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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
LAWTON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

6:40 P.M. CDT

Senator Dewey Bartlett, Senator Henry Bellmon, Senator Paul Laxalt, my good friend Tom Steed, my good friend John Jarman, Mayor Gilley, distinguished guests on the podium, ladies and gentlemen:

It is great to be back in Oklahoma, and thank you very, very much. Senator Bellmon and Senator Bartlett tell me you have a pretty good football team in Oklahoma this year. My alma mater, the University of Michigan, learned it the hard way last year. I told them that the University of Michigan was not bad this year. I hope they are good. Dewey, maybe I can win that two bucks back again.

Tomorrow I am going to have the honor of attending the Texas-Oklahoma football game. Does anyone here know who is going to win that game tomorrow?

I just thought I would ask. As I said, we are stopping down at the Texas State Fair tomorrow, and I may get a question about it. As President, I have to be impartial about the game. I even have to change sides during the half. Of course, if my opponent were there, I am sure he would find some way to sit on both sides at the same time.

Now let me give you some straight talk about taxes and national defense. You love America, as I do. You want an America strong and decent here at home. You want an America strong and at peace, with freedom throughout the world. This country has restored trust in the White House in the last two years. This country has restored peace abroad. We should be proud of the fact that not a single young American is fighting and dying on any foreign soil tonight, and we are going to keep it that way.

You should be proud that we turned an economy around, that America sees brighter stars, skies, like you see in Oklahoma right here today. We are proud of that progress.

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Now let me give you a little straight talk about taxes because if I could put a tax on empty rhetoric in this political year, we would have the national debt paid off in one week. When we talk about taxes, we are talking more than just about money. Every tax dollar represents your time, your energy, your hard work. Those tax dollars ought to work just as hard for you as you have worked for them.

Mr. Carter's platform calls for new Government programs that would cost between \$100 billion and \$200 billion each year. He never puts a price tag on those programs. He just says he will soak the rich, close the loopholes and everything will be just fine.

Let me say this: If we put a 100 percent tax on all personal income over \$50,000 in America, it would produce less than \$9 billion a year. Where is the other \$191 billion going to come from? Two choices: One, Mr. Carter can have a \$191 billion deficit. Two, he can do what he said he would do and raise taxes on every American family above the median income of \$14,000, and we don't want that.

I say to you there is a better way: Cut spending, cut taxes, keep more of your own money. To me, tax reform means tax reduction. For ten years now spending has grown at an alarming rate, thanks to an overtaxing, overspending, overbearing Congress.

The budget that I submitted to the Congress this year cut that rate of growth by one-half. I asked for a \$28 billion tax cut. I asked for a \$28 billion restraint on the growth of Federal spending so we could have an honest tax reduction.

For every dollar we cut in spending, we could cut a dollar in taxes. Unfortunately, the Congress refused to make those reductions in spending. They went \$18 billion more in the spending than I recommended, and the net result is they only cut the taxes of the American people \$10 billion this year.

In January of next year we are going to do a lot better with a much better Congress. I will tell you the kinds of tax reductions I want. I asked for an increase in the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 per person. That means that the middle income taxpayer who has gotten short shrift, shortchanged by the Congress over the years will get the kind of tax reduction that the American people need and want, and that is what we stand for, and we are going to get it next year.

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I asked for tax incentives to increase business investment in high unemployment areas. Congress refused. I sent back to the Congress 59 bills that I vetoed. I saved you more than \$9 billion. If Mr. Carter's friends in the Congress had been more interested in saving rather than spending, we could have saved another \$16 billion.

But, let me say those vetoes did a lot of good. I thank those in the Congress who supported me. I appreciate the support from people like Henry Bellmon, Dewey Bartlett, John Jarman, Tom Steed. Those are the kinds of people that have stood with you and stood with me in these tough decisions to save your hard earned tax dollars.

But, let me say another word or two. One day Mr. Carter proposes doing away with tax deductions for home mortgage interest payments, for taxing church properties other than church buildings. The next day he says that wasn't what he really meant.

One day Mr. Carter talks about balancing the Federal budget and fighting inflation. The next day he turns around and talks about new programs that would cost at least \$100 billion annually.

We have seen Mr. Carter go from labor halls and blast away at businessmen for paying less than their share of taxes and say their burden should be increased. Then he goes to Wall Street in New York City, the 21 Club, and tells businessmen, "Don't worry, I didn't mean what I said."

We have seen Mr. Carter call for cuts of \$15 billion in the defense budget, not once but twice -- in Savannah, Georgia, March 15, 1975; in Beverly Hills, California five days later; then last Wednesday night we saw him deny it in San Francisco.

Mr. Carter can change his mind as often as he wants to -- and he does it plenty of times -- but he can't change the facts. He was wrong when he denied he ever said, "We should slash, we should gut our defense budget by \$15 billion."

The American people asked Mr. Carter, "What are they supposed to believe?" Mr. Carter replies, "Don't worry, I will tell you what I plan to do after November 2."

But let's talk about national defense. You have got a great national park here just a few miles away. A great American President, Teddy Roosevelt, once said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick." Mr. Carter speaks loudly and carries a fly swatter.

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He wants to cut \$15 billion out of your Army, your Navy, your Air Force and Marine Corp. He wants to cancel or delay the B-1 bomber, which is aimed at replacing the B-52. The B-52s are about 20 years old, and by the time we phase in the B-1, they will be another five years older.

But, let me be very, very precise in this. President Ford does not believe in sending young pilots in planes in combat that are older than the pilots themselves. They deserve better than that from the American people.

Now let me give you a little advice. If I were concerned about keeping America strong and Jimmy Carter were President, I would be worried sick. If I were concerned about inflation and high taxes and Jimmy Carter were President, I would be very, very worried. If I were concerned about bringing unemployment down without spending billions and billions on dead-end Humphrey-Hawkins jobs and Jimmy Carter were President, I would be very worried.

My friend, that is really what this campaign is all about. Mr. Carter and his platform offer more promises, more programs, more spending, more inflation and more taxes. Jerry Ford says that Government is already too large, too powerful, too costly, too remote and too, too deeply involved in your lives.

I want to make Government your capable servant but not your meddling master. That is why I am a candidate for President in 1976.

Now let me make one final observation and comment. This country is strong and this country is beautiful. But we ought to learn from past history. As we look around the world, one of our great and staunch allies over the years has been Great Britain. But Great Britain is faced with the gravest financial crisis in its illustrious history.

Just earlier, a week ago, Prime Minister Callaghan had the courage to say as he spoke to his Labor Party Convention in England -- and I quote him, because I think his words are what we ought to listen to. Prime Minister Callaghan had this to say: "Britain for too long has lived on borrowed time, borrowed money and borrowed ideas. We will fail if we think we can buy our way out of our present difficulties by printing confetti money and paying ourselves more than we earn."

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Those are strong words by a man who leads a country whose past has been great but whose crisis is serious.

Let me say from the bottom of my heart that this country is strong, but we have those who are running for the Presidency who want to borrow more money, spend more money, have higher taxes, and lead us down the road to more and more inflation.

Let me say very specifically to each and every one of you, as long as Jerry Ford is President of the United States, we will not have that kind of a Government. We will have a strong Government at home with less taxes, less inflation, less Federal spending, and we will have a Government that is strong enough to preserve the peace and to maintain our deterrent forces and to look at each other and say we are proud of America.

I come before you as a President who wants to serve you for the next four years, and to come back to Oklahoma, to Lawton, and say, I kept my promises.

I want, I need your support. I won't let you down. Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 6:55 P.M. CDT)