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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE GIVEN AT THE
ILLINOIS STATE GOP FUNDRAISER

Since taking office as President, I have gone to 38 States to let people know what this Administration is trying to do in Washington -- and to learn what concerns my fellow Americans.

One of these concerns is farm prices. Last year, American farmers responded to my call for full production. This year, they harvested a record wheat crop. They expect a record corn crop by the end of the harvest year.

American farmers want -- and have every good reason to expect -- to sell all they produce either at home or abroad. I intend to see that they do -- in a free market and at fair prices. Profitable and steady grain trading relations have been built with buyers in Europe, Japan and elsewhere. We can count in advance on regular purchases by those foreign customers.

With the Soviet Union, a relatively new customer, we do not yet have that assurance. Soviet grain purchases have fluctuated greatly in the past five years.

In 1971-72, the Russians bought 182 million bushels of grain from us. In 1972-73, the figure soared to 524 million bushels. In 1973-74, it dropped to 252 million bushels, and then fell sharply to about 74 million bushels in 1974-75. During this crop year, the Russians have already bought 399 million bushels and want to buy more. These wide fluctuations disrupt our markets and make it difficult for farmers to plan properly.

That's why I am giving priority attention to an agreement with the Soviet Union that will put agricultural trade on a predictable basis -- an agreement along the lines of the one which we are now concluding with Poland to assure grain sales over the next five years at levels considerably higher than in the past. I am confident we will soon reach an agreement with the Russians to facilitate the sale of this year's bumper crop with assurances of similar sales in future years -- all while meeting needs at home and keeping food prices steady.

Another proper concern of all Americans is the condition of our economy. Tonight, I can tell you this: The recessionary trend has been reversed. There is encouraging news from the supermarkets and other retail stores of America.

A year ago -- in September of 1974 -- the cost of living was rising at an annual rate of more than 15 percent. For all of last year, the rate rose by more than 12 percent. Yet, the figures just in for August show the cost of living rose only two-tenths of one percent -- and that is encouraging news.

(MORE)

But this does not mean the battle against inflation is won. Far from it. We must continue to apply restraint, particularly on inflationary spending by the Democratic-controlled Congress. With the Republicans in the Congress outnumbered almost two to one, my veto is often the only weapon available to defend fiscal responsibility against the assaults of the big spenders.

Let me emphasize this: The exercise of a Presidential veto is a positive action, as the Framers of our Constitution intended it to be. For one thing, the legislation I have vetoed to date will save the taxpayers more than six billion dollars by 1977--and that is positive!

Furthermore, when these vetoes were sustained--as most of them were--the Democratic majority was forced to come back with reasonable legislation which Republicans could support. And that is positive action. It not only saved the taxpayers billions, but resulted in better legislation.

But the veto is not the long-term answer. The long-term answer is for Republicans in Illinois and in every state to elect more Republicans to the Congress.

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