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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

THE LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER

12:53 P.M. PDT

Thank you very, very much, Oran, Bob List, Glen Walden, and thank all of you who have come to this opportunity for me to talk straight to you to tell you what we are trying to do and to thank you for your support and assistance in a program that I think is in the best interest of the United States. I thank you very, very much.

As much as I am strongly in favor of a healthy and prosperous automobile industry, let me say I urge you in 1976, don't trade in your reliable Ford for a flashier model. (Laughter)

I would like to talk to you very seriously for a moment. The stakes are very high in this pre-convention challenge that we have. The stakes are very high for what happens between now and November 2, and I, in all sincerity, ask you to go back to what the circumstances were in August of 1974 when I was sworn in as your President.

If you will recollect, there had been a great loss of trust and confidence in the White House. If you will remember, inflation was over 12 percent and we were on the brink of the worst economic conditions in the history of the United States for 40 years.

If you will remember, our allies abroad were uncertain as to the course, the will and the resolution of the American people. Our adversaries could have been in a position, if they had wanted to, to take advantage of the uncertainty in America.

Let me assure you that day of August 9 was not the easiest day to be sworn in as President of the United States. But, let me say that I decided right from the outset that regardless of any political consequences, any political disadvantages that follow in the months ahead, that I was going to do what was right for America and that I would not promise that I would do more than I could produce, and I would produce everything that I promised.

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So, let's review very quickly what has happened and transpired in the 21 or 22 months since August of 1974. Inflation was over 12 percent. For the first four months of 1976, the rate of inflation on an annual basis is 3 percent or less. That is a 75 percent reduction in the rate of inflation, and we are darned proud of that record.

A year ago we were in the worst economic condition with a serious recession. Unemployment was going up and employment was going down. But we followed the right course, I didn't succumb to the quick fixes that were recommended by the Congress. I said there was a better way to rely on the free enterprise system, the private sector in America, and the net result is we now have 87,400,000 people gainfully employed, on the job in America, an all-time high, and that is a darned good record.

As a matter of fact, in the last 12 months we have added 3,300,000 more jobs in America. In the last month, 710,000 more jobs. We are on our way. Everything that is supposed to be going up is going up, and everything that is supposed to be going down is going down. That is a good program, and we are very proud of it.

But let us talk for just a minute about some of the things that do concern, I am sure, as I understand, about a third of the people in this great State of Nevada. A lot of people for the last 40 years have had faith and trust in the money that they were paying into the Social Security Trust Fund, and 33 million Americans today are relying on Social Security because they have earned it.

A good many millions of Americans today are participating, expecting their Government will keep faith with them. But because the Congress has procrastinated, the Social Security Trust Fund is in some jeopardy.

As a matter of fact, in this 12-month period, \$3.5 billion will be the deficit. In other words, the income is \$3.5 billion less than the expenditures, and next year the deficit will be \$4 billion.

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The Ford Administration believes in facing up to the cold, hard facts, and I know some people have urged and advocated that we duck the issue in the Oval Office. I said in January this year that wasn't fair to 33 million people who were counting on their Government keeping faith.

So, I recommended some action that would preserve the financial integrity of the Social Security Trust Fund. I believe that is the only honest, responsible thing to do, because we have an obligation to make certain that those who have retired and those about to retire have the security that they expect.

I only cite this because some people in one way or another want to play politics, whether it is Social Security or some of the other programs and problems that we have. It is my firm conviction that the best politics is calling them straight and dealing fairly, justly and responsibly with the American people.

The Federal Government, for the last few years, has been spending its money at an accelerated rate. The rate of expenditures in the Federal Government for the last six or eight or ten years has been an increase of 11 percent per year. If that rate of increase in Federal spending went on and on and on, this country would face a very serious economic and financial problem from which we probably couldn't recover.

So, last November and December, when I had the obligation of putting the Federal budget together, I looked at the figures, the forecasts, the future, and I said the only way that we can maintain the financial and fiscal integrity of this country was to cut the rate of Federal growth by 50 percent.

So, when I submitted the budget to the House and the Senate in January, we reduced the rate of growth in Federal spending by \$28 billion, and if we have the faith and the strength, and if the Congress will cooperate, we can have a balanced budget by 1979 and give you another tax decrease at the same time.

But speaking of taxes, in January I recommended that the Congress approve a \$10 billion tax reduction, 75 percent of it to go to individuals, 25 percent of it to go to business. The part for business is to permit American business to expand, to give them an opportunity to provide more jobs, and every year we have around 2 million more younger people coming into the labor market. So the economy of this country has to grow and businessmen have to have an incentive to expand, to modernize.

But let's talk about the tax decrease that I recommended for individuals. What would it do? The principal benefit would be to increase the personal exemption from \$750 per person to \$1,000 per person. That is so that you can spend your own money and the Government won't waste it for you.

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But, let's talk about our national security. Refresh your memory. Just about a year ago the war in Vietnam was ended and we are on a path of peace, we have achieved it, we have it, we are going to maintain it. And the way to do it is to have the unsurpassed military capability that the United States has today.

There isn't a single responsible military leader in this country who doesn't feel that we have the military strength, the weapons, the people, the leadership to meet every mission, every challenge that this country might be called upon in the months ahead. We can deter aggression, we can maintain our national security, and we can keep the peace -- keep the peace, yes, for us, but mainly what we want is the peace for the younger people, the children of our generation and the children of their generation.

By keeping America strong as we are today, we can keep the peace and we can build a better and better America.

You have a great primary in the State of Nevada on Tuesday. It is one of the six primaries. Nevada is very important. We have good leadership with the President Ford Committee in this great State. We obviously have a lot of fine people that are interested in making certain that we get a maximum vote and, as Bob List was telling me this morning, in the State of Nevada the delegates are allocated on a proportionate basis. So, every vote that you get, every vote that supports the President and his policies, gives us a better and better opportunity to get more and more delegates.

And, speaking of delegates, we got some good news this morning. The State of New York had a convention of their delegates and 119 of them are pledged for President Ford, 18 for my opponent and 15 uncommitted, which takes our delegate count up to 697. We are well on the road for a bandwagon in Kansas City.

But let me say the countdown has started in Nevada as it has in five other States on tomorrow. I want your help. I want your support so that we can continue the kind of programs of peace, prosperity and trust for the next four years.

I won't let you down. I hope you can help me to the maximum tomorrow.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 1:07 P.M. PDT)