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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
WEST VIRGINIA REPUBLICAN
FUND-RAISING DINNER

THE CHARLESTON CIVIC CENTER

8:45 P.M. EST

Let me say with the deepest conviction and greatest appreciation, my wife Betty and I are most grateful for the friendship of Arch and his lovely wife.

The Fords and the Moores over a long period of time have been close personal friends. Arch and I have fought many a battle on the floor of the House of Representatives. I, from time to time, tried to be helpful in his greater achievements in political life, and I have been proud of that young fellow who came to Washington quite a few years ago, made an enviable record and has been without a question of a doubt one of the greatest Governors in the history of West Virginia.

I want to thank Arch for several things that he has done for me when I first ran for the minority leadership: when there was the question of endorsements for the Vice Presidency. Arch, I am deeply grateful for your never-ending support. It is just wonderful to see an old friend.

Let me pay tribute to the members of the board, the State legislative members and all of you who are here to participate in this great rally, this fine dinner. I think all of us owe a debt of gratitude to Tom Potter for the first-class job he has done.

It is nice to see one of your great statesmen, Senator Chapman Révercomb. It is nice to see you, Senator.

One of the nice things that traveling around the country gives you an opportunity to enjoy is to see old friends that you knew many a year ago who, for one reason or another, you haven't seen over a period of time. One of my old high school classmates--in fact, he and I graduated from high school together (Laughter)--Mike Burdell of Charleston, West Virginia.

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It is a great treat and one that I have enjoyed thoroughly to be back in West Virginia again and to share this marvelous evening with all of you good, loyal, enthusiastic West Virginia Republicans, and a few Independents, and I hope a lot of discerning Democrats.

You know, I keep hearing how the Republican Party will go into the 1976 elections as the underdog, and somehow that has a vaguely familiar ring to it. Isn't that what they said about the Mountaineers against Pitt last Saturday? (Laughter)

When it comes to football, I think I can speak with some authority, and tonight I am predicting that what the Mountaineers did at Morgantown last Saturday, your great Republican ticket is going to do at the polls in 1976.

This is really a great evening, and before we go any further, I want to congratulate your Finance Committee for its sheer raw courage in the way it has handled this dinner this evening. I say sheer, raw courage because it isn't easy to charge \$100 a plate for a dinner in a State whose motto is "Mountaineers are Always Free."

I am especially pleased to be with you tonight, pleased at this tremendous turnout, as I indicated, pleased to be back in a State that is known by its natives and its visitors alike as "Almost Heaven." Incidentally, I have one of your ties on tonight. (Laughter)

I am pleased to be back in Charleston, the city of imagination, of enterprise and, above all, a city that is blazing new trails in the delicate science of removing bridges. (Laughter)

The first time I came to West Virginia was back in 1949 to make a high school commencement address in Berkeley Springs. Since then, I have been to Charleston, Clarksburg, Wheeling, Morgantown, Elkins, Berkeley Springs, as I mentioned, and, of course, White Sulphur.

Don't ask me which place I liked the best. (Laughter) But, I made that high school commencement speech in Berkeley Springs. I don't remember what I said on that occasion, and probably nobody else does either. But, I distinctly remember my first impressions of West Virginia -- the beauty of its mountains and particularly the warmth of its people.

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The impressions haven't changed a bit over the last 27 years, but West Virginia has changed a lot. The West Virginia I see today is a new State. The beauty of its mountains still remains. The warmth and hospitality of the West Virginians continues to strike the visitor like a summer breeze.

But, through all those impressions, something new has been added; that is, the feeling of the people here striding confident into the future while retaining the heritage and the charm of your great past.

The reasons may be complex, but they have a great deal to do with coal. Your State is one, as I have heard from Arch and others, one of the largest bituminous coal producers in the Nation and among the largest in coal exports.

This great natural resource has improved the living standard of many of your citizens, enriched your State treasury to an increased tax flow and provided much of the fuel to keep this Nation warm, its lights burning and its factories humming.

But, beyond the surging demand for coal, West Virginia's present prosperity can be attributed in large measure to the energy, self-reliance, the imagination of your citizens and public officials.

Under the enlightened leadership of my dear friend, and your Governor, Arch Moore, you have vastly -- under the leadership of Arch, you have vastly improved your highway system, raised the quality of education, at every level, built tourism into a \$600 million a year business and conducted a highly successful drive for new industries that has paid off in thousands and thousands of jobs and an unemployment rate below the national average.

I congratulate every one of you, and thousands like you throughout your State, on this new prosperity for this great State of West Virginia.

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I was so pleased to find when I was looking through some material, that you here in West Virginia have a prosperity which now ranks West Virginia 5th in per capita income growth in our Nation, a prosperity which springs primarily from the rugged self-reliance, the inexhaustible energy and the fierce independence which led the first hardy settler in the 1730s to penetrate the wilderness.

Tonight I would like to talk with you, after those introductory remarks which I feel very deeply about -- I would like to talk to you about another form of independence. Ten months ago when I addressed the United States Congress and the American people, I said the state of the Union was not good. I called on the Congress and the country to move in a new direction. I pointed out the world is watching to see how we respond.

This evening, let's look at the state of our economy compared to that very, very uncertain circumstance that prevailed last January. While the economy is not my central theme -- it is energy -- nevertheless the health of our economy is unalterably linked to a stable and adequate supply of energy.

Last January simultaneous recession and inflation whipsawed the American people -- they were caught in the middle. The money of millions of people was being eroded by double-digit inflation while recession cut very deeply into our national production and employment.

Today, although we have a long ways to go, the economy of this great Nation is well on the road to a healthy recovery and we should be proud of it. We are making a marked progress. The signs of this progress are clear for all of us to see. Our gross national product for the third quarter of 1975 increased by more than 11 percent -- the biggest quarterly increase in two decades. That is progress. Industrial production rose at an annual rate of 20 percent during the same period -- the biggest quarterly increase in more than 10 years. Productivity among American workers has been steadily improving for months. That is progress.

The number of Americans with jobs went up by nearly 1,600,000 from March through October of this year and that is progress. For the last 8 months we have had a surplus of \$1 billion a month in our balance of trade with other countries, and that is progress, too.

Inflation has been cut almost in half between 1974 and 1975 -- down from 12 percent range to 6 percent range. That is not good enough. We are not satisfied but it is progress.

These are all encouraging signs of growing economic strength and stability and vitality in America. Even though we have a way to go, we should be darned proud of the role that has been played by the American people and the way they have responded to adversity. I am proud of them and you should be, too.

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This past year has not seen the decline of America predicted by so many of the doomsayers last January. It has witnessed a resurrection of the traditional values of hard work and the toughness of spirit that have always characterized the American people in times of adversity. Believe me, no one on earth will bury us unless we bury us ourselves.

The economic difficulties of 1975, contrary to the forecasts of fear, are a simple and straightforward challenge to achievement. Tonight, I remind you we not only accepted that challenge -- Americans -- but more importantly, we did something about it.

But I must, frankly, admit to disappointment in getting the Congress to move on the principal comment I would like to make here tonight -- energy. Last February the leaders of the Congress met with me--and I say this with sadness--at the White House, solemnly assured me that they would have an energy program on my desk in the Oval Office by April. When they failed to meet that deadline, they asked me for more time, promising again to have an energy program on my desk within an additional 45 days.

Well, as we meet here tonight, the wind and the snow of a new winter are beginning to whip across the Great Plains and other areas of our country and, like the flowers of the spring, the energy promises of the Congress are faded and gone.

So far this year proposed energy legislation has been incorporated in nearly 2,500 separate legislative proposals, tied up in 29 different committees. Tonight I call on the Congress once again to act responsibly, to provide this Nation with a program which will put us on the road to energy independence. We must move on that program now -- not after next year's election but now.

The American people must have a responsible and reasonable and realistic legislation that will accomplish our national needs and our national goals. As part of this program we must develop our most abundant and most known energy sources and, as all of you here in West Virginia know -- what is the word? Coal. Coal.

Our coal resources total more than 3 trillion tons -- a supply that guarantees the United States literally hundreds of years of energy. The fact is, we are not so much squandering our fuel resources as we are ignoring them.

We are like a man in a desert who is dying for water while an oasis lies just beyond the horizon. Unless we in this land of ours develop the energy sources that surround us, take the difficult steps required to make them useable, our thirst for fuel will create severe hardships for ourselves and for generations to come.

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While I am President, the faith and the future of America will not be left to undependable foreign sources of energy -- I promise you that.

In the next 25 to 50 years, oil and gas -- constituting more than two-thirds of the fuel we now use -- may be far too costly to burn at any price. But our national coal reserves have more potential and are more precious to our future and your children's future than all the Middle East reserves of fuel and all the fuel throughout this vast globe.

The United States cannot and will not base its national destiny on energy that belongs to other nations. That is not our national future. To do so would be national folly. We can and we must develop our own national energy resources without despoiling the environment, improve mining technology and insure safe and environmentally sound production of coal. We can and we must technologically learn how to burn coal directly without producing environmental damage.

We do not have a shortage of resources. We do have a shortage of useable energy, and a shortage of determination in the Congress to act in the development of an energy program that involves politically difficult decisions. But the Congress must carry out its responsibilities in this vitally important area.

I like to put it this way: We can produce American energy with American money, an American work force and an American technology for an American future, and shouldn't that be our aim and objective? That is what we want and that is what we have to get.

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As I said earlier, the world, the whole world is watching to see how we respond. Economically, we are on the road to recovery. In energy, we are still at a standstill. The choice is up to Congress: To stand still in energy, to retreat from responsibility and reality, to threaten our economic recovery, or to move forward with legislation that will produce energy and economic stability for America.

I happen to believe that the American people want, as they always have, responsibility and reality. We in the Republican Party are prepared to provide it, and we welcome all comers to our fold who believe, as we do, that we can and will provide this Nation with strength at home and abroad.

From my travels across America -- and I have been in quite a few States -- Arch knows how many States I visited for ten years when I was the minority leader, and have done a little in the interim -- but from my travels across America, I am convinced of this: The Republican Party is in tune with the hopes and the aspirations of the American people, with their desires, with their wants and, most importantly, their hopes for themselves and their children.

For just a moment, let's be specific. I have found the American people want energy independence. So do we, the Republican Party. The American people want a sound economy. So do we. They want good housing, good food and a good future for their families, and so do we. They want the \$28 billion tax cut I proposed to the Congress so they can spend their own money rather than have the Federal Government spend it for them, and so do we.

At the same time, they want a \$28 billion reduction in the growth of Federal spending as a start toward a balanced budget, and so do we. The American people want the Government to help them meet their needs without ordering and dictating and dominating their lives, and so do we.

As I travel, I find this sort of drive that is, I think, coming to the surface. The people of America, the length and breadth of this land, are learning that a Government big enough to give you everything you want is a Government big enough to take from you everything you have.

These friends of ours -- Democrats, Independents, and our Republican associates -- want an America at peace and actively promoting peace with a strong, intelligence capability to insure our protection, and so do we.

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The American people want a defense second to none. So do we, and we are going to insure that. If we successfully carry this message to the people of West Virginia and the voters across America for the next 12 months, we can make 1976 a great year for the Republican Party, but more importantly for this wonderful country that we all love so much.

We need the kind of continuing support being provided by your presence here tonight, and I thank you for it. The decisions the American people will make less than one year from now will shape the course of this country well into our third century of independence.

In our first century of independence, our forefathers put together the greatest kind of Government, the finest structure of Government in the history of mankind, protected more people, gave more responsibility and opportunity to people, and how fortunate we were. Those men had the vision and the courage to do what they did for us.

In the first 100 years of America, this kind of Government was put together firmly and soundly. In our second century of America, we moved forward into the greatest industrial Nation in the history of mankind.

Now, in the third century, we are moving into a new era and a new opportunity, an opportunity to give to the individual the kind of freedom that is so needed, so necessary, so vital, that so many want -- freedom from mass Government, freedom from mass labor, freedom from mass industry, freedom from mass education.

The American people in our third century have this tremendous opportunity, with the kind of leadership that we can give, to have that which we all seek -- our individual freedom.

But, let's make sure as we move into this century that we do our part for an America at peace, for a Nation renewed, for a people with pride, for a future that summons us to new achievement and glory and greatness.

With your help, we can do it.

Thank you.

END (AT 9:14 P.M. EST)