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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT
COLONIE HILL

2:08 P.M. EST

Thank you very, very much, Dick Rosenbaum.

May I ask a favor of you for just a minute, because this is a very crucial election, not only at the local but at the State and at the national level. I would like to reintroduce maybe a person or two. I would like to introduce some people who have really been very helpful and then I would like to talk to you straight from the shoulder about the differences between electing my opponent on the one hand and the Ford-Dole ticket on the other.

First, I want to thank Dick Rosenbaum. I want to thank "Buzz" Schwenck, who has done a super job. I wish to express my appreciation to Barry Duryea.

And on a very personal note, back in 1970, I had a tough Congressional race, after having 11 relatively easy ones, and I asked a dear friend of mine, a man who would have an impact in my Congressional race, to come out and give a Lincoln Day speech in my behalf, and I have never forgotten his loyalty, his help, and I want to recognize it here among all of you in Suffolk County because he is a great statesman and I say Senator Jack Javits.

But, there are some other people that have been introduced, but I would like to give them some special and very personal recognition from me -- to have one of the great musicians of all time, Lionel Hampton; and a person who represents the best in professional athletics, Joe Frazier.

And then there are two candidates, among others, but two that can make a great contribution to not only the best interests of Suffolk County but the best interests of the State of New York, and even more importantly, the best interests of the country, I hope that you will send Jim Buckley back to the United States Senate.

And we need a good man -- Joe, get up here. Send Peter down to help us. But there is another person who has made a tremendous sacrifice. He has helped me. But he is doing it because he feels so strongly about what ought to be done in the next four years to make this country a better place for all of us to live. I can't express my appreciation and gratitude deeply enough, but one of my good friends and one of yours, Joe Garagiola.

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In the last 10 days, I have been in many, many areas in this great State. Let me just run down the list: Flatbush, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, Suffolk, Nassau tonight, and Westchester County. We are on the momentum to win this great State, and we are going to.

Now I am going to issue you an invitation. I talked to Betty today and Betty said, "Tell all those wonderful people from Suffolk County to come to the White House, come to the inauguration on January 20, when Jerry Ford and Bob Dole are sworn in."

As I stand here tonight, inevitably my mind goes back to August of 1972 (1974) and reflect for just a minute. Those were tough times. We had inflation of over 12 percent; we were on the brink of the worst recession in 40 years; we were still involved in Vietnam; and the American people had lost faith and trust in the White House. And I can recall that sad day because I had never sought to be your President, but I took the oath of office to be the President until January 20, 1977. And with some emotion in the short remarks that I made after taking the oath, I said to 215 million Americans, "You haven't confirmed me by your ballots. I ask that you confirm me by your prayers."

And in the next two years, which were tough, I had the distinct feeling that 215 million Americans -- Independents, Democrats and Republicans -- were standing with us as we tried to meet the terrible problems that faced this country.

But because we put the ship of State on an even keel, and we had a firm, consistent, common sense hand on the tiller, we started to make that progress that has culminated in today the rate of inflation being less than 6 percent. We have cut it by more than 50 percent. And I pledge to you we will do better in the next four years.

In the last 18 months, we have added four million jobs in America. We have 88 million people gainfully employed, the highest number in the history of the United States. But I won't be satisfied in the next four years until we find a job for everybody who wants to work, and we are going to do it.

I think in the last two years the White House has been open. I have been candid, frank, forthright. And the net result is that even people who disagree with me have faith and trust that the White House is their White House, it is an honest, frank, open White House, and it will be that way for the next four years.

One of the things that pleases me the most is that I can stand before you tonight and say I am the first President seeking election since Dwight D. Eisenhower who can say America is at peace.

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I thought I asked you to be as quiet so you would hear a pin drop. But I like it. (Laughter)

But let me add on the point I just made, not a single young American is fighting and dying on any foreign soil tonight, and they won't during the next four years. And they won't, because we have the finest Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines. They are number one, and we are going to keep them number one.

I am proud of the fact that we have given additional support to our national defense program to make sure that in the future when a President sits down to negotiate with his allies, his allies will understand that the United States is strong in weapons systems and strong in will. I am glad that the defense program we have today is a strong one so that when I sit down to negotiate with any adversary they know we have the strength and the will to stand up for freedom and liberty in the United States.

But in order to do that, yes, we have to spend a good bit of money, but we have to spend that money for the finest weapons systems, not to fight a war but to preserve the peace, and I am proud of the contribution that you in Suffolk County make with the Grumman plant and the F-14.

But, let's talk now about how we can keep America strong at home. There are some in this political campaign who say the way to increase employment is to put people on the Federal payroll, deadend jobs, vast expenditures out of the Federal budget. I don't think that will work in the United States. It certainly hasn't worked in Great Britain.

The better way, and the Ford way, is to give tax reductions to the middle income people and to give tax reductions to industry so they can expand, build new plants in Suffolk County, expand the ones that are here, and make this a healthy economy through the free enterprise system.

My opponent, when he talks about taxes, he sort of escalates one day, then he goes down the next, and really even the finest newspaper people in this country -- and they are all over there -- can't figure out where he stands on taxes. But they know where I stand. I have told them and the American people that I stand for a tax reduction. That is the best tax reform I know.

Last January I sent a tax reduction package up to Capitol Hill and I said, you ought to cut taxes \$28 billion and hold the line on Federal spending by \$28 billion. Well, Congress gave us half a loaf but they didn't hit the tax reduction where it should have been applied.

Fifty percent of the American people -- fifty percent -- are middle income taxpayers. They have been short-changed over the last 10 years, and President Ford's tax reduction proposal to increase the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 helps those people who obey the laws, raise their families and make a better life for America.

The other day I was out in a plant talking to a number of people working on a production line, and they stopped and I chatted. One of them said, "Well, what are you going to do about my taxes?" I said, "How many children do you have?" He said, "I have three." It turns out he had a wife, three kids and himself. I said, "If Congress had acted responsibly and done what I suggested they do, next April when they go to make out that income tax return," I said, "Mister, you could have taken \$1,250 more in personal exemption. He said, "Why didn't Congress do it?" Well, you will have to ask the majority party. They didn't want to give it to you.

But the point is they didn't do it. I am going to have a tax reduction package right on their doorstep and on their desk when Congress comes back in January.

The American people want tax relief, and President Ford has recommended it, he is going to fight for it, and we are going to get it for you.

But now that we have gotten over the hump where we have had an opportunity to pull together like we did -- and wasn't that a magnificent day when we celebrated our 200th birthday? I will never forget -- never will I forget taking a flight over Manhattan and seeing those beautiful Tall Ships from many, many, many nations throughout the world who came to the United States to pay their respect to the great and wonderful country in which we live.

But we still have some things to do despite our incredible comeback, and let me just tick off a few. I am not going to be satisfied until every American who wants a job has a job. I am not going to be satisfied until everybody who works and saves and wants to buy a decent home in a fine neighborhood -- I am not going to be satisfied until we give a quality education to every American. I am not going to be satisfied until we give health care at a cost that people can afford. I am not going to be satisfied until we lock up the criminals and make it safe to be on your streets.

You have wonderful enthusiasm, but as old Joe Garagiola said -- and he ain't as old as I am (Laughter) -- all right, you know, this is towards the last quarter -- I will put it in football terms -- we were way, way behind in the first quarter and, boy, they were overconfident. But we got together. The Republican Party has never been better unified. We are out there with the right programs, the right enthusiasm, and the net result is we have the momentum.

So, I happen to believe that this State will be on the side of the right direction for the next four years and the first four years of our third century. I know you can do it right here in Suffolk County. I know that Dick Rosenbaum and all of the wonderful workers in New York State can have the Empire State lead the pack for the right kind of a program, for the right kind of an America we believe in.

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But let me ask one final, final favor. I have been very proud to be your President during a period of two years of adversity and difficulty. You didn't lose faith in your country, in your Government or yourselves, or your neighbors. You were proud, as I was, to be an American.

I would be honored to serve as your President for the next four years.

And so I ask you, on behalf of Betty and myself, will you not only confirm me on August -- October -- November 2 (Laughter) -- will you confirm me on November 2 by not only your prayers but by your ballots?

And I won't let you down.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 2:35 P.M. EST)