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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
AKRON-CANTON AIRPORT

FIRESTONE HANGAR

10:25 A.M. EST

Let me ask you to be very quiet for just a few minutes because the issues and decisions you make between now and tomorrow when the polls close are very, very crucial for America.

First, I want to thank your great Governor Jim Rhodes, who has been with President Ford from the very beginning. Jim, I can't express deeply enough my gratitude and appreciation for your loyalty. But let me add this one feature. We have on the stage with me today the two greatest Governors in the history of Ohio.

But it is great to be in Akron, Canton, Massillon and Alliance. What an area in the great State of Ohio.

I am honored to be on the team in Ohio with Bob Taft. Send him back to Washington for your good and for the country's good. Bob, you have got to win.

And then you have your own Congressman in this area. He has done a super job, a fantastic job on your behalf, but a job for America. Send Ralph Regula back to help us.

And now let me speak straight from the shoulder. You have a chance to improve the quality of Congress by sending one of your own, Jim Houston, down to the House of Representatives.

But it is great to be here with Mayor Ballard, with Mayor Cmich. And then I want to thank somebody else who has taken time along with others of equal prominence. Wayne, thank you very, very much. All over the country we have had outstanding people like Wayne participate voluntarily. We have had Peter Graves, Hugh O'Brien, Rod McKuen. We have had quality people who on their own have come out and said it is important for America that President Ford win. Wayne, thank you very, very much.

Now there is one fellow that came down here along with his beautiful wife, and I want to thank Bill Stanton. Send Bill back to Congress.

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But I mentioned a moment ago when I was speaking about your great Governor -- and I said there were two great Governors on the platform this morning. But now it is my privilege to introduce to you a man who was a judge in Cleveland, a mayor of Cleveland, a Governor of Ohio, and an outstanding United States Senator, Frank Lausche.

You know I come from that State up north, but since 1963 I have been in the State of Ohio 56 times. That is not a bad record. I have been down to Canton on three occasions to the Football Hall of Fame, the football center of the United States. I never made it as a participant, but I respect and admire those outstanding men who have given us a great American sport. Congratulations.

With the help of Bob Taft, Ralph Regula, Bill Stanton, they got through the Cuyahoga National Park, the first national park in the history of the State of Ohio, and I was honored and pleased to sign that legislation.

As I said a moment ago, this is a crucial election. It will determine the course of events of this country not only for the next four years but maybe, undoubtedly as I see it, the next century, our third century of American history. You know where I stand. I stand for lower taxes, a balanced budget, lower Federal spending, beating inflation, and peace and liberty for the United States of America. And in the last two years America has made incredible progress, and we are on our way and we are going to make more in the next four years under Jerry Ford.

In Kansas City I said we would not concede a single vote, we would not concede a single State. We want Ohio and we are going to win Ohio.

And now let me extend a personal invitation from Betty and from me. We would love to have every one of you down to Inauguration Day on January 20 when Jerry Ford and Bob Dole are sworn in as President and Vice President.

There are many issues at stake in this election, but let me take two -- one that means whether we have peace or a lack of security in this country; the other involves the health of our economy.

In the first debate, Mr. Carter said he would anticipate a \$60 billion surplus in the Federal Treasury. He said that he would spend that \$60 billion for a whole raft of new Federal programs. In that same debate, I said if there is a \$60 billion surplus, I want a tax reduction for the American people.

President Ford is for the little taxpayer and President Ford is against the big tax spender. I have been firm, I have been consistent. The best tax reform is tax reduction. The middle income taxpayer in this country -- over 50 percent of us -- have been short-changed in the last 10 years by the actions of the Congress, and we are going to change it in the next session.

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Mr. Carter, in the last two or three days, in discussing tax reduction, has said, "Perhaps we will have a tax reduction--if we have a tax reduction." It is a clear distinction between him and President Ford. I have consistently, firmly, said the American people should and will have a tax reduction so we can stimulate the economy, so we can give you a better chance to spend that hard-earned cash that you deserve in your pocket and not in the Federal Treasury.

In January of this year, 1976, I submitted to the Congress a \$28 billion tax reduction package. I said in order to do it honestly and conscientiously, the Congress had to go along with a \$28 billion restraint in Federal spending.

Included in my tax reduction proposal is the kind of tax reduction that is meaningful to the middle income taxpayer. I recommended that we increase the personal exemption from \$750, which it is today, to \$1,000.

Let me tell you what that means. The other day I went through a plant and I was talking to some working men on a production line. One of them said, "President Ford, what does your tax reduction proposal mean to me and my family?" I said, "How many children do you have?" He said, "I have three kids." It turned out that he had himself, a wife and three children. I said, "Get out your pencil." It means that if Congress had acted responsibly, we would have had for that man and millions and millions and millions of other taxpayers the opportunity next April to sit down and figure out in his case that he would have gotten \$1,250 more in personal exemption, money that he could have spent for himself and his lovely family.

On January 3, when Congress reconvenes, they are going to have that tax reduction proposal on their desks and if they don't pass it in 1977, we will send it right back up in 1978, and if that Congress doesn't pass it in 1978, you and I will go out and beat them in the next election in 1978.

But, there is another big difference. I am proud to stand before you and say that I am the first President since Dwight D. Eisenhower who can go to the American people to seek their support and say America is at peace. Under our Administration -- yours and mine -- we have the finest Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, and we are going to keep them number one.

Mr. Carter wants to cut the defense budget by \$5 to \$15 billion. That is too big a gamble for America's security, and I want to pledge to you that in the next four years we are going to keep America number one so we can preserve the peace, deter aggression and meet any challenge. That is the kind of defense program I stand for and you stand for and America stands for.

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On August 9, I stood in the East Room of the White House and took an oath of office to be your President. I had not sought this high office. Betty held the Bible, and I placed my hand on it and I said afterwards -- because America was troubled, we were divided, there was anger, there was division -- after having taken the oath of office, I said, "I know that you have not elected me by your ballots. I ask you that you confirm me with your prayers."

With the help of your prayers in the last two years, we have gone from inflation of over 12 percent to under 6 percent. With your help and support, we have come out of the worst recession in 40 years. With your help, we have restored trust and confidence in the White House because I can look each and every one of you in the eye and say I have been candid, straightforward.

But, most of all, I can stand here with pride and say with your help and, yes, your prayers, America is at peace, not a single young American is fighting or dying on any foreign soil today and we will keep it that way for the next four years.

But now we have come to the crucial 24 hours. How many of you can remember in either Canton or Akron or Alliance or Massillon that on July 4 you had a wonderful celebration in honor of our 200th birthday? Our forefathers gave us the greatest document for the governing of people in the history of mankind. Our forefathers have given us the kind of Government that is good for freedom and liberty.

We celebrated what they gave to us, but now -- beginning tomorrow -- we have an opportunity not only to read history but to make history. So, we come down to the bottom line. I know America is on the move. America has a new fresh look. We are together. We are united.

So, tomorrow, when you make that fateful decision, I ask you not only to confirm me with your prayers, but I ask you to confirm me with your ballots. I won't let you down.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 10:47 A.M. EST)