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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

THE SHERATON CLEVELAND HOTEL

8:53 P.M. EDT

Tom, Governor Rhodes, Senator Taft, Congressman Chuck Mosher, Mayor Perk, Abe Luntz, Dr. Hyatt, Reverend Clergy, ladies and gentlemen and, of course, our honored guest, my old and very, very dear friend, Frances Bolton:

I am honored once again to address the National Conference of Christians and Jews. You are striving to make brotherhood more than just a phrase. You are enriching the lives of all Americans by working to keep your democracy real and our democracy flourishing.

You have given tonight the Human Relations Award to one of my best and most wonderful friends, Frances Bolton, with whom, as has been mentioned before, I had the privilege of serving in the Congress for 20 years. I know from very deep and personal experiences of her tremendous contributions to our country and her dedication to humanity.

Frances liberated herself long before the age of women's liberation: The first woman to be elected to the Congress from Ohio, the first woman Member of Congress to head an official mission abroad, the first woman to be appointed a Congressional delegate to the United Nations and one of the first Members of the Congress to recognize the very special importance of Africa and the Middle East in international affairs.

I think Frances is the best proof of women's equality in America and as she was speaking, I closed my eyes for a moment. I heard the same voice here tonight that I heard speak on the floor of the House in the well which was just as meaningful then as it was tonight, and I opened my eyes and saw virtually the same person that I saw as a great leader in the House of Representatives for nearly two decades.

It is just a great opportunity for me, Frances, to be here and to pay tribute to you for all the superb things you have done, not only for Ohio but for the country and across this great land. I am proud of her, and I am sure each and every one of you are proud of Frances Bolton.

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This organization works to promote harmony and brotherhood--and I must say sisterhood--among all peoples of all religions and all races. Frances Bolton very early understood America's interests in promoting harmony and promoting peace in all countries and all peoples of the world.

You know, when I start talking about foreign policy, it sounds like I am talking about some foreign problems. Actually, I am talking about people like me who represent people like you. While I am at a negotiating table with a foreign leader, I am not looking across the table at a nation. I am looking at another person.

The differences between nations that keep us apart are less important than the similarities that bring us together as people. This is the lesson of our common humanity.

Our foreign policy today is based on man's respect for man on our understanding that we are indeed riders on the earth together and a constant effort to make reason the strongest force in the conduct of nations. This is why America has long sought to use its strength for peace. This is why America has always stood for freedom and justice, self-determination, the duty of the strong toward the weak, of the prosperous toward the poor.

Americans have learned that we cannot police every remote corner of the earth, nor fill every empty bowl, but we can be an immense influence for good and for justice, for reason and for peace in this world in which we live. We have made some mistakes. We have learned from those mistakes rather than being disillusioned about them.

We must now carry out our responsibilities with the wisdom and maturity that we have gained. I pointed out in my first State of the Union Message in January of 1975 the following: At no time in our history has the state of the nation depended more heavily on the state of the world and seldom, if ever, has the state of the world depended more heavily on the state of our nation.

I spoke then at a time of trouble, a time of division among Americans, of economic recession and energy shortage; of course, constitutional crisis and national self-doubt.

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Now we are in the midst of gathering recovery in our unity, in our economy, in our self-confidence. Yet, it has become increasingly apparent that the interconnection between peace, prosperity and justice in the United States and in the world is a permanent fact of international relations.

On this shrinking planet, our self-interest and our ideals compel us to use our vast power to help shape the world's future. This will be our challenge for as far ahead as any one of us can see.

In my travels across the country, I have found that the American people know this. They know that we cannot have security for ourselves unless we maintain the global balance of power. They know that we cannot remain prosperous and spread prosperity to more Americans in a world which is deeply divided by confrontations between the rich and the poor, producers and consumers, free market economies and centrally planned economies.

They know that America cannot continue to exist as a just society by turning its eyes away from injustice elsewhere in the world. The American people are ready to do their share, but we are tired of those who deliberately belittle our nation, running down our strengths and poisoning the political debate. The American people know that this is a strong country and this is a good country.

In my meetings with world leaders, I found that they are getting this message. The resilience of our economy and our society, after all we have been through, is clear to everyone. Today, our allies and our friends have new faith in our commitments. Our potential adversaries have no doubt about the risks of further adventurism.

The simple fact is we are not losing the struggle for a safer and more peaceful world. We are winning and we will keep on winning.

The foundation of our world role is American military strength. Throughout my own career, as Frances well knows, I have been a champion of the strong defense which is essential to our own security and to international stability. Largely because of this strength we are at peace today.

On this day, the anniversary of D-Day, on the beaches of Normandy, no American soldier is fighting on any battlefield anywhere in the world and we are engaged in realistic negotiations with adversaries to reduce the dangers of future confrontations and wars.

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As a nation, we have pulled our economy back onto the road of prosperity and to stable growth. Nothing else we do has such benefit, not only for every American and their families, but for millions of families around the world whose well being depends in large measure on the vigor of the world economy.

Finally, we are at peace, not only with others but with ourselves. In overcoming the doubts and the dissensions of the past, we have regained our position as a vital, moral force in the world today.

Now, as much as ever, America is a beacon of hope to all who yearn for freedom, well being and justice. In this Bicentennial year, we rightly celebrate our past. We have earned it. But, it is also a moment to think about the future. The quest for peace will always be unfinished.

What are the real issues that the country will face over the next four years? The real issues of today are not always the issues that make the headlines or attract the attention of campaigners. Although we are at peace, we must consolidate this peace for ourselves and for our children and children everywhere.

We must never forget the tremendous responsibility we bear as the world's strongest military and economic power. What we do or what we fail to do can often have a very decisive impact. Therefore, we will continue to propose defense programs to the Congress that fully meet the requirements of our security.

We can never, or we should never, in the future afford the trend of thoughtless cutbacks in defense programs. We will vigorously resist future reductions in expenditures for adequate defenses.

Secondly, we must have the vision and the courage to use that strength with diplomacy, to build a better world for our children and our children everywhere. We must conduct an imaginative, bold diplomacy that shows creative American leadership instead of just reacting to events as they come.

Thirdly, we must move ahead on the road of economic recovery, strengthening our economy, guarding against the inflation and working with other nations to promote global economic expansion.

With the emergence of new nations and the economic impact of the Communist countries, major changes have taken place in the world's economic situation. We must adjust the world economy for these new conditions.

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These basic issues are one of the subjects the leaders of the major industrial democracies will discuss in Puerto Rico in a few weeks, the conference that I called to follow on from the one held last fall in Rambouillet, France.

I envisage further such summits in the future. We will reach important agreements, in my judgment, in the multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva. We will continue discussions with our major partners on strengthening the monetary system.

Fourth, our alliances with the great industrial democracies must be relevant to the concerns of a new era, an era of economic issues, an era of intensified negotiations with adversaries.

We must maintain our unity in these positive endeavors as we maintained it in periods of threatening danger. This means cooperation on a more equal basis among allies and a regular practice of close consultation.

I will continue my practice of frequent contacts with my colleagues, the leaders of our major allies in Europe, Canada and Japan.

It is now clear that relations with our adversaries must be managed on a long-term basis.

We have successfully maintained the balance of power, but where do we go from here? The answer is carefully planned, patient efforts to negotiate, to lower tensions, to find solutions to problems, to be willing to mold coexistence into cooperation.

There will be obstacles and there will be disappointments, but confident in our purpose to maintain freedom we will persevere. This is a President's responsibility.

We have embarked on the path of halting and reversing the strategic arms spiral. We must continue both with vigilance and perseverance until we have banned the horrors of nuclear war.

I will seek a successful conclusion of this round of the SALT negotiations to finalize the accord I reached with General Secretary Brezhnev at Vladivostok a year and a half ago.

When concluded, I will submit such an agreement to the Congress and to the American people regardless of any alleged political advantage or political disadvantage.

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We must continue and we must develop our new relationship with the People's Republic of China. China is a major country and a great country. It contains one-quarter of mankind. No stable global peace can be built without its constructive contributions. The United States will carry on this process with fidelity toward our friends and goodwill to all.

We have taken important initiatives toward helping resolve the problems of the Middle East and Southern Africa. Peaceful solutions may be more possible now than at any moment before or in the future. Regional conflict can pose wider dangers. The world communities cannot let them fester and explode.

We are morally committed to the survival and to the security of Israel. We also have significant and growing friendships with the moderate nations of the Arab world.

Because of the steps that we have taken, the time is approaching when successful effort can be made for a just and lasting negotiated peace in the Middle East. We will continue America's efforts to help resolve local conflicts, whether in Lebanon or Cyprus or elsewhere and we are redoubling our efforts to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We have opened a hopeful new dialogue with the less developed nations. We must continue the process on the basis of mutual respect, making it a fruitful vehicle for developing their economies and contributing to international prosperity.

America will continue to offer bold proposals in the economic dialogue with the developing countries, as we have done. We will not be pressured. We will not be blackballed. But, talks between producers and consumers of energy, between rich nations and poor, will continue until cooperative solutions are reached to the common challenge of interdependence.

Most importantly, we are regaining our self-confidence and pride at home. Let us face the future confidently. Our role abroad should be a source of continuing pride. We must live our ideals so that America will find true peace, prosperity and justice at home.

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I intend to see that Congress and the Executive Branch of the Federal Government find a cooperative way of working together so that essential national policy can go forward with full national unity behind them. This is a program for peace. I intend to make it a reality.

Let us heed the words of the 34th Psalm which urges us to seek peace and to pursue it. As we never cease our vigilance, let us never lose our vision of what we want the world to be. This is the spirit of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. This is the highest responsibility of the President.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 9:10 P.M. EDT)