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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
FUND-RAISING RECEPTION FOR
SENATOR ROBERT TAFT, JR.

KARLIN HALL

6:41 P.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much, Bob Taft.

You can't imagine the thrill it is, how really humble I feel to be on this platform in this great Karlin Hall with the two greatest Governors in the history of Ohio, as well as the finest mayor of a great city; and then a person who is going to follow in the great tradition that he has built on his own record and the great tradition of his father, your Senator Bob Taft.

If I might take just a minute to introduce a member of my family, we have three boys and a daughter, Susan, and our son, Mike Ford, has been here in the State of Ohio all day and will be with me tonight. He is a divinity student up in Boston, Massachusetts. He is out campaigning for his old man. (Laughter) I would like to introduce to you our son, Mike Ford.

Let me reemphasize right here in Karlin Hall how proud I was to have shared with you your bread and salt, and I am equally proud to be your President and your friend. It is great to have had the opportunity of going down Fleet Street. The good mayor has told me on many occasions about his home, his neighborhood, his friends, and I saw it firsthand. And to be here in Karlin Hall really gives me a great, great thrill.

If I might add a special observation and comment, us Michiganders look at people from Ohio and, you know, (Laughter) we have nothing but great, great respect for you. (Laughter) And when I was first getting started in politics Frank Lausche was your Governor. I never thought when I took that step to run for the House of Representatives that I would ever have the opportunity to meet and work with Frank Lausche, but fate made it such that Frank went to the United States Senate and I stayed in the House of Representatives, and over the years we not only became good friends but we recognized that our philosophies -- even though he was a Democrat and I was a Republican -- were virtually identical.

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We believed in the same basic sound principles that had made America great, and to have a statesman of his stature -- he mentioned his age, I didn't -- make the effort to come and to speak as he did about his friend, Jerry Ford, I will never forget it. It will be a high moment in my political career.

The thing that impresses me about the many people I see here and what I saw on each side of the street is that you have so many wonderful traditions, such distinctive and delicious food, a uniquely spirited way of life, a very special place in this great American family.

Through your support for people like Frank Lausche, Jim Rhodes, Bob Taft, myself, we want to make certain that what we do politically preserves these unique things that each and every one of you represent.

We think those different heritages must be kept alive, and I can assure you, as your President for the next four years, I will be listening, I will be responding to your concerns, individually and collectively.

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Each of your group is unique and, as I said out on the street, I was taught early in my life by a wonderful Sunday school teacher that the beauty of Joseph's coat is its many colors. The strength of our great country is the fact that we are all different, that we share that same great hope of freedom, of liberty not only for ourselves but for all mankind.

You share a deep, deep devotion to your family and your churches and your neighborhood. These are the best American values. They are the values that really keep America united. They are my values. You are my concern, and I know that America is your concern.

My Administration has been working to insure that what you have earned, what you have built for yourself, your churches, your local groups, your social club, will be here tomorrow for them, your children, to enjoy.

We must insure that your family will have the healthy neighborhoods like this one. Ralph Perk told me he was born a house or two away from where he now lives and the neighborhood has retained its great strength and character. We must keep, across this nation, not just in Cleveland, this kind of neighborhood so that people can build a decent and better life for themselves.

A family needs a neighborhood that is safe. A family needs a neighborhood that is stable. A family needs a neighborhood of local churches, local shops and local schools. The first day of this year, January 1, I signed into law -- some of you may remember -- the Mortgage Disclosure Act to prevent redlining and neighborhood decline.

Two months ago I met with ethnic leaders to see what more we could do and, as a result of that meeting--and Ralph Perk, as I recall was there--I created a President Ford Committee of urban development and neighborhood revitalization.

I charged that committee with developing a sound fiscal policy, a sound Federal policy to help preserve our neighborhoods. That policy will be based on local initiative and local control, and I will see that that policy is carried out over the next four years.

I am deeply aware of another issue that troubles many of you, especially those of you from Eastern Europe. This Bicentennial year, as you celebrate, as we all celebrate American liberty, you are concerned to see that your friends and relatives abroad who do not share all of your freedoms, your friends and relatives are not forgotten.

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America cares today as it has always cared. We stand for freedom and independence in 1976 as we stood for freedom and independence in 1776. My position during my total political career in the Congress, as Vice President and now as President has remained the same; that is, the spirit of the peoples of Eastern Europe has never been broken and never will.

The United States, as a matter of fundamental principle, supports the aspirations for freedom and national independence for the people of Eastern Europe and as long as I am President of the United States, our great country will never recognize or acquiesce in the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.

As we celebrate our Bicentennial -- and wasn't that a wonderful day on July 4 of 1976 -- we must make certain that the whole wide world knows the torch of freedom in the Statue of Liberty still burns brightly and always will.

What a great day this has been in Cincinnati, here in Cleveland, culminating in this great occasion in Karlin Hall. But let's make November 2 an even greater day with its victory for all 215 million Americans.

I ask for your help, I ask for your support, I ask for your vote so we can continue to keep America strong, proud and free. With your help, we will do it, and I will never let you down.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 6:55 P.M. EDT)