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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FAIR

4:20 P.M. EDT

Let me thank all of you for the opportunity to come to Columbia, South Carolina, to the great State Fair.

I would just like to introduce a member of our family, who went to the fair while I went to the football game. I would like to introduce to you my son, Steve Ford.

Two weeks ago I went to the Texas State Fair. This morning I stopped at the North Carolina State Fair. Here I am at the South Carolina State Fair. I love fairs. Thank you very, very much.

But what I like best is those figures up there.

But let me be serious, if I might. We have a great campaign that is about to come to its conclusion on November 2. The issues are very important. We have been hearing that only about 50 percent of the people are going to vote. I hope that is not true, because the course and direction of this Nation could well be decided on November 2, and that course and that direction for the next four years and perhaps for the next century.

Let me tell you where I stand. I stand for a strong national defense. America must be number one, and will be number one. We have the best Army, the best Navy, the best Marine Corps, the best Air Force, and under President Ford we are going to keep it that way.

But we also have to have a strong economy, and that means not only an industrial economy but it means a strong agricultural economy. We believe very strongly that American agriculture is probably one of the most important segments of our society, and we are going to keep agriculture in America strong under President Ford for the next four years.

MORE

I think a few of you may have heard the debate last night. I am not going to ask you who won, but I do want to repeat one or two things that I believe are very important for us to remember.

Two years ago, in August, this country was in serious trouble. Today, we have made a substantial amount of progress. We have gone from a lack of trust in the White House to confidence and trust in the White House under President Ford. We have gone from inflation of over 12 percent two years ago to a rate of inflation under 6 percent, and it is going down. We have made a lot of progress in winning the battle against inflation, and we are going to make a lot more between now and the end of the next four years.

But then, let me make one other observation. America is at peace. We are at peace, because we are strong. Not a single young American is fighting and dying on any foreign battlefield tonight. We are able to do that because the United States has the military capability and the diplomatic skill through strength in our allies and respect from our adversaries.

But the most fundamental thing that is important in America is our moral and spiritual strength. The United States is a Nation where each and every one of us has an opportunity to participate -- to participate in Government, to pray to God, to have our own religion, and strengthen the character of America. And I think by any standard we can say we are proud of America and we are proud to be Americans.

Thank you very, very much.

END

(AT 4:30 P.M. EDT)