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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

ROOM F  
CIVIC CENTER CONCERT THEATRE

6:40 P.M. CDT

First, I want to thank Charles and Mildred for the superb job that they have done in organizing the State on my behalf. I can't express my gratitude deeply enough to both of you.

Then I want to thank Hall Thompson and Bill Acker for the superb job they have done. It is 150 percent, and we appreciate that, but Alabama is number one in all of the States in raising money on the basis of their quota, and we thank all of you.

Then, obviously, I want to thank the delegates and the alternates who are out there in the front line. Nothing would make me happier than to have every delegate and every alternate down there in Kansas City helping us win that nomination and eventually helping us to win the election on November 2.

I also want to thank, in the presence of all of you Bill Dickinson, John Buchanan and Jack Edwards for the great endorsement that they gave me out in the city square or the city area there this afternoon. I haven't had as strong, as fine endorsements by a Congressional delegation as those three gave today, and I am very, very appreciative of what they have done.

It is awfully nice to see two former colleagues of mine here, Glen Andrews and Jimmy Martin, two fine, fine people who came to the Congress in January of 1965 and along with Jack and Bill and John supported me when I became the minority leader. Let me tell you how close that vote was. (Laughter) There were 140 Republicans that were sworn in January 3, 1965, and I won by the landslide margin of 73 to 67. (Laughter) If I had not had those five votes of Jimmy and Glen and Bill and John and Jack, you know it might have been the other way. (Laughter)

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But, let me say just a word or two, if I might. I know that you are going back to talk to your friends, you are going to get people out, you are going to be doing a wonderful job in the next 24 or 36 hours. I think there are a couple of things we can talk about that if you have any people that are on the fence, that have not quite made up their minds yet. Let me summarize it very quickly because I think I have done enough talking today. Let me tell you as succinctly as I can the selling points that I think make sense.

Number one, when I became President there was a great loss of confidence in Government and, in particular, the White House.

Number two, we were on the brink of the worst economic recession this country has had in 40 years. Inflation was 12 percent or greater. Unemployment was about to go up and employment was about to sink. We have restored confidence and faith I think in the White House.

Number three, the rate of inflation has been cut by 75 percent. The first three months of this year the rate of inflation on an annual basis was under 3 percent. In the last 12 months, when we hit the bottom of the recession, we have gained 2,600,000 more people on the payroll of the private enterprise system of this country. We now have 86,700,000 people gainfully employed, the highest number in the history of the United States.

So, I think we have a lot to talk about, and we are not going to be overwhelmed by some of the emotional appeals that have been made by some people.

I thought Jack Edwards, who really knows something about the defense program of this country and what we have in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines, because of his very unique experience on the Defense Appropriations Committee -- and Bill Dickinson is also on the House Armed Services Committee, and I am sure that Bill agrees entirely with Jack Edwards -- that all of this talk about the United States military being second -- it is nonsense.

Furthermore, both Bill and Jack can tell you categorically a year ago I submitted the highest military budget in the history of the United States and this year I also submitted the highest military budget in the history of America, increasing the funds by 14 percent.

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So, this President is doing what is needed and necessary to keep America strong, period.

Let me ask you one question. How many here yesterday heard our wonderful friend Barry Goldwater on Meet the Press? Apparently some of you didn't, (Laughter) so let me say at the outset in 1964 I supported Barry Goldwater because he was right. I am proud of it. In retrospect, I think he was right, but here is the transcript of Barry Goldwater's interrogation on Meet the Press yesterday, and there is one issue that has been raised.

I think I have tried to set the record straight, to give the facts, but sometimes another person can do it better than yourselves and now here is Barry Goldwater being asked about the Panama Canal, and here is the question:

"On the Panama Canal, who is right on that? Whose position do you support, Ford's or Reagan's?" Senator Goldwater in response: "I have to support Ford's position on it, and I think Reagan would, too, if he knew more about it."

So, what I am saying, we have got an affirmative record. We should be proud of it, at home and abroad. We also have the answers to the charges that have been made in the political campaign, so each and every one of you delegates can go back to your respective communities and with pride I think get those votes, so I will see each and every one of you delegates and alternates at Kansas City.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 6:48 P.M. CDT)