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Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO BE DELIVERED  
TO THE CONNECTICUT STATE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION  
BUSHNELL MEMORIAL HALL, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

It is an honor for me to address this great convention of the Connecticut Republican Party. The long series of primaries and state delegate conventions comes to its conclusion today, here in Connecticut and across the continent in Utah. This healthy and vigorous competition has taught us much about the mood of the American people in 1976.

Here in Connecticut as in all fifty states, there is a growing feeling of confidence in the future. The American people feel good about themselves and about their country. The Bicentennial celebration reached its climax two weeks ago and revealed a spirit of harmony, goodwill and optimism in America which had been eclipsed during the turmoil of the last decade and a half. It comes as no surprise to me that, for all our past troubles, we have emerged as a stronger and a wiser people.

The American people, descendants of the hardiest stock of many nations, have a deep reservoir of strength which has served the nation well for the past 200 years and will serve us well in the future. That powerful American spirit brought us through the worst economic crisis America has faced in four decades.

Two years ago, inflation was running at a rate of more than twelve percent. Thousands of men and women were being laid off. A climate of fear threatened to engulf our people. What's happened since August of 1974? Inflation has been cut in half.

Since the bottom of the recession last year, three million, 400 thousand of our fellow Americans have found new jobs or gotten their old ones back, and more people are being added to payrolls every day.

More people have been on the job in America in 1976 than ever before. We have broken the back of the recession.

We are in the full surge of a strong recovery, and we look with confidence to an era of enduring prosperity without the cruel tax of runaway inflation. That's a good record, and I'm proud of it. But there's more.

Two years ago, America was mired in what seemed an endless war in Southeast Asia. After a decade in which the Congress had consistently short-changed America's defenses, the future of our military strength was endangered.

In August of 1974, America's will to respond to international challenges was being called into question by allies and adversaries alike.

What's happened since August of 1974? America today is at peace. There are no American boys fighting anywhere on the face of this earth--and I intend to keep it that way.

I have proposed the two largest defense budgets in history, reversing the trend of the last decade, and ensuring that our military capability commands the respect of every nation. This is two years of progress, despite a democratic Congress that fought us every step of the way.

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Two years ago, the people's confidence in their government, and especially in the White House, had been shattered. What's happened since August of 1974? This new Administration has been open, candid, and forthright. In my Administration, ability is not enough. Experience is not enough. Dedication is not enough. In all that we do, in everything we undertake, I require integrity, decency and honesty. Private morality and public service can -- and must -- go hand in hand.

In the past two years, then, we have passed from war to peace, from recession to recovery, from tragedy to trust, from fear to faith in America. This is performance, not promise. This is a record that will be supported by the American people -- Democrats, Independents, and Republicans -- and it will lead us to victory in November. What about the future? What challenges will we demand of ourselves as we enter the third century of the American adventure?

First of all, we must create a better balance in our society. We must introduce a new balance in the relationship between the individual and the government, a balance that favors a greater individual freedom and self-reliance. We must strike a new balance in our system of Federalism, a balance that favors greater responsibility and freedom for the leaders of our state and local governments.

We must introduce a new balance between spending on domestic programs and spending on defense, a balance that insures we will fully meet our obligations to the needy while also protecting our security in a world still hostile to freedom. In all that we do, we must be honest with the American people, promising them no more than we can deliver and delivering all that we promise. Above all, we must face the future together, as a party and as a people. It is as true today as it was in Lincoln's day that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

For our Party, that means joining ranks in a common struggle. The Republican Party this year has demonstrated throughout America the vigor, vitality and competitive spirit on which a dynamic political organization thrives. Now we must resolve to stop fighting each other and start helping each other. We must resolve to strengthen our Party with November victories at every level, from the courthouse to the state house to the White House. We must center our attack not on fellow Republicans, but on this Democratic Congress, the Democratic Platform and Democratic Ticket which tries to be all things to all people. For our country, the new unity we have found must be channeled into common sense action for the common good. But the common good in this country must always be reflected in the well-being of the individual.

Every American must have the chance to reach his or her fullest potential, unfettered by excessive bureaucratic regulation, by the bonds of discrimination, or by conforming pressure from the giant institutions of our society. Americans are ready once more for an era of good feeling -- not in the blind belief that all our problems are solved, but in the certain conviction that we can solve these problems together.

We can ensure that older Americans will have nothing to fear from the ravages of runaway inflation, from flaws in the Social Security System, from the threat of crime, or from the costly burdens of catastrophic illness. We can ensure that the American farmer will continue to produce record crops of food and fiber, and get a fair price in a free worldwide market -- and ensure at the same time that the American consumer will have ample supplies and stable prices. We can ensure that every working man and woman in America who wants a job can find a job -- not a Humphrey-Hawkins dead-end job, but a well-paying job with a future, generated by an expanding economy. We can ensure that our young people have an education of high quality and a job worthy of their talents. We can ensure that government will again be the capable servant -- not the meddling master -- of the American people.

We can ensure that the American people will continue to live in peace and in freedom by keeping America strong and by standing for what is right in the world. We can achieve these goals without looking to the Federal Government for all the answers, and without sticking the American taxpayer with all the bills.

These are not dim visions of the future. They are the proud record of my Administration over the past two years. They will be the agenda for my Administration in the next four years. These are my goals, and this is my pledge: To lead this Nation forward on the path of peace, prosperity and trust.

Join me on the road to a great victory for the Republican Party and for the United States of America in 1976.

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