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Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO BE DELIVERED AT A BIRTHDAY PARTY IN HONOR OF  
SENATOR TED STEVENS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1975

I am delighted to be in Alaska again, even for such a short visit. I understand that this is the time of year in Anchorage when the sun rises at 8:40 in the morning, sets at 2:54 in the afternoon, and the nights are 18 hours long. All I can say to that is: What a great place to hold a party! And what a great guy to honor at a party!

Ted Stevens is one of the most conscientious, capable and astute legislators we have in Washington. In fact, Senator Stevens flew in from Fairbanks with me and I never realized how much of a diplomat he is as well, until we were coming in over Cook Inlet. I told him that every morning I like to take an outdoor swim in my pool in Washington and how I was just thinking about taking a dip in Cook Inlet tomorrow morning. He said, "Mr. President, I would certainly recommend that." I said, "Taking a dip in Cook Inlet?" He said, "No--just thinking about it!"

This year we're celebrating America's 200th birthday, the 16th year of Alaskan statehood, and Ted Stevens' 52nd birthday. That's a young country, a young State, and when you get right down to it, a dynamic young Senator as well. I am very impressed with what Senator Stevens is accomplishing. All Alaskans, regardless of party, should be very proud of him. I find him a constant source of sound advice about Alaskan affairs. Ted Stevens has already distinguished himself by winning a leadership role among Senate Republicans. He earned much recognition for his strong fight for the Alaska pipeline. He is a leading advocate of a sound energy policy. He has also won plaudits for his hard work in securing passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Ted, I'm delighted to be here with you and your many friends.

(MORE)

This morning, I took a ten-mile tour along the trans-Alaska pipeline. I visited a pump station and talked to some of the dedicated workers. I was fascinated by what I saw and heard. I had been hearing about the pipeline and its impact. But all I heard--all of the television and newspaper reports on Alaska--can't begin to convey the excitement and optimism that I experienced today. The pipeline you are building is an absolutely essential step in this country's drive for energy independence. You know, and I know, that the United States must end its dependence on foreign oil. The two million barrels of oil a day that will ultimately flow through the pipeline will not by itself reduce entirely our dependence on foreign oil. But that amount of oil will constitute a loud and clear declaration of intent--our firm resolve to achieve national energy independence.

My visit here has given me another glimpse of Alaska's remarkable vitality and warm hospitality. I wish I could stay longer.

Tomorrow I leave for China, the Philippines and Indonesia. My trip to the Pacific region reaffirms America's strong belief that we cannot isolate ourselves from our Asian neighbors. Those of you who live at the crossroads of continents know that America's destiny is inseparably linked to the destiny of the other Pacific nations.

The renewal of the historic relationship between China and the United States is one of the most important events in the recent history of American foreign policy.

I leave for China tomorrow determined to reaffirm and strengthen that improved relationship, to seek better understanding, and to reassert America's interest in lasting peace and greater prosperity for all of the peoples of Asia.

Thank you--and before I leave--Senator Stevens, from those who live down below, I bring you best wishes as you are celebrating your birthday.

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