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OCTOBER 18, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
NATIONAL MEDAL OF SCIENCE AWARDS CEREMONY

THE EAST ROOM

12:15 P.M. EDT

Distinguished medal recipients, members of the Cabinet, Dr. Stever, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

This afternoon I have the high honor and the very rare privilege of sharing in two events that reflect great credit upon the United States in this Bicentennial year. The first involves the latest announcements by the Nobel Prize Selection Committee.

Some very recently raised some doubts about America's continuing leadership in the family of nations. These doubts were surely put to rest this morning by this announcement.

Three more Americans today were named recipients of the 1976 Nobel prizes. Americans have now swept the 1976 prizes in economics, medicine, physics, chemistry, marking the first time in history that a single country has been the home of all of these winners. We should be very, very proud.

Speaking on behalf of a proud and very grateful Nation, I wish to take this opportunity to salute these six outstanding Americans who have earned this magnificent distinction. They have contributed immensely to their profession, to their country and to all of mankind.

Now let me turn, if I might, to the matter at hand. One of the privileges of an American President is to personally present the National Medal of Science, the Nation's highest achievement in the science and engineering fields.

This afternoon, it is my pleasure to present this award to 15 distinguished Americans. They are joining a very select group of Medal of Science award winners who have achieved recognition since 1962 for their outstanding contribution to knowledge in the physical, biological, mathematical and engineering sciences.

The recipients we honor today have added to our understanding of the natural environment; they have increased productivity in agriculture; they have improved our Nation's health; they have helped bring new energy sources within our reach; and they have made contributions in mathematics and its application that will permit further progress in computer technology and systems research.

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Their accomplishments underscore the importance of scientific research itself. The freedom and the means to question and explore are not just branches of the American experience. They lie at its very roots. The discovery of this Continent, the birth of this Nation, were the results of experimentation and exploration.

For 200 years, this Nation's strength has been in its economic health, its military security and the general well-being of its people, and these in turn have depended on the intellect and creativity of America's inventors, scientists and engineers.

Our founders believed that the ideas of such searching inquiry--men and women encouraged and protected by a free society--would produce benefits extending to all of its people. Throughout our history, this belief has been totally justified. Time and time again, the results of scientific research have captured our imagination, bettered our condition, and raised our expectations for the future. Today, more than ever, a strong national effort in research and development is critically important to strengthen our economy and our defense and to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

While in Congress, as well as President, I have worked to bolster our research and development programs in order to achieve our national goals. Just about a year ago, I was struggling with the various Cabinet officers and heads of other departments, and with the Office of Management and Budget, as to how we could meet a temporary fiscal problem within the Government, but despite the fiscal constraints imposed upon most departments, the fiscal year 1977 budget included requests for an 11 percent increase in Federal funding for research and development, one of the few areas within our Government that got an increase during this temporary fiscal problem that the Nation faces.

Included within were increases for the support of basic research to enlarge the funds of basic knowledge so necessary for the scientific and engineering progress. With the strong and very effective support of Vice President Rockefeller, we now have established a new Office of Science and Technology policy in the White House designed to bring the Executive Branch of the Government timely advice on how science and technology can help us deal with our national problems. And I am personally delighted, and I think the country is fortunate to have Guy Stever in that new position of responsibility.

The men and women devoting themselves to science and technology in our universities, in our industrial laboratories, our private and public research centers, continue to deserve America's support and encouragement. Therefore, I am extremely proud and consider it a rare privilege to award these 15 National Medals of Science today and I extend my gratitude and my congratulations to the award winners and to their families.

Dr. Stever, would you please read the names as I present the awards.