

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 22, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Francisco, California)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE
AFL-CIO BUILDING AND TRADES DEPARTMENT

HYATT HOTEL

10:50 A.M. PDT

President Georgine, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Bob, let me thank you for your very generous invitation to be a part of this very great convention. It is always a pleasure to see so many old friends and some new friends again and, in particular, to visit with my very good friend, Bob Georgine.

Bob is well-known as a man of outstanding accomplishments, a demonstrated leader, an exceptional administrator, concerned citizen and a celebrated gin rummy player. (Laughter)

I say a celebrated gin rummy player but perhaps I'd better explain that term. Bob doesn't celebrate, his opponents do. (Laughter)

As a friend I won't say how good a gin rummy player Bob Georgine is, but two more games and you could have a brand new name -- the AFL-CIO-IOU. (Laughter)

Last January I went to a testimonial dinner in Washington honoring Bob Georgine. I asked Bob and the Skilled Construction Trades to help America to achieve energy independence, and Bob has helped. I have just seen a copy of the September issue of the AFL-CIO American Federationist in which Bob Georgine again speaks out on the energy crisis.

Bob, nothing could make me happier than your report that unions are still vigorously pressing for energy growth. I know that construction workers are among those suffering the heaviest impact of recession and the energy crisis. When you suffer, America suffers.

The mission of the Skilled Construction Trades represented here is to build a better America. That is also my goal as your President. Two centuries of construction enabled America to achieve its special status among the nations of the world, and I salute you, as representatives of the millions of men and women who have been a part of this great building process in our wonderful country.

MORE

As America completes 200 years of history, we face some very serious problems but we, you and I together, will solve those problems.

If any nation or group of nations in this world in which we live, including those favored by nature with great oil resources, think America is finished, and we no longer control our destiny and our finances, then they have another think coming.

The four million skilled construction workers you represent and multitudes of other Americans will show the world that Uncle Sam is not about to say uncle.

You and I know we can produce our own energy. You and I know we can protect ourselves against arbitrary increases in price by foreign nations. You and I know we can provide more jobs and you and I know we can bring an end to the intolerable situation in which America exports more than \$25 billion annually to pay for imported oil while plenty of energy is potentially available right here at home. The money we will pay out this year for foreign oil would pay the wages for one million more American workers.

When I talk about energy, I am talking about jobs, American jobs. Last year about three-fourths of all planned nuclear plants and overall one-fourth of all coal plants scheduled to be built in the next ten years were postponed or cancelled. Domestic oil production right here in the good, old USA has fallen by one percent since early 1973. Natural gas production has declined so seriously that thousands of jobs are threatened this very winter.

Last year the average American home paid about \$360 for foreign oil compared with only \$45 in 1970. Oil producing nations know that we are more dependent and more vulnerable than ever. There is now a possibility that the OPEC nations foreign cartel will once again raise prices, in fact they are meeting this week for that purpose. We don't have to take this lying down and we won't.

MORE

For starters, let's spend here at home for American jobs some of the billions we have been spending abroad for foreign oil and foreign payrolls. We can create construction jobs for workers, capital for industrial expansion and new energy for all Americans. That is what independence is all about.

In response to those nations which would control our energy supply and prices, and hence our future, I say to industry, to construction workers and to all Americans, let's go into business for ourselves, let's produce American energy in America with American workers and do it as soon as possible.

Last January, I asked the Congress to act. The comprehensive program I then outlined was based upon my deep personal conviction in America. By 1985, I envisioned 200 major nuclear power plants, 250 new coal mines, 150 major coal-fired power plants, 30 major new oil refineries, 20 major new synthetic fuel plants, the drilling of many thousands of new oil wells, the insulation of 18 million homes and the manufacture and sale of millions of new automobiles, trucks and buses that use much less fuel. I happen to believe we can do it.

In another crisis, the one in 1942, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, our then President, said this country would build 50,000 war planes in a year. Our enemies scoffed. But, by 1943, our production had reached 125,000 aircraft annually.

We did it then. We can do it again right now.

Frankly, we cannot wait any longer for the Congress to act on my comprehensive energy program. Long-range security, jobs and energy are inseparable. The time has come for action on energy independence. Accordingly, I will ask very shortly the Congress to erase all doubt about the capacity of America to respond. I will propose an entirely new \$100 billion Government corporation to work with private enterprise and labor to gain energy independence for the United States in ten years or less.

This new Energy Independence Authority will have the power to take any appropriate financial action to borrow, or to lend in order to get energy action. It will serve as a catalyst and a stimulant working through, not in place of, American industry.

It can stimulate economic growth. It can create new jobs. It can give us control over our own destiny and can end runaway energy prices imposed by foreign nations.

MORE

It can give foreign nations a new look at what Americans can do with our great resources when we stop talking and start acting. That is my answer to those who tell us Americans can no longer do what they set out to do.

I speak today to the great majority who believe in American capacities rather than in American incapacity. I speak to all Americans who know that this is the same nation that made up its mind during World War II to develop synthetic rubber and who know that this is still the same Nation that decided to harness the atom by the Manhattan Project and accomplished that objective, who know that this is the same Nation that said it would put the first man on the moon and did so.

Perhaps people said all these projects were impossible, but Americans have done the impossible. The proposed Energy Independence Authority would have a ten-year life and be self-liquidating. It is designed to achieve what many regard as impossible energy independence by 1985.

It is a program to secure our jobs, our standard of living and the national interest of the United States.

This new Government corporation would be an independent Federal authority reporting directly to the President. This concept is bigger than partisanship. I am determined to appoint, as directors, Americans of stature without regard to politics.

The new Energy Independence Authority will seek new technologies to support or directly produce or transport American energy, technologies to support American nuclear development and electrical power from American coal, nuclear and geothermal sources.

The Energy Independence Authority will undertake only those projects which private business cannot undertake alone. It will not replace the private enterprise system. It will supplement it.

My vision is a dramatic action to produce oil and gas from coal, safe and clean nuclear and coal-generated electrical power, harness the energy of the sun and the natural heat within the earth and build numerous other energy facilities throughout our great country.

The Energy Independence Authority would act to finance those projects vitally needed for America's energy independence that will not be financed even by America's great private capital resources.

MORE

We will need over \$600 billion of energy investments over the next decade to finance American energy independence. As always, most of that investment will come from private sources. But, I am convinced that we cannot wait for our emerging technologies to become conventional technologies.

We must act now to speed their development. We must also insure that conventional projects with very large capital needs will have adequate access to investment resources.

The central defect of America's energy system is that it relies most on our least plentiful domestic energy resources -- oil and natural gas -- and relies least on our most abundant energy resources -- coal and nuclear power.

My vision is a crash development in harmony with environmental protection of these abundant resources we have throughout our land.

America's oil shale resources are more vast than all the oil reserves of the Middle East. America's coal resources are ten times greater than our oil shale resources. America's ability to harness the atom is legendary with the known potential of producing unlimited amounts of clean and safe energy.

Without this Energy Independence Authority, these vast treasures of America might never be developed or developed too late to keep America's leadership in the world.

With an Energy Independence Authority, we will have the financial means to tap all of this energy during the crucial next ten years.

The Energy Independence Authority will be an important new element, but only one element in our total national energy independence effort.

We need dramatic action to produce synthetic fuels, at least a million barrels a day, floating nuclear power plants mounted on barges, new pipelines for oil and gas and vast energy parks throughout America.

My vision of America is one of going back to work as a chain reaction of economic activity spreads throughout all 50 States. To build energy is to create energy and jobs in all sectors of our life in this country.

MORE

It has been estimated that for each job created directly in energy, the ripple effect throughout the economy creates at least another unrelated job. The total number of jobs generated will more than double the energy related jobs.

Let me cite an example, if I may. Four hundred thousand man years of labor are required to construct plants and manufacturing equipment for 50 nuclear plants. This represents 650,000 man years of labor in the time frame required.

I want to see millions of new jobs in the next ten years with healthy widening ripples of growth throughout the economy. We can do it.

I am directing my energy and economic advisers to take all steps required in the shortest possible time to make this vision a reality. I am also counting on you, the construction workers who will do the job. We need your help, along with the help of literally millions of others throughout our Nation.

You have the skills, you have the courage, you have the dedication which has enabled America to defend itself in times of war and develop in times of peace.

I am confident of your ability and that of all Americans--labor and management, Democrats, Republicans and Independents, employed and unemployed, rich, poor and struggling, old and young--to unite behind this bold new program that I have outlined.

As America's population grows and our economy expands, we must create 11 million more jobs by 1980. This is a big order. It cannot be filled by Government alone or by industry alone or by unions or by politicians acting on their own.

But, the problem can and will be solved if we all work together, just as you in this hall today are united in building America.

As Bob Georgine said, the door to the White House will remain open, as it has been since I have been President, to those who champion the cause of America's working people. Nor will I ever close my heart to the millions of Americans who are now unable to find work.

I will not rest as long as any American who wants to work can find work. Too many people remain without jobs. I have heard references to so-called acceptable rates of unemployment. I do not recognize the acceptability of any level of unemployment as long as people cannot find a job.

MORE

I am determined to help create new jobs on a sound economic basis, good jobs, real jobs and not make-work \$2 an hour jobs. When statistics are issued on the losses of jobs, there are some losses which are not published.

I refer to the loss of hope among young people seeking their first real job, the loss of self-esteem among heads of households who are laid off, the loss of security and standard of living that people work for years to achieve and, most important, the loss of faith in America's future.

These are tragic losses. They are losses that the United States of America cannot and will not permit. Need for skilled construction workers to build new energy installations and new operators to run them will be enormous.

By planning and working now, we can insure the development is orderly and that progress is continuous. As we enter our third century, Americans can look back with great pride upon our achievements in providing safe, healthful, stable and productive jobs.

But, obviously, we have much to do. Let's get going and let's go to work together.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 11:12 A.M. PDT)