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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
ABOARD THE SS NATCHEZ

THE TOULOUSE STREET WHARF
JACKSON SQUARE

5:18 P.M. CDT

It is wonderful to come here to New Orleans after a tremendous day. I want to thank Congressman Dave Treen, Congressman Henson Moore. I would like to thank Senator Strom Thurmond, who is on board; Governor Jim Edwards of South Carolina; former Governor Kennon of Louisiana and former Governor Griffin of Georgia.

I like that sign, "Georgians for Ford."

It is great to have on board here the next Congressman from this area, Bob Livingston.

But, I have two favorite girls of mine alongside of me on board. First, I would like to introduce to you my bride, Betty Ford.

It has been a great privilege and pleasure for us to have on board all day long the very attractive beautiful wife of the great Governor of the State of Louisiana, Elaine Edwards.

At Kansas City in my acceptance speech I made the statement that I would not concede a single State, that I would not concede a single vote, that we were going to carry the campaign from the snowy banks of Minnesota to the sandy plains of Georgia.

Today we have been in Louisiana, tomorrow we go to Mississippi and Alabama, and then we end up in Florida. This campaign on this weekend has been by car, by airplane and then we have had this wonderful experience of going down the Mississippi in the finest riverboat in the country today, the NATCHEZ, and I thank the crew and everybody.

It must be perfectly obvious that I want to win in Louisiana, and every reception that we have gotten, the three stops, has been tremendous and I want to thank all them through you for the warm, warm welcome given to Betty and myself.

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Let me tell you why I think we can win Louisiana. All of you know that when I became President in August of 1974 this country was in deep trouble. The American people had lost faith in the White House. We were suffering inflation of over 12 percent and we were on the brink of a serious economic recession and we were still deeply involved in Vietnam. We had troubled times and in the last two years we have turned that ship of State around.

It has taken a little longer than I wanted -- and I am sure you wanted -- but look at the progress that we have made. Instead of inflation over 12 percent, it is under 6 percent. Instead of losing jobs, we have gained four million jobs in the last 17 months, and we are going to get more and more in the future.

I won't be satisfied until every person who wants to work will get a job and a good job. We are out of the war in Vietnam. We have the peace and we have an all-volunteer military force and we are going to keep it that way, and we have the military capability and the diplomatic skill to continue the peace.

But, let's talk for a few minutes, if I might, about what we want to do in the future. In the next four years, in the first four years of our third century, we want a job, as I said a moment ago, a good job for everybody who wants to work.

I promise that we will get an additional 2,500,000 jobs each year in order to satisfy the young people coming into the labor market.

Our second objective is to make it possible for every family, particularly the young, who want to save and buy a home, to have a home in a decent neighborhood.

Some of us are deeply concerned, as you are, about the crime rate in this country, but we have made some progress. Two years ago the crime rate was 18 percent. Last year it was 9 percent, and for the first six months of this year the crime rate is 3 percent. That is a lot of progress, and we can take some credit for it, and we will.

In the next four years we will increase the educational opportunity for young people; we will make our health facilities and services much more available. There is no reason whatsoever why anybody should go broke in this country to get well, and they won't under the Ford Administration.

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I have been talking about the quality of life and that is what we want to give to our country in the months ahead.

Let me take one quick minute to talk about some things we have tried to do that I think give you some concrete indication of what we are going to do in the future.

Less than a year ago I recommended a \$28 billion tax decrease, 75 percent for the individual taxpayers and 25 percent for business. Included in that -- and this is what is meaningful to you -- I recommended that we increase the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 and for a family of four that means a tax saving (deduction) of \$1,000. The middle income people have been shortchanged, and under the Ford Administration we are going to give them the equity that they deserve.

Let me thank you all. Just a comment or two about our long-range goal in the future.

On the Fourth of July we had a tremendous, exhilarating experience. We celebrated our 200th birthday. The length and the breadth of this country there was a new spirit, a new vision.

I think because we have the character of our people, because we have the kind of Government that is surpassing any kind in the history of mankind, we have the opportunity to give to our children and our children's children the blessings that we inherited from our predecessors.

I pledge to you that the first four years of this next century under a Ford Administration will open the floodgates to blessings that we have not had, blessings that we can get, blessings for a better America.

That is what this Administration is all about and that is why I want your vote November 2. We need it, we can carry Louisiana and we can win the election.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 5:28 P.M. CDT)