

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
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SOUTH CAROLINA STATE CONVENTION
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I'm delighted to be back in the south in my stomping ground. The size and enthusiasm of this crowd demonstrates the strength of the South Carolina Republican Party, and Bob Dole, since he was elected to Congress 27 years ago, he has worked with you to reach this point. Long before he served as Republican National Chairman, during those years as Chairman of our party, and through the years since, he's been out in the vineyards working for Republican candidates, working to strengthen our Party.

I want to congratulate State Party Chairman Van Hipp, State Committeeman and State Senator, John Coursen, and State Committeewoman Beverly Gosnell for their tremendous leadership. Thanks to all of you here today, a new day has dawned. We've talked for 30 years about the dawning of the new South. Well, the dawn has come, and it's the beginning of a brand new day for the entire Sun Belt. You can see it in the phenomenal population shift, the booming economy, and the new political landscape. The south and particularly South Carolina -- has become the center of the political battleground and will play a pivotal role in American politics for decades to come.

All Republicans can delight in the fact we have one of our own in the South Carolina Statehouse this year -- Governor Carroll Campbell brings to South Carolina his important experience as a legislator. I know how effective he was for South Carolina in the House, fighting for improved roads and air service to South Carolina, which will attract new business and industry, creating more jobs for South Carolinians. And already Carroll Campbell is proving to be a leader among governors.

Republicans throughout the South owe a great debt to your outstanding Senior Senator, Strom Thurmond, who led countless thousands of fellow Southerners to a new home in the Republican Party. Strom has been a proven leader in the Senate for over a quarter-century. His tenure as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee was marked by fairness and distinction. He provides outstanding service to the people of South Carolina and the nation on the Armed Services Committee, the Labor and Human Resources Committee, and the Veterans Affairs Committee. And I can attest personally to the fact that he's about the best advocate in the U.S. Senate.

And South Carolina is most fortunate to have two outstanding Republican House Memmbers, Floyd Spence and Arthur Ravenel. Floyd Spence is a strong and effective advocate of defense, a crucial industry in this sate. You are very fortunate to have your newest member of the Republican Congressional Delegation, Arthur Ravenel, in Washington. He and Congressman Spence bring an effective and united voice for South Carolina to the Armed Services Committee.

The fact that we now have such fine leaders in government is due in no small part to those who give to the political process their heart, as well as their material resources -- who share their time, their energy, their commitment. And we know it takes all that to win elections.

I'm looking at just such a gathering today, and if I impart nothing else, I want to express the personal gratitude I feel, along with so many others in the Reagan Administration, for all you do to make what we do possible.

We are gathered today at a very special time, for it was two hundred years ago this month that 55 men gathered in what was then known as the Pennsylvania State House to consider alternatives to the existing Articles of Confederation. Four South Carolinians, John Rutledge, Charles Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and Pierce Butler were among the assembled. History tells us that what we know as the Constitutional Convention didn't get underway on time. In fact, it started two weeks late -- because the roads to Philadelphia were so bad! It took George Washington four days to travel by carriage from Mt. Vernon to Philadelphia. Today, that same trip on the Metroliner takes one hour and thirty seven minutes. Of course, if the convention were held today, there'd not only be men representing the colonies, but women as well.

Two hundred years later, we pause to remember the men of Philadelphia. Yet it isn't their daily debates that we recall, nor even the individual signers, most of whom are lost in the pages of time. No: it's the idea behind the document -- the idea that America was different because here, we the people would rule ourselves.

The document whose bicentennial we observe this year was tailored to fit the changing needs of a dynamic and fluid society. It was a coat woven to fit an infant republic of three million souls, and which now clothes the 240 million Americans in opportunity and freedom. The framers wrote for the ages. They embraced timeless beliefs in self-government and shared responsibility. For they believed in the ability of seemingly ordinary people -- people like you and me -- to accomplish extraordinary things. To make their own decisions. To realize their own destinies.

The drafters of the Constitution drew up a challenge as well as a charter. They fashioned a popular government, knowing that the only way it

could survive was to enlist the energies and devotion of the people themselves.

They crafted a government strong enough to protect our liberties -- but limited enough to keep from crushing them in its embrace. Thomas Jefferson said it well: "That government is best which governs least, because its people discipline themselves."

Recently, I happened to come across a speech on citizenship and democracy which I gave in 1978, when I was a member of the Federal Trade Commission. In that speech, I indicated my concern that many citizens seemed to have lost the sense of pride and commitment to the ideal of America that once prevailed among our people. I spoke of a decline in national confidence, and the rise of public apathy in its place. Sadly, many Americans no longer felt that as individuals they could make a difference. And if they stopped believing in themselves, I wondered, then how could they believe in the American dream of individual effort and national service? As our citizens turned inward, we were in danger of turning out the lights in America. Little wonder that the 1970s were dubbed the "Me Decade."

Happily, I stand before you nine years later to report what you already know -- all that has changed. The "Me Decade" has been replaced by the "We Decade," as citizens all across America have regained confidence in themselves and in the mission of their country to serve as a beacon of hope to an oppressed planet.

Today, we are witnessing nothing less than an American renaissance, a grassroots revival of those fundamental principles that give character to our land and reality to our dreams. We are renewing the ancient ideals of hard work, pride of family, love of freedom and trust in God. We have rediscovered our roots -- and we are reaching for the stars.

President Reagan came to office sensing this thirst in Americans for a return to basic principles. He has helped restore faith and confidence in our institutions and in ourselves. He has reminded us that we can strengthen the land we love by meeting several important challenges. These challenges go to the heart of who we are and who we want to be.

First, there is the economy. Few doubt the strength of the American economy today. For 53 consecutive months we have enjoyed the benefits of economic growth. During that time, productivity has risen. Inflation had declined to the lowest levels since the early 1960's. Interest rates have been cut in half. Unemployment is at a seven-year low, and over 13 million new jobs have been created. We've cut taxes across the board, so that all Americans can keep more of what they earned. And last year, we enacted the most sweeping tax reform legislation in decades, so that all Americans know that they are paying their fair share.

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Simultaneously, we are called on to meet the challenge of defending freedom in a dangerous, sometimes desperate era. Since taking office, the President has made significant headway in rebuilding our defenses and making America more secure. But now is no time to rest on our laurels, or let down our guard. Skimping on defense now could undo all we have achieved. It could undermine not only our own security, but that of our closest friends.

There is nothing new to the cries for less defense and more domestic spending. During one debate in the Constitutional Convention, a delegate rose to his feet and moved that "the standing army be restricted to 5,000 at any time." This prompted George Washington, as presiding officer, to suggest an amendment of his own -- to prohibit any foreign enemy from invading the American soil with more than 3,000 troops!

But what are we defending? We defend more than factories -- more than shopping malls -- more than territory. We defend the values that have blessed this land and set it apart in the family of nations. The record of the Constitutional Convention leaves no doubt that our nation's founders were sustained by their faith in God. As George Washington once said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

I'm reminded of a story that President Reagan once told me. How he first learned to deal with enormous challenge and stress as a newly-elected governor of California. "Each morning began," he says, "with someone standing before my desk describing yet another disaster. The feeling of stress became almost unbearable. I had the urge to look over my shoulder for someone I could pass the problem to. One day it came to me that I was looking in the wrong direction. I looked up instead of back. I'm still looking up. I couldn't face one day in this office if I didn't know I could ask God's help!" Let us never forget the source of our strength and courage.

To meet the challenges I've discussed is to be reminded every day of what it is that distinguishes this constitutional republic from the rest of mankind. The Constitution does not merely grant rights to the people. It reminds us of our responsibilities to each other and to America. Benjamin Franklin, who could have written America's first manual on public service, once said, "The most important task we are undertaking as a nation is to solve the magnificent challenge of being a free people." Two centuries later, his words have not lost their resonance. They still shine forth, from the red brick state house of colonial Philadelphia to guide our steps along the narrow path of duty.

There's a famous story about Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who once found himself on a train, but couldn't locate his ticket.

While the conductor watched, smiling, the 88-year old Justice Holmes searched through all of his pockets without success. Of course, the conductor recognized the distinguished Justice, so he said, "Mr. Holmes, don't worry. You don't need your ticket. You will probably find it when you get off the train and I'm sure the Pennsylvania Railroad will trust you to mail it back later."

The Justice looked up at the conductor with some irritation and said, "My dear man, that is not the problem at all. The problem is not, where is my ticket. The problem is, where am I going?"

Where, indeed. It's a question every American should constantly ask himself. This bicentennial year of the Constitution offers a special opportunity to ponder the meaning of that sacred document, and the challenge it poses to our generation. For the decisions we make today can affect the lives of other people as dramatically as the Founding Fathers have affected us.

Take, for example, the problem of drug and alcohol abuse, a pervasive problem in our society. That means transportation is not exempt. To combat drug use in the transportation system, I have undertaken a strong program of random drug testing, and counseling and rehabilitation for DOT employees who hold safety and security-related positions and who may be suffering from a drug problem. Also, we'll address such problems among airline and railroad personnel. We are trying to be sensitive to our employees' needs, and provide help with this terribly serious problem without the loss of a job. A major element of our program is to provide the means for rehabilitating employees who need help. My senior staff and I will be subject to the random drug testing program, along with 27,000 other DOT employees in safety and security-related positions.

But as we move forward with these initiatives, government action must never become so extreme that it threatens the preservation of individual liberty -- which of course is guaranteed by the Constitution. Thus, in the implementation of any drug testing program, let me emphasize that our watchword at all times will be the utmost respect for individual dignity and privacy.

The future also calls for more privatization of government functions that can be best performed by the private sector. The sale of our government-owned railroad, Conrail, was the flagship of privatization. I had one of the most exciting moments of my life in March standing on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange as eager investors bought every last share of Conrail. And we're working on the privatization of space. For three years I've argued within the government that the federal monopoly in space must be ended. Last summer, the private sector was given the green light. The president announced that routine commercial satellites would no longer be launched by the space shuttle. Now if there ever was a case for

privatization, this is it. Companies for twenty years have been manufacturing rockets for Uncle Sam and at a highly reliable rate. And it is exciting to watch this fledgling industry move out now to compete against the French, the Chinese and the Russians.

The future also calls for turning more functions back to the states. Early next month, I will hand over the keys to the last two federally-owned airports, Washington National and Dulles, to an independent regional commission. It took three years of hard work! We sold the Alaska Railroad to the state. And it's high time we think about returning the federal highway program to the states.

For the fourth time in five years, federal highway construction funds were held up last fall because Congress felt compelled to dictate spending rather than allowing the states to set their own priorities. As a result, many states had used up most of their construction funds before legislation was finally passed. Thousands of jobs were threatened. It's time for a change in our highway program, so we never again have to say to the American people that their government is incapable of properly managing the funds entrusted to it. Privatization and federalism have enormous ramifications for the future of America.

Daniel Webster was not in Philadelphia in 1787. But no one studied the handiwork of Madison, Washington and Franklin with greater care. And the result of Webster's lifelong study was a warning to those who would come after him. "We may be tossed upon an ocean where we can see no land -- nor perhaps, the sun or stars," he said. "But there is a chart and a compass for us to study, to consult, and to obey. The chart is the Constitution."

As a people who have lived with freedom under the guidance of the Constitution for two centuries, we can forget how precious and rare that freedom is. All of us have an obligation to participate actively in the system of self-government the Constitution establishes. And that's why you're here today. It is an obligation we owe not only to ourselves, but to the framers of our government -- men and women who risked everything for freedom, brave men and women who have bonded this nation with their blood and their toil and their sacrifice.

I thought about this a lot on Monday, Memorial Day, as Bob and I drew strength from stirring speeches and music at Arlington Cemetery. I recalled an experience that Bob and I had when we visited the Soviet Union a few years ago for the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Trade Conference -- an experience I will never forget.

At our embassy in Moscow, I talked to members of two families from Siberia, who had sought asylum from the religious persecution they had encountered in their own mother country.

In attempting to reach our embassy's gates, one of the young sons was caught by Russian guards, beaten in full sight of the two families, and then dragged away. Not until three weeks later did they learn that he had been thrown on a train back to Siberia. It was nearly five years -- separated from their friends and family and living in the basement of that embassy -- before the Soviet government allowed those families to emigrate to Israel.

As we drove up to the airport to begin our long trip home and I looked at that airplane sitting on the runway with "United States of America" emblazoned on its side, I just thanked God I could come home to a country where freedom and democracy are more than just hollow spaces.

Every citizen has a stake in government that lives up to its noblest promises. Each one of us is obliged to pass on to our children the freedoms that men of Philadelphia entrusted to us. They created something unique in the annals of history. Let us not only preserve their past -- let us make certain that the present is worthy of preservation, so that in another 200 years, our descendants can say as proudly as we do today, "I am an American."

Thank you very much.

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