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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
U.S. JAYCEES CONVENTION

INDIANAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER

10:24 A.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, President Dick Robinson, Governor Bowen, Mayor Hudnut, Mr. Simensen, members and guests of the United States Jaycees:

I am overwhelmed and obviously deeply honored to join you here this morning and to receive such a warm and generous welcome and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have been looking forward to this visit for a long, long time because the Jaycees have always made me feel right at home. When I was just beginning a law career in 1941 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I became a proud member of our local Jaycee chapter. In all of the years that have followed, as a Congressman, as Vice President and now as President, I have found the philosophy and the spirit of the Jaycees to be a great source of personal strength. So it is great to be among friends on this occasion.

I am especially proud that I can salute all of you on the eve of our 200th anniversary as a Nation. If there is a single organization, if there is a single group of outstanding young Americans that has come to reflect the Bicentennial spirit, it is the United States Jaycees, and I congratulate you.

For over a half century the Jaycees have been fertile breeding ground for America's most promising young leaders, the kinds of leaders -- men in Philadelphia in 1776 that proclaimed a new age of freedom for mankind. For over half a century the Jaycees have stood tall in their patriotism for the United States -- the kind of patriotism that rode in the saddle with Paul Revere on the outskirts of Boston and inspired Patrick Henry down in Colonia Williamsburg for over half a century the Jaycees have been filled with rock hard determination to do what is best for America, the kind of determination that sailed with John Paul Jones when he warned the enemy, "I have not yet begun to fight."

Youth, patriotism, determination, a love of liberty -- those are the qualities that I have always found in the Jaycees and I know this group and those that will follow will carry forward this same determination, this same patriotism, this same love of liberty in the years ahead, and if you don't, who will?

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As an active member of this organization just a few years ago -- (Laughter) -- I remember then that I often asked myself what sort of a future did I want for my family and for my country? Many of you here today may ask yourself the same questions: What do we want for ourselves over the next 20 or 30 years? What do we really want for America's third century as a Nation?

Let me respond to some of those questions for just a few moments by suggesting some of my own answers. From my readings of history I am persuaded that America's first two centuries can be split roughly in half. The hallmark of our first century was the establishment of a free democratic Government in our land. Rising up from a weak, fledgling Nation our people sprawled across the continent, territories were acquired, States were formed, wars were fought, none more devastating than the one that turned American against American.

But the Union survived that terrible ordeal and by 1876, at the end of our first century, a responsive and responsible form of Government was firmly implanted in our soil.

Our second century as a Nation, I would suggest, has been marked by the growth and the development of a great industrial system. The pioneer spirit of the early days began to conquer new frontiers, spanning the Nation with rails transforming our manufacturing and marketing, recasting our cities with concrete and steel, revolutionizing our science and technology, so that at this very moment an American spacecraft, for the first time in man's history, is preparing to land on the planet of Mars.

These have been great achievements--the triumph of free Government in our first century, the triumph of free enterprise in our second.

Now, in our third century, I promise that we climb an even higher mountain. Let us fulfill the dreams of the early fathers. Let us make these new 100 years the ultimate triumph of people, the triumph of individual freedom in the United States of America.

We made enormous progress in securing and expanding individual freedoms in the past 200 years, and much of that progress has come in our own lifetimes. But, we have not finished the job. Full individual freedom in America must mean freedom from want. America has the compassion and the resources to meet this challenge.

So long as our Nation is burdened with heavy inflation and heavy unemployment, we shall not be free. Over the past 15 years, due in large measures to stop and start economic policies in Washington, the United States' economy has been on a long and dangerous roller coaster ride -- up one year, down the next. The accompanying inflation has not only eroded personal income but it has eaten away at public confidence in our economic institutions, the very institutions that served to give us the highest standard of living anywhere in the world.

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The first order of business in the Government of the United States is to put the economy on a smooth, upward course and to keep it moving in that direction. The enormous surge in Government spending and Government deficits must be ended. The only way to hold down the cost of living is to hold down the cost of Government.

If I may be permitted to interject a word on a subject that is before the Congress at this moment, I would urge that this organization join in the struggle to enact responsible, new tax legislation in the next 10 days.

On July 1, the temporary tax enacted last year will expire and, unless the Congress acts promptly, taxes will automatically increase. The Congress should not only extend the tax cut that was enacted last year but should increase it by \$10 billion and make it permanent. There is no excuse for the Government to take more and more of your earnings when it cannot fully justify their use, and especially when those hard-earned tax dollars of yours can do more good for you and for this country in your pocket, not in the Government Treasury.

Let me specify two specific provisions in the additional \$10 billion tax reduction that I proposed and Congress must approve, to help your family and our country. The personal exemption must be increased from \$750 to \$1,000. The estate tax exemption must be increased from \$60,000 to \$150,000, so that small businesses and small farms can stay in one family from one generation to another and not in the pockets of the taxpayer.

And there is one other provision that involves all of you -- estate tax transfers from husband to wife or wife to husband must be tax free. Full individual freedom in America also means freedom from intrusive, overbearing Government. This is a familiar theme in our American history.

As long ago as Thomas Jefferson, he sounded it in the Declaration of Independence himself, where he complained there His Majesty's Government has erected a multitude of new offices and sent swarms of officers to harrass our people.

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Today we see the intrusion of our own Federal Government in many forms -- some old and some new. We see it in the many regulatory agencies that have sprouted up along the Potomac and have imposed the massive regulatory burden upon American business. We see it in the way that some of our other departments in Washington under requirements mainly imposed by the Congress have taken over many, many of the activities that were once left to the State and local units of government.

We see it in the past records of some government agencies that exceeded their authority and spied upon and otherwise violated the rights of individual American citizens.

And we see it in the way that a few of our courts have wandered so far into the school busing controversy that they are practically running our local school boards.

The time has come to roll back the wave of big government in America and we must never forget a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have.

We must bring order and restraint to the Federal regulatory process through sweeping reforms, in airline transportation, in trucking and in many other areas. In order to restore greater powers to local and State Governments to put decisions back where they belong we must reenact general revenue sharing and collapse complicated education and health programs into new block grants so that the rights of our citizens may be protected while the essential intelligence functioning of our government continues.

We are undertaking reforms in the intelligence community and we are putting into place new constructive guidelines for the FBI. In the next few days I plan to announce action in still another area -- court-ordered forced busing. There is no good reason why we cannot wipe out the vestiges of discrimination in America, achieve quality education for our children and at the same time minimize the massive busing of our children.

Underlying actions in each of these areas is our fervent belief that individual liberty in this great country means liberty from oppressive, heavy-handed, bureaucratic government. That is a goal we can achieve. That is a goal we must achieve in our third century. I firmly believe that Americans can do anything if other Americans do not tie us down with red tape, tie us up with pessimism or tie us into a knot of frustration and stagnation.

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Let me reemphasize that my vision of the future means equal opportunity and equal rights for all of our citizens. The principle of racial equality is indelibly written into our Constitution and into our hearts, and in all that we do we must honor it.

Earlier in this century the novelist, Thomas Wolfe, spoke about America in a way that is worth remembering. He said, "To every man his chance, to every man regardless of his birth his shining golden opportunity, to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself and to become whatever things his manhood and his vision can combine to make him. This," he said, "is the promise of America."

That is the promise we seek to fulfill in the next 100 years. We must also recognize, as George Washington did in his first inaugural address, that no nation on earth owes more to providence than does the United States of America. Our greatness is because of our goodness. Should we cease to be good, we would soon cease to be great. Americans have seen too much abuse of the moral imperatives of honesty and decency, the foundations of our civilized society.

Americans, especially our young people, can take little pride in the system that is dishonored by misconduct whether in the White House or in the halls of Congress. The essential task of leadership in business, in education, in family life and in public life is to inspire, to teach, to act with courage -- to live with honor and to show the way. Personal integrity must not be a part of nostalgia, it must be the living and life essence of the American character.

There are many freedoms that we must secure, that we must expand in the United States, but let me mention only one other, freedom from war. On too many occasions since the Jaycees were founded America has sent her finest sons to the battlefields in faraway lands. The first and foremost objective of every President is to protect and preserve the security of the United States.

Today that security is fully protected. Our armaments are unsurpassed, our alliances with Europe and Japan have never been healthier. Our will in America is strong.

Yet we must also recognize that we live in a world that is increasingly hostile to freedom. Only one nation in six in the world today is free and democratic. There are many, many nations that oppose our interests and our belief and our dedication to freedom and to liberty. Through negotiations and constructive diplomacy we are seeking to reduce the level of tensions with the Soviet Union. We share with them an interest in preventing a nuclear incineration but we have no illusions that they have changed their political objectives or their essential world outlook. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to maintain a strong balanced military posture. Military strength is the best insurance for peace. We have that peace and we are going to keep it.

One of my greatest frustrations as a Congressman -- and I think Mayor Bill Hudnut can vividly recall it because he served in the Congress with me -- but that frustration was to join with the occupant of the White House, Democrat or Republican, in the fight for large defense budgets and then to see those budgets unmercifully cut by a Congressional majority on the other side.

In just the past 10 years the Congress has cut some \$50 billion from the defense budget recommended by three different Presidents, often to make room for new social programs of questionable merit.

This year, I am pleased to report to you we are finally reversing that trend and, for the first time in a long, long while the Congress seems ready to agree with the President for a needed increase in the expenditures and programs for the defense establishment. However, once again, I ask the support of the Jaycees on a critical issue. This country simply cannot afford anything less than the very best for the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines.

America covets no one else's land. We seek no one else's treasures. Indeed, we have given generously of our own when others needed help, but we must also never shirk from the responsibility of protecting our interests and our own security. If the promise of individual freedom is to be achieved in the coming century, it will take a full-hearted effort by all Americans.

I know that as Jaycees you are devoted to humanity as the best work of life. You are neither weak nor timid in your devotion to America. You believe that citizens must be actively involved in the affairs of the State and of the Nation.

We have an historic opportunity in America today. We stand at the threshold of our third century. We can either let this time slip by with no clear vision of what we wish to achieve as a people or we can seize this moment by resolving to fulfill the great promise of America -- to achieve full individual freedom for all Americans.

A year ago, there was a special ceremony in the City of Boston at Old North Church. You may recall that was the church where two lanterns were hung on the night of Paul Revere's famous ride. Last April, they hung a third lantern in the Old North Church and as they did the rector spoke briefly about it: "The two lanterns which were shown from this steeple," he said, "led us to two centuries of some progress in reason, liberty and in faith -- but not enough. To some fulfillment in mind, body and spirit -- but not enough. To some gains in thinking, acting and trusting in freedom -- but not enough.

"Now the steeple of the Old North Church will shine with a third lantern tonight, a new signal that will call us to renewed effort and renewed hope in our third century. It will say we will yet make the American promise a reality. We will yet make it the truth every day, everywhere for everyone. We will go forward and we will stumble, but we will try again and again and again."

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My fellow Jaycees in this Bicentennial year, let us carry that message to every community across this land. Let us, through our own actions, become a beacon of hope and of promise, and let us working together light the path to a new century of freedom for all Americans.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 10:49 A.M. CDT)