, John, and all of you. We have got great leadership here in Georgia and we have got great people like you to help in the job. I think we have good programs, both domestically and internationally, and if we are able to do, as I think we have done in the last 20 months, in the next four years, we can say at the end of the next four years even stronger and better than we say it today -- every one of us is proud to be an American and proud of America.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 5:48 P.M. EST)