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(Pendleton, Oregon)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
HAPPY CANYON ARENA

PENDLETON MEMORIAL ARMORY

2:00 P.M. PDT

My dear friend, the former Governor and former Senator from the State of Idaho, Len, I want to thank you for coming from Idaho, for bringing a number of people from that great State to greet me here at Pendleton. I only wish that I had the time to stop in Idaho, and I hope and trust that you will express to all of your literally thousands of friends in Idaho my very best wishes and tell them that I appreciate their support and will not let them down.

Mr. Mayor, distinguished guests, fellow Americans:

At the outset, let me express my deep appreciation to the fine Pendleton band. You are great. I am grateful, and God bless you.

May I express my gratitude to the Seever family. That is great, great music. I have a very special family reason to thank the Seever family. Our third son, Steve, is trying to become a rodeo rider, a bronco buster, whatever you call him. (Laughter) He is just a beginner. He won't like me to classify his skill in that way, but a few months ago he got a Seever saddle. He has been doing a lot better ever since.

I flew out here yesterday morning to spend four days campaigning, meeting people on the West Coast, and my very first stop was right here in the great State of Oregon. I am glad to be here. I know you are always glad to be in Oregon. This is God's country.

Some States have mountain ranges. Some border on the ocean. Some have fertile and productive lands, broad forests, sparkling rivers. In some you can ski, in others you can swim, but here in Oregon, you got it all.

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My message to all of you in this beautiful spot here today in Pendleton can be summed up in a very few words: As much as I believe in a strong and prosperous American automobile industry, I have come here to say that this year there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to trade in your reliable Ford for a flashier model.

Let me tell you why I am asking you, my fellow Americans, for your support. I have done a good job under the toughest kinds of circumstances, and I would appreciate your wholehearted support. We have achieved and maintained the peace, moved America on the road to prosperity and we have restored the confidence and trust in the Presidency of the United States.

I ask you for a mandate here in Oregon and the American people to finish that job in the next four years.

Peace, prosperity and trust are my record of performance since I became your President. It is a record achieved against almost insurmountable obstacles. Consider where we were in the very first few months of my Presidency. You will recall vividly, as I can, some well-known economists some labor and political leaders who were predicting that we were heading into a deep depression, that unemployment would exceed 10 percent and that we would have all kinds of troubles for the next months and the next years.

They alleged that only massive Federal spending by the Government in Washington could avert a catastrophe. Inflation had soared at an annual rate of over 12 percent. Interest rates were going out of the roof. Far too many Americans were being laid off, and too few could find new jobs.

Just about a year ago we hit the bottom of our worst recession in 40 years. Many were urging me to push the panic button.

The Congress, the economy was bothering them as it was bothering me. The economic downturn set off a clamor in the House, as well as in the Senate, for huge emergency Federal subsidies and for more and more and more and bigger and bigger Federal programs which inevitably would have added significantly to our deficit and contributed even greater to the inflation that we were suffering.

The prophets of gloom were wrong. Because I had the faith in the American economy and faith in the American people, I knew they were wrong. We didn't panic. We didn't lose our cool. I never lost sight of a deeply held belief that I have that a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

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In those difficult months we resisted big spending schemes that would have caused larger and larger Federal deficits and even far more destructive inflation. We rejected the discredited techniques of all politics, of tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect.

Instead, we pursued a calm, constructive, effective policy -- to insure America's economic health, not just for an election year but for the long, long pull. For us, yes; but, more importantly, for the young people that I see in this great arena here today. And that is what America is all about.

We had that deep-seated faith of the American system that private enterprise would regain its strength and, as a result, we meet here today not in the gloom of a recession or a depression, but in the full surge of an economic recovery.

One very major contributor to the strong economic recovery we are experiencing is the success, the tremendous contribution and success of American agriculture, and the State of Oregon has played a very major role in that progress and that success.

And, as I flew from Portland here, it was one of the most enjoyable, one of the greatest experiences to see your fields, your equipment and to see what all of you do to make America the productive and successful economy that we have, and we thank you very, very much.

Admittedly, we have a long way to go in certain areas -- beef production -- we have to do better, and we will. But, I say that overall farm exports are being traded at a record volume; farm income is at an all-time high. We have reached a major agreement with the Soviet Union which will insure for the period of the next five years a minimum of 6 million metric tons, a new market, a good market, and Oregon will contribute very significantly, tremendously in that regard.

Last year, talking about exports, we exported the crops of the farmers of America to the extent of \$22 billion, and in 1976 we are going to export more and more of the bounty of America's agriculture, and your contribution is tremendous.

To make sure that good Oregon wheat and other farm products are produced for future generations and by those generations, I have proposed legislation raising the estate tax exemption from \$60,000 to \$150,000. But I have added to that a stretch-out of estate tax payments at low interest rates over a 25-year period.

But, even more importantly, in the proposal that I have made to the Congress, the transfer of assets between husband and wife will be tax free. That will not only help the family farms of Oregon, but family businesses as well.

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That will not only help the family farms of Oregon, but family business as well. There is no reason that these wonderful family enterprises should be sacrificed just to pay the tax collector and, if I have my way, it will be yours and not the tax collector's.

These family enterprises have helped us turn our economy around in the right direction for the past 21 months. America's new prosperity cuts across every segment of our economy. 87,400,000 Americans are gainfully employed, they are on the job today -- an all-time record, and we should be proud of it.

We will create more jobs by following your local example in generating new jobs in the private sector where five out of six jobs in America today exist and are available.

Inflation has been cut by more than half during the past 21 months, and we will keep the pressure on so that we won't have that kind of inflation threatening our economy in the future.

And let me point this out, if I might: In August of 1974 inflation was 12 percent; for the first four months of 1976, the annual rate of inflation is 3 percent or less. That is a 75 percent reduction, and we should be proud of that record, also.

I vetoed 49 bills that Congress sent me, and 42 of those bills have been sustained, saving the taxpayers of America \$13 billion. That is progress.

And, for the benefit of the families, that is about \$200 per family in America. And if the Congress keeps on sending to me the big spending budget-busting bills, I will use my veto again and again and again.

It is about time you got to spend your money the way you want to spend it instead of letting the Congress spend it for you. I am determined that your tax dollars work as hard for you as you work for them. I want the Government to spend less and tax less.

Last year, we reduced Federal income taxes. That was sound public policy. This year, I proposed another \$10 billion tax cut to begin July 1, which would raise the personal exemption from \$750 per individual to \$1,000 per person. That is what we want.

Right now, it looks like the Congress would rather spend that \$10 billion and almost \$8 billion more rather than let you keep it so that you could decide for yourself how that money should be spent.

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But let me assure you I will fight the Congress every step of the way to get your tax relief that you deserve. It will be good for America as well as for you individually.

I deeply appreciate this wonderful opportunity to come before you today and talk about the programs that have returned peace, increasing prosperity and trust to America. Today, America is at peace. There are no American boys fighting anywhere on the face of the world, and I intend to keep it that way.

Our military strength remains unsurpassed. We have the best equipped, the best trained, the best led fighting force in the world, and they are all volunteers. Your sons and your husbands are not being drafted under the Ford Administration.

I will maintain the peace as I have achieved it. I will secure that peace through strength and through perseverance and leave that legacy of peace for our children and for their children.

I will continue my policies of cutting your taxes, expanding the economy, reducing bureaucracy and useless regulation and restraining Federal spending. My policies have brought us from the depths of a recession to a sustained economic recovery and will insure that runaway inflation never robs us or our loved ones of the rewards of honest work and lifetime savings.

Finally, I will finish my most important job -- restoration of trust in the Presidency itself. As your President, I will promise you no more than I can deliver and deliver everything that I promise.

I need your support to insure peace, increasing prosperity and trust for the future. The future belongs to those who come after us. Americans have always wanted life to be better for the children than it was for us, because life for us has been better than it was for our parents.

What do I see ahead for this wonderful country, the United States of America? I see a strong and confident America, secure in a strength that cannot alone be counted in megatons and a Nation rejoicing in riches that cannot be eroded by inflation or by taxation.

I see an America where life is valued for its quality as well as for its comfort, where the individual is inviolate in his constitutional rights, where the Government serves and the people rule.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 2:20 P.M. PDT)