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President Gerald Ford speaks at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska

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Series: Governor Hammond tapes

KUAC recording

Jay Hammond greets the presidential party. He said it was a rare occasion to have a governor, senator and president on the same podium much less the same politics. He will not use the occasion to present the politics, but will introduce Ted Stevens. Ted Stevens will introduce President Ford. Jay Hammond said he has met the president several times and each time his admiration and respect has increased. He said the president came into the office at a tumultuous time in the world. Inflation was high, unemployment was a problem, the stock market plunged, the dollar was low and confidence in leadership was at an all-time-low. Since he came into office global problems have decreased, inflation has decreased, unemployment has improved, the dollar has improved and for the first time in a long time no one questions the honesty of the president. Jay Hammond introduces Senator Stevens and talks about his appointment to the senate and then he was later elected.

Ted Stevens thanks Governor Hammond and greets the presidential party. He said the president does all of Alaska an honor by stopping in Alaska on his way to China. They are located in an Air Force hanger and he talks about Alaska assisting to defend the country. President Ford will also visit the pipeline during his visit. He talked about energy independence. He introduces President Ford.

President Ford thanks people on the podium. He thanked everyone for their generous and enthusiastic greeting. He appreciated the warm greeting in spite of the temperature outside. He thanked the men and women at Eielson Air Force Base. He talked about the size of the building and past trips to Alaska and he is impressed by the state. He talked about the oil coming from the North Slope. He understands the great land of Alaska is part of our great land. He was in Alaska the previous year when he was on his way to Asia and the trip was successful in advancing the cause of peace. He said the United States has moved forward to stabilize our domestic economy and our international relations. Alaska is helping to allow America to be self-sufficient in energy and is in the forefront of our national revival. He talked about the defense that Alaska provides for the United States. He said the best insurance for peace is the United States military power and there will be no slackening of support for the military. They are vitally interested in the defense of Alaska. Worldwide diplomacy would not be credible without a military force. It is appropriate that they are stopping in Alaska on their way to China. He talked about Alaska's invasion in WWII and how critical a strong national defense is. They will never forget that freedom and independence come first. He said in Alaska you can feel America's greatness and the sense of fantastic potential. The U.S. has become dependent on oil from other nations and the embargo affected our country. It affected our national economy and employment. He said we are determined to liberate ourselves from this threat. The vast resources of Alaska have the means to accomplish the goal of energy independence. He said the liquid gold that flows from the North Slope will have an impact on Alaska's economy and that of our entire nation. Alaskan oil is closer to making a significant contribution to our national supplies than any other source of energy. He was delighted when the pipeline reached

its halfway mark last October. He wishes he could report that all aspects of the energy program were moving as quickly but they are making headway and we are going to achieve energy independence. He looks forward to seeing the pipeline on this trip. The oil is expected to start flowing in the middle of 1977 and the daily flow will reach 1.2 million barrels. The North Slope will be producing 20 percent of the domestic use of oil in the near future. He talked about how much money will be saved by using North Slope oil and the great economic benefit it will have. He talked about the expected revenues. The construction of the pipeline has brought in many workers and their paychecks. He said Alaska is blessed with many natural resources. There was fear that the pipeline would destroy the environment in Alaska. It has proven that ecology can be preserved while energy needs are met. He said Alaska has set an example throughout the United States. He talked about the reserves of coal in Alaska. He said he felt pride when he voted for Alaska statehood and the state has never let him and others who voted for it down. All of America benefits from Alaska and he is grateful.