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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT  
FOUNTAIN SQUARE

12:40 P.M. EDT

Thanks very, very much, Governor Jim Rhodes, Senator Bob Taft.

I am certainly looking forward to having Bob Taft down there to help me in the next four years, so he can help Ohio in the next six years. Send him back. We need him, and so do you.

But it is also great to see so many of my old and very dear friends from the House of Representatives: Bill Gradison, Don Clancy, Tom Kindness, Bud Brown, Jim Harsha, Gene Snyder, Doc Carter.

Well, there is one special person, too, a former Senator, just resigned as our Ambassador to East Germany, John Sherman Cooper.

Well, it is just great to be here in Cincinnati, the home of the Big Red Machine. You didn't concede a single game in the World Series, and we won't concede a single State or a single vote on November 2.

A few days ago, I understand you had a pretty big celebration here on behalf of the Reds, and I would, too -- back-to-back world champions. Boy, what a record.

And I am very, very proud to have some of the men here who made that championship possible. We have Ted Kluzewski. You know, I know something about Ted. He not only helped the big bats break loose in that World Series, but what a hitter Ted was in his own day.

And then Ken Griffie. I have been trying to run as fast as Ken does when he goes for first base.

Then, Pete Rose. Pete, who plays baseball like that great American spirit: Give us a chance and we will get there ahead of everybody, period.

But there is another baseball friend of all of yours and a great friend of mine who is here. He had a little color that he added to the World Series, a great friend of mine who has been campaigning with me, Joe Garagiola.

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(OVER)

But, you know, it is also a great honor and privilege for me to be here on this platform with some of the great athletes that represent Cincinnati so well, the champions of some of the sports in our Olympics, the Bengals, the Cincinnati Stingers, I thank them all for being here and wish them all the very, very best.

But let me extend to all of you a special invitation. On January 20, a pretty significant day, I invite every single one of you to come to Washington and participate in the Jerry Ford-Bob Dole inauguration.

Johnny Grant came in from California. He handled a great rally like this in Orange County, and thank you, Johnny, very much.

As I said, Jim Rhodes has been a loyal friend, a great Governor, and I want to express my deep appreciation to him for the job he has done for you, but also for the help and assistance that he has given me. Thanks very much, Jim.

We are at the countdown, fellows. We are at the countdown where it makes a difference for all the men and women, the young and the old. On November 2, some big decisions are going to be made.

But let me point out to you, today America is at peace. No American is fighting or dying on any foreign soil, and we are going to keep it that way. Your lives are not being threatened by war or interrupted by the draft. I have spent most of my time in the last two years working for peace, and I am determined to keep America out of war in the next four years.

And what does that mean? That means that America's young people, like the many young people I see in this great audience here today, can go to school and get a good education. That means they can plan their careers confidently, buy a home, raise a family and look forward to a great life.

I pledge, as I said a moment ago, that in the next four years, because we are strong militarily, because we are skillful diplomatically, that America will be at peace, and we will keep it that way. Thank you for that support on that key issue.

But here in this great part of Southern Ohio, you make a substantial contribution to our military weaponry that is so essential. I refer here to the contribution to the B-1 bomber program where GE puts those engines together so we can have replacements for our aging B-52s. We need the B-1. There is no right -- it would not be fair to send our young pilots in the years ahead to do a job for you and for me in an aircraft, a weapons system that is older than they are, and that won't be the case under President Ford.

We not only have to keep ourselves strong militarily and skillful diplomatically, we have to keep our economy strong. I know Ohio believes, as I do, in growth and in progress. I announced this morning at the airport a very important decision, which is particularly important to Southern Ohio. My new policy is designed to keep America number one in the nuclear energy field in order to maintain our world leadership in that area.

We must maintain our position as a major reliable supplier of fuel for nuclear power, not only in the United States but around the world. The diffusion plant near Portsmouth, Ohio has played a leading role in supplying enriched uranium for electric power plants in the United States and for the rest of the world.

Last May I announced that we will build an add-on plant in Portsmouth, Ohio. The Energy Research and Development Agency is now asking for bids for further design work on this add-on plant. The construction -- listen to this -- the construction on this important addition at Portsmouth is to begin next year, early 1977.

This is a \$4 billion 400 million construction project, and it means 6,000 construction jobs right here in Southern Ohio.

America needs more good productive jobs like that created by a healthy growing economy. My policies have brought up America from the depths of its worst recession in 40 years and with your support we can continue the march to a sound and sustainable prosperity. With your support, I will continue the sensible, common sense approach that we have to your Government by keeping the lid on Federal spending, by doing an even better job in cutting the rate of inflation.

You know when I became President a little over two years ago the cost of living was increasing at the rate of over 12 percent. By doing the right thing, keeping a lid on Federal spending, by having tax reduction, stimulating the economy in the right way, we have cut the rate of inflation under 6 percent, and we are going to do better in the next four years.

But if we are going to have the kind of an economy that is one that will make jobs available in the private sector, we have to have additional tax reductions. There is an old saying that I firmly believe in -- the best tax reform is tax reduction. As I look across this group here this morning on Fountain Square, I know that most of you are in the middle income tax paying brackets. The record shows that the middle income taxpayers have been short-changed, and we are going to change that in the next Congress.

MORE

I recommended to the Congress last January that the personal exemption ought to be increased from \$750 to \$1,000. That is a one-third increase in the tax exemption you would be getting. But, I was out to a plant the other day and I asked the man, I said, "How big a family do you have?" He said, "I have three kids and a wife." I said, "If the Congress had acted responsibly in this last session, they would have done what I proposed be done last January, which would have been to increase the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 and you, Mr. Taxpayer, with three kids and a wife and yourself, when you make out that income tax return next April, you would have had \$1,250 more of personal exemption."

Now, Congress didn't do what I proposed, but Congress is going to have it on their doorstep when they come back, and they better pass it. If they don't pass it in 1977, we are going to go after them in 1978, and if they don't do it in 1978, we are going to beat them in the election in 1978.

Now let me tell you something else that I support. I mentioned it in the last debate. In my view, we lost a great, great American tradition when the Supreme Court ruled out voluntary prayer in public schools. Every child should have the opportunity for voluntary prayer in school, and I strongly support a constitutional amendment that would permit voluntary prayer in public schools.

We have much to do. We have to keep strong so we can keep the peace so that when I negotiate with an adversary, whether it is from the Soviet Union or any other country, or when I negotiate with our allies, they know America is number one.

We have much to do to keep the economy strong so we have prosperity for our people. We must do what is right so that our older people have an opportunity to enjoy the quality of life that they have so richly earned. But let's do all these things together. I ask for your vote so we can keep America strong, peaceful, prosperous and free.

It would be the highest honor of my life for you to say to me here in Southern Ohio and all over this country, "Jerry Ford, you have done a good job. Keep right on doing it for the next four years."

Thank you very much.

END (AT 12:56 P.M. EDT)