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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE STATEWIDE FUND RAISING DINNER
FOR INDIANA REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES
INDIANA CONVENTION-EXPOSITION CENTER

I particularly appreciate this invitation to be here tonight because I want to not only see what is happening but to be seen. And obviously I need it. As I was walking through the lobby, a very friendly lady came up to me, shook my hand and said, "I know you from somewhere but I can't remember your name". . . . So I tried to help her out. I said, "Jerry Ford?" She said, "No, but you're close."

It is a pleasure to be here tonight with so many enthusiastic Indiana Republicans at the Convention-Exposition Center. I have visited Indianapolis many times. But I still come away from each visit more impressed, more enthusiastic, about the future of this great city and State.

One of the reasons for my optimism about Indiana is here with us tonight -- my old friend Dick Lugar. For years, Dick has been an outstanding mayor of Indianapolis. In fact, a lot of people claim he is the best mayor in the country.

I am convinced Dick Lugar will do as much for his State and country as he has already done for his city. He's going to make a great United States Senator.

He has a tough fight on his hands. A lot of political muscle and out-of-state money are working against him. But, with your help, Dick Lugar can make it. And he deserves to.

We need a man like him representing Indiana in the Senate -- a man who will support economy in Government and fight inflation year in and year out -- not just at election time!

Dick Lugar is young, dynamic, honest and smart. He does his homework. He will be a full-time Senator for Indiana who will really represent the responsible, common-sense approach to the issues that most Hoosiers share.

And, speaking of men who are outstanding at their jobs, I want to say how much I admire Governor Otis Bowen. I had planned to meet with Doc Bowen at the White House sometime ago. But I found out that, like so many Doctors these days, Doc Bowen doesn't make house calls any more. So I've come to him instead. Besides being a popular, hard-working Governor, Doc Bowen is also a great team player. I know I speak for everyone here when I say how grateful Republicans are for his tireless campaigning this year for Dick Lugar and for the entire State Republican ticket. I also want to express my thanks to the fine Republicans in the Indiana Congressional delegation -- Earl Landgrebe, John Myers, Roger Zion, and David Dennis -- men I can count on to fight the good fight against inflation in the Congress. I am going to need them more than ever during the next two years. I urge the people of Indiana to send them back to Washington. In addition, right here in the Marion County area, you have three fine Congressmen whom I look to for counsel and support - Bill Bray, Bud Hills and Bill Hudnut. I served side-by-side with Bill Bray in the Congress for almost 23 years. He is a friend as well as a colleague. His experience, seniority and know-how have made him one of the most important men in the Congress. Bill Bray is a great asset for Indiana and a proven inflation fighter.

(MORE)

So is Bud Hillis whom I have known since 1970 when he was first elected to the House of Representatives. Bud has brought the same courage, the same integrity, and the same strong sense of duty to his work on Capitol Hill.

As you know, Congressman Hudnut is also an ordained minister, which isn't a bad thing to be in politics. Bill is the only man I know who can sit through a long dull dreary meeting . . . and when he closes his eyes, you don't know if he's praying or sleeping.

Frankly, I never knew Bill Hudnut was a minister until one day I saw him pick up a phone and call DIAL-A-PRAYER . . . COLLECT!

Bill Hudnut's first term in the House coincided with my last one, but in the eleven months we served together, I came to know and respect him. Incidentally, in looking over a few back issues of Bill's newsletter to his constituents, I discovered that he actually declared inflation 'Public Enemy Number One' before I did. This is only one of the many vital issues on which we agree.

There is another thing I know about Bill that may be news to some of you. Tomorrow is his 42nd birthday. Many happy returns, Bill -- including a happy return to the Congress this November.

Speaking of birthdays, I can't help thinking back to my own 42nd birthday. It was 19 years ago in 1955. There's an old saying that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Looking back for a moment to 1955, there seems to be something to it.

In 1955, violence in Cyprus was making headlines. People were worried about peace in the Middle East. And threats of inflation and recession weighed heavily on a lot of worried taxpayers.

Here we are, nineteen years later. Strife in Cyprus and the Middle East are still on the front page. The economy is again a big worry.

Americans have been rediscovering a lot of other things, too. In the wake of Vietnam, Watergate, the energy crisis and the economic challenge, we are learning some of the basic lessons that went into building America.

I have in mind things like the need for integrity in Government; the necessity for fiscal responsibility to fight inflation; the timeless balance, created by the founders, between the three branches of Government; and the need for interval balance within the Congress through a viable two-party system.

It is the need for this balance, and the challenge it faces in this year's elections, that I will address.

Lord Acton is famous for a frequently repeated quote, "Power tends to corrupt," he said, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Again and again, the truth of those words has been proven. Whenever any one branch of Government, any one person, or any one class or faction in a country enjoys a monopoly of power, corruption and extremism are the inevitable result.

Only checks and balances -- the free play of different ideas, and a vital, competitive two-party system -- can preserve a Nation's freedoms and deal with corruption. We need the built-in watchdog of a strong opposition party and an aware public.

And make no mistake, that is exactly what you are not going to get if you and other responsible citizens stay home on November 5th -- or blindly penalize good Republican candidates for the misdeeds of others.

Such a development would be dangerous at any time. But, today, more than anything else, we need a Congress willing to fight inflation. A lopsided majority of big spenders would override every effort made to cut Government spending and whip inflation.

Electing a spendthrift, veto-proof Congress to fight inflation makes about as much sense as asking the wolf to watch the hen house. What we need is an inflation-proof Congress made up of members committed to curbing spending and checking inflation.

A Congress like that might balk at voting for a small, temporary surtax aimed at fighting inflation -- such as the one I asked Congress for last week. It might well have to vote for a far heavier, more repressive system of taxation, however, to pay for all the programs it could enact over a presidential veto.

I believe in levelling with people. Americans prefer the truth to sugar coating. They can tell the difference. That is why, even though this is an election year, I have proposed a 31-point Economic Program that aims at solving problems instead of sweeping them under the rug.

An important part of that program is the proposed surtax I mentioned a moment ago.

I realize that a new tax is not the easiest way to make friends and influence people in an election year. Some of my oldest friends in politics warned me that while the surtax is required to whip inflation, it is political poison in an election year.

I can understand their attitude. But this year, with so much at stake, I can't go along with them. I am more interested in my country's economic survival than in playing politics as usual.

And I am also a great believer in the wisdom of the American people. Once Americans know the facts, consider them properly, they will do what is needed.

What I offer is not magic formula. But I do offer proposals that balance flexibility, sacrifice and equity so that no one group of Americans bears all the burden. In short, everyone is protected from the full brunt of inflation, everyone shares the burden equally.

Let me conclude today by just reminding Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike: Congressional elections are what America is all about. It is the time to account for the stewardship of those who serve the people. There is no gun so mighty nor force so powerful as the quiet symbolic voice spoken in the privacy of the voting booth. It is the opportunity, and indeed the responsibility, of every citizen to balance the ledger sheets of good Government.

I know we will get the job done. We will lick inflation. We will strengthen the great two-party system in the United States. And we will continue to build the international peace which will come from bipartisan cooperation in the highest councils of our Government.

And to help accomplish all this, we need a strong, responsive Congress. As one commentator put it on television last week -- "I'm looking for a Congress that'll praise the Lord and pass the legislation."

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