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PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 12

of the

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

12:01 P.M. PDT
April 3, 1975
Thursday

In the Silver Room
At the San Diego Convention
and Performing Arts Center
San Diego, California

THE PRESIDENT: Will you please sit down.

At the outset, let me express my appreciation to Mayor Pete Wilson and the fine people of San Diego for the very warm welcome.

I also am delighted to see one or more of my former colleagues in the Congress here. It is always nice to see them and all others who may be here. Good morning.

I have a short opening statement.

We are seeing a great human tragedy as untold numbers of Vietnamese flee the North Vietnamese onslaught. The United States has been doing -- and will continue to do -- its utmost to assist these people.

I have directed that all available Naval ships to stand off Indochina, to do whatever is necessary to assist. We have appealed to the United Nations to use its moral influence to permit these innocent people to leave, and we call on North Vietnam to permit the movement of refugees to the area of their choice.

While I have been in California, I have been spending many hours on the refugee problem and our humanitarian efforts. I have directed that money from a $2 million special foreign aid children's fund be made available to fly 2000 South Vietnamese orphans to the United States as soon as possible.

I have also directed American officials in Saigon to act immediately to cut red tape and other bureaucratic obstacles preventing these children from coming to the United States.

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I have directed that C-5A aircraft and other aircraft especially equipped to care for these orphans during the flight be sent to Saigon. I expect these flights to begin within the next 36 to 48 hours. These orphans will be flown to Travis Air Force Base in California, and other bases on the West Coast, and cared for in those locations.

These 2000 Vietnamese orphans are all in the process of being adopted by American families. This is the least we can do, and we will do much, much more.

The first question is from Mr. George Dissinger of the San Diego Tribune.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you ready to accept Communist takeover of South Vietnam and Cambodia?

THE PRESIDENT: I would hope that that would not take place in either case. My whole Congressional life in recent years was aimed at avoiding it. My complete efforts as President of the United States were aimed at avoiding that.

I am an optimist, despite the sad and tragic events that we see unfolding. I will do my utmost in the future -- as I have in the past -- to avoid that result.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand you are soon going to ask Congress for new authority to extend humanitarian aid in Southeast Asia. I wondered if you stand by your request, though, for more military aid for South Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: We do intend to ask for more humanitarian aid. I should point out that the Administration's request for $135 million for humanitarian aid in South Vietnam was unfortunately reduced to $55 million by Congressional action. Obviously, we will ask for more; the precise amount we have not yet determined.

We will continue to push for the $300 million that we have asked for and Congress had authorized for military assistance to South Vietnam, and the possibility exists that we may ask for more.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, how and why did the U.S. miscalculate the intentions of the will of the South Vietnamese to resist?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe that we miscalculated the will of the South Vietnamese to carry on their fight for their own freedom.

There were several situations that developed that I think got beyond the control of the Vietnamese people. The unilateral military decision to withdraw created a chaotic situation in Vietnam that appears to have brought about tremendous disorganization.

I believe that the will of the South Vietnamese people to fight for their freedom is best evidenced by the fact that they are fleeing from the North Vietnamese, and that clearly is an indication they don't want to live under the kind of government that exists in North Vietnam.

The will of the South Vietnamese people, I think, still exists. They want freedom under a different kind of government than has existed in North Vietnam. The problem is how to organize that will under the traumatic experiences of the present.

QUESTION: Unilateral decision by whom?

THE PRESIDENT: It was a unilateral decision by President Thieu to order a withdrawal from the broad, exposed areas that were under the control of the South Vietnamese military.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what is your response to the South Vietnamese Ambassador to Washington's statement that we had not lived up to the Paris peace accords and that the Communists are safer allies?

THE PRESIDENT: I won't comment on his statement. I will say this: That the North Vietnamese repeatedly and in massive efforts violated the Paris peace accords. They sent North Vietnamese regular forces into South Vietnam in massive numbers -- I think around 150,000 to 175,000 -- well-trained North Vietnamese regular forces, in violation of the Paris peace accords, moved into South Vietnam.

We have objected to that violation. I still believe that the United States, in this case and in other cases, is a reliable ally and although I am saddened by the events that we have read about and seen, it is a tragedy unbelievable in its ramifications.

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I must say that I am frustrated by the action of the Congress in not responding to some of the requests for both economic, humanitarian and military assistance in South Vietnam. And I am frustrated by the limitations that were placed on the Chief Executive over the last two years.

But let me add very strongly, I am convinced that this country is going to continue its leadership. We will stand by our allies and I specifically warn any adversaries they should not, under any circumstances, feel that the tragedy of Vietnam is an indication that the American people have lost their will or their desire to stand up for freedom any place in the world.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, can you explain why President Thieu, with our close military ties as allies, did not tell you what he was going to do in terms of the retreat?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only answer to that can come from President Thieu.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, recently you said the fall of Cambodia could threaten the national security of this country. Considering the probable fall of South Vietnam to Communist forces, do you feel that will threaten our national security, and if so, how?

THE PRESIDENT: At the moment, I do not anticipate the fall of South Vietnam, and I greatly respect and admire the tremendous fight that the government and the people of Cambodia are putting up against the insurgents who are trying to take over Cambodia.

I believe that in any case where the United States does not live up to its moral or treaty obligations, it can't help but have an adverse impact on other allies we have around the world. We read in European papers to the effect that Western Europe ought to have some questions.

Let me say to our Western European allies, we are going to stand behind our commitments to NATO, and we are going to stand behind our commitments to other allies around the world.

But, there has to be in the minds of some people, a feeling that maybe the tragedy of Indochina might affect our relations with their country. I repeat, the United States is going to continue its leadership and stand by its allies.

QUESTION: Are you, in fact, a believer of the domino theory of, if Southeast Asia falls, then perhaps some of the other countries in the Pacific are next?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe there is a great deal of credibility to the domino theory. I hope it does not happen. I hope that other countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand, the Philippines, don't misread the will of the American people and the leadership of this country to believing that we are going to abandon our position in Southeast Asia.

We are not, but I do know from the things I read and the messages that I hear, that some of them do get uneasy. I hope and trust they believe me when I say we are going to stand by our allies.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, as you are well aware, there are about 7000 Americans still in Saigon. They are in danger not only from Communist attack, but from South Vietnamese reprisals. There are reports that the South Vietnamese are in a bad temper toward Americans.

Do you feel that under the War Powers Act and also under the limitations voted by Congress in 1973 on combat by Americans in Indochina, that you could send troops in to protect those Americans, and would you, if it came to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I can assure you that I will abide totally with the War Powers Act that was enacted by the Congress several years ago. At the same time, I likewise assure you that we have contingency plans to meet all problems involving evacuation, if that should become necessary. At this point, I do not believe that I should answer specifically how those contingency plans might be carried out.

QUESTION: Sir, you don't want to talk specifically. Can you tell us, however, if you do believe that you do have the authority to send in troops? You are not saying, I understand, whether you would, but do you have the authority?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my interpretation of that legislation that a President has certain limited authority to protect American lives. And to that extent, I will use that law.

QUESTION: Mr. President, despite your statement here this morning about war orphans, there apparently is a lot of red tape in Washington. A San Diego man who is trying to get four Vietnamese children out of that country has received hundreds of calls from people all over the Western United States wanting to help, even adopt children, but despite this outpouring of compassion by the American people, all he gets in Washington is, "No way."

There is nothing that can be done. Why is he running into this problem, if we are trying to help?

THE PRESIDENT: Having had some experience in the past with the Federal bureaucracy, when we had a similar problem involving Korean orphans, I understand the frustration and the problem.

But, I am assured that all bureaucratic red tape is being eliminated to the maximum degree and that we will make a total effort, as I indicated in my opening statement, to see to it that South Vietnamese war orphans are brought to the United States.

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QUESTION: Do you think something can be done before it is too late for many of them?

THE PRESIDENT: I can only say we will do what has to be done, what can be done, as a practical matter. I cannot guarantee that every single South Vietnamese war orphan will get here, but I can assure you that we intend to do everything possible in that humanitarian effort.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Gallup Poll shows a very healthy majority of the American people, 60 percent of the American people, are more concerned about the high cost of living than they are about any other issue including the recession and international developments.

I would like to ask you, in view of that, if Congress does not respond to your repeated appeals to hold down spending and not exceed a level that would produce a deficit of $60 billion. If they don't do that, and government borrowing increases to cover the deficit, do you have any plans, is there anything you plan to do beyond just these appeals to Congress to prevent a resurgence of inflation?

THE PRESIDENT: As I clearly indicated last Saturday night when I approved the Tax Reduction Act, I have drawn the line on additional Federal spending. That is as far as we dare go.

If we go beyond that, we amplify the potentialities for a resurgence of double-digit inflation. I intend to appeal to the Congress to hold the lid and I intend to appeal to the American people to get their Members of Congress -- Senators and Congressmen -- to stop coming to the White House with one spending bill after another.

In addition, I am asking the Congress to enact a provision that would make applicable for fiscal year 1976 the Budget Control Act that was enacted last year by the Congress.

Under the present law, the Budget Control Act, which forces the Congress to set a ceiling, does not actually come into effect until fiscal year 1977. It seems to me in the crisis that we face today, that the Congress ought to amend the Budget Control Act and make it applicable to fiscal year 1976 so they will impose on themselves, individual Members of Congress -- House and Senate -- a spending limitation.

Now, they are going through sort of a practice session on it. I wish they would abandon the practice session and get down to the ball game, and they, themselves, set a spending limit at the level that I indicated.

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QUESTION: What I am asking you, Mr. President, is if you have any strings to your bow other than these Congressional strings? In other words, what I am asking you is, do you plan any executive action to try to curb a resurgence or prevent a resurgence of inflation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the executive actions will be directives to the various departments of the government to limit their spending even within the appropriated amounts that Congress has made available.

We are expecting every department to spend as little as possible to carry out their programs or their mandates, and this includes holding the line on Federal personnel; it includes the limitations on spending for anything that cannot be justified. Under the law, that is the maximum that I can do in an executive capacity.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if it would alleviate the refugee problem in South Vietnam and bring about something of a temporary cease-fire would you urge President Thieu to resign?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe that it is my prerogative to tell the head of state elected by the people to leave office. I don't believe whether it is one head of state or another makes any difference in our efforts to help in the humanitarian program.

We are going to carry it on, I hope, with a full cooperation of the South Vietnamese government, and I don't think it is appropriate for me to ask him, under these circumstances, to resign. I don't think his resignation would have any significance on our humanitarian efforts.

QUESTION: In that regard, are there any plans underway by the U.S. government to accept large numbers of Vietnamese refugees in this country other than the 2,000 orphans that you have talked about?

THE PRESIDENT: Under existing law, action by the Attorney General can permit refugees who are fleeing problems in their own country to come to the United States. This authority was used after World War II. This authority was used after the Hungarian invasion by the Soviet Union.

This authority has been used on a number of other occasions. I can assure you that that authority is being examined and if it will be helpful, I certainly will approve it.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, what is your judgment now on when you expect the recession to end and recovery to begin? Is it the third quarter of this year, or will it be later?

THE PRESIDENT: Our best judgment is that the recession will turn around during the third quarter of this calendar year. We are already seeing some significant changes in the statistics that give us more certainty that the recession will end and that economic recovery will begin in the third quarter of this calendar year.

QUESTION: Could you tell us what those signs are, please, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. The latest report shows that there has been an increase in the ordering of manufactured goods. The first time I think in six months that there has been an increase rather than a decrease.

Interest rates are dropping. More money for borrowers is being made available. The inflation is receding, or at least the rate of inflation is receding. As of the last report, it would annualize at about 7.2 percent, contrasted with a 12 or 13 percent rate of inflation in 1974.

When you add up all these various economic indicators, it does show that the recession is receding and that economic conditions will get better in the third quarter of 1975.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, in line with the spending question, last year when you campaigned in California, you asked voters to help defeat the big spenders in Congress and, if they happened to be Republicans, well, so be it.

Do you plan to use the same philosophy in campaigning next year, and to the extent you will openly campaign against Republicans whose philosophies or policies may contradict yours? If so, how does this sit with your statement that the Republican Party is broad enough for all views?

THE PRESIDENT: I expect to be campaigning very hard for my own re-election, or election, in 1976. I will, of course, urge that voters in every state support those candidates who believe as I do, that we have got to hold a line on and restrain excessive Federal spending.

My enthusiasm for an individual candidate will, of course, depend upon his strong support for my policy of fiscal restraint, but I am not going to pass judgment today on individuals, whether in one party or another.

QUESTION: Does this mean then that there is a possibility that during that campaign you could come out openly in support of a Democrat as opposed to a Republican?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe in the need for the country to have individual Members of the House and Senate who believe that these massive Federal spending programs are bad for America.

I certainly will look with favor on anyone who believes as I do, that we cannot spend ourself into prosperity. A tax cut approach is a far better way, and that massive spending programs are not good for America.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you now head an Administration which came to power on a strong law and order platform, but the crime rate since 1969 has done nothing but go up and the statistics include crimes at the highest levels of government.

My question is, whether you think it would be fair for the Democrats to charge that this Administration is soft on crime, or at least is incapable of dealing with the problem?

THE PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, for the country the crime rate has been increasing for the last ten or 15 years, whether it was under a Democratic administration, under President Kennedy or President Johnson, or, except for, I think, one year under the former President, the crime rate has been going up. I don't think it is a partisan issue.

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It is my judgment that we have to maximize our efforts--the Federal Government, state government and local units of government--to try and have proper enforcement of the law, which includes the prosecution of people who violate the law.

I can only assure you that to the extent that the Federal Government can do something about it, we -- this Administration -- will do it. The facts of life are that most law enforcement is the local responsibility.

Through the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, the Federal Government has been spending for the last several years around $800 million to help local units of government, state units of government in the upgrading of their law enforcement capability, helping police departments, helping sheriff's departments, helping the courts, and will continue to do it.

But, the principal responsibility rests at the local level.

QUESTION: Will you be able to spend any more money,under your proposition that the line has to be drawn somewhere,on fighting the crime problem?

THE PRESIDENT: I think in the budget I submitted, there is ample money for a Federal effort to carry out the Federal role in the area of law enforcement.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you spoke a few minutes ago about being frustrated by the limitation of the War Powers Act. If it were not forbidden now, would you like to send American planes and Naval forces and possibly ground forces into Vietnam to try to turn the situation around?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said that there are no plans whatsoever for U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. On the other hand, I think history does prove that if a Chief Executive has a potential to, it, to some extent, is a deterrent against aggressors.

QUESTION: So, that is your frustration, because you do not have that power to at least threaten the possibility?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not use the word "threat." I said the potential for power, I think, over the years has indicated that that potential is a deterrent against aggression by one country against another.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, in view of the possible primary entries by Governor Reagan and perhaps Governor Thomson of New Hampshire, would you be good enough to discuss your own timetable?

When will you set up your committee, specifically, and can you also tell us, do you plan to enter any primaries yourself, or through a stand-in candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not defined our precise timetable, nor our precise plans for the pre-convention campaign. We are in the process of putting together our timetable and our plans. I have said repeatedly that I intend to be a candidate, but I have made no categorical announcement to that effect. But, the matter is not being neglected.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, in light of current concerns regarding the assassination of President Kennedy and the recent showings of the Zapruder films, do you still have the same confidence in the finding of the Warren Commission that you had as a Member of that Commission?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you have to read very carefully what the Warren Commission said. And I, as a member of the Warren Commission, helped to participate in the drafting of the language. We said that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin. We said that the Commission had found no evidence of a conspiracy, foreign or domestic.

Those words were very carefully drafted. And so far, I have seen no evidence that would dispute the conclusions to which we came.

We were most careful because in 1963 and 1964, when we most carefully analyzed all the evidence available, there was none of the involvement of anybody or anybody as a group, in the assassination.

It is my understanding that the Rockefeller Commission may, if the facts seem to justify it, take a look at it, at the problem, and I suspect that the House and Senate committees that are currently investigating CIA history may do the same.

But the Commission was right when it made its determination and it was accurate, at least to this point -- I want to re-emphasize that -- as to the evidence that we saw.

QUESTION: Mr. President, some people are saying this week that despite all our massive aid in Vietnam and all the lives that were lost there, that the whole thing has come to nothing.

Now, how do you feel about this, and do you think there is any lesson to be learned in what has been happening over there?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that the program of the previous four or five Presidents -- President Kennedy, President Johnson, President Nixon, and myself.-- were aimed at the -- in the right direction, that we should help those people who are willing to fight for freedom for themselves.

That was a sound policy. Unfortunately, events that were beyond our control as a country have made it appear that that policy was wrong. I still believe that policy was right if the United States had carried it out as we promised to do at the time of the Paris peace accords where we promised, with the signing of the Paris peace accords, that we would make military hardware available to the South Vietnamese government on a replacement, one-for-one basis. Unfortunately, we did not carry out that promise.

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QUESTION: Are you blaming Congress for this, then?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not assessing blame on anyone. The facts are that in fiscal year 1974, there was a substantial reduction made by the Congress in the amount of military equipment requested for South Vietnam.

In fiscal year 1975, the current fiscal year, the Administration asked for $1 billion 400 million in military assistance for South Vietnam. Congress put a ceiling of $1 billion on it and actually appropriated only $700 million.

Those are the facts. I think it is up to the American people to pass judgment on who was at fault or where the blame may rest. That is a current judgment.

I think historians, in the future, will write who was to blame in this tragic situation. But the American people ought to know the facts and the facts are as I have indicated.

I think it is a great tragedy, what we are seeing in Vietnam today. I think it could have been avoided. But I am not going to point a finger. The American people will make that judgment. I think it is more important for me and the American people and the Congress, in the weeks and months ahead, to do what we can to work together to meet the problems of the future.

That is what I intend to do, and I will go more than half way with the Congress in seeking to achieve that result. I think we have the capability in America. I think we have the will to overcome what appears to be a disaster in Southeast Asia. To the extent that I can, I hope to give that leadership.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, regardless of what caused it, it seems apparent that for the first time in our Nation's history, the enemy is about to win a war where Americans fought and died. Do you think those 55,000 lives were wasted?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think they were wasted, providing the United States had carried out the solemn commitments that were made in Paris. At the time American fighting was stopped in South Vietnam, at a time when the agreement provided that all of our troops should be withdrawn, that all of our POW's should be returned, if we had carried out the commitments that were made at that time, the tragic sacrifices that were made by many -- those who were killed, those who were wounded -- would not have been in vain.

When I see us not carrying through, then it raises a quite different question.

QUESTION: Is that a yes, then, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I still think there is an opportunity to salvage the situation in Vietnam, and if we salvage it, giving the South Vietnamese an opportunity to fight for their freedom, which I think they are anxious to do, if given an honest opportunity, then there was not a sacrifice that was inappropriate or unwise.

QUESTION: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

In a speech you are going to deliver here in San Diego this afternoon, you warn against the fatalism, despair and the prophets of doom. Yet, as I look back over the past eight months or a year -- and I don't mean to suggest that these are in any way your responsibility or fault -- I have a laundry list which cites Portugal as having a leftist government raising serious questions about its future in NATO.

Greece and Turkey are at each other's throats, threatening the Southern flanks of that alliance. We are familiar that Secretary Kissinger's mission failed in his peace talks with Egypt, and Israel, and we don't need to rehash the situation in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

That being the case, sir, how can you say that the world outlook -- and particularly as you address it in your speech next week on the state of the world -- is anything but bleak for the United States when many of the minuses which I cited are actually plusses for the Soviets?

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THE PRESIDENT: The speech that I am giving to Congress and to the American people next week will deal with many of the problems that you have raised. I think we do face a crisis. But I am optimistic that if the Congress joins with me, and the American people support the Congress and me, as President, we can overcome those difficulties.

We can play a constructive role in Portugal; not interfering with their internal decisions, but Portugal is an important ally in Western Europe. We can find ways to solve the problem in Cyprus and hopefully keep both Greece and Turkey strong and viable members of NATO.

We can, despite the difficulties that transpired in the Middle East in the last several weeks, find a way to keep a peace movement moving in that very volatile area.

It may mean -- and probably does -- that we will have to take the problem to Geneva. I would have preferred it otherwise, but the facts are that if Congress and the American people and the President work together -- as I expect they will -- then in my judgment, those disappointments can become plusses.

QUESTION: But, sir, can you cite any specific reasons for the optimism you express?

THE PRESIDENT: The historical character of the American people, that is the main ingredient that in my judgment, will take America from the disappointments of the present to the optimism of the future.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much.

END (AT 12:45 P.M. PDT)

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PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 13

of the

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

7:31 P.M. EDT
May 6, 1975
Tuesday

In Room 450
In the Old Executive
Office Building
Washington, D.C.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you please sit down. Good evening.

Miss Thomas?

QUESTION: What are the lessons of Vietnam in terms of the Presidency, the Congress and the American people in terms of secret diplomacy and fighting a land war in Asia, and also, would you welcome a Congressional inquiry into how we got in and how we got out of Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: Miss Thomas, the war in Vietnam is over. It was sad and tragic in many respects. I think it would be unfortunate for us to rehash allegations as to individuals that might be to blame or Administrations that might be at fault.

It seems to me that it is over. We ought to look ahead, and I think a Congressional inquiry at this time would only be divisive and not helpful.

QUESTION: Mr. President, may I ask you, then, don't you think we can learn from the past?

THE PRESIDENT: Miss Thomas, I think the lessons of the past in Vietnam have already been learned, learned by Presidents, learned by Congress, learned by the American people, and we should have our focus on the future. As far as I am concerned, that is where we will concentrate.

Miss Lewine?

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QUESTION: Mr. President, your forthcoming meetings with Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, do they represent the beginning of a new American-led negotiation in the Middle East toward a peace settlement?

THE PRESIDENT: They do not represent a new negotiating process. I am meeting with President Sadat and Prime Minister Rabin for the purpose of getting from them any recommendations they might have as to how we can maintain the peace in the Middle East, how we can come to some final settlement that will be beneficial to all of the parties.

We are in the process of reassessing our Middle East policy, and they can make a very valuable contribution with their on-the-spot recommendations.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you now see any hopeful signs that there is any movement there off dead center?

THE PRESIDENT: I am always optimistic. I believe that the leaders of all of the countries, both Arab and Israeli, as well as others, recognize the seriousness of any new military engagement in the Middle East and the ramifications that might come from it.

So, I am optimistic that as we try to move ahead aimed at avoiding a stalemate, avoiding stagnation, that we can work with other countries in order to ensure the peace and a settlement that will be satisfactory to all parties.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, you have been reported as being damned mad about the adverse reaction of the American people to the Vietnamese refugees. I would like to ask you how do you explain that reaction? What in your judgment is the cause of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Lisagor, I am primarily very upset, because the United States has had a long tradition of opening its doors to immigrants from all countries. We are a country built by immigrants from all areas of the world and we have always been a humanitarian Nation.

And when I read or heard some of the comments made a few days ago, I was disappointed and very upset. I was encouraged this afternoon, however. I understand that the Executive Committee of the AFL-CIO passed a resolution urging that the United States open its doors and make opportunities available for the South Vietnamese who have been driven or escaped from their country.

I understand that the American Jewish Committee has likewise passed a resolution this afternoon endorsing the policy of making opportunities available in the United States for South Vietnamese. And I am very proud of those Governors, like Governor Pryor of Arkansas, Governor Askew of Florida, Governor Longley of Maine, Governor Evans of Washington, Governor Ariyoshi of Hawaii, as well as Mayor Alioto, who have communicated with me and, indicated their support for a policy of giving the opportunity of South Vietnamese to come from this country to escape the possibility of death in their country under the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, and individuals who wanted an opportunity for freedom.

I think this is the right attitude for Americans to take and I am delighted for the support that I have gotten.

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QUESTION: Could I follow that and ask you, why in your judgment is there such a widespread adverse reaction to this?

THE PRESIDENT: I understand the attitude of some. We have serious economic problems. But out of the 120,000 refugees who are either here or on their way, 60 percent of those are children. They ought to be given an opportunity. Only 35,000 heads of families will be moved into our total society.

Now I understand people who are concerned with our economic problems, but we have assimilated between 50,000 and 100,000 Hungarians in the mid-50s and we have brought into this country some 500,000 to 600,000 Cubans. They have been good citizens and we ought to welcome these people in the same way, and despite our economic problems I am convinced that the vast majority of Americans today want these people to have another opportunity to escape the probability of death, and therefore I applaud those who feel that way.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to ask a political question. What steps have you taken so far toward the creation of a campaign organization in 1976, and if you haven't taken any steps, what steps do you plan to take in the future, and when do you plan to take them?

THE PRESIDENT: Within the last week a group headed by Dean Burch have indicated that they would like to get started in a very informal way to kick off a campaign at the proper time. This group is meeting within the next few days, I understand. They expect to get a great many more who will join them.

The precise time when we will take the formal step to declare my candidacy has not yet been determined, but I would only reiterate my intention to become a candidate.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have said many times that you intend to become a candidate and yet there seems to be continual skepticism in some quarters of your own party that you really will be. Why do you think that skepticism has endured?

THE PRESIDENT: I am surprised myself that there is any skepticism. I know my intention. I have said it repeatedly, as you have indicated. I intend to be a candidate. I believe that I have the best opportunity to solidify the Republican Party, getting strength from both the right as well as the left within the Republican spectrum and to put on a good campaign against the individual that the Democratic Party nominates.

There should be no skepticism about my intention. I will be at the proper time a candidate in a legal sense and no one should feel otherwise.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, if I could follow that up. Will you this year be going out and speaking at Republican gatherings doing the kind of political things that Presidents often do in the year before they run for election?

THE PRESIDENT: I undoubtedly will make an effort to help the Republican Party. I think that is a proper function for a President. I did it a week or so ago for the Republican Party in the State of Virginia and I will do similar activities in the future.

But that effort will be aimed at helping the party. We need a strong two-party system and I have a responsibility to try and help the Republican Party.

Miss McGrory, may I congratulate you on your Pulitzer Prize, and I am delighted to recognize you.

QUESTION: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I was wondering if now that the war is over for everybody and we are admitting many thousands of Vietnamese, including, we are told, some young men who did not obey their country's draft laws, have you reconsidered your position on amnesty towards young Americans?

THE PRESIDENT: Miss McGrory, about six months ago, I initiated a program under former Congressman Charles Goodell and a group of eight others, to grant relief, or amnesty, to some 120,000 individuals who were either deserters or did not comply with the Selective Service laws.

As I recollect, up to a week or so ago, approximately 30,000 out of that group had applied. I assume that most of them will have a change in their status. I hope so.

And therefore, I have taken, I think, a step that was right. It is a good program and I just wish that more had taken advantage of it.

At the present time, we are in the process, or they, the Commission, are in the process of handling the applications. I hope they will expedite and be very generous in their consideration of the records of those who have applied.

There is always a chance in the future if the facts justify it.

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QUESTION: Even though the war is over, sir, there are many Americans who must still live with the agonies that it caused them. I speak primarily of those wounded and crippled and the families of those who died.

In very human and personal terms, how would you speak to them about the sacrifices that were made?

THE PRESIDENT: First, let me say very emphatically they made a great sacrifice. The 56,000 that died and the countless thousands who were wounded, I honor and respect them and their contribution was most significant. I think their contribution was not in vain.

Five Presidents carried out a national policy. Six Congresses endorced that policy, which was a policy of our country, and they carried out that responsibility as a member of our Armed Forces.

I think we should praise them, congratulate them, and we have an unbelievable commitment to them in the future. All we can say is, thank you very much for what they have done for freedom.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you mentioned that you spoke to some Virginia Republicans the weekend before last and at that time, you said that in 1976 we will have some excellent results in foreign policy. After the past few weeks, we can all use a little good news. Can you tell us just what you do expect in 1976?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think between now and the end of 1976 we are going to make progress in the negotiations for a SALT II agreement. It hasn't been finalized, but the atmosphere is good.

There is going to be some hard negotiating, but I will approach that important meeting with Mr. Brezhnev aimed at achieving results, and I think his attitude will reflect the same.

I think you are going to find a greater solidarity in Europe. I am going to Europe the latter part of this month to strengthen that solidarity and to work on a more unified position in solving our joint economic problems, in trying to solve the energy problems that are serious for all of us.

It is my judgment that we can move ahead even in the Pacific. We will have to not reassess, but assess, how we can proceed, but it is my aim to tie more closely together South Korea with the United States, to reaffirm our commitments to Taiwan, to work more closely with Indonesia, with the Philippines, and with other Pacific nations. These are the kind of, I believe, forward movements in foreign policy that will be beneficial in the maintenance of peace.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, I would very much like to follow that up. Is your job going to be complicated by what happened in Southeast Asia? You have gone out of your way in the past week or two to say the United States will honor its foreign commitments. What sort of private feedback are you getting in foreign capitals? Is there a lack of confidence now? A loss of confidence in the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: We do get reactions from foreign governments wondering what our position will be, asking where we will go and what our policy will be. We have indicated to our friends that we will maintain our commitments. We understand the perception that some countries may have as a result of the setback in South Vietnam. But that perception is not a reality because the United States is strong militarily.

The United States is strong economically, despite our current problems, and we are going to maintain our leadership on a worldwide basis, and we want our friends to know that we will stand by them and we want any potential adversaries to know that we will stand up to them.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there have been persistent reports here in Washington that the Rockefeller Commission is looking into reports that somehow or the other, discussions of the assassination of Fidel Castro may have somehow triggered the assassination of John Kennedy. Can you tell us is there any connection between those two events?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot give you the inside information on the Rockefeller Commission because I established it for the purpose of investigating the CIA and making any recommendations concerning it. It is my understanding that they are taking a very broad look. Until I get their report, I think it would be premature for me to make any comment as to precisely where they are going with their investigation.

Now, as a former member of the Warren Commission, a commission that I think did a good job, we found as a Warren Commission,no connection of anything between Cuba and the United States. We found no evidence of a conspiracy, foreign or domestic.

QUESTION: Mr. President, after eight years of a Republican in the White House, there probably will be a lot of people who next year will say it is time for a change. Now what accomplishments can you cite to rebut the argument that there should be such a change?

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THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there ought to be a change. I strongly believe that a continuation of the basic policies of the last eight years will be good for America, and let me take a minute or two to talk about foreign policy.

A Republican Administration ended the war in Vietnam. They withdrew 550,000 American military personnel. They brought back all of the POW's. The United States under a Republican Administration took the first meaningful steps in trying to control nuclear arms, and I think we are going to have continued success in that area.

In the domestic area, we have gone through a difficult time, but when you look at the overall, a period of eight years, I think domestically there will be far more pluses than minuses and therefore it is my judgment that the American people, if we sell the program properly, we will have an excellent opportunity of prevailing in November of 1976.

QUESTION: Mr. President, on the economic issue, I assume that is what you are saying; but if the economy is at a low ebb next year, if unemployment is about what it is now, can you win?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think the economic concerns in 1976 will be comparable to those today. I think we are at the end of the recession. I believe that we can look forward to some improvement economically in the third and fourth quarters of 1975 and they ought to improve in 1976. Therefore, in my judgment, we will be looking in the future towards better times at home and a good foreign policy abroad.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, events in Indochina outran the deliberative process of the Congress, and you weren't given clearly defined authority to use U.S. forces to evacuate there because of Cambodia and Vietnam.

My question goes to the matter of whether it was a personal dilemma for you as Commander-in-Chief to use U.S. forces without the expressed concurrence of the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Our prime objective, of course, both in the evacuation from Phnom Penh and Cambodia and in Saigon was to bring all Americans out of both locations. Now, in the process it did appear to be wise, particularly in Saigon, to take out a number of South Vietnamese.

We did that because, number one, we felt that a number of these South Vietnamese had been very loyal to the United States and deserved an opportunity to live in freedom and secondly, the possibility existed if we had not brought out some South Vietnamese, that there could have been anti-American attitudes develop that would have complicated the evacuation of our American personnel.

So, I felt that what we did could be fully justified in not only evacuating Americans, but evacuating some of the South Vietnamese who wanted to come to the United States.

QUESTION: Secretary Kissinger said that all of the Americans who wanted to leave South Vietnam were evacuated, but there may be some reason to believe not all were evacuated. Some organizations have, for example, reported at least eight missionaries captured in the Northern part of South Vietnam.

So, I am wondering if there is some process to check this sort of thing out and what could be done about it.

THE PRESIDENT: We certainly made a maximum effort to get every American out. We found in the last week that on a certain day they could tell us that there were 1,000 Americans that were ready to come out, and we would take 300 or 400 out and then the next day we would find that a number of other Americans had come into Saigon and wanted to get out.

So, we certainly made a tremendous effort to get all Americans out. I am sure there are some who are left. At this time, I can't give you the specifics as to how we will seek to get any Americans who are still there, but we will do all we can to achieve that result.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, you praised Ambassador Graham Martin's record in Vietnam, and you have also defended the evacuation of Vietnamese civilians. Yet, there is some evidence that Mr. Martin's actions made it impossible for some Vietnamese to escape who were longstanding employees of the U.S. Government and others were evacuated on the basis of their ability to pay.

Have you investigated any of these charges and do you still believe that Ambassador Martin's record is one of effectiveness?

THE PRESIDENT: Because of the ability of Ambassador Martin to handle a tough situation -- and it was very difficult -- we got all Americans out and we got roughly 120,000-plus South Vietnamese.

Now, I am familiar with some individuals who are critical of the way in which Ambassador Martin handled it. I never had much faith in Monday morning quarterbacks or grandstand quarterbacks. I would rather put faith in the man who carried out a very successful evacuation of Americans and a tremendous number of South Vietnamese.

Rather than be critical of somebody who I think did a good job, I think we ought to praise him. If some of these people want to, in hindsight, who didn't have the responsibility, criticize him, I think we will accept it for what it is worth.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, there has been some references tonight to the economic situation. The overall unemployment rate is nine percent but among black teenagers and young black males and some other minority groups it is three times that. What plans do you have to cope with the social consequences of that kind of unemployment?

THE PRESIDENT: We are concerned about the unemployment of the youth, particularly, and the highest percentage, of course, of unemployment falls in the black youth group.

I submitted to the Congress about a month ago a request for $450 million, as I recollect, to fund a young people's employment program for this coming summer.

Now, unfortunately, the Congress has not approved that funding and the steps that have been taken, I think, will hamper the possibility of getting that funding to meet this problem, and they have added about $3 billion over and above extra funding that I don't think can be justified.

If the Congress would approve the request that I made for roughly $450 million, we would be in a position right now to do something about the problem that you raise.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the record of recent years is that that kind of summer jobs and that kind of thing has not prevented what really is a chronic long-term problem of 30 percent unemployment among young minority groups. What I am really asking is this: A great many economists think instead of coming out of this recession dramatically, we are just going to have a long period of stagflation where we don't have a really serious situation, but we don't have things very well indeed, and this kind of chronic unemployment among minority groups just persists.

What I am trying to find out is other than summer jobs and that kind of thing, do you think this is really a serious problem that the United States ought to address and try to do something about and if you do, what are your plans for it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think it is a serious problem, but the most important problem is to meet the present difficulty which begins with the end of the school year, and that is why I think the Congress ought to act quickly on the request that I made for summer employment.

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Now, in the long run, the best way to get the young people properly employed in our economy is to have a healthy economy, not a Government-dominated economy. I think we are in the process of coming out of the recession. I am optimistic in the future and when we, in the third and fourth quarters of this year, have the success that I think we are going to have, some of the problems will be answered that you have raised.

Mr. Jones?

QUESTION: You apparently had some intelligence reports about a bloodbath in Cambodia. I am wondering if you can bring us up to date on anything in this area in Cambodia and whether or not there is any report of a bloodbath in South Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: We do have some intelligence reports to the effect that in Cambodia some 80 or 90 former Cambodian officials were executed and, in addition, their wives were executed.

This is very hard intelligence. That is, I think, very factual evidence of the bloodbath that has taken place or is in the process of taking place in Cambodia.

Now, a turn to Vietnam. As you know, there is a very tight censorship in South Vietnam. The news that gets out is pretty heavily controlled by the North Vietnamese and by the Viet Cong. So, we really don't have the same kind of hard evidence there that we have had in Cambodia in the instance that I have indicated.

But I think probably the best evidence of the probability is that 120,000-plus South Vietnamese fled because they knew that the probability existed, that if they stayed, their life would be in jeopardy.

That is the best evidence of what probably will take place.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, if I may follow up on this, you say you don't have any hard evidence. Do you have any report, any intelligence reports that indicate this is going on?

THE PRESIDENT: At the moment, we have not.

QUESTION: May I ask you something, sir, and simply a matter of style and nothing of substance. Reading Mr. Hersey, who has spent a week with you, and reading others, you seem to be a kind of a peaceful, quiet man, a placid man. Do you ever get mad at people? Do you ever chew people out? Do you yell? Do you fire people? Do you kick people around?

THE PRESIDENT: I have learned to control my temper. I get very upset internally, but I have learned that that is not the best way to solve a problem. I do have occasional outbursts on the golf course, but in dealing with people I have found that the best way to meet a personnel problem or to handle a serious matter where a decision has to be made, that if you can keep cool, you can make a better decision. I have learned that over a long period of time.

QUESTION: If I may follow up, sir, you were described as very angry about those rumors that you were going through a political charade and were secretly not going to run -- this story in the news magazine a week or so ago. How did you express yourself?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't shout.

QUESTION: They said you were damn mad.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't raise the devil with anybody. I simply indicated to my staff that the stories were totally untrue, which they are, and that no such meeting took place where such a policy was outlined by me.

I found the best way to handle the matter is to be very firm, very calm, but very forthright, dealing not only with my staff, but with others. I think they understand what I mean by the way I say it, but you don't have to shout to do it.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, Attorney General Levi has proposed banning of handguns in high crime areas, and the Justice Department says that the White House cleared that position before he made it clear.

Does that represent an extension of your proposal that the Saturday night specials only be controlled?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that the Attorney General, when he made that speech, indicated that this was an alternative way of meeting the problem created by Saturday night specials.

It is my understanding that he didn't recommend this as the way to handle the problem. I think it is a unique approach, and it is being discussed with the Department of Justice within our Domestic Council, but there is no firm decision on whether that approach or any other approach is the right way to meet the problem.

QUESTION: Do you expect effective gun control legislation to be passed, and are you going to get behind effective control?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to recommend the registration of gun owners, and I am not going to recommend the registration of guns, or handguns, I should say.

If we can find some responsible way to do it other than that approach, we certainly will consider them.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, a growing number of Americans, lower and middle class, are being priced out of the housing market, and now there is new evidence that mortgage rates may be turning around, and indeed the FHA has increased its rate by half a percentage. Can you tell the American people tonight that makers of houses, potential buyers of houses -- can you give them any assurance that in the next months, the next year or two, more housing will be available at relatively moderate prices and that interest rates will stay down?

THE PRESIDENT: The most encouraging development in the housing area is the fact that the inflow of deposits in the savings and loans has gone up very substantially. It is my recollection that in the last reported month about $4 billion in deposits flowed into savings and loans and that over the last three months it has been a very favorable inflow into the S and L's. This means, of course, that there is money available for home buyers and it is my judgment that once we start the upturn from the present recession that the consumer interest in buying homes will increase significantly and with the money available in the S and L's, I think the prospects for an upturn in the housing industry are very encouraging.

QUESTION: Do you then approve the FHA increase, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I approve the increase because if you are going to have FHA handling of mortgages, if you are going to have the government guarantees, they must be competitive with other interest rates, and I happen to think that an FHA loan or a VA loan, either are very good, and we want those competitive with the regular conventional interest rates, and therefore to make them competitive I agreed with the decision.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 8:05 P.M. EDT)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 9, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Dallas, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE

FAIRMONT HOTEL

6:18 P.M. CST

Thank you very, very much, John, and let me thank Trammell Crow, and let me officially thank Barney Young and Ed Haggar, but let me add a very strong thank you for all of you who have come here and given this support.

I am very, very grateful, and I can only tell you as strongly as I can you haven't let me down, and we aren't going to let you down.

I have really been talking so much today I have kind of gotten tired of hearing myself talk. But it's, I think, good every once in a while for us to take a minute or two and see where we were and where we are going. And I was thinking as I came down on the plane this afternoon, or this morning rather, in August of 1974, we were in real trouble. We had economic conditions that were unbelievable, inflation over 12 percent and on the brink of a serious economic recession, unemployment about to explode and employment to plummet.

And as I look back over this last year, I am very proud of the American people, and I am extremely proud of the kind of Government we have because, despite the worst recession in 40 years, the American people didn't panic, they didn't succumb to the blandishment of quick fixes and superficial proposals.

We tried to have a strong, steady,constructive course, which I think we did, and we got the kind of support that was needed and necessary from people like John Tower and others.

And the net result is, you know, the skies look pretty good now. Everything that is supposed to be going up is going up. And everything that is supposed to be going down is going down, and if we don't lose our cool, and we keep the same firm, steady progress in programs that we have, we are going to have the most prosperous country in the history of the world, and it will be permanent,not a lot of ups and downs, peaks and valleys. That is what we are aiming for, and that is what we are going to get.

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We have got other problems besides the economy, but let me just add one comment about where America stands in the world. I always thought I was the second best informed person in the Congress on military affairs -- I always conceded that John Tower was number on. (Laughter) But number two out 535 isn't bad, so I had in the House of Representatives 12 years on the Defense Appropriations Committee that met five days a week, five hours a day, seven months a year, listening to Secretaries of Defense, Secretaries of Army, Navy, Air Force, Admirals, Generals, you have it, and I believe over a period of that many years, I understand what the programs and the policies are, both strategic as well as conventional.

And I can tell you without any hesitation or qualification that the military capability of the United States today is unsurpassed, period.

You take strategic forces, we have a superiority where our technicians and specialists and military leaders say we should have it. We have more warheads by far than the Soviet Union. We don't have more missiles, but missiles don't destroy targets. It's warheads that destroy targets.

So isn't it better to have more warheads than missiles? Our missiles and warheads are more accurate than theirs and accuracy is a very important thing in a weapons system that goes 5,000 miles. And our launchers are more survivable.

So in the areas where we want a greater strength than anybody, warheads, accuracy, survivability, we have got it, and we are way ahead.

Now, you can take strategic airplanes -- and all of you in this great State know all about them -- in our B-52s, we outnumber them -- what is it, three to one, John -- closer to four to one, I think, in strategic aircraft and our B-52s are being replaced on a responsible level with our B-1s, which is a great aircraft.

So what I am saying is, you have to look at the actual programs, and you have to compare apples and apples and not apples and oranges.

Now, I have heard somebody say that the Soviet Union has 4 million, 200 thousand men under arms and the United States has 2 million, 100 thousand -- that is right. But that doesn't really equate the reality.

We have Canada to the North, and we don't have a single soldier from the Pacific to the Atlantic. We have Mexico to the South. We don't have a single soldier that mans the border between Mexico and the United States.

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The Soviet Union, what do they have? On their Eastern border, they have the People's Republic of China with 800 million people and a thousand miles of border where there is controversy every day. So they have half, at least, or more of their military manpower there.

Their Western border is NATO, Western Europe. They have the rest of their forces there. You just can't take numbers, you have to understand, and all I ask of responsible people like all of you and your many friends in Dallas, listen to a fellow like John Tower, he knows what he is talking about.

Well, it's real nice to see you all. I guess the rest of the Ford family is coming down to the great State of Texas. I understand Betty is coming down. You know she always goes and campaigns in order to get my votes up to her polls. (Laughter)

And I guess Jack is coming down here, and we can get the rest of them down here if they will help the old man.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 6:26 P.M. CST)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Amarillo, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
AMARILLO AIR TERMINAL

7:02 P.M. CST

Senator Tower, Mayor Drummond, my former colleague in the Congress, Bob Bryce, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It's great to be back in Amarillo. And the truth is, I have been here before, and I like the people and this tremendous crowd here tonight on a Saturday evening when I am sure you might have been doing some other things. It just is great, and I thank you all from the very bottom of my heart. It is wonderful. Thank you very, very much.

As I indicated, I have been to Amarillo on several occasions, and every time I come back, I see a greater spirit, a more wonderful drive, and I love those kinds of people.

I like to see progress, and you in Amarillo have the right spirit, you have the right objectives, you are agricultural oriented, you do the best. You have got some oil and gas, you are doing well. You have got some retail, wholesale centers, and you are doing darn well there.

Amarillo doesn't do badly in anything, and I am proud of you, and so should you be.

You know what it all comes back to, it's the right kind of spirit. If you think you can do something, and if you work at it, you can accomplish it.

And now let me relate that to what we have tried to do in the last 20 months since I have been President. Let your mind go back to August of 1974, we were in trouble. We had inflation at 12 percent or more, we were about to fall into the worst economic condition, the worst recession we have had in 40 years. We had our allies abroad concerned about whether the United States would stand tall and strong. We had some adversaries who might have been tempted to take advantage of a new President.

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First, we decided that we weren't going to panic, we weren't going to let the Congress smother us with some quick-fix legislation in order to get a superficial answer to our economic problems.

We decided that the best way to get jobs for Americans to lick the inflationary problems was not to add thousands and thousands and thousands of people to the Federal payroll, but rather to try and find a way to provide an incentive for the private sector, where five out of six jobs are available anyhow.

So what has happened in 20 months,I think we can be darned proud of the progress we have made. Inflation has been cut from 12 percent to about 6 percent, and it is going down.

A year ago unemployment was a terrible problem; 8.9 percent unemployment in the last 12 months, we have taken employment up 2 million, 600 thousand more jobs. Last month we added 375,000 more jobs in the American economy. Unemployment is going down, and employment is going up because we decided to stick with the free enterprise system instead of having the Government try to satisfy the problem.

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But you know we also had a little pressure from Congress. Congress wants to spend money like you just haul it out of those wells. I don't know what your well situation is here, but in Michigan, I tell you, we have lots of them, and the Congress wanted to spend money like it was water. Believe me, that is not the way to balance the Federal budget. It is not the way to reduce your taxes.

So, what we decided to do was veto all the big budget busting bills that Congress sent down. We vetoed 47 of them and 39 of them have been sustained. The best news is that we saved you $13 billion by those vetoes that Congress sustained, and $13 billion in savings is worth the effort.

I thank you for supporting us in that attempt we have done. I might say to the Congress if they send down some more bills that bust the budget like that, we will veto them again and again and again, period.

Now, let's talk about where our country -- and I speak of it as our country because 215 million Americans have a great stake not only in the peace we have, but in the peace that we want to keep, not only in the liberty we have and the freedom we cherish at this time, but the freedom and liberty that we want for these young people that I see in the audience here tonight.

The United States today -- and I say this with firmness and very direct talking to you in the way that I think you understand -- the United States of America is unsurpassed in military capability and we are going to keep it that way.

If we take a broad look at this country with an unsurpassed military capability, with the tremendous industrial base and capacity that we have, with the agricultural production that is by any standards the greatest in the history of the world, when we look at our scientific and technological progress, our superiority in these areas, and when you add that important ingredient of morale and spiritual and religious dedication, the United States of America is number one, and we are going to keep it there.

As I look around this wonderful crowd, it is an inspiration to be here. I just know that all of you represent the finest in all of our society out of 215 million Americans. You are strong, you are dedicated, you believe in our system of Government, you believe in our economic system. You don't want a handout from the Federal Government, you want your Government to create the environment and the atmosphere that makes us great in the future like it has been in the past.

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One of the basic truths that I think we all have to understand--and this audience I know feels as I do--that basic truth is a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

So, we want our Government to create the atmosphere that gives all of you in Amarillo, and all of your fellow Americans all over the country, the opportunity and yet the responsibility to make America a better and better country.

But, in the meantime, we should stand tall and strong and say we are proud to be Americans and we are proud of America.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 7:12 P.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(El Paso, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
AT THE
TEXAS GRAIN AND FEED ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION

EL PASO CIVIC CENTER

12:37 P.M. MST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much, Mr. Jones, Senator John Tower, Mayor Henderson, members and guests of the Texas Grain and Feed Association:

It is really a very great honor and a very high privilege for me to have the opportunity of addressing this convention of your wonderful association, and I thank you very deeply for the opportunity.

Coming to Texas is always a special treat for me, and it is especially satisfying in the springtime.

As we have traveled around Texas for the last day and a half, John Tower and myself, your countryside obviously is alive and humming with farm machinery of every description.

Spring is a time of new birth, new optimism, and this year there is a lot to be optimistic about. As a State that produces more cattle, grain sorghum than any other, Texas has played a major part in one of the most successful farming years in America's history.

In fact, the last three years have been the highest net farm income in history, and that is a tremendous record. I don't think it is a mere coincidence that these three very successful years have been years when the Government left you alone and let you produce without a lot of bureaucratic interference from the nation's capital.

I can promise you categorically that is the kind of successful farm policy that I intend to pursue for the next four years. Today, we have no longer any heavy farm surpluses hanging over your market, costing the Government a million dollars a day in storage fees. Instead of piling it up, we are selling grain at a record volume.

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The Nation's grain reserves are now in the hands of the farmers and in the hands of the private trade; the system is working very well. I congratulate you for it.

During the past year, your industry has been adversely affected to some extent by a few grain inspection agencies which have not carried out properly their responsibility.

It is absolutely essential that we maintain the confidence of our export grain customers who buy such a large percentage of America's farm production. But we must not, we cannot do it by turning over more of your business to a Government bureaucracy in Washington, D. C.

I strongly oppose, and I want to be emphatic and affirmative in this regard. I strongly oppose the so-called "Humphrey-Clarke Bill", which would federalize the U. S. grain inspection service.

I favor instead an approach which provides for more careful Federal supervision of grading and weighing our grain for export.

However, I do not believe that it is appropriate or necessary to extend this limited Federal participation to interior points.

Private concerns have for years operated country elevators in weighing and inspection services all across our great union. The abuses which have been exposed do not implicate the internal operations at all, and I see no reason whatsoever to replace private interests with Government controls.

Furthermore, the Department of Agriculture has recently proposed broad, sweeping regulations aimed at eliminating conflicts of interest and insuring a more efficient port-side grain inspection system.

I urge Secretary of Agriculture Butz to devote the best and most comprehensive efforts of his department to insure that the grain of American farmers sold abroad is properly certificated and that the integrity of our export efforts is restored to its proper position.

Abuses of the past have impaired our trade credibility and shortchanged the American farmer. We are working hard, and we are working fast to correct these deficiencies, and I hope that Congress does not over-react by federalizing the entire system.

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In any event, I propose to put an end to corruption in the grain inspection business,and the sooner the better.

Furthermore, I am and will continue to be firmly opposed to putting your grain in the control of some Government board or international reserve. I am firmly opposed to subsidized imports. I don't want American farmers having to compete with the national treasuries of foreign governments.

I am just as firmly in favor of farm policies which yielded a $21.6 billion agricultural export market last year and it will be more than $22 billion this year.

I am in favor of policies which will enable you to export an estimated $48 million metric tons of feed grain, an all-time record, in the current marketing year. That is 12 million more than we exported last year and about 7 million more than we exported in the previous record year of 1973-74.

I am in favor of policies which will enable you to export between 1.5 and 1.6 billion bushels of corn during this marketing year, and I am in favor of policies which will enable you to export between 250 and 300 million bushels of grain sorghum this year, a record amount.

These policies are the ones this Administration has followed for the past 20 months. And they are the policies we will continue to follow for the next four years to keep agriculture strong and keep it growing in this great country, the United States of America.

As you know, our domestic feed grain useage has not been expanding as rapidly as our export demands in recent years, but even domestically where a short corn crop in the 1974-75 season resulted in a very substantial decline in feed grain use, we are steadily and constructively recovering.

The number of cattle on feed is sharply higher than a year ago, although it will be later this year before we can expect the feeding range to approach those of the early 1970s.

I suspect we will get into some of these particular matters in a little more detail during the question and answer period, but let me make one or two brief remarks and general observations.

With respect to our overall agricultural policy, I have appointed, as you well know, the Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, as Chairman of my new Cabinet level Agricultural Policy Committee.

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This committee will have the central role in developing and directing our Nation's food policies, and with Earl Butz as Chairman, you can be sure that his strong, plain spoken common sense and his advocacy of your interest will be well heard in the highest councils of Government.

You will also be interested to know that Secretary Butz leaves tomorrow on a ten-day mission to promote the further development of our agricultural export markets, or as Earl says, he's going overseas to drum up some business for the most prolific producers of food and fiber in the history of mankind, and he's a real advocate of what all of you truly represent.

I think all of you know that to a large degree, your success depends upon our country's success. When your country has economic problems, so do you. When your country has good relations with foreign nations, so do you.

The real decision that you and your fellow Americans will be making this year is whether or not America is on the right course for the future. The evidence strongly suggests that we are on the right course.

After suffering the worst agricultural problems this Nation has faced in 40 years, America is on the road to a new prosperity. Employment is going up, unemployment is going down. Sales investments, industrial production are all going up while inflation and the rate of growth in Federal spending are going down.

In fact, they have been cut in half in the past 12 months. In addition, our balance of trade is the best on record.

Every single leading economic indicator today is a sign of progress and a sign of hope for America. We have pursued some very pragmatic common sense policies in the past 20 months that stress the revitalization of the private sector rather than relying on big Government to cure our economic ills and increase its control over our lives.

We must never forget that a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

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My policies in the past 20 months have reflected that basic truth, and they have worked. They are still working, and we have a lot more progress in store in the months and years ahead.

This is a promise that I can make with total confidence and the watchword of this Admi istration has always been to promise no more than we can deliver and deliver everything we have promised.

Finally, we are pursuing the same kind of common sense policies, international as well as domestic. America is at peace, and we are pursuing a policy of peace through strength, and it has been successful. Our strength is unsurpassed by any other nation on earth, and let me assure you that I intend to keep it that way in the future.

Our military capability is fully sufficient to deter aggression, to keep the peace and to protect our national security. But, strength involves more than military might. A nation's real power is measured more completely by considering a combination of its military, agricultural, industrial, technological and moral strength.

In every one of these areas, the number one nation in the world is the United States of America. We have every right and every reason to be confident and optimistic about our future. Even as we enter our third century of independence, I believe that the United States is in the springtime of its life. I am ready to meet the great challenge of the future with you, to fill that future with new achievement and a new life for the nation we love so well.

That is my goal, and that is why I am asking you for your support on May 1, November 2 and the years to come.

Thank you. I will be very glad to answer your questions.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to ask the question that in view of the fact the United States has one of the most efficient grain inspection systems in the world that has worked well for over 50 years, one of the major concerns of this convention has been the bills now pending in Congress that would drastically change our inspection system.

If we can present sufficient information to you that most of the grain inspectors are doing an honest job of discharging their duties, would you consider a veto of the bills now pending in Congress and recommend to the Congress that they pass legislation that would preserve the free enterprise system of grain inspection with its good check and balance system of Federal supervision and grain grade appeals?

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THE PRESIDENT: As I indicated during my prepared remarks, I am completely and totally opposed to the Humphrey-Clarke bill. If that comes down to the Oval Office, the answer is categorically I will veto it. On the other hand, the House Committee on Agriculture has its version, which is a different version than the one that Secretary Butz presented to the Congress on my behalf.

Obviously, if the Congress was wise enough to support the bill that I recommended, I would have to sign it. (Laughter) But, I am not optimistic that they are that smart. (Laughter)

We will certainly listen to your recommendations if and when they get something down there.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to know how you propose to get this common sense approach that you have mentioned into our EPA and Mr. Train? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I recognize it is one of the most complicated and controversial problems, not only between agriculture and EPA, but between industry and EPA, between communities and EPA, and I am not trying to duck it because virtually every day, whether I meet with mayors, Mayor Henderson, or whether I meet with Governors, or whether I meet with industrialists and now people connected with agriculture, they complain about the rigid regulations and the enforcement of those regulations by EPA.

I have to say to a substantial degree the Congress, in passing the legislation, required certain actions by EPA. They can only modify their regulations to a limited degree because they have to carry out the law. It is my judgment that in a number of instances the legislation upon which EPA predicates its decisions must be reanalyzed.

In fact, we are recommending that they do it in such as the Clean Air Act and some of the other areas. There is a new water quality group under the Vice President that just made a report that recommended certain changes in the requirements for 1978 and 1981. Therefore, I think we have got to get some changes in the basic law, but in the meantime, I would hope that the head of the EPA -- Rus Train -- would take a look at all of the areas -- and there are some in agriculture -- that in my opinion have to be reanalyzed under current circumstances.

The enthusiasm with which they were originally promulgated, I think when they are analyzed in the cold, hard fact of hard reality, don't work. Therefore, we will do our best to get Mr. Train to review any and all that you or others think are unfair or inequitable under existing law.

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QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how would you propose to solve the problem of the ever-increasing national debt, and along with this problem, do you think there is a possibility we could have tax reform that would give some relief to the middle Americans who are now carrying the burden or the greatest share of the burden?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer the last question first. Over the period of the last ten or 15 years, the so-called middle class have been getting a worse and worse deal. The people in the lower or lowest income bracket got the biggest relief, and there was really no substantial impact on those at the higher brackets.

Those in the middle bracket, where most of the taxpayers are, have been getting, I think, short shrift. Now, in the tax proposals that I submitted to the Congress last year where we would reduce overall Federal taxes by $28 billion -- three quarters of it to individuals and 25 percent to business -- I recommended that the biggest rate reduction come in those categories from, I think it was, $9,000 or $10,000 up to $25,000 or $30,000.

That is the middle income bracket, and they deserve the majority of tax relief as we move ahead and try to make more sense out of the internal revenue code. If I had my way with a Congress that would cooperate, that is the way I would do it.

Now, let's turn to the other question. As I recollect, when are we going to have a balanced budget, was that the question?

QUESTION: What do you propose to do to solve the problem?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me tell you what I propose to do to solve our Federal fiscal problem, and it is a problem.

In the budget that I submitted in January of this year, I cut the growth of Federal spending by 50 percent from an annual increase of 11 percent per year to 5.5 percent per year. If we can get the Congress to accept my budget proposals, we can have a balanced budget in 1979 and will, in addition, have a substantial Federal tax reduction.

Now, let me just tell you what the Congress has done so far. I submitted in January a budget for $394 billion. That called for a 5.5 percent increase in Federal expenditures.

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Already in their preliminary work the Congress and the House and the Senate have -- one, a little more than the other-- but basically they have indicated they are going to increase Federal spending to around $411 or $413 billion. In other words, instead of holding the lid on Federal spending, as I have requested, they have already in their preliminary estimates increased it by $12 to $13 billion.

Now, to get to another approach, not by the budget, but by the bills that are sent down for me to approve or to veto, since I became President 20 months ago I have vetoed 47 bills. That is an all-time record. Congress has sustained 39 of them, primarily with the help of people like Senator Tower.

But, the interesting point is that with the 39 vetoes that have been sustained, we have saved the taxpayers $13 billion. I can say to you, and John, I know, agrees with it, if they keep sending them down, they are going to be vetoed again and again and again.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, I have a question for you. Do you believe in limiting farmer profits by Government intervention so that food will be cheaper for domestic use and do you believe in limiting farmer profits by Government intervention for use of our food as bargaining power with other foreign nations?

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THE PRESIDENT: I have vigorously opposed any efforts by Congress, or economists, or anybody else to put a price ceiling on agricultural commodities. I don't believe in wage and price controls, whether it is for agriculture or others. That is not the Amnrican system. I am against it.

Number two, I do not believe that American agriculture ought to be used as a pawn in international diplomacy.

Now, I know there are people in this audience who are then saying to themselves, if not speaking up, well, why did you impose an embargo on grain shipments to the Soviet Union a year ago for two or three months. There are several very good reasons.

At the time that embargo--temporary as it was-- was imposed, if we hadn't gotten those ships moving, you would have had grain piled high on the docks in Houston and New Orleans, you would have had trains stopped because they couldn't deliver any more grain to the ports on the Gulf and elsewhere. You would have had your elevators over-flowing, you wouldn't have been able to handle, if this process had gone on for two or three months.

The courts of this country, in the course of handling those problems, I don't think would have operated quickly enough to solve that. That is one answer.

We got the grain shipped. We kept it from backing up on your farms or in your elevators and, number two, we ended up with a five-year grain deal with the Soviet Union with a minimum of 6 million tons per year.

Instead of having peaks and valleys, in 1972, as I recall, we sold to the Soviet Union about 10 million tons. The next year we went down to virtually nothing. The next year we sold a little more. The next year we went down to virtually nothing. This year at the time the embargo went on, we had sold 9.9 million tons.

Since the embargo went off, we sold another 3.7 million tons for a total of around 13 million, 600 thousand tons.

Now, we have a firm commitment that you are going to have a minimum stable market of 6 million tons per year, and if they want to buy more, they can. But we have a guaranteed market for what you produce, and it's a lot better than having this peak-and-valley proposition. And this was all a part of the negotiating process.

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I think when we look at the total, we came out of this in good shape, and I am convinced that over the long haul, it's in the best interest of American agriculture.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in your first response, you said that our products would have been backed up at ships and trains and other places. Was this because of labor unions, that we had to negotiate with them to move our products?

THE PRESIDENT: We didn't have to negotiate with them. They had instituted an embargo at the ports and some efforts were made, the Farm Bureau and several other organizations instituted law suits, but those law suits take time, and if the time had elapsed for the court processes to go through, it might have been two months, it might have been three months. And in order to break that log jam and to get the ships moving to sea and other ships coming in so you could unload the trains and the trains could take the grain from your farms and your elevators, we had to get some action.

And I think that was the practical way. And anybody that alleges or believes George Meany runs the White House, I think most of you know I vetoed the Common Situs Picketing bill, which was a bill they wanted very strongly.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Ford.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would either John Tower or John Connally be acceptable as your Vice Presidential running mate? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: The answer is unequivocally, yes. John Tower is one of my best friends. He is one of the outstanding Senators. He has gone sled length on my behalf in this campaign.

I can't thank him enough for his efforts, not only for Texas, for the country and myself, but I think he is a great guy. Therefore, he surely would be the person that would be fully qualified and certainly a potentiality.

And from John Connally's record, that you know as well, if not better than I, obviously he would be qualified.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: President Ford, I have read that by enacting the moratorium was against the Administration Export Act, which was passed at an earlier time by Congress. Would you tell us what the Administration Export Act states concerning export controls, and how the Administration can legally violate this act by imposing the moratorium?

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THE PRESIDENT: I obviously cannot quote the precise language, but I can assure you that before the action was taken that I had the advice of the legal authorities who do advise me that such authority did exist,and based on their legal interpretation of the basic laws, the temproary action was taken.

I say I cannot quote you the language, but those lawyers studied it and their advice to me was that such authority did exist.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what can our association do to get you to come to our convention in September? (Laughter) Our theme is vote for progress and prosperity.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have both of them. (Laughter)

I was out at the Iowa State Farm meeting this summer at the State Fair, so I have a lot of friends in Iowa. But I am going to be out there again. I don't know whether I can come to your convention or not, but I will be in Iowa. Don't worry, it is a great State.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: That is why I went to the State Farm meeting in Des Moines last summer.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to know what we can expect in the future on the Food Stamp program.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just tell you some facts about the Food Stamp program, how it has grown. It was started seven or eight years ago. The first year the cost was two to three, $400 million. It will cost in this fiscal year $8 million.

Now, last summer I recommended to the Congress legislation that would cut that program in dollars by a biillion, six-hundred million. At that time the Congress said, or a majority said, don't do anything to disturb it and passed legislation to that effect. They said, don't do anything until January 1st, we will do something.

So January 1st came and it went on for two or three weeks, and they didn't do anything. So I took the bit in my teeth and I submitted, through the Secretary of Agriculture, regulations that would, in effect, carry out what I asked the Congress to do which would result in 1 billion, 600 million being saved.

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The Senate finally, in the meantime, got a bill out of committee which was much less rigid, or less strong, and far less saving than mine, and then it went to the Floor of the House and the Senate, and they made it worse, didn't they, John?

Finally, they passed this Mickey Mouse bill which really doesn't save much at all, and isn't very constructive in approach. So I don't know what the House will do about it.

In the meantime, the regulations that I proposed have been published in the Federal Register. They can go into effect, I think, in another couple of weeks, and we can't wait for the Congress to act, particularly if they are going to do a bad job, which it appears they have done.

John tells me that the Senate version costs about $500 million more. That is not going in the right direction. (Laughter)

So we are going to go ahead with our regulations and hopefully we won't be sued and won't be precluded from putting them into effect. But our program will save $1 billion, 600 million. What it does is to take away the benefits from those families above the poverty line and the poverty line just got increased to $5,200 or $5,300, and it makes certain that families that are below the poverty line get better treatment.

Now, that is the way it ought to run, and at the same time we can save $1 billion, 600 million.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what, in your opinion, is the possibilities of a national healty plan becoming a reality, and what is your position on that subject?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me see if I am sure I got the question. Do I favor national healty insurance programs? Is that it?

QUESTION: Yes, and would there be regulations in there that would, in your opinion, that would keep us from going broke trying to sponsor this thing?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not recommend to the Congress in the State of the Union Message, nor do I intend to in 1976, any national health insurance program. I don't think we can afford it during a budget year where we are trying to save money. I don't think we have it finalized to a degree that it is acceptable.

I think any plan that has been put together so far does not fit in with our understanding or our beliefs for the patient-doctor relationship. I just don't believe that the United States ought to embark on a program of that kind.

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QUESTION: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me add one other point. I have, however, recommended a national -- not a national but a catastrophic health insurance program for Medicaid and Medicare people. There are roughly 25 million Americans who come under Medicare and Medicaid who are -- about three million of them have in one way or another a catastrophic illness where the costs are high because of long hospital or nursing home care, or the costs are high because of operations or medical care.

I think we ought to help those people who are tragically hurt by these catastrophic illnesses, but it is a limited program to help those who see their savings gone and who are forced by these tremendous costs to, in effect, go on welfare.

I think that is wrong. You just shouldn't put that burden on them. So, I favor that, but not a national health insurance program.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this will be the last question.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you comment on Solzhenitsyn and his warnings about our dealings with Russia and the casual way in which we Americans seem to view our freedoms?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer the last part first.

I honestly don't think Americans casually treat their freedoms. I believe from my many travels all over the country that Americans believe very deeply in their freedoms and over the history of this country Americans -- and thousands upon thousands of them have gone to war to defend those freedoms and tragically we have lost a lot of great American youth in defending those freedoms.

So, the history of the United States is one of defense of those freedoms and I believe, if the crisis ever arose -- which I don't think it will -- America today would be just as forthright and strong in meeting those challenges to our freedom as our predecessors have in the past.

I am confident of that.

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Mr. Solzhenitsyn has commented concerning the life that he and others live in the Soviet Union. He has forthrightly and strongly indicated how he feels, how he and others in the Soviet Union were treated. Obviously he preferred our society where we think we have individual freedom to the conditions in which he lived.

I think it is wholesome and healthy for him to speak out as forthrightly as he has on this subject.

QUESTION: I saw published recently a comparison of the military preparedness between the United States and the Soviet Union, and it appears that we maybe are rapidly losing the arms race with the adversary and it seems in the recent past Russia has become much more aggressive in the world, in various parts of the world, so what do you as President propose to do to keep this nation a very strong nation and one that would not be overcome by the Russian power?

THE PRESIDENT: As I said in my prepared remarks, the United States is unsurpassed in military capability. Our strategic military strength is exactly what our military leaders have recommended to me as President and to my predecessors as President.

We have about a three to one lead over the Soviet Union in warheads, and warheads are what goes to the target, not missiles themselves. We have a far more accurate ballistics missile capability, and that is very important. We have a much more survivable missile capability in the United States and our strategic aircraft. The B-52 is followed on by the B-1. We outnumber the Soviet Union by about three to four to one. So, in strategic capability, the United States is fully sufficient to deter aggression, to maintain the peace and to protect our national security.

It is true, and this is a good illustration, that the Soviet Union has over four million people under arms. The United States has two million one. But, it is interesting to note that there isn't a soldier on the border between Brownsville and San Diego. We have a friendly neighbor to the South. There isn't a soldier from the West Coast to the East Coast on the Canadian-American border.

We don't need soldiers for those purposes. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has better than 1,000 miles of very controversial border with the People's Republic of China. Half of their military capability is guarding that border. On the West, they have the NATO nations. They have the other half of their military force lined up against the United States and our allies. That is why they need twice as many people. They don't have friendly borders like we do. We can concentrate our military capability in a much more restricted way.

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Now, let me add this: This country is unsurpassed. This country is going to stay strong. I recommended last year the largest military budget in the history of the United States. Unfortunately, the Congress cut it by $7.5 billion.

In January of this year, I submitted a much larger military budget, $112.4 billion, the largest budget for the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines in the history of our country.

If the Congress is wise enough to carry out the budget that I proposed, there is no fear, under any circumstances, as to the military capability of the United States, period.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 1:21 P.M. MST)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 12, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I am today returning, without my approval, H.R. 8617, a bill that would essentially repeal the Federal law commonly known as the Hatch Act, which prohibits Federal employees from taking an active part in partisan politics.

The public expects that government service will be provided in a neutral, nonpartisan fashion. This bill would produce an opposite result.

Thomas Jefferson foresaw the dangers of Federal employees electioneering, and some of the explicit Hatch Act rules were first applied in 1907 by President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1939, as an outgrowth of concern over political coercion of Federal employees, the Hatch Act itself was enacted.

The amendments which this bill make to the Hatch Act would deny the lessons of history.

If, as contemplated by H.R. 8617, the prohibitions against political campaigning were removed, we would be endangering the entire concept of employee independence and freedom from coercion which has been largely successful in preventing undue political influence in Government programs or personnel management. If this bill were to become law, I believe pressures could be brought to bear on Federal employees in extremely subtle ways beyond the reach of any anti-coercion statute so that they would inevitably feel compelled to engage in partisan political activity. This would be bad for the employee, bad for the government, and bad for the public.

Proponents of this bill argue that the Hatch Act limits the rights of Federal employees. The Hatch Act does in fact restrict the right of employees to fully engage in partisan politics. It was intended, for good reason, to do precisely that. Most people, including most Federal employees, not only understand the reasons for these restrictions, but support them.

However, present law does not bar all political activity on the part of Federal employees. They may register and vote in any election, express opinions on political issues or candidates, be members of and make contributions to political parties, and attend political rallies and conventions, and engage in a variety of other political activities. What they may not -- and, in my view, should not -- do is attempt to be partisan political activists and impartial Government employees at the same time.

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The U.S. Supreme Court in 1973 in affirming the validity of the Hatch Act, noted that it represented

> "a judgment made by this country over the last century that it is in the best interest of the country, indeed essential, that federal service should depend upon meritorious performance rather than political service, and that the political influence of federal employees on others and on the electoral process should be limited."

The Hatch Act is intended to strike a delicate balance between fair and effective government and the First Amendment rights of individual employees. It has been successful, in my opinion, in striking that balance.

H.R. 8617 is bad law in other respects. The bill's provisions for the exercise of a Congressional right of disapproval of executive agency regulations are Constitutionally objectionable. In addition, it would shift the responsibility for adjudicating Hatch Act violations from the Civil Service Commission to a new Board composed of Federal employees. No convincing evidence exists to justify this shift. However, the fundamental objection to this bill is that politicizing the Civil Service is intolerable.

I, therefore, must veto the measure.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,
APRIL 12, 1976

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

NOMINATION SENT TO THE SENATE ON APRIL 12, 1976:

Hung Wai Ching, of Hawaii, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for the remainder of the term expiring December 8, 1981, vice John Y. Ing, resigned.

# # # #

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 12, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON HIS VETO
OF THE HATCH ACT AMENDMENTS

THE OVAL OFFICE

1:48 P.M. EST

I am returning to Congress today without my signature a bill that would lift the ban against partisan political activity by Federal civil servants. For almost 40 years under the Hatch Act civil servants have been allowed an active role in the Democratic process. They can vote, they can attend rallies and conventions, they can contribute to the candidates of their choice.

However, the Hatch Act has also prohibited civil servants from engaging in other far more partisan activities, such as political campaigns. The prohibition against the partisan politics in the Civil Service was written into the law for two very sound and worthwhile reasons: to assure the American people that their affairs were being conducted with an eye on the public interest, not a partisan interest, and to protect civil servants themselves from undue political coercion.

I believe that the concerns that have been valid for the last four decades are still valid today. The public business of our Government must be conducted without the taint of partisan politics. I am, therefore, returning this bill to the Congress without my approval.

END (AT 1:49 P.M. EST)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 9, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Antonio, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH THE PRESIDENT
AT
KELLY AIR FORCE BASE

11:02 A.M. CST

QUESTION: Mr. President, what about the 1,200 civilians employed at Kelly that were laid off in the manpower cuts, and what specifically will you do for them, and what assurances do the people of San Antonio have that there will not be further cutbacks in the closing of Kelly?

THE PRESIDENT: First, I think we have to have a little history of what precipitated the closing here of Kelly and the loss of these civilian jobs.

Congress, in the 1975 fiscal year's budget for the Defense Department, imposed a 26,000 cut in civilian employment across the military installations, so this cut here at Kelly came as a result of Congressional action, which I, as President, didn't ask for but the law was passed and it was imposed on them.

Now, it will unfortunately have to be carried out as dictated by Congress. The Department of Defense, working through the Air Force, will make a maximum effort to try to find jobs either in the military or civilian community.

The word I have is they will make a maximum effort, and they are optimistic employment will be found.

And your second question, there are no actions being initiated involving any of the other military installations, of which there are many in this county, for cutbacks in the recent announcements by the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

I quickly add that whatever has been recommended, not here, for the future, are only environmental impact statements, economic impact statements and probably it will be six to nine months before any final decision will be made on any of the others, except the one here which was imposed by the Congress.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you have any statement regarding the annexation of San Antonio? We have been told that the Justice Department has ruled that we may have to give those territories back.

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THE PRESIDENT: I understand that the members of the Texas delegation met with the Mayor of San Antonio and with the Assistant Attorney General, Mr. Pottinger, yesterday in Washington, D. C.

The matter was discussed in great detail, and it is hopeful that the resolution of the problem can be worked out. I am optimistic, but I don't think there is any specific comment I can make at this time. They are working on it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has agreement been reached between the United States and the Soviet Union for on-site inspection of each other's nuclear weapons systems?

THE PRESIDENT: Under the Peaceful Nuclear Prospective Treaty, there are some very far reaching new steps that will be taken to insure that there are no violations. One of them does involve, under certain circumstances, on-site inspection.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, are you giving up on trying to get Connally's endorsement, or have you two reached an agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: John Connally is a very good friend of mine. I don't ask people to support me. I want them to do it on their own, and I just think any comment on this situation ought to come from former Governor Connally.

Thank you very, very much. It is nice to see you.

END (AT 11:07 A.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 9, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Antonio, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH THE PRESIDENT
AT
KELLY AIR FORCE BASE

11:02 A.M. CST

QUESTION: Mr. President, what about the 1,200 civilians employed at Kelly that were laid off in the manpower cuts, and what specifically will you do for them, and what assurances do the people of San Antonio have that there will not be further cutbacks in the closing of Kelly?

THE PRESIDENT: First, I think we have to have a little history of what precipitated the closing here of Kelly and the loss of these civilian jobs.

Congress, in the 1975 fiscal year's budget for the Defense Department, imposed a 26,000 cut in civilian employment across the military installations, so this cut here at Kelly came as a result of Congressional action, which I, as President, didn't ask for but the law was passed and it was imposed on them.

Now, it will unfortunately have to be carried out as dictated by Congress. The Department of Defense, working through the Air Force, will make a maximum effort to try to find jobs either in the military or civilian community.

The word I have is they will make a maximum effort, and they are optimistic employment will be found.

And your second question, there are no actions being initiated involving any of the other military installations, of which there are many in this county, for cutbacks in the recent announcements by the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

I quickly add that whatever has been recommended, not here, for the future, are only environmental impact statements, economic impact statements and probably it will be six to nine months before any final decision will be made on any of the others, except the one here which was imposed by the Congress.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you have any statement regarding the annexation of San Antonio? We have been told that the Justice Department has ruled that we may have to give those territories back.

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THE PRESIDENT: I understand that the members of the Texas delegation met with the Mayor of San Antonio and with the Assistant Attorney General, Mr. Pottinger, yesterday in Washington, D. C.

The matter was discussed in great detail, and it is hopeful that the resolution of the problem can be worked out. I am optimistic, but I don't think there is any specific comment I can make at this time. They are working on it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has agreement been reached between the United States and the Soviet Union for on-site inspection of each other's nuclear weapons systems?

THE PRESIDENT: Under the Peaceful Nuclear Prospective Treaty, there are some very far reaching new steps that will be taken to insure that there are no violations. One of them does involve, under certain circumstances, on-site inspection.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, are you giving up on trying to get Connally's endorsement, or have you two reached an agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: John Connally is a very good friend of mine. I don't ask people to support me. I want them to do it on their own, and I just think any comment on this situation ought to come from former Governor Connally.

Thank you very, very much. It is nice to see you.

END (AT 11:07 A.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(El Paso, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
WAR MEMORIAL PLAZA

3:20 P.M. MST

Senator John Tower, Congressman Dick White, Mayor Henderson, Mayor Luzama, Mrs. Barnes, Reverend Nichols, distinguished guests:

It is a great privilege for me to be here today dedicating this memorial, which honors those men from El Paso who gave their lives for their country. Let me thank the Gold Star mothers and the El Paso Bicentennial Commission for sponsoring this very important, this very dramatic occasion.

I extend my particular thanks to Mrs. Barney Barnes for her very kind letter of invitation, and I commend her sons, Stanley and Mark, both students here at Parkland High School.

It was their efforts which resulted in the bronze plaque that we dedicate today. They were motivated by the memory of their brother, Corporal Charles Barnes of the United States Army who was listed among the 203 men whose memory and bravery we honor.

In a larger sense, we are paying tribute to all those Americans who died for their country and to Americans throughout our history who paid the very highest price for the sake of our liberty.

This ceremony should make us realize how precious freedom is and how dearly Americans have paid for it from the first battles for independence down to the very present.

This ceremony should also make us thankful for peace we now enjoy. Not one American serviceman is fighting in any part of the world today. Not one American mother or wife or daughter, father, brother or son lives in constant fear of losing their loved one.

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And today as we dedicate ourselves to preserving the peace and freedom for which these men died, we must also dedicate ourselves to preserving peace they died to secure.

Peace today has a very special significance because war today has a very special terror. A thermonuclear war today would mean death and destruction on a scale so vast that we can hardly comprehend it.

We can avoid this holocaust, and we will avoid it if we keep America strong, not strong for the sake of war, but strong for the sake of peace.

This concept is as old as our great Republic. George Washington told us to be prepared, for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving the peace. We are prepared today, we will stay prepared. We are strong today, and we will stay strong today as well as tomorrow.

But true strength demands true responsibility and keeping the peace means keeping our commitment to avoid constant and reckless confrontation, to weigh our words carefully, knowing what hangs in the balance.

In my very first words after taking the solemn oath of office to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, I pledged myself...to an uninterrupted and sincere search for peace.

I said America will remain strong and united, but its strength will be dedicated to the safety of the entire family of man as well as to our own precious freedom.

Today on this solemn occasion, I repeat that pledge, to work for a world where the foundation of peace is mutual self-interest instead of mutual terror, to reduce world tensions through patience and perseverence, rather than increase those tensions with hot words or rash acts.

Where there is conflict, let us try conciliation. Let us attempt to work out our differences on the negotiating table rather than in a desperate dual that would leave the world in ashes.

You have placed your memorial at the base of a flower-bed. It is an appropriate setting,for the flowers are a symbol of life. To honor the memory of those who fought for freedom, you will keep those flowers blooming, and together we will keep America strong, at peace and forever free.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 3:25 P.M. MST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 9, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Antonio, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
TO THE
GOP RECEPTION GUESTS

SAN ANTONIO CIVIC CENTER

2:08 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: John and Seagal Wheatley and all of you good Republicans:

I have been in San Antonio three or four hours thus far. I have been here a number of times before, but I am deeply grateful for the warm reception and the opportunity to meet many, many more wonderful people from San Antonio.

Let me say something that I feel very deeply about. It has been my privilege during the period of some 25 years in the House of Representatives to have many, many contacts with members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle, as well as a good many members of the House.

You are so fortunate from the State of Texas to have John here, John Tower, as your representative. I am deeply grateful for his strong support, and I would be most appreciative and grateful for any support ythat any of you can give me in the forthcoming race.

But, let me give you some thoughts as to what has happened in the 19 plus months that I have been privileged to be President. Let me assure you it hasn't been the easiest time. Nineteen months ago, if you will refresh your memories a bit, you will recall that we were suffering inflation of about 12 to 13 percent. We were on the brink of the worst recession for some 40 years in the history of the United States, and within a very few months after I became President unemployment soared, employment plummeted.

There were all kinds of quick fixes and various panic proposals coming from the other side of the aisle, the liberal side of the Democratic Party, to try and get us to do this or do that, to try and solve our economic problems.

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The facts are, we didn't panic. We knew we had to solve inflation, and we knew that the best way to do it was to do it with a firm steady course. We knew that big Government, expensive Government was a principal cause of inflation in this country, and so we repeatedly tried to hold down the lid, as far as Congress was concerned, as they came from Capitol Hill with one bloated budget proposal after another.

John mentioned the vetoes. In 19-plus months, well, it's 47 now, I vetoed one yesterday. (Laughter) I vetoed one yesterday,that if they sustain it, it will save us $150 million. But the more important thing, out of the 46 I vetoed, Congress has sustained 39 of them and in the process of sustaining 39, we have saved the taxpayers $13 billion.

And I might add parenthetically, I think the Congress, either the House or Senate, will sustain the one I vetoed yesterday.

But the net result of a firm steady course that relied on the private sector taking us out of the recession instead of trying to get us out of the recession by expanding the Federal Government has proven sound.

We are now well on the road to controlling inflation. We have gone from over 12 percent inflation down to 6 percent or less per year, and it is going further downward.

At the same time, we are increasing employment, and we are decreasing unemployment. We got a report last Friday, not this Friday,, that we had gained 375,000 new jobs in our economy in one month, the month of March.

The statistics showed that we had increased the total number of jobs in the last ten months by 2 million, 600 thousand and that the total employment in the month of March for the country as a whole was 86 million, 700 thousand, the most people employed in our country's history. So we are on the right road.

And we have done it with the emphasis on the private sector, which is the crux of what all of us as Republicans believe in and a good many of our conservative Democratic friends believe in.

Now, let's take a look at the world situation. When I became President,most of our allies weren't sure what our attitude would be. Our adversaries were looking to take an opportunity to perhaps exploit the situation, and so what we had to do right from the outset was to convince our allies, Japan, NATO and elsewhere that we would have a firm foreign policy and a strong military capability.

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And I can assure you from my many contacts in Europe, in the Pacific and elsewhere that our allies believe America is firm and America is capable of meeting any crisis that would be thrust upon us.

And from my contacts with those adversaries that we have, I think they know that your President is a pretty good Yankee trader. (Laughter)

We haven't given up anything, and we don't intend to give anything up as far as the capability of protecting the United States is concerned.

And now one other comment. For the last six years, the Congress of the United States has cut a total of $32 billion out of military appropriation requests. And that action by the Congress for the last six years has caused me, a year ago, to submit to the Congress the largest military budget in the history of the United States.

It was necessary to do that to reverse the trend that the Congress had forced upon the previous President and the previous Administration.

Unfortunately, last year the Congress cut that budget $7.5 billion. So in January of this year, I submitted again the largest military budget in the history of the United States, $112.4 billion, $14 billion more than the bill that Congress finally sent down to the White House.

That legislation, or that appropriation -- I think Congress has finally awakened -- is needed and necessary. But let me assure you this country is militarily ready, alert, well trained, well equipped, is unsurpassed by any other power in the world today, and we are going to keep it there.

One final word, I took the oath of office and almost from the first day I decided this: I would never promise more than I could produce, and I would produce everything that I promised. And that is the crux of what this Administration believes in.

We are not going to kid anybody. We are going to call them as we see them. We are going to stand tall and strong. We are going to be honest, candid, forthright, and we are going to work like the devil for the good of this country because all of us love the liberty, love the freedom, love the system. It's the greatest country in the history of mankind. We are proud to be an American, and we are proud of America. Thank you.

This young lady has a question.

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QUESTION: Yes, sir. I have a problem. There is money coming from your office to fund something in San Antonio that many people are very unhappy about. We need your help, sir. That is funding for the homosexual conference.

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that an organization here was awarded by the National Endowment of Humanities to the extent of $5,000. We are looking into it. We understand -- I can't give you a firm answer today -- we are looking into it. We understand there are allegations in the application that was made that there were some misstatements made. Whether that is true or not, I can't honestly tell you here this morning.

I can only assure you that if there were misstatements made to justify the award, appropriate action will be taken.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, please do not give away the Panama Canal. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Sir, I don't think you have to worry about that. (Laughter) The United States, as far as I am concerned, will never give up its defense responsibilities and capability. It will never give up the rights of navigation and so forth. You just don't have to worry.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Thank you for recognizing me. Will big John Connally be your Vice President? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Some very attractive lady said, no, make it Anne Armstrong.(Laughter) Well, Anne has a big job, you know. We accept Anne over to be the first U. S. Ambassador to Great Britain in the history of the United States, and I think from what I hear, she is wooing them over there. (Laughter)

Let me say we have a number of outstanding, potential Republican candidates for Vice President. We have some from the Congress. We have some governors, we have some former governor and certainly John Connally has some outstanding qualifications, having served as Governor of this State for six years, he was Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Treasury, he is an outstanding person, but I think it is premature to make any comment. In the first place, I have to get nominated myself. (Laughter)

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QUESTION: President Ford, are you taking credit for all of the savings, the $13 billion, is that plus interest or including interest?

THE PRESIDENT: That is money that we didn't spend because those vetoes were sustained. If we didn't spend it, we are saving not only the cash, but the interest that would have had to be paid if we had to borrow more.

We are going to keep on vetoing, vetoing and vetoing because that is the only way we can teach that irresponsible Congress, or a majority of it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if the Communist Party keeps going in Italy, how will that affect our NATO relationship?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said, not only while in the United States, but I have spoken very directly to the top people in NATO coming from the 15 NATO nations, that any communist government would thoroughly undercut, undermind the aims and objectives of NATO and, if there is a communist government in any one of the NATO countries, I think it would have a seriously adverse impact on the justification and the reason for NATO.

I can only say with emphasis, we vigorously oppose any government in NATO that would have a communist head or control vigoroulsy.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I happened to turn my television set on yesterday just in time to hear Mr. Humphrey talking. He referred to your football playing days and talked about you seeing the world upside down. He is a very gracious fellow, but I think if he had been sitting in that hot seat for the 19 months you have been in it, I think the world would be upside down. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to recruit you as a speech writer. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you initial your protrait for me?

THE PRESIDENT: I tell you what, there are 400 people here?

QUESTION: I won't tell anybody. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: We will try and do it, but if I do it for one, I have an obligation to do it for everybody, but if no one else will ask me -- (Laughter) -- or the other alternative is to send it to the White House, and we will sign it there and get it back to you. Let's see how we do it.

Yes, Ma'am.

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QUESTION: Give our love to Betty. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I will. She did very well not only for herself but the Ford family last night. I was very proud of her, and she is coming to Texas next week, I guess. You know she campaigns hard for me, trying to get my votes up to her polls. (Laughter)

QUESTION: The foster grandparents attended a White House conference, and I was a member of the National Conference on Aging.

THE PRESIDENT: The foster grandparent children is one of the outstanding programs, and it costs relatively little, and it calls on the great talent and the experience of grandmothers and grandfathers who go to disadvantaged homes primarily and help with the care and the upbringing of these unfortunate children, and I congratulate you, it is an outstanding program.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 2:24 P.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 9, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Antonio, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
ALAMO PLAZA

12:15 P.M. CST

Senator Tower, Mayor Cockrell, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen:

May I at this time express my very deep appreciation and gratitude to Mayor Cockrell for the very thoughtful and very beautiful gift on behalf of the people of San Antonio. I can say without any hesitation or reservation that both Betty and I will prize this very, very highly, and I thank you very, very much.

At the outset, may I thank the San Antonio Bicentennial Committee and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas for making this memorable occasion possible. It is a tremendous honor for me to join all of you in a new commemoration of the cradle of Texas liberty. These hallowed grounds were already in physical ruins when Colonel Travis sounded his battle call for the people of Texas and all Americans in the world.

But, because of a single great battle, the Alamo has put on the immortality of history. More than a shrine to Texas valor, more than a landmark of American courage, the Alamo is a monument to human freedom. Here the eyes of Texas and the attention of the world focused on more than 180 remarkable men who gave all they had to give in the defense of liberty.

The names of some of these very brave defenders are written large on the page of history. Travis, Davey Crockett, Jim Bowie, among others, have entered the domain of American legend, as well as lore.

But, these were only a few of the more than 180 valiant men who waited out a deadly seige and fought against incredible odds for days on end in the defense of the Alamo of Texas and our great liberty in America.

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We rarely hear of Joseph Bayliss or Antonio Fuentes or Robert Musselman or Charles Zanco, but these men were here too. They fought and died with the same courage that marked their more celebrated compatriots and their names, too, have been written on the rolls of honor that history reserves for only a few. Some of these men came here believing one hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name. Others thirsted for battle with the Napoleon of the West, Santa Ana, but all of them came to the defense of this capital fortress knowing full well that they would meet victory or death.

Like America's Revolutionary heroes a half century earlier, these were men yearning for freedom and a new life, and like those earlier patriots, these men were struggling not only for the priceless treasures of liberty, but for a land of incredible beauty as well as abundance.

As one early Texan wrote, "It does not appear to me possible that there can be a land more lovely with so much worth defending." It is no wonder that when Colonel Travis was issued a demand for surrender, he answered that demand forthrightly with a cannon shot. It is no wonder that more than 180 rugged men made so valiant a defense here, 140 years and one month ago.

This great epic of courage, this great epic of defiance, which is the story of the Alamo, is without doubt a story quite familiar to those of you who live in the shadow of this chapel or in the city that surrounds it. But whether the story is old or new, it is to us and will always be a towering source of inspiration to every American.

In our time, far removed from the sounds of ferocious battle which filled this courtyard in 1836, we look back and honor those more than 180 men who did battle here and thereby nobly advanced the cause of Texas liberty and independence.

All Americans who have gone to battle in defense of liberty share a kindred spirit with these men of the Alamo. Since 1776 Americans have paid a high price for the freedom that each one of us and all of us enjoy. We have paid it in the universal currencies of courage and sacrifice and blood.

We are thankful today that America is at peace and is blessed with freedom. We rejoice that this day finds no Americans in combat anywhere on the face of the globe. Yet, we know that in peace, as in war, we must stand ready to defend liberty. Brave as these men were who fought in this immediate area and despite the heavy casualties they inflicted on their advancing enemy, the garrison that fought here fell at last before an army of superior size and superior strength. In global terms, America must never give away such an advantage to any potential enemy, and we never will.

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All of our courage, all of our skill in battle will profit us very, very little if we fail to maintain the unsurpassed military strength which this dangerous world demands of us, but neither do vast stores of armaments alone constitute America's greatest strength.

Our greatest strength resides within our own hearts, hearts filled with pride and past achievements, hearts filled with hope for a promising future, hearts filled with courage for challenges that stand before us.

It is the duty of everyone of us, whatever our age or race or station in life, to insure that we have something worth defending in America, a land of liberty and opportunity and justice, a Government that guards our rights, defends our shores, protects our safety and sustains our progress and a people of independent spirit, determination and faith.

As we dedicate ourselves again here today to the defense of these priceless treasures, we know that they are the same ones which others fought for on this site 140 years ago.

May we always share their courage,and may Americans always be inspired as we have all been by those thrilling words which echo still in this old courtyard -- "Remember the Alamo."

Thank you very much.

END (AT 12:28 P.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(El Paso, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

EL PASO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

11:58 A.M. MST

THE PRESIDENT: It is real nice to be here in El Paso with your fine Mayor, Don Henderson, and I am looking forward to several interesting, very important gatherings here, but on this occasion I would like to answer any questions from the local press.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: The continued influx of illegal aliens at a time of high unemployment remains our basic concern in this part of the country. The issue has been debated for years and is still bottled up in committees, and the so-called Rodino bill would make it a crime to employ illegal aliens.

What is your position on that measure, and what message do you have in general for Congress on that position?

THE PRESIDENT: We fully recognize that there is somewhere between six and eight million illegal aliens in the United States, many of them all over the United States. We think it is a problem that has to be resolved in order to meet that challenge. I have increased the number of people in the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the next fiscal year. We are trying to speed up the deportation of those who are here illegally.

The Rodino bill has not come out of the committee. It is controversial. There are some who think it puts too much of a burden on the employer and some social agencies feel that it is discriminatory in part in the procedures that are used. Others think this is the most effective way to ferret out and find those illegal aliens that ought to be deported.

If I have to tilt, I will tilt toward the bill, but I recognize it is extremely controversial, and we will see what happens when it gets down to the White House. I am not making any firm commitments until we see the final bill, but it could be a way to help solve this problem.

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QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Many of us in the Christian television community attach a lot of significance to a candidate's religious commitments.

THE PREISDENT: My family have been Episcopalians since before my lifetime. My wife and I both are, but I have taken a commitment in a broader sense, and I am proud of it.

OUESTION: We have heard it said that you have lots of White House prayer sessions.

THE PRESIDENT: We have a number of prayer group meetings in the White House. I think it is once a week or once every other week. I go to those occasionally.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, the El Paso-Las Cruces area is one of several in the country that is hoping to be selected as the site for the proposed Federal Solar Energy Institute. I think the worry is here that even if we can qualify for the technical qualifications, we may not have the voter population that some other parts of the country have.

THE PRESIDENT: The final decision will be made by the Energy Research and Development Agency (Administration) under Dr. Robert Seamans. They have put out the criteria by which the applications will be judged. Sometime in the latter part of 1976 a decision will be made. It will be made strictly on the merits. It is my understanding that El Paso, along with several other Texas communities, is interested.

There are some other applicants or prospective applicants around the country, but the final decision will be made strictly on the merits as interpreted under the criteria issued by the Energy Research and Development Agency (Administration). Dr. Robert Seamans is the head of that, he I will have full faith in his final judgment.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ronald Reagan's continued challenge of yourself for the Presidential nomination and the failure of John Connally to thus far endorse your campaign -- do these two facts eliminate these men from consideration of possible Vice Presidential candidates, and how about a George Bush sticker?

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THE PRESIDENT: As I have said many times, you have a lot of fine people here in Texas. John Tower is one who has committed himself and has an outstanding record in the United States Congress. George Bush, unfortunately, and very regrettably, when he continued to have his name before the Senate, in effect took his own candidacy out.

I think that was very unfortunate and very unfair, but that is what happened. Naturally, I would be very pleased if John Connally would endorse me, but that is a decision he has to make. I think it is premature at this time to establish any criteria for any Vice Presidential candidate. I have to win first, and then we will make some judgments on that.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: It is nice to see you all.

END (AT 12:03 P.M. MST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Amarillo, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT A
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

THE HILTON INN

9:14 P.M. CST

In the many years that I was privileged to represent my Congressional district in the State of Michigan, one of the favorite annual groups that I had the opportunity to discuss, the difficulties, the problems, the prospects, the optimism about Washington was the Grand Rapids Lion's Club. After I have done that for 25 years they finally made me an honorary member. (Laughter)

I have two brothers who are members of the Lion's Club, so the Ford family feels pretty close to all of you. I know what the Lion's International stands for. You have wonderful programs and policies at the local level. I can tell you from personal experience, and I have spoken to many Lion's Clubs, you have outstanding people who believe right and do things right to get things done.

So, let me just say to you it has been a great day and a half to be in the State of Texas. We started in San Antonio, went to Dallas and El Paso, and we are here in Amarillo, and we are going down to Canyon. We will get home, I guess, about 2:30 Palm Sunday morning. (Laughter)

But, it has been a great experience. I have been in Texas a good many years, but I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to meet so many people in this two-day period and to stop here and see all of you.

We will do our best. As President, I hope we have a friend or two in the State of Texas because we think our policies both domestically and internationally are good for America and good for the country and good for all of you and good for the world as a whole, and we will do our very best to maintain that record.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 9:16 P.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Amarillo, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

AMARILLO AIR TERMINAL

7:14 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. I would be delighted to answer any questions from the local press, and particularly from the pretty girl here.

QUESTION: Not many of the Presidential candidates are really speaking to the problems of the farmer. What kind of specifics do you have for the wheat farmer, who is losing money right now?

THE PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, there are some wheat farmers who, because of weather and other problems, may have had a bad crop in the winter wheat situation. But we have a crop insurance program, we have a disaster program to help the unfortunate farmer who has lost a crop because of the weather or other unforeseen difficulties.

We will make certain, we will make positive that those programs move in and take care of those emergency situations. There is no question the Federal Government has a responsibility, and we will do our best.

OUESTION: Mr. President, how much do you think the pardoning of Richard Nixon will hurt you in the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it will hurt at all. I think most responsible thinking people believe that it was far better to get that chapter of American history out of our system and to tackle the problems that we had -- the high inflation, the prospective unemployment, the reassurance of our allies. Those problems were infinitely more important than having a dragged on legal battle that undoubtedly would have been the case.

So, I think most responsible thinking Americans understand that it was the right decision.

MORE

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

QUESTION: You just said that we are unsurpassed in military supremacy. Why did Mr. Reagan accuse or say that Mr. Kissinger said that?

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone who knows the facts knows that the Soviet Union does not surpass the United States in military capability. Our military forces, when you consider the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines, are unsurpassed by any foreign Government. We have the most survivable missile system. We have the most accurate ballistic missile system. We have three to four to one warheads over the Soviet Union, and it is warheads, not missiles, that do the destructive action on another enemy or another force.

Anyone who says that the United States is less than number one doesn't understand all the facts.

QUESTION: Mr. President, who are some of the Vice Presidential hopefuls you are looking at?

QUESTION: John Connally?

THE PRESIDENT: We are looking at a whole number of Vice Presidential potential candidates. We have some outstanding Members of the United States Senate, the House of Representatives, Governors, former Governors, people in public as well as private life. But, I think it is premature to start winnowing down the field. We expect to win in Kansas City. I am certain we will, but until we get closer to it, I think it is premature to make any decision.

QUESTION: On this defense budget, I read the paper this morning about your budget, especially the arms authorization. What is this going to have to do with our taxes in the future?

THE PRESIDENT: The House Armed Services Committee added primarily some extra money for some naval shipbuilding. We are delighted to have the Congress take such action, and I was pleased that the House as a whole seemed to reaffirm what the House Committee on Armed Services recommended.

We are going to have some specific recommendations for perhaps some extra shipbuilding in a month or two, but in the meantime I certainly don't object if the Congress wants to do as they have done in this case.

Thank you all very much.

END (AT 7:17 P.M. CST)

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 9, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Antonio, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
GOP RECEPTION GUESTS

SAN ANTONIO CIVIC CENTER

2:35 P.M. CST

President Ford Art, Senator John Tower, all of you wonderful 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)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE BREAKFAST

THE FAIRMONT HOTEL

8:03 A.M. CST

Thank you very, very much, John. Boy, you are in good form early this morning. (Laughter)

Let me say very quickly but very sincerely, we had a wonderful day yesterday and the fact that John Tower was with me and spoke up as he did this morning was very, very helpful, and I just couldn't have a better spokesman, a better leader in the State of Texas than John Tower. I thank you very much.

I couldn't get a finer group of people here in Dallas than this group here,and we thank you very much on behalf of all the efforts, all the tremendous things you have done in organization and phone banks and the many other chores that have to be done. I thank you, and I think we might surprise some people.

I had some experience doing exactly what you have all done on a number of political campaigns. I was a young, enthusiastic volunteer for Wendell Wilkie back in 1940, (Laughter) and spent most of that summer trying to see that he had his opportunity in the Presidential race.

So, I know precisely what you are doing and how you are trying to do it, and I know that it makes a difference. So, every phone call you make, every effort you make otherwise, that one doesn't appear to have an impact, but when they are accumulative, then there is no question whatsoever that in this kind of race, particularly, and even in the runover in November, what you do every day, what you do a part of the day does make a difference.

So, I thank you, and it is a very significant factor in this contest where I think we are coming from behind, but as I said a moment ago, we might surprise some people who are a little overconfident, I suspect.

Let me tell you a couple of things that you might say when you call individuals and they ask the question, which is very legitimate in their politial arena in which we operate, "Why should I be for President Ford?" Let me tell you what I would say and what Betty has said in New Hampshire, Florida and elsewhere, and what our children say when they are asked that question and they are repeatedly interrogated concerning it.

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Number one, we inherited at the time I became President the most uncertain and most potentially devastating economic situation in the history of the country in the last 40 years. Inflation was 12 percent or more. We have cut it back to 6 percent or less.

Unemployment was about to soar and employment was about to plummet. And through sound, constructive, economic plans and programs that put the focus on the private sector rather than loading up the Federal payroll we now have everything reversed with all things that are supposed to go up, going up.

And at the same time everything that is supposed to be going down is going down. The rate of inflation is in the right direction, downward. The unemployment figures are also down, and one statistic that I found very convincing in talking to people is that a year ago just about now our unemployment was 8.9 percent, and in that span of time from last March or April, we have regained 2 million, 600 thousand jobs.

And today, or in the month of March, we achieved a total employment of 86 million, 700 thousand Americans, the highest number of Americans who have ever worked in our work force in this country.

We have an all time record, so we are doing very, very well. And we are on the way to making it not only increasingly prosperous, but I think on a more permanent basis.

One other question you will be asked: Well, what is the President doing about getting the Government out of my business or out of my hair? Whatever they might say.

In the first place, every department of the Federal Government has been told that they must go through every one of their regulations, they must analyze every one of their forms, and they have specific instructions from the White House to reduce the forms that they require the American people to fill out by 10 percent by July 1st.

And we have outside task forces going into every department so that it's not self-analysis, it's a group of fresh individuals who are looking at their regulations to make sure, to make certain that all of these obsolete, obsolete regulations can be junked, and there are many of them.

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One final question that I am sure is raised, how does the United States stand around the world? Number one, the United States is unsurpassed in military capability. And when you put together our unsurpassed capability militarily with our tremendous U. S. industrial capacity that is superior to any nation,and when you put together with that our unbelievably superior agricultural productivity and our scientific and technological superiority, then you have a package that without question of a doubt makes the United States number one compared to any other nation in the history of the world, period.

And then there is one final ingredient that I think makes a difference to all of us. In the United States of America, we have a great devotion to spiritual religious, deep seeded convictions about what we can do and who we believe in and what our feelings are toward something greater than we, greater than anything, and that spiritual religious conviction gives us the inspiration to keep going to make this freedom, security and this liberty positive and certain and to make America what we want as our dream, the America that our forefathers gave us but improved and added to and just made better by all of us.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 8:12 A.M. CST)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE BREAKFAST

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Canyon, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

WEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

8:55 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much, Dr. Watkins, Senator Tower, my former colleague and very old and dear friend, Bob Bryce, Mayor Bryan, distinguished guests, students, faculty, wonderful people from Canyon, Texas. It is a great, great evening, and I am delighted to come here at the conclusion of two wonderful days and have the inspiration of all of you great people from West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas, and thank you for the very, very warm welcome.

Not long ago you probably know that I spent a little time in Florida, and some of my friends in the Miami area, as I was campaigning down there asked me to bring you a message this evening, a message to the Buffalos. (Laughter)

They asked me to thank you for sending them Mercury Morris. (Laughter)

I have got a long speech here which I have read over, and it is a very good speech, but I would rather sort of discard it and let the press -- they have all written about it anyhow -- (Laughter) -- stand by their stories and make a few observations and comments and then I would more thoroughly enjoy and far greater benefit from your questions, so if you will excuse the discarding of the text and let me say a few things and then we will get to the questions.

It would be much more enjoyable from my point of view, and I think a fine climax to the two great days here in the State of Texas.

I have read about West Texas State University, and back a long time ago at the University of Michigan, I played a little football and have had a long and continuing interest in athletics, and I still read the sports page first because you have a 50-50 chance of being right on the sports page. (Laughter)

On the front page, those odds change. But anyhow I have watched,you know, the progress of those that were in the top 20 or top ten in basketball. Michigan sneaked up there and almost made it, but you had a good season, you are going to do better next year. Good luck to you.

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As I travel, I make a very determined effort to come to college and university campuses because I think the future of this country is among our young people. I have a lot of faith, I have tremendous belief in what the younger generation of this country is going to do in the years ahead.

I know that a period of time over the last ten years there was some lack of rapport between what the younger generation and some of our older generations, but as I travel and visit college campuses around the country, I find that there is a strong belief among younger people today that our form of Government, that our form of economic development, that our aims and ambitions, our hopes and aspirations are what appeals to them, because America, as you look at what we have and what we have gone through and what we can expect, by any standard, comparing us with any other country, America is a great country, and you will make it even greater.

We know it and you know it, and it will be a country that is better than anything we have had and better than anything we can compare it with.

We have gone through a tough period. Twenty months ago when I had the honor and privilege of becoming President, we were suffering some severe economic problems, inflation virtually out of control. We were sliding in at that period even then into the worst economic conditions this country has had in 40 years. Employment was beginning to drop,and unemployment was beginning to rise.

Many people said the answer to our problems was to load up the Federal Government with thousands and thousands and thousands of more employees, to spend ourselves really virtually into bankruptcy.

There were these critics who said we were going to have unemployment of 10 percent. There were those who were, as doomsayers, saying we were going to have a depression like we had in the '30s, and some of you remember it very vividly.

But the American people didn't panic. The American people didn't buy these quick-fixes that look good on paper but hasn't worked, never will work. The American people believed in the free enterprise system. The American people believed in our Government and the net result is the skies are getting brighter, everything that should be going up is going up, and everything that should be going down is going down. Employment is going up, unemployment is going down. The rate of inflation is going down, and the American people have confidence again.

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One survey after another in recent weeks indicate very clearly that the American people have again the faith and the belief in our system, not only our economic system, but our political system, and believe me this is what will make America what our forefathers wanted it to be and what we can make it be.

But, we have responsibilities around the world that fall on our shoulders. Not that we necessarily in every instance want them, but fate has decreed that the United States has a responsibility to work with our allies, to negotiate with our adversaries, to help the less advantaged, to make this globe in which we live not only a better place for us, but a better place for all people.

As we look around the globe today, I think we can say that despite a problem here or a problem there, the world is getting a better place in which to live. It may take longer, but we should never give up the ambition and the hope and the aspiration for that.

Now, one quick comment or two about what I try to stand for, one principle. I will never promise more than I can deliver and we will deliver everything that I promise.

There is one basic truth that I believe in. I think it cuts across all the rhetoric that most people use. It is a basic truth that is so fundamental that I state it this way -- we should never forget that a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

Finally, I think as Americans we can stand tall and strong and say without hesitation, qualification or reservation, when we look at what we have gone through for 200 years and what we have gone through for the last 20 months, we can say individually and collectively we are proud to be Americans and we are proud of America.

The first question.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that Mrs. Ford has a CB radio, and I was wondering what her handle is. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: This is a matter of very high discussion among the Ford family. (Laughter) I am sure what she decides it should be it will be. (Laughter) And I am sure when it is decided, it will be public very quickly. (Laughter)

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QUESTION: I would like to know what your views are on the new book by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, "The Final Days."

THE PREISDENT: I haven't read the book. I was not interviewed by Mr. Woodward or Mr. Bernstein. I can only personally testify as to the parts that I understand he wrote concerning the last few days where I was in a position of moving from Vice President to President.

It appears from what I have heard -- and I haven't read it -- that it is reasonably accurate. It seems, as I understand it, to coincide with the testimony that I gave to the House Committee on the Judiciary in October of 1974 when they asked me to come up and testify as to that period.

I hope that the book is accurate. I am not qualified to pass judgment on all of the incidents or stories that are alleged. In some way I am a little saddened. I am not sure that going back and writing that tragic period in our history is necessarily good, but if it is accurate, that is the record.

If it isn't, I think it is very, very tragic and not having read it, I can't testify to anything more than that.

QUESTION: Mr. President, we -- the farmers and the ranchers of the Pan Handle -- have really inherited a rich and fulfilling future, but we have also inherited some problems, just as you yourself have. But, we feel that without the passage of the Burleson-Curtis estate tax bill we are going to have -- raising the floor from $60,000 to $200,000 -- we are going to have trouble affording to inherit, or have trouble affording this inheritance.

Would you elaborate on this, and would you tell us if you plan to sign this bill as it is coming in out of the committee going to both Houses and it should go across your desk in the next several months?

THE PRESIDENT: I fully recognize the need and necessity for increasing the exemption in our Federal estate tax. As a matter of fact, in January of this year in my State of the Union Message, I indicated that we had to give some relief if we were going to permit owners of so-called family farms to pass them on from one generation to another or small businesses to pass the controlling interest in small businesses from one generation to another.

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At that time I recommended that we ought to have a five-year moratorium in the payment of any estate taxes. No payments would be made under the estate tax laws, plus a 20-year annual payment of whatever the taxes were on annual increments at a 4 percent interest rate.

In checking into the matter further, we have made an additional recommendation that would take that $60,000 exemption which was passed in 1942 up to $150,000. Now, that is a modification of the so-called Burleson bill. I know that arguments can be made that it ought to go to $200,000 rather than $150,000. I know that other figures can be used that might even take it higher than that.

All I can say is I understand the problem. We have submitted what I think is a good increase in the exemption, particularly with the phasing of the payments, if any, beyond the $150,000 so that in effect the Federal Government is financing the transfer over that rather than forcing the new generation to go to the banks.

So, I think our proposal is a good one. If the Congress wants to modify it, of course we will take a look at it. You have no hesitancy to believe that I honestly feel very strongly that we have got to make changes along the lines we have discussed, and I don't think we are too far apart.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, pertaining to the three national health insurance plans that the Congress has been discussing, which of the three are you for, and would you support?

THE PRESIDENT: Are you talking about national health insurance?

QUESTION: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not sure we can identify three. We have had the Kennedy proposal, which up until this year was the Kennedy-Griffith proposal, which would have encompassed a total Federalization of the health delivery system of the United States.

It would have put the Federal Government in the patient-doctor relationship. It would have in effect made the Federal Government collect the payments or the taxes and handle all the monetary transactions and really control medicine in this country. I am opposed to that program, period.

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If you go from that extreme, you can go to the attitude that nothing should be done. I think not now, maybe not for three or four years, there is a potential that we can utilize the private health insurance companies. They are good, they cover now about 80 to 85 percent of the American people, and the Federal Government could utilize their capability, their experience, and have in effect total coverage.

That is, I think, a possibility. But even in that instance we can't go to it now until we get our Federal finances underway; straightened out, I should say.

Now, I should add a postscript. I suspect that many people in this audience tonight are familiar with what we call insurance of catastrophic illness where a person in a family, old or young, or a neighbor or friend, a relative, or even in your own family, has suffered tragic illness where the costs are unbelievable, they wipe out the resources.

It is my feeling that under Medicaid or Medicare some three million people who have had that tragedy ought to be covered for what we call catastrophic illness care. I favor that, but it is a very limited number of cases, and they are the saddest, most tragic in our society.

So, I have recommended that, but that is a far cry from total coverage of what we call national health insurance. We have an obligation to find a mechanism to take care of those who have catastrophic illness, and I will push for it. I will fight for it because I think it is right, and I think it is justified.

But, other than that, no, at this stage, anyhow, any national health insurance program.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that you will be receiving a petition from E. Howard Hunt next month concerning a pardon.

How do you intend to reply to Mr. Hunt's appeal?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not familiar with that petition. That petition will be handled just like any other request. It will go through the Pardon Attorney's Office in the Department of Justice. It is a well-established office that has years and years of experience in handling pardon requests.

If and when they make a recommendation to me from the Office of the Pardon Attorney in the Department of Justice, of course, I will consider it. But for me to pre-judge that without having their recommendations, I think, would be unfair and improper.

I can only say he, along with everybody else, will get the same consideration, and if it comes to my desk, we will give it the same consideration any other person in our society would get.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, quite frankly, I am nervous as a cat at a dog show. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: So was I when I came in.

QUESTION: I am from Memphis, Texas, and I am from the agricultural part of the country, as we are in the whole State. And I would like to ask you what you feel about the farm programs or what type of farm programs might you favor in the next Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, during the 25-plus years that I served in the Congress, most of the time the Congress perpetuated those farm programs where we had the Government running virtually every farm in America with acreage limitations, price supports, et cetera, and the net result was we had vast surpluses of wheat and corn, et cetera, and these vast surpluses were costing the Federal Government about $1 million a day in storage fees, and they were depressing the market where the farmers were trying to sell their commodities.

I think those programs were wrong, and about three years ago, we went to the current farm programs where the net result is farmers produce for the open markets, where we have no surpluses and where American agriculture has shown that, it can out produce any other country in the history of mankind, where we sell about $22 billion a year of American agriculture all over the world.

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It has been the greatest insurance for us in the balance of trade to offset the importation of foreign oil. This present farm program, which I think is a good one, is going to expire next year, and next year, as President, I am going to recommend the extension of this program for the next four or five years.

I think it is sound. I think it is good for agriculture. I think it is good for America, and I think it is good for the world.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you being an ex-football player and presumably a BMOC --

THE PRESIDENT: You are giving me a big build-up. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Well, that is all I know about you so far. (Laughter)

What is your concept of winning in America, your concept or your philosophy about America has to come first in everything and win?

THE PRESIDENT: I did compete in athletics at the University of Michigan. I competed athletically as well as scholastically. I have competed all my life. I think competition is good. It has to be fair. But, competition stimulates me, and I think it stimulates the vast majority of Americans to do better.

The net result is our country has advanced more rapidly and in the process of advancing more rapidly, we have done more things for more people in this country than any other country in the history of mankind, materialistically, but we haven't lost our spiritual and moral and religious dedication, either.

So, competition, if it is within the rules, is good for each of us, and I think it is good for our country to compete with other countries because in that process we have advanced scientifically and technologically. We have, as a consequence, improved our capability to produce in agriculture, in industry.

This competition has helped us retain our form of Government which, by any standard, is the freest in the history of mankind. So, I am a believer in competition. I can be a good winner and I can be a good loser, but the competition is good, and I hope we never lose it in America.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, first I want to thank you for vetoing the irresponsible child care bill.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. That was Number 47. I think the Congress will sustain it because it is bad, I think, organizationally speaking. I think it is bad for many other reasons, plus it just was another instance of the Federal Government setting standards and pre-empting the right of individual States to set standards when the record is very clear that States do set high and responsible standards, dependent upon the circumstances in each State, and there is no reason whatsoever why the Federal Government had to set a national standard in this area. So, it wasn't hard to veto it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that over 90 percent of our nation's businesses are self-employed and family businesses, yet our politicians insist on referring to this large segment of our economy as small. Is it possible, Mr. President, to begin action in Washington to remove the stigma of "small," a most repugnant title placed on this most energetic segment of our economy? The IRS at least refers to us -- I must include myself -- as self-employed. It sounds better.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't get the impression in Washington that we consider small business or the self-employed as a title of stigma. If I can recall the many debates on the floor of the House of Representatives and discussions I have had with the Democratic and Republican leadership in the Oabinet Room, Members of Congress as well as myself honor and respect small business, including the self-employed.

Most of the condemnation that you are getting today, some of it fair and much of it unfair, comes at what we call conglomerates or massive business organizations that employ literally thousands and thousands and do billions of dollars worth of business.

I think the Congress, as well as we in the Executive Branch, are grateful for and appreciate tremendously, the contributions of small business. You are not going to be hurt by anything done by us or in the Congress, I can assure you of that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a year ago I wrote you a letter on how us kids should get involved in the energy crisis, and I received a letter in return. Now I would like to know what the Government is doing to conserve our energy for our future?

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THE PRESIDENT: That is a very good question, but let me answer it this way. About the time that you wrote me that letter a year ago, maybe a little longer, I submitted to the Congress a comprehensive energy program aimed at achieving energy independence for the United States by 1985.

There were two basic concepts: One, the stimulation of more production of energy in the United States on the one hand and, secondly, to conserve energy on the other. Among those legislative proposals to stimulate more production, I recommended the decontrol of domestic oil production and the decontrol of natural gas production.

Unfortunately, the Congress, after pulling and hauling for about 12 months, finally sent down to the White House, the Oval Office, a marginally acceptable oil bill, which I with some reluctance signed. I signed it because it had some provisions which were very helpful in the conservation field, and it had some advantages over a period of time of decontrolling our domestic oil production, a 40-month period. I can assure you I will use every possible provision of that legislation to accelerate the decontrol of the domestic oil industry.

Secondly, the Congress has not acted on deregulation of natural gas. The Senate passed a good bill, the House passed a terrible bill, and I am afraid they are at loggerheads. But now let's turn to conservation. In the energy proposals that I submitted, we recommended about eight individual items that would conserve energy. Congress passed four of them. They are being implemented, and it is encouraging to note that our domestic utilization of oil and gas, energy as a whole, is down about 2 percent from 1973 and 1974.

Now, some of that has come about because we have had an economic recession. I concede that. But actually, if you compare it, 1975 to the two previous years, the American people did quite well. They drove less fast, or drove slower, they turned down their thermostats, Industry had a great program of using less energy in the manufacturing of their products.

In many, many ways the American people undertook a good conservation program, not as well as we would have liked, but we did make headway and if we can get several more pieces of legislation, I think we will do even better.

We have to conserve, we have to stimulate our domestic production of oil and gas, we have to spend money in research and development, in the exotic fuels, solar energy, and I might quote for you, if it would be helpful, two years ago we spent about $40 million in research and development for solar energy. This year we are spending $116 million, and next year $160 million.

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This is a great potential. Your Government is making a massive effort to the extent that we can to conserve on the one hand and to increase production on the other.

QUESTION: Mr. President, we have time for one more question.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, gosh, can we take a couple more? If you can stand it, I am enjoying it. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Mr. President, what qualities in a leader do you deem necessary for a person in the Presidency to possess? As we go to the polls as voters in November we need to be aware of these qualities of leadership. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: From my 27 plus years in public life -- 25 years in the Congress and two plus years as Vice President and President -- I would summarize it this way: I think a person in public life has to be honest with himself and frank and candid in his relationship with people, whether he represents a Congressional district or represents the 215 million people in the United States. That is number one.

Number two, I think there has to be a basic intelligence that is related to your education, whether it was in school or whether it was in the business world or whether it was in your profession. You have to have not only an educational background, but an experienced background. Experience is vitally important as one sees day after day the kind of problems that come across the President's desk.

I can assure you that it is not an eight-hour day, and don't get me wrong, I love it. I can't wait to get to the office every morning, and I don't go home tired and worn out and otherwise unhappy at night.

But I think you have to have some experience because the wide spectrum of problems that come to the desk, say yes or no, you seldom can say maybe. You have to have experience, you have to be able to make decisions decisively. You have to have a capability of coming forth with constructive suggestions to solve our problems.

You just can't sit back and say this is wrong, it is terrible, or that is wrong, and I can't do anything about it. You have to look at the problem through experience, through education, through good judgment, through honesty. You have to come forth with some solutions, not just be critical, and those are the kinds of ingredients that I think are essential and vital for any President, whether it is President in 1976 or whether it is in the future or whether it has been the case in the past.

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QUESTION: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you support legislation that would repeal the Buckley amendment and do you think that this amendment has had an adversary effect on the effectiveness of educators in making unbiased reports and recommendations on students?

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, the Buckley amendment, which requires the public disclosure of all school applicants as well as the school records of students who are in colleges and universities, is that correct?

QUESTION: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the experience that has been held in the last 12 or 18 months since that went into effect would argue very affirmatively that there ought to be modification in that legislation. I know that Senator Buckley, when he offered the amendment and when it was passed by the Congress, did it with the best of intentions.

But, I think experience has proven that it went too far. It is inflexible and there ought to be some changes, and I hope that the Congress will do so.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I am sure that you are aware that scientists in our country are working toward a cure for paralysis in spinal cord injuries, and these men must have money for research. I would like to ask you if you plan to support these men in every way so that thousands like me can get out of the wheelchairs?

THE PRESIDENT: I know that the Veterans Administration asked for additional funding and help and assistance to continue or to expand research in the areas in which you have indicated. It is my best recollection that we recommended an additional amount of money for the expansion of such research to try and find some answers, not only answers in the United States but to work with other scientists around the world.

I was told at the time we considered the budget that there were some excellent programs in other countries, including the Soviet Union, in this particular field. So, I can assure you that whatever funds the VA or the National Institute of Health or any other agency of the Federal Government can come up with a program, there will be no hesitancy as far as I am concerned, in recommending the funds they request.

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QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like for you to comment on what your personal fiscal policy is and what it will be in the next year. I would also like to know what you think the unemployment rate will be at the end of this year and at the end of the next Administration.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer the last question first. In the budget that we submitted for fiscal year 1977, we forecast that during 1976 the unemployment rate would end at the end of this calendar year at a rate of about 7 percent. In the first two months or three months of 1976, the actual results have been better than we anticipated.

I respectfully refer you back to a year ago when it was 8.9 percent. It is now, according to the figures for March, 7.5. It is my judgment that by the end of calendar year 1976 we will have an unemployment rate below 7 percent, and it will continue downward in the months ahead after January 1, 1977.

Now, as a fiscal policy, I submitted this year a budget that calls for a 50 percent cut in the rate of growth in Federal expenditures. If you go back for the last ten years and look at the Federal budget, you will find that during that period of time the expenditures in the Federal Government grew at a 10 to 11 percent rate per year.

Let me illustrate what it meant in dollars. For the current fiscal year we expect the Federal Government will spend roughly $372 or $373 billion in 13 months. If we don't change a program, if there is no new law passed, just more people going on this program or that program or the cost of living escalators in the many programs, the rate of growth in dollars in the Federal budget will be over $50 billion in 12 months. That is just the growth factor at a 10 to 11 percent increase.

We can't sustain, we can't justify that kind of growth. So, I recommended a budget for fiscal year 1977 that cuts that growth rate in half from 10 to 11 percent down to 5 to 5-1/2 percent and set a spending ceiling of $394.4 billion.

Now tragically, the Congress and the two budget committees have already added to that spending figure by -- well, from 394 to 413 to 414. So, that is the practical problem we face.

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I can assure you that we are going to do our utmost to hold the spending line at the figure that I indicated -- $394.4 billion -- and we are going to veto, as we have in the past, any expenditures over the budget figures. As you look at the record for the last 19 or 20 months, I have vetoed 47 bills, 39 have been sustained, and we have saved $13 billion, and we are going to continue to do it in order to keep control over the rate of growth of Federal spending.

Now, what will be the net result? If Congress will go along and the American people will support it, we can have a balanced budget in fiscal year 1979 and we can have an additional tax reduction at the same time.

One more here, and then one over there.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this is in reference to the Federal housing assistance program that you signed into law in 1974. As it stands right now, Amarillo has a five-year contract with HUD on this program, but Congress has only appropriated money for one year. How do you feel that Congress will react on this program for the succeeding four years?

THE PRESIDENT: Are you talking about the Section 8 program?

QUESTION: Yes, I believe that is it.

THE PRESIDENT: I recommended for fiscal year 1977 I think it was 400,000 units of Section 8 housing.

QUESTION: That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: Naturally, I hope the Congress will go along with it. I think it is the best of the subsidized housing programs that have come from the Congress or from the White House.

I personally believe that Congress will go along wit it, and we hope so because I think it is a good program. We will certainly try to prod and push them.

What is your impression, John? (Laughter)

Senator Tower is the senior Republican on the Committee on Banking and Currency in the Senate. He probably knows a lot more about housing legislation than I. But, I think it is the best of our subsidized housing programs, and I hope the Congress will go along with it.

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QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: You have probably been asked this before, but what are your feelings on abortion and, if you are against it, would you support an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the United States Supreme Court decision went too far. I think in effect it went further than it had to. On the other hand, I do not agree with those who would seek to amend the Federal Constitution to have an inflexible approach to abortion, either. I think that is much too drastic.

Furthermore, I don't think you will get two-thirds of the Members of the Congress to pass it, and I don't think you will get three-quarters of the States to adopt it. So, it is not a realistic solution, even though I think it is too drastic in one respect.

So, you have a Supreme Court decision that I think goes too far and some of the other proposals to amend the Constitution likewise go too far. It seems to me that we have got to move the decision of the Supreme Court to a position more to the middle, and I think the Supreme Court, when it recognizes the overall attitude of the American people, it will respond to a more moderate approach than the one that they took several years ago.

That is the kind of approach that I would strongly support.

QUESTION: Mr. President, last year we had trouble, the farmers had trouble, in the grain deal with Russia that blew everything -- it was all over the papers, and I was wondering, foreign markets are agricultures -- we have to have foreign markets. Are we going to have to look out in the next four years to see whom and how much we can sell grain to?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that under my Administration you have had more grain sold abroad in the last two years than any other Administration in the history of the United States. I think that is good.

Now, the problem you raise of that temporary suspension in 1975 is one that I think if you are objective and analyze it, it was for the benefit of the grain producers in this country. Bear in mind that it was precipitated by what? There was an action taken to have a strike on the docks of Houston and New Orleans, et cetera.

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If those strikes had not been ended, you would have had no ships taking American grain from the harbors, you would have had the grain piled up on the docks, you would have had the railroads stopped, they couldn't have handled the grain from your elevators and from your farms. It would have been an unbelievable mess, and it wouldn't have gotten one bushel more of grain overseas.

Now, the best way to solve it was to get an agreement with the Soviet Union, as we did, for a five-year program with a minimum sale of six million tons per year and anything above that that they want to buy.

What does that do? That guarantees the grain producers of this country a market for five years, beginning next September of six million tons per year instead of one year having no sales to the Soviet Union, the next year ten million tons, the next year no sales, the next year five million tons. You have a sustained, guaranteed market in the Soviet Union, plus those markets in Japan, plus those markets in Eastern Europe, plus those markets in Western Europe.

I think this is a good deal, and the temporary suspension that we had in the sales was necessary to consummate this agreement for a five-year market of six million tons or more for the American farmer. I think it was the right thing to do. I don't think it was harmful in the long run. I think it was beneficial to American agriculture.

One final aspect of that. I would like to make very clear the allegation has been made in some quarters that this President capitulated to Mr. George Meany. There is nothing true about that accusation, and may I use as a good illustration of my independence from Mr. Meany, I vetoed the common situs picketing bill, which he wanted very badly.

OUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: Could I ask a question?

THE PRESIDENT: You sure may. I couldn't turn you down. (Laughter)

QUESTION: What I wanted to ask was, are you going to have John Connally as your Vice Presidential runningmate?

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THE PRESIDENT: I have to get nominated myself first. But, I have said before, and I repeat here, John Connally is a very good personal friend of mine. He has had a fine public record -- six years as Governor of Texas, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of the Navy. He certainly has all the qualifications.

But, I hasten to add we have some other outstanding potential candidates, and John Tower, with his experience, certainly should be one who would qualify for consideration. I think it is just premature to make any decision at this time. We are lucky in the Republican Party to have such a wealth of talent from all over the country, and it will make a good team, let me assure you.

Thank you very, very much.

Thank you all. I have loved being here in Canyon. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to have an opportunity to try and respond to the good questions and the wonderful spirit of the West Texas State University students, faculty and townspeople of Canyon.

I thank you for your generous and very wholesome and warm feeling. It has been a wonderful conclusion to a wonderful two days in Texas.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 9:46 P.M. CST)

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