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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMPUS  
DOHENY LIBRARY

12:37 P.M. PDT

Glenn, Dr. Hubbard, Bob Portnoy -- I should say, Bob Fluor and Hugh Portnoy -- students, faculty and guests:

It is great to be at the home of the University of Southern California, the home of the conquering Trojans. I will tell you one thing: I would rather run against Jimmy Carter than Rickey Bell any time. (Laughter) And I might add that I started out way behind, but I have been swimming upstream ever since.

By November, I hope to be known as the John Naber of politics. The opinion polls have been very encouraging lately. As I said in Kansas City a few weeks ago, the only polls that count are the polls that the American people go to on November 2.

My campaign experts tell me if past performance is a guide, your age group will be the least represented at the polls on election day. When I was Minority Leader in the House of Representatives, I worked hard with many others to lower the voting age to 18. Even though some of the experts said young Americans would vote against my party more than for it, I wanted to open up the system, make sure that you had a voice as to what goes on in your Government.

But for one reason or another most people your age have never taken advantage of this new right and this new privilege. The experts say the majority probably won't vote in this election. I hope that forecast is wrong, and I believe it is wrong.

You have the biggest stake in the country's future. You must take an active interest in the work of your Government. One reason for the low turnout, probably, the low turnout of the past, must be that some of you have been disappointed so many times.

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Through most of your lives America has been in turmoil. Some of our most beloved leaders were assassinated, including my good friend and our President John F. Kennedy, who spoke here as a candidate in 1960 and whose memory is honored with a plaque in your library.

There was a war that seemed to have no end. There were destructive riots in our cities and on some of our campuses. We suffered runaway inflation and the worst recession in 40 years. We were betrayed by wrongdoings at the highest level of our Government.

But let me assure you that things are better in the United States of America today, and they are going to get better in the future.

On August 9, 1974, as I said on taking the oath of office as President, our long national nightmare is over. In the last two years, the United States of America has made an amazing comeback and, as I said a moment ago, we are not through yet.

In the last two years trust has been restored to the White House. We have turned the economy around. We are at peace, and I will keep it that way.

We have entered an era of good feeling. We have given the American people a fresh start for the future.

On July 4 of this year, we celebrated the biggest birthday party in our Nation's history. America was 200 years old and going strong into the future. We found ourselves healed and united as never before. We found that we were looking at the future with faith instead of fear. For all our faults, for all of the troubles we have had in recent years, we felt proud to be Americans, proud of this great country that we live in and work for and will do our best for in the future.

We still have our share of serious problems. We still have goals that have not been reached. But we have found a strength in ourselves and in our national character that is more powerful than all of our armaments, more precious than all of our wealth and as enduring as the United States Constitution.

As we look back to the days of the American Revolution, we felt the same strong spirit which guided the courageous men and women who founded this Nation.

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We realize more vividly than ever before that we are the heirs of the greatest, the most constructive, the most enduring revolution in the history of mankind. As we move forward into the third century of America's independence, we know that the challenges of the future will be greater than those we faced in the past.

Here at home our greatest challenge is to insure that every American who wants a job can find a job, a job that gives a person pride as well as a pay-check, a job with an opportunity for advancement, a job generated by the demands of a healthy economy, not manufactured by a big brother Government.

We must make it easier for people to buy a home, a home of their own, while they are still young enough to enjoy it. We must make sure that our older people don't have to go broke just to get well. We must make it possible for every young American to get an education of the highest quality, an education that you can use when you get out of school -- U.S.C., Michigan, Yale or any other of the outstanding educational institutions in this country today.

We must make sure that our streets and campuses are free from the threat of violent crime. We must try harder to protect our environment, to purify the water that we drink and the air that we breathe. We must enlarge our capacity for recreation, enrich and preserve our treasure of natural beauty and our heritage of history throughout America.

We must keep America strong and secure, but with volunteers and not with a military draft. Above all, we must keep the peace that America enjoys today, the peace that finds no Americans in combat anywhere throughout the globe right now.

I am the first President in 20 years to stand for election in a time of peace. You are the first generation of college graduates who in 15 years do not have to face the prospect of going to war, and I intend to keep it that way.

Keeping peace with freedom is the key to all of our hopes and aspirations. Without peace, we cannot concentrate on improving the quality of life in America. Without freedom, life has no quality at all. Therefore, I will take every possible step to build peace, not only for ourselves, but for all of the world.

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We are taking those steps today toward peace where the going is hardest, but where the stakes are the highest -- the Middle East, Southern Africa and the strategic arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union.

After so many years of war, we are proud as a nation to stand for peace. We are proud to stand for what is right in the world -- human dignity, decency, equality and freedom.

Last night in the debate, I spoke of America's firm support for the aspiration for independence of the nations of Eastern Europe. The United States has never conceded -- and never will concede -- their domination by the Soviet Union. I admire the courage of the Polish people and have always supported the hopes of Polish-Americans for freedom of their ancestral homeland.

It is our policy to use every peaceful means to assist countries in Eastern Europe in their efforts to become less dependent on the Soviet Union and to establish closer and closer ties with the West and, of course, the United States of America.

I am very much aware of the present plight of the Eastern European nations, and as I declared in this year's Captive Nation Proclamation, and I quote, "The United States supports the aspirations for freedom, independence and national self-determination of all people. We do not accept foreign domination over any nation," period.

We really believe, as our founders did, that these are the inalienable rights of people everywhere. We believe that America is a very special country, that in 200 years we have passed from open rebellion against foreign misrule to a peaceful, continuing revolution for the rights of free men and women.

If we are to be true to our heritage, Americans must continue to have the confidence that we control our own lives and we can leave our children a better world than we found; that Government will be under our control, a capable servant, and not a meddling master.

We did not throw off the bonds of oppressive Government in the 18th century only to create one for ourselves two centuries later. The greatest danger I see in America today is the overwhelming of the individual -- you and millions like you in this wonderful country -- being overwhelmed by the massive institutions of Government, business, labor, communications -- yes, even education.

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I see Government growing too large, too powerful, too costly, too remote, too deeply involved in our daily lives. The mounting troubles in Great Britain, our old and honored ally, offer compelling evidence that we cannot keep relying on Government alone to solve all of our problems.

Faced with the greatest financial crisis in the history of British democracy, Prime Minister Callaghan, before a recent convention of his Labor Party, had the courage to say, and I quote him, "Britain for too long has lived on borrowed time, borrowed money and borrowed ideas. We will fail," he said, "if we think we can buy our way out of our present difficulties by printing confetti money and paying ourselves more than we earn."

That is advice that I think in good conscience we should take. We must not let that happen in America now or in the future. We better avoid it. We can avoid it, and as long as I am President of the United States, we will avoid it.

We must have a new generation of freedom in America--not the freedom to shirk our responsibilities and to let the Government assume them, but the freedom to do what we want to do and what we ought to do.

With the Government's help -- but not at the Government's direction -- that is the kind of America that I want. That is why I am a candidate for the Presidency of the United States and why I come here on this wonderful campus and ask you for your help on November 2.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 12:56 P.M. PDT)