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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
GOP RECEPTION GUESTS

SAN ANTONIO CIVIC CENTER

2:35 P.M. CST

Art, Senator John Tower, all of you wonderful
President Ford workers:

I have had a wonderful five or six hours here in
San Antonio, the warmth of the reception everywhere we have
been, the enthusiasm that we find here -- I just think we
might surprise somebody. (Laughter)

At the outset, let me express my deepest personal
gratitude and appreciation to John Tower, who has been an
outstanding person to take over the leadership and head of
the President Ford Committee. John, I can't thank you
enough for helping me.

But, let me also indicate my deepest appreciation
and gratitude for all of you who have made those 5,000 calls
here in San Antonio and all of you who have made them all
over South Texas.

You know, we started behind up in New Hampshire;
we started way behind in Florida. We, in both cases,
because we had good leadership in our organization, because
we had the enthusiasm of the people who manned the phone
banks, the people who did all the other things and because
we had sound policies to begin with, that gave the American
people in those two States, as well as the will in the other
48 States, the kind of confidence that makes them feel as
though the next four years will be better and better.

That is why we want leadership, enthusiasm and
the right program. When we come down here to Texas, we are
going to perhaps start from behind, but we are going to
surprise some people.

Whenever Betty or I go to a phone bank set-up,
whether it is in New Hampshire or Florida or Illinois,
Wisconsin or North Carolina, we try to indicate to the
people who are on the phone the answers that they should
give to people who raise questions.

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I suspect as you man phones, you inevitably, on one occasion or another, get a question. Let me give you very quickly -- I think in broader perspective -- what we have done in the last 19 months. We have a record, and it is a good record. When we took over in August of 1974, many Americans were apprehensive. They had lost faith in our Government. Our friends abroad weren't sure what our policies would be, our adversaries around the world were wondering whether that was an appropriate time for them to maybe take some initiatives and, at home, we were experiencing the worst inflation in this century, 12 to 14 percent per year, and we were on the brink -- literally on the brink -- of the worst economic recession in 40 years.

Now, it wasn't the easiest time to become President. But, we decided that instead of trying to give any quick fixes and short political answers to the problems, that we would carry out a firm, constructive course and take our chances in politics. So, instead of trying to spend our way out of the recession, we decided that it was better to give the free enterprise system, the private sector an opportunity to meet the challenge of inflation and to provide more jobs, and it worked.

We have taken inflation from over 12 percent down to 6 percent or less, and it is going further down. We have gone through high unemployment and decreasing employment. But, the trend has changed. We have now regained 2,600,000 jobs in this country in the last ten months. We got 375,000 new jobs last month, and we have now 86,700,000 gainfully employed, the highest number of people working in this country in the history of America.

We are going in the right direction. Employment is going up and unemployment is going down, and we are going to be going there forever.

Now, let me indicate to you how we stand around the world. I have had extensive conferences with our NATO allies in Europe. I had a very successful trip to Japan, our strong ally in that area of the world. I have had numerous conferences with other people, other leaders in various parts of the world.

They trust America. They believe that we are standing firmly with them, and they know that we have the capability to stand with them against any adversity or any adversary. So, we are now in a position of having firmed up our alliances around the world and, at the same time, we have convinced our adversaries that this is no Administration to fool around with.

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I think that any adversaries we have around the world know that this President is a good Yankee trader. He is going to stick up for the best interests of the United States and is not under any circumstances going to give it away.

Now, if anybody asks you, "Is the United States number two," let me point out in strategic arms we have more nuclear warheads by far than any other nation in the world. Our ballistic missiles are more accurate and more survivable. We have more strategic bombers by far than any other nation in the world.

We have the best SAC cruise to carry out the missions, if they ever have to. So, no one should have any apprehension at all. The United States is unsurpassed in military capability, period.

One final word. When you take our unsurpassed military power and capability and add to it the industrial capacity of this country and the agricultural productivity of this country and the scientific and technological superiority that we have and add to it our moral and spiritual and religious leadership that this country has, the United States of America is number one, and we are going to keep it there.

In conclusion, I thank John Tower, I thank Art, I thank all of you, and Betty is going to be down here. She is going to try and express her appreciation by being in Texas, and Jack is going to come down here and maybe we can get Susan and the others to come down here.

But, we are all indebted to you. We are not going to promise anything that we can't produce, and we are going to produce everything that we promise. That is a good credo by which any President ought to live up to.

Can I add one postscript. You know I have had to deal, as John knows, with a pretty tough Congress. They outnumber us better than two to one in both the House and the Senate, and of course we always have the quality -- they have the quantity. (Laughter)

In the 19 months that I have been President, I have vetoed as of yesterday 46 bills; 39 of those bills were sustained by the Congress and as a result of my vetoes and strong people like John Tower helping to sustain them, we saved the taxpayers \$13 billion.

That ain't hay, so if anybody raises any questions, are we conservative, that is an all-time record for a President, and I would add the second postscript, we are going to veto some more -- veto, veto again and again and again.

Thank you all very much.

END (AT 2:47 P.M. CST)