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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
CONNECTICUT STATE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION  
BUSHNELL MEMORIAL HALL

12:30 P.M. EDT

Fred, Senator Lowell Weicker, Congressman Sarasin, Congressman Stu McKinney, Governor John Lodge, distinguished party leaders, delegates, alternates and guests, and Pearl:

Pearl, I understand you gave quite a speech last night. Pearl is our American Ambassador of Love. You will be a tough act to follow. But, it is great to have a person who portrays the finest image of America around the world and, Pearl, I thank you not only for what you have done but what you are going to do.

It is a very high honor and a great personal privilege to speak to the people of Connecticut and to have an opportunity of addressing this great Republican Convention in the State of Connecticut.

It has been wonderful to be here all morning and to see so many of my old friends.

Quite a few years ago I had the privilege of living for approximately six years in the State of Connecticut, where I worked and learned.

As a result, I have tremendous admiration and affection for the people of Connecticut, and I thank you for this very, very warm welcome.

The long series of primaries and State conventions come to a conclusion today, here in Connecticut and across the continent to Utah.

This healthy and vigorous competition has taught us much about the mood of the American people in 1976.

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Here in Connecticut, as in all 50 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, good will and optimism about America which had been eclipsed during the turmoil of the last decade and a half. It comes as no surprise to me for all our past troubles, we have emerged as a stronger and wiser people.

The American people, descendants of the hardiest stock of many, 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 as we move forward for the betterment of our country and for mankind as a whole.

That powerful American spirit brought us through the worst economic crisis America has faced in 40 years. Two years ago, inflation was running at a rate of more than 12 percent. Thousands of men and women were being laid off. A climate of fear threatened to engulf our people. What has happened since August of 1974? Inflation has been cut in half.

Since the bottom of the recession last year, 3,400,000 of our fellow Americans have found new jobs or gotten their old jobs back and more people are being added to payrolls each and every day.

More people have been on the job in America in 1976 than ever in the history of this great country. We have broken the back of the recession. Everything that is supposed to be going up is going up and everything that should be going down is going down.

We are in the full surge of a strong recovery. We look with confidence to an era of enduring prosperity without the cruel tax of runaway inflation. That is a good record. I am proud of it, but there is more good news.

Two years ago, America was mired in what seemed like 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 in danger.

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

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Today, America is at peace. There are no American boys fighting anywhere on the face of the earth and I will keep it that way.

I have proposed the two largest defense budgets in history, reversing the trend of the last decade in order to insure that our military capability commands the respect of every nation.

A strong military capability is the best insurance for peace and we are going to keep that Defense Department ready, able and effective in order to maintain the peace in the future.

This is two years of progress despite a Democratic Congress that fought us every step of the way. Two years ago, the people's confidence in their Government, especially in the White House, had been shattered. What has happened since August of 1974? The Ford Administration has been open, candid, 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, 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. It will lead us to victory in 1976.

What about the future? What challenges will we demand of ourselves as we enter the third century of this great 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 can achieve this better balance by my tax proposals in several areas that will create greater equity and fairness in our Internal Revenue Code. For example, we must increase the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 per person.

We must increase the estate tax exemption from \$60,000 to \$150,000.

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Our middle income taxpayers need a better break. They have been shortchanged in the past. We must strike a new balance in our system of Federalism, a balance that favors greater responsibility and freedom of action for the leaders of our State and local units of Government. 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 and our compassion for the needy while also protecting our security in a world 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 Congress and to the White House.

We must center our attack not on fellow Republicans but on the failures of the Democratic platform and a 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 full potential, unfettered by excessive bureaucratic regulation, by the injustices of discrimination or by the conforming pressures from the giant institutions in 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 the problems together.

We can insure that older Americans will have nothing to fear from the ravages of runaway inflation from the flaws in the Social Security system, from the threat of crime or from the costly burdens of catastrophic illness.

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We can insure 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 insure at the same time that the American consumer will have ample supplies and stable prices.

We can insure that every working man and woman in American 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 free enterprise economy.

We can insure that our young people have an education of high quality and a job worthy of their talents. We can insure that Government will again be the capable servant, not the meddling master of the American people.

We can insure that the American people will continue to live in peace, to continue to live in freedom by keeping America strong and by standing for what is right throughout the world.

We can achieve these great goals without looking to the Federal Government for all the answers and without sticking the American taxpayer with all the bills.

We can do it all and still balance the Federal budget. With the right kind of a Congress, with a few more outstanding Members of the House and Senate like Lowell Weicker, Ron Sarasin and Stu McKinney, I promise you that by fiscal year 1979 we will do just that.

These are not dim visions of the future. They are the proud record of my Administration over the past two years, with the help of your delegation from the State of Connecticut and Lowell and Ron and Stu. Let me thank you for having them at my side, and believe me, we sure need them back.

But, this record of progress over the last two years will be the agenda for my Administration in the next four years. These are my goals. This is my pledge -- to lead this nation forward on the path of peace, prosperity and trust. Join me, if you will, on the road to a great victory for the Republican Party and for the United States of America in 1976.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 12:48 P.M. EDT)