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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PFC VOLUNTEER RECEPTION

HOLIDAY INN RIVERMONT

1:21 P.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, Howard.

Let me add a postscript to what Howard just said. What he did say in compliments to all of you was not something he just said for you here, because he has been telling Jimmy Quillen and myself and Governor Dunn that all the way from Johnson City. (Laughter) So, he really means it and I can see from the enthusiasm and the record that you have that we are going to do very well here, and it is not the record that I have, it is not anybody else, but it is the hard work on the telephone and in the precincts and every other way that you people do, and for that I am very, very grateful.

Now, let's think about what we have to do between now and May 25. We have got a couple of very important primaries next Tuesday, and then the following Tuesday it is countdown day right here in the State of Tennessee.

Tennessee, along with Kentucky, are very crucial. We expect to get some momentum next week up there in Michigan and Maryland, and let me assure you, if we get that momentum we want it to be contagious and we want it right down here in Tennessee, as well.

Now we have got great leadership here with Senator Baker, Governor Dunn, Jimmy Quillen, Robin Beard, my old friend Dan Kuykendall, and Bill Brock. It is just a great organization of people that have either served with me in the Congress or I have known, such as Governor Dunn, when he was the Governor of your State and did so extremely well and who was the head of the Governors' Conference.

These people have had an opportunity to observe, to see how I voted, how I talked in the Congress, what I tried to do, and their endorsement of me means a great deal.

So I am deeply grateful to each and all of them, and I am equally appreciative of your willingness to be a volunteer out in the front line because, as I said a moment ago, that is where the battle is won.

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If I could give you a few words or a few ideas that you might use as you talk to your neighbors, to your business associates, to your friends, I can summarize it very quickly.

Why should Jerry Ford be the next President for the four years ahead of us? I think it is very simple.

One, I have got a record. It is not predicated on promises with no experience. It is predicated on the basis of struggling with the Congress, on the one hand -- not with Howard and Jimmy, but with (Laughter) those other fellows. (Laughter) It is experience in working with the Congress to get them to do something or to prevent the Congress from doing something. And I can tell you it is very helpful to be able to call people to help affirmatively, like Jim or Howard, or to ask them to stand with me when those goings are tough with the vetoes that we have.

Continuity in the office is important. Some of the things that we have to meet on a day-to-day basis relate to what happened in the past, and to have a little background is sometimes extremely helpful, both as to time and as to content. So whether it is experience or continuity, those are important assets.

Number three, let me take just a minute about the record. We try to summarize our achievements in three words -- peace, prosperity and trust. I think we have done a good job. We achieved the peace during the 21 months that I have been President. We have got it today and we have the programs, both military and diplomatic, to keep it in the future.

Let me point out, as Howard did on several occasions today, I am the first President in 13 years who can go to the American people and say our country is at peace.

There is one other point. The young people who are on college campuses, it is the first time in over 40 years that a young man graduating from college and/or high school isn't faced with mandatorily going into Selective Service. We achieve our manpower requirements in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines by volunteers, and so we have a good military organization, but we also have the option for young people if they want to do otherwise.

Now, let's talk for just a minute about prosperity. You don't know how tough it was -- I suspect some of you do -- a year ago we had nearly 9 percent unemployment. A lot of people were saying, Mr. President, you have got to spend a lot more money, you have got to initiate a whole lot of new costly programs with all kinds of new Federal bureaucracy, you have got to do a multitude of other things in a panic.

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We didn't do it. We held the line. We vetoed 49 bills -- 42 of them were sustained, and we saved \$13 billion of the American taxpayers' money. That is our track record.

Of course, I got a lot of help from Howard and Jimmy and some of the other staunch people, because we have to get a third in order to achieve that result -- so we did.

What are the facts now? Twelve months after a serious drop into the depths of a recession we are on the way up, and everything that is supposed to be going up is going up and everything that is supposed to be going down is going down.

The rate of inflation has been cut better than 50 percent, and if you take the first three months of this year, we have cut it 75 percent from the high of 1974. We added 3,300,000 more people in our labor market in the last 12 months, including 710,000 in the last 30 days. So the whole momentum is really surging for a good, prosperous future for this country, and I think I had something to do with it.

I have one quick other comment. They weren't very happy days to walk into the Oval Office on August 8, 1974. The American people had lost a lot of confidence in our Government. You all know the reasons. It has been a long way up to where I think we have restored that confidence, and the restoration of that confidence was absolutely essential to get America moving again.

America is moving and I think the restoration of confidence, trust, integrity, candor, forthrightness has been a major factor.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 1:30 P.M. CDT)