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OCTOBER 8, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Los Angeles, California)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

THE SHERATON UNIVERSAL HOTEL

10:22 A.M. PDT

Mike, Congressman Thomas Moorhead, distinguished public officials, ladies and gentlemen:

It is just wonderful to be here. Betty and I enjoyed being with you last night. We both want to thank you for your support. I would like to take just a few minutes, if I might, to talk about some of the things that are an issue in this campaign and to set the record straight on several issues that involve the future security of this country, both domestically and internationally.

Number one, each and every one of us believe in a strong America. That means a strong national defense program. Mr. Carter about a year ago called for a \$15 billion reduction in the defense program. You can't keep America strong with that kind of a cutting of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and Marines.

Mr. Carter, waffling as he usually does, (Laughter) has said that he would either cancel or delay the production of the B-1 bomber. At the present time, we are flying the B-52s, a great aircraft, but they are about 20 years old. By the time the B-1 is built and deployed the B-52s will be anywhere from 30 to 35 years old.

I don't believe that we should send young American pilots flying an aircraft that is older than they are.

The B-1 is a plane that will help us maintain the peace and protect our national security. It is an integral, important part of our overall defense program, and Mr. Carter is very wrong when he wants to either cancel or delay it and President Ford believes it must be produced and deployed for our national security.

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A great President of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt, once said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick." Mr. Carter speaks loudly and carries a fly swatter. (Laughter)

But, if we are going to keep America strong at home, we must spend less, have lower deficits and lower taxes so that the free enterprise, the great engine of a strong America, will have a chance. Mr. Carter has called for tax increases for all taxpayers from the medium to the middle income taxpayer. That means he wants to increase taxes for all taxpayers from \$14,000 up. That is wrong. I believe that we must reduce taxes for the middle income taxpayers, and we will.

I recommended in January of this year that the personal exemption should be increased from \$750 to \$1,000 to help the shortchanged middle income taxpayers. That is what we are going to do with a new Congress.

The best tax reform I know is tax reduction. Let me say that the Ford Administration believes that we must cut spending and we must cut taxes, and that is what we are going to do in the next four years.

Mr. Carter talks about the bad tax program that we have at the present time. Let me remind you and remind him that if our tax legislation is bad today, for the last 22 years the Democrats controlled the Congress, and they have written every tax bill that is on the law today.

So, I say to you if we are going to be strong at home, have a healthy economy, if we are going to be strong so that we can maintain the peace that we have, we have to beat Jimmy Carter and elect Jerry Ford.

I am proud to stand before you, as well as any other audience in this country today, and say that I am the first President in 20 years who can say as he seeks election that America is at peace, that not a single young American is fighting or dying on foreign soil. That is a record that we are going to keep for the next four years.

One final word -- this is a wonderful group. We have got a real mission to perform. Before the Convention in Kansas City, we were 30 some points behind. We have been closing that gap rapidly. We have the momentum because we have the right program. We tell the American people the truth. We don't make a mistake one day and apologize for it the next. The United States believes that the policies of this Administration -- peace with freedom, a strong economy predicated on the private enterprise system -- is the way to keep America, not only for ourselves but, more importantly, for our children and our grandchildren.

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I go before you and the American people proud of what we have done in the last two years and optimistic about what opportunities we have for progress in the next four years. We may still be behind by a narrow margin, but with your help and with the right program and the fact that Mr. Carter makes mistake after mistake, we are going to win that election for the American people November 2.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 10:30 A.M. PDT)