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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESENTATION CEREMONY ON MAIN STREET

12:11 P.M. CST

Good morning, everybody.

Let me first, of all thank your Congressman, Bill Steiger, and former Governor Warren Knowles and all of the local public officials, and all of you for coming out here. This has been one of the most wonderful welcomes, one of the greatest crowds, one of the warmest and most friendly groups, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

May I express, also, my gratitude to the various individuals who have been so generous in remembering both Betty and myself, and the wonderful things you make here in the City of Fond du Lac and Fond du Lac County, which we will eat and wear and walk on, and everything will just bring back some superb memories of this occasion.

Now if I could just say a word or two, I am here in the State of Wisconsin, last weekend and this weekend, because I want as many people in the State of Wisconsin to see President Ford, to have an opportunity to hear his views. I have talked to two farm groups, I have talked to business and industry, I have met with many other groups and, of course, the opportunity to see all of you here and to see the reaction you give.

But I think what we have tried to do since I became President 19 months ago, whether it is at home or abroad, it has been in the best interest of the country and all of us are a lot better off because of those policies.

Let me just remind all of you for a moment that 19 months ago, in August of 1974, we had inflation of 12 to 14 percent. It is 6 percent or less today. We had unemployment that rose to a height of 8.9 percent; it is down to 7.5 and it is going lower.

We had an announcement yesterday from the Department of Labor that 86,700,000 Americans are working today -- the highest number of gainfully employed in the history of the United States. That is a lot of progress. We are going to get a lot more.

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But in order to enjoy all of the benefits that come from freedom in America, we must be strong enough to make certain that we can maintain the peace, that we can deter aggression and that we can maintain our national security against any challenge. The way to do that is to keep America unsurpassed in military strength, to keep America's industrial capacity strong, stronger than any other nation in the history of the world, to keep our agriculture in America as strong and as productive as it is today -- and it is by far the strongest of any nation in the world. We must keep our technological and scientific capabilities ahead of everybody's.

But, most of all, the greatest strength that comes in this country is the deep religious, moral and spiritual values that mean so much to each of you and to each of us. And if we are unsurpassed militarily, we keep ahead in science and technology and agriculture and industry and morally and spiritually and religiously, every one of us will know that America is number one and we can be proud to be an American and proud of America.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 12:17 P.M. CST)