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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
SIGNING CEREMONY FOR
S.932, SYNTHETIC FUELS BILL

The South Grounds

(4:04 P.M. EDT)

THE PRESIDENT: I had to take a minute to speak to my heroes. Senator Scoop Jackson who's representing Bob Byrd -- Bob is on the floor now on one of the important Appropriations bills -- Majority Leader Jim Wright in the House, other members of Congress and distinguished Americans who are here because you are deeply concerned about the energy security of our country:

This is a proud day for America. The keystone of a National Energy Policy is finally being put into place.

Our intolerable dependence on foreign oil threatens our economic security and also threatens our national security, and America's energy security is the key to both because all three of those -- economic, national and energy -- are links in the same chain of American security.

From the very moment of assuming office, I've maintained that the energy problem is a clear and present danger to our lives and to our livelihood -- both as individuals and also as a nation.

Just as foreign oil drives our cars, so foreign high prices of oil drives America's inflation, and with that inflation comes unemployment and also declining productivity in this country -- and scarcity and poverty, economic deprivation even approaching chaos among the less developed countries of the world.

These are the hard facts and it's been very difficult for Americans to face these facts, but during the last 12 months, Americans in all walks of life and at all levels of government have shown our determination that this country will produce more, discover more, create more and conserve more energy and that we will use American knowledge and American resources and American labor to do it.

Passage of the Energy Security Act is the highlight of our efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive National Energy Policy -- a policy that meets our energy problems; a policy that sets out a program for Americans to follow in the future; a policy that gives us weapons to wage and to win the energy war.

Our legislative and executive accomplishments already are unprecedented in this area and our joint effort is already producing impressive results. This has not been an easy achievement, but I'd like to outline for you very briefly what Americans have already done to make me so proud.

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We've cut imports since 1977 by more than one and a half million barrels of oil per day. Prior to that time, there had been a steady upward trend in the amount of oil from overseas that we were buying. So far this year, imports are down 12.9 percent below what they were the same months of 1979.

Gasoline consumption is down 8 percent and total oil consumption has dropped more than 9 percent.

We've reversed the decline in domestic crude oil production and we're mining more American coal, our most abundant natural resource. Coal is being produced now at more than 16 percent higher than it was the same period a year ago.

This new Energy Security Act will help the American people to conserve more energy than I've already outlined and will help industry of all kinds in the energy field to produce more energy than they are today.

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This legislation will also help to create more than 70,000 new jobs a year to design, to build, to operate and to supply resources for synthetic fuels plants and for production of alcohol and other biomass fuels. Thousands of other jobs will be created in the conservation field and in the production of solar energy, and indirect employment, not included in these figures, will be generated by all these efforts.

This bill establishes a corporation to encourage production of 2 million barrels a day of synthetic fuels by the year 1992, by converting coal to synthetic oil and gas and by extracting oil from shale and from tar sands, and by other means.

The Solar Energy and the Energy Conservation Bank will provide over 3 billion dollars in direct subsidies to homes and to industries to conserve energy and to use renewable supplies of energy, helping us to reach our goal of deriving 20 percent of all the energy we use by the end of this century directly from the sun.

This act will also provide over \$1 billion to help produce biomass energy, such as gasohol. This year alone, 1980, we will quadruple our capacity to produce gasohol.

The act also recognizes that energy and environmental problems are closely interrelated, both very serious problems. Under the provisions of this act we will complete a comprehensive study of the Problem of acid rain and the other impacts of fossil fuel consumption on our environment, our economy and on our society.

In sum, the Energy Security Act will launch this decade with the greatest outpouring of capital investment, technology, manpower and resources since the space program. Its scope, in fact, is so great that it will dwarf the combined efforts extended to put Americans on the moon and to build the entire Interstate Highway System of our country.

This tremendous commitment will make the 1980s a time of national resolve and also a brave and exciting achievement.

In the past when we switched from wood to coal, there was a great amount of fear and trepidation. And then when we switched from coal to oil there was also uncertainty about the future. But those changes, as we well know, brought only better things to Americans; a better lifestyle, more leisure time, more essentials like electricity and heat. Now, as we switch from foreign oil to American fuels, again we stand only to gain for our economy, our security, and our confidence.

Our accomplishments are historic, but our work is not yet complete. Last year the Energy Mobilization Board was recommitted to conference; a serious disappointment and a major setback. I urge the leaders of the Congress to reconvene the Energy Mobilization Board conference committee to produce an effective board which will expedite the process of project approval and which respects environmental protection as well. Utility oil backout legislation, which will let us replace the consumption of oil in natural gas and utility plants with more plentiful supplies of energy like coal, should be passed also without delay. Only the last few days, the Senate had a major victory in the passage of this important legislation.

I would like to point out that the fight for energy security is not a partisan fight. I ask the Members of both parties to complete our energy agenda in the same spirit of cooperation that has brought us the success which we are celebrating today.

The battle for America's energy security has been joined. There will be no retreat. We must recognize our energy

problem for what it truly is, our nation's greatest opportunity in a lifetime.

We are the same Americans who just 10 years ago put a man on the moon. We're the generation that dedicated our society to change, social change, to provide equality of opportunity and equality under the law for all Americans, and to end generations of discrimination, to provide human rights and justice. We have the knowledge, the wisdom and the skill derived from more than two centuries of overcoming obstacles. We have the will and the power of a mature nation and we have the vision and the determination of a young people.

In just a few days we will celebrate the birthday of our declaration of political independence. I can think of no more fitting birthday present than this declaration of energy security or energy independence, which I'm very proud to sign now with all of you present today. Thank you very much. It's a great day for America.

(Applause.)

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It would really be appropriate to call on every one of these distinguished members of the Congress on the stage, but I will call on two -- one to represent the fine work that was done in the Senate, and one to represent the work that was done in the House.

First I would like to call on the chairman of the committee responsible for this legislation in the Senate, Senator Scoop Jackson. Scoop? (Applause.)

SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. First off, I want to express to you, to the Administration, Secretary Duncan, our appreciation for the support -- all out support -- that we had in this long fight.

Energy legislation represents contentious legislation. There isn't anything you do that can make people totally happy, but it brings out the worst in all of us and any alternative source that you suggest, people object. Even out in my country we're putting up windmills, but we're getting objections on the ground that it results in noise pollution and interferes with television reception.

And so there is not any alternative source that you do not have trouble.

This program is a result of many years of effort. On the platform is Senator Randolph who, with Senator O'Manney, started the ball rolling 1944. The present legislation is a result of 12 years of effort. The man in the Senate who really led the charge is Senator Johnston of Louisiana, and I want him to stand. (Applause.) He deserves all the credit, Mr. President, on the Senate side. I simply delegated my responsibility to him, and he did a terrific job.

Mr. President, as you mentioned, this was a bipartisan effort. Senator Hatfield on the Republican side -- the ranking minority member -- backed up Senator Domenici, did a terrific job, made possible the movement of this legislation through the Senate in short order. I want both of them to stand. (Applause.)

Senator Ford, of course, has no interest in coal. (Laughter.) Stand up. (Applause.) He worked around the clock and even Hawaii has tremendous interest in this sort of thing -- Senator Matsunaga, please stand. (Applause.)

And way out west -- Senator Church, who did a great job in helping all of us on the committee. As the President has mentioned, the bill was more than just a synthetic fuels program, but it covered some eight or nine additional titles involving everything from gasohol to, shall we say conservation.

And so we have here, representatives of the other committee -- Senator Sarbanes of Maryland, Senator Riegle -- they're all modest. I guess none of them are running. (Laughter.) Senator Tsongas? I know that Herman Talmadge will stand up. You're not running, but -- (applause).

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This is the largest, it's not spending, this is the largest investment program ever undertaken by the Government of the United States to prosecute a single project except in time of war. We're talking about \$100 billion in round numbers and we're all very proud of this noble beginning. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: This bill actually started as a very small proposal, with profound significance by Congressman Bill Moorhead, but it was adopted by the House, sent to the Senate, and then as part of the bill incorporated many titles which will transform the life and the attitude and the security of our whole country. To speak for the House, I'd like to call now on Majority Leader Jim Wright, Texas, who played such a crucial rule in this legislation. Jim Wright. (Applause.)

CONGRESSMAN WRIGHT: Mr. President, as I approached this moment and watched your signing of this monumental piece of legislation I thought of those words from Kipling, "If you can wait, and not be tired by waiting, or being lied about, don't deal in lies, or being hated, don't give way to hating, and yet don't look too good nor talk too wise." We have waited for this energy legislation and we haven't looked too good, and so I suppose Kipling is pleased with us. (Laughter.)

For three decades, ever since the Paley Commission warned us that our voracious thirst for power would eat its way inexorably through the finite resources of oil and gas that it took nature some 6 million years to lay beneath the earth, and that we'd be wise if we began immediately to find replacements for oil and gas and particularly in our abundant supplies of coal, which we have approximately one-third the world's known reserves. We have waited during those three decades. A combination of timidity, lethargy and parochialism have kept us from doing those things that we needed to do.

And it remained until this year under the inspiration and leadership of President Carter that a heterogeneous collection of opinionated individualists, each of us an energy expert in his own right, from four separate House committees came together to give life and breath to this skeleton outline that had been laid before us three decades ago.

Bill Moorhead has already been mentioned and it was he as chairman of that subcommittee and the banking and currency and housing committee of the House, along with his associate on the Republican side, Stuart McKinney from Connecticut, who began this long process. And on the Commerce Committee we had Republicans and Democrats working together. We had John Dingle and Jim Broyhill, a Democrat from Michigan and a Republican from North Carolina. I would like for those four I've already mentioned to stand because I want the public to recognize the importance of your contribution. (Applause.)

And the Chairman of the Science Committee of the House, Don Fuqua, had a major role in the shaping of this legislation. (Applause.) As did Chalmers Wylie of Ohio. There are so many that I want you to see the breadth of ideological and geographical spread that came together to produce this legislation; Jim Blanchard of Michigan, Bruce Vento of Minnesota, please stand and let them acknowledge you. Stu McKinney and Don Fuqua I've mentioned, John Dingle I've mentioned, but Phil Sharp of Indiana, a truly creative Member of the House, and with him Albert Gore of Tennessee who worked diligently on the conservation sections of this bill, along with John Wydler and with Stephen Neal of North Carolina. (Applause.) And with Ken Kramer or Dick Ottinger and Toby Moffett who work together with Bob Edgar of Pennsylvania and Berkley Goodell of Iowa and Phil Gramm of Texas, my colleague and neighbor, and Austin Murphy of Pennsylvania, and Tom Daschle of South Dakota.

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And if I have left anybody -- oh, the main one I wanted to mention last, Mary Rose Oaker of Ohio. Is Harley here? Of course, the Chairman of them all, the Papacito of the Commerce Committee, interstate and foreign, Harley Staggers of West Virginia. (Applause.)

I hope I haven't neglected to mention anyone else. This bill is a monumental piece of legislation. I think it is in the American tradition. It doesn't set out to do it all by government nor by tax dollars. It sets out instead to let government be the catalyst to perform the role that government best can perform in this free society of ours to create the climate that will be conducive to the investment on the private sector that will make real the development of a commercial synthetic fuels industry capable of making this country energy sufficient again.

It will unleash the dynamics of the American enterprise system. And I think that this day ranks with that day in the beginning of the 1940s, when with the United States cut off from sources of raw rubber by the Japanese invasions of Asia, Franklin D. Roosevelt called together Bernard Baruch and Bill Jeffers and gave them the challenge to create in this country a synthetic rubber industry. Nobody knew exactly how it should be done. But four years later when the allies rolled into Berlin, they rolled triumphantly on rubber tires made by an indigenous American synthetic rubber industry.

We made the commitment and we fulfilled the promise. And then two decades later the beginning of the 1960s, John F. Kennedy came before the Congress of the United States and promised that we would have a man on the moon by 1970. To put yourself back into the frame of mind of 1961, you'd have to recall the sheer audacity of that promise; nobody knew that it could be done. Scarcely any of us dared to believe that there were those who knew how to do it. But we gave it the commitment and the priority that it deserved and we made the promise into a reality.

No less fatefully significant is this day when President Jimmy Carter signing this landmark legislation, promises that in this decade upon which we now have embarked, we're going to make America energy independent again. Our presence here bespeaks our commitment to that goal and we enlist with you, Mr. President, behind that banner. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: I'd like to ask all the Congressmen to stand up at one time and Mrs. Oaker and let the audience express in closing our deep appreciation to them for their farsighted leadership and for their investment and confidence in America. Our country will be greater, happier, have a better quality of life, a better environment, utilize our resources more efficiently and be more secure because of their action in this legislation. Bob Byrd just sent me word that he was sorry he couldn't be here; he was a ringleader, as you know, in the passage of this historic legislation.

Thank you all very much. Let's give the Congressmen and women a round of applause. (Applause.)

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(4:30 P.M. EDT)