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#22
5/3/76



PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 32

of the
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

11:00 A.M. EST
May 3, 1976
Monday

In the Arabian Ballroom
At the Murat Shrine Temple
Indianapolis, Indiana

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Won't you all please sit down. I am ready for the first question.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Time Magazine has published a poll to the effect that Jimmy Carter would defeat you, if the election were held today, by a fairly substantial margin. In light of that and your rather convincing defeat in Texas to Mr. Reagan on Saturday, do you feel that Indiana's primary on Tuesday is absolutely crucial for you to stop any momentum that Mr. Reagan might be generating right now?

THE PRESIDENT: We have always considered the Indiana primary a very important primary. As you well know, I have been in Indiana twice, my wife has been here on one occasion. We have a first class organization. We have the support of the Governor, we have the support of many public officials, as well as many, many volunteers, which is an indication of how important we feel the Indiana primary is.

I think any apathy on behalf of my candidacy will have been done as a result of the situation in Texas, so we think the situation is crucial and we are making a maximum effort here in Indiana.

QUESTION: Would you care to comment on the Time Magazine poll?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the final poll comes in November and there will be ups and downs, and I am sure just as soon as some of these issues are laid before Governor Carter, we will find some erosion of his support. Some of the positions that he was forced to take in the last few days I think will have some adverse impact on his popularity. But the final test comes in November.

Walt?

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have said you expect to win in Kansas City but, after Mr. Reagan swept all 96 delegates in Texas, will you have enough delegates to lock up the nomination before you get to the Convention or will your getting the nomination depend on the uncommitted delegates in Kansas City?

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THE PRESIDENT: We certainly hope, and I personally believe when we get to Kansas City we will have enough delegates to win the nomination.

QUESTION: On the first ballot?

THE PRESIDENT: We believe so.

QUESTION: Is that predicated on before you get to California or will it depend on California?

THE PRESIDENT: We will make that judgment when we get down to the last primary.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you are on a couple of other State primary ballots tomorrow, in addition to Indiana. How do you evaluate your chances for victory in the other two, in addition to Indiana, and what would be the impact to your candidacy if you lost all three in one day?

THE PRESIDENT: We certainly would be disappointed but we don't think we are going to lose all three. We think our chances are very, very good here in Indiana, for the reasons I have given -- we have the full backing of the Governor and many public officials, we have a great volunteer organization, and I think any apathy has gone as far as my candidacy is concerned. So we think Indiana will do very well by us and in the other two States, why, we certainly are underdogs in both Alabama and Georgia, but we are going to make, as we have in the past, a real sincere and very maximum effort in the time that is allowed. After all, I do have to be President and that takes a lot of time, so we can't campaign as much as my opponent does in the primaries.

QUESTION: Do you rate your chances in Alabama and in Georgia as under those in Indiana?

THE PRESIDENT: As I said, we believe the opportunities here in Indiana are very good. In Alabama and Georgia, yes, we are underdogs so there is a difference in the two situations.

QUESTION: Mr. President, with the compromise reconstituting the Federal Election Commission out of conference and pending in Congress this week, have you had a chance to review it and can you confirm a report that you will sign it if it passes as it came out of conference?

THE PRESIDENT: As you know, I strongly recommended that the Congress only approve the necessary defects in the basic law to perfect the constitutional questions raised by the Supreme Court. If Congress had done that promptly, the whole matter would have been resolved a good many weeks ago.

When that bill gets down to the White House, the Oval Office, I will give it very careful, very precise analysis.

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But, at this moment, I can't make any categorical statement as to whether or not I will sign it. Congress, as of this moment, has not yet approved even this so-called compromise bill. So when they finish their work, after almost 90 days of inaction, then I will make a judgment as quickly as possible.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, yesterday Governor Carter said that the South Korean Government is a dictatorship and has repressed and called for the gradual withdrawal of troops there and the withdrawal of atomic weapons. What is your view there?

THE PRESIDENT: The South Korean Government is a very important part of our overall specific strategy. I think to make any judgment of that kind by Governor Carter, who hasn't had the benefit of the detailed briefings and the detailed recommendations of our top military leaders, I think his judgment at this point is not a very solid one.

We have a good program, a good military relationship with the South Korean Government, and, as far as I am concerned, we are going to keep them strong because they are a part of our overall strategy for the Pacific.

QUESTION: Mr. President, continuing with Mr. Carter, in the news conference here yesterday, he accused you of weak knees as a President. He said that Reagan had pushed you around in the campaign and you had backed off on issues to accommodate his political pressures.

How would you react to those charges?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a very inaccurate charge. There is an old Michigan saying that people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. Let me make an observation how Governor Carter has really been pushed around.

For example, when he raised the question of ethnic purity, I think within 24 hours he made a flip-flop, and then up until that situation arose, why, he had been opposed to the so-called Humphrey-Hawkins bill and, again, within 24 to 48 hours, he came out and endorsed the Humphrey-Hawkins bill.

So I think his flexibility in this campaign is pretty well recognized. The minute any of his Democratic opponents hit him on something he backtracks and takes another position. I know of no position I have taken from the very beginning to now where I have changed my basic policy or program based on any campaign rhetoric of Governor Reagan.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, yesterday Senator Barry Goldwater said that on a scale on conservatism there might not be 2 percent of difference between you and Ronald Reagan. In light of that, and the conservative nature of Indiana Republicans, what is the choice that you offer over Governor Reagan tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: There is a very basic choice. A person who has had some experience on a very important job, such as being President of the United States, is a very vital factor. When individuals have to go to the polls and make a decision between somebody who knows the job, who has done a good job, whose policies both domestically and internationally have been successful, and when you look at the record that I offer where we have cut inflation by 75 percent in the 20 months that I have been President; where we now have employed in this country 86,700,000 people -- an all-time record; when you look at the fact that I have restored integrity and public confidence in the White House, this is a record based on experience and success and I don't think the voters are going to trade that for campaign rhetoric, which is what my opponent has basically based his campaign on.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, from the questions you receive around the country at Republican forums, it is apparent that Governor Reagan is controlling the issues in this campaign. In your post-mortem on Sunday, when you met with campaign leaders, I wonder if you can tell us if you have devised any kind of strategy to perhaps take the offensive instead of always reacting to the charges by the former Governor?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there will be any basic changes in our program, Aldo, between now and Kansas City. We always recognized it was going to be a very hard contest and would probably get more heated as the campaign went on, but we have had some help and assistance just within the last 24 to 48 hours.

For example, on Meet the Press Sunday, Senator Barry Goldwater came out very forthrightly on my behalf as far as my policy on the Panama Canal is concerned. This kind of assistance, I think, helps to undercut the validity and credibility of Governor Reagan's various charges.

Again, I would like to quote from the Meet the Press program on which Senator Goldwater appeared and when he was asked this question on the Panama Canal. The question is as follows: "On the Panama Canal, who is right on that? Whose position do you support? Ford's or Reagan's?"

Senator Goldwater said the following: "I have to support Ford's position on it, and I think Reagan would, too, if he knew more about it."

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QUESTION: Mr. President, if you should lose the three on Tuesday, which you don't expect to do, Governor Reagan would have more delegates than you have, I believe.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I am not going to speculate on something I don't think is going to take place.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Senator Paul Laxalt, the Citizens for Reagan Chairman, underscored what he called the inequities of the Federal election law, saying they favored you, especially in air travel. He cited some \$600,000.

Governor Reagan this morning, in a news conference, raised the question of propriety of campaigning on the one hand and holding a revenue sharing meeting at the same time, this close to a primary.

Will your expense report show this trip as political or nonpolitical?

THE PRESIDENT: The expenses of this trip will be paid entirely by the President Ford Committee and the expenses that we pay to the Federal Government will be a matter of public record, and the arrangements for the full payment of this trip coincide precisely with the Federal Election Commission's reports and regulations.

Now that we are talking about full disclosure and who owes how much to the Federal Government, let me raise a question concerning Governor Reagan. I refer here to 1975 income tax payments.

I have fully told the public what I paid, which was 42 percent of the income that I earned in 1975. It is a matter of public record. The press knows it; it has been printed. As far as I know, Governor Reagan has not made public any of his 1975 income tax payments. He has not disclosed it to the press or to the public, and I suggest respectfully that he do the same on this disclosure as we are doing, as far as paying the Government for this particular trip, which is total.

QUESTION: I think the issue was that other candidates have to pay for their expenses and air travel reservations in advance, and this being one of the inequities they cite.

THE PRESIDENT: We are paying precisely according to the regulations of the Federal Elections Commission and we pay in toto and we are doing as required by the Federal Election Commission. We have to go by their rules and regulations.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, should you somehow lose the nomination in Kansas City, would you be able to support the nominee?

THE PRESIDENT: I have traditionally supported the Republican candidate for the Presidency. I supported Senator Goldwater in 1964.

QUESTION: So that is a yes?

THE PRESIDENT: I have traditionally supported and I would expect to support the Republican nominee.

QUESTION: Along the same lines --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't expect to lose, however, in Kansas City. (Laughter) I wish I could get the same comment from my opponent, who I expect to lose in Kansas City. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Would you consider accepting the number two spot on the ticket should you lose?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course not.

QUESTION: Of course not?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course not.

QUESTION: Why is that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that, first, I anticipate winning in Kansas City and I, therefore, don't anticipate any opportunity to serve as Vice President. I have had that experience, which was helpful in the job that I am now doing as President and, since I expect to win in Kansas City, I don't think that option will be open to me.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ronald Reagan says your claims that the state of the economy is good are false. He says the country is \$95 billion more in debt than it was a year ago and goes further into debt at the rate of \$2 billion a week. Can any President really get the Nation out of debt?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that the policies I have of restraining the growth of Federal spending, cutting that growth in Federal spending by better than 50 percent and, at the same time, saving, if the Congress goes along with my budget that I have submitted, we can have a balanced budget by fiscal year 1979, and the Governor's accusations about the economy are totally without foundation.

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We have taken this economy from a year ago, where we were in the midst of the worst economic recession for the last 40 years, and by the Ford Administration doing the right thing we have now cut the rate of inflation by 75 percent. For the first three months of this year the rate of inflation is under 3 percent, and we have regained 2,600,000 jobs throughout the United States in the last 12 months.

Furthermore, for the month of March we have the most people gainfully employed in this country -- 86,700,000 people.

I should think Governor Reagan would applaud this kind of healthy economy instead of trying to scare people as he apparently is trying to do. The economy is sound, it is getting better and it is getting better. The way he talks, he seems to invite economic difficulties and I think that is the wrong approach.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, in the last 48 hours or so you have indicated that you think Ronald Reagan has been rash with some of the issues and you have accused him outwardly of distorting some of the figures. There was a time when your campaign people were accusing Reagan of taking the campaign to the point where it would be divisive for the Republican Party.

Are you aware that now you are taking the campaign to a point where it would hurt the party's chances in November?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so, But when accusations are made without foundation or there is a distortion of statistics, I think it is my obligation to the American people to tell the truth and to explain what the facts are in the total context.

So, it has not been a personal attack. It has just been an attempt by me to set the record straight, which is an obligation of the President of the United States.

QUESTION: Is it serious to accuse Mr. Reagan of being rash or distorting issues? Do you worry about that hurting the Republican Party?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think the Republican voters, once they have heard the facts, will think that what I am saying is divisive.

QUESTION: Mr. President, one of the lessons being drawn from the Texas results is that the voters there tend to believe what your opponent has been saying about Secretary Kissinger and his view that second place is satisfactory for America militarily.

What are you doing to determine if that is indeed what they feel and what would Dr. Kissinger's position be if it is indeed an influencing factor?

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Kissinger has always said to me that at any time that I feel that his staying on as Secretary of State was a political liability he would be glad to stop aside. That is a matter of public record. But again, if I might refer to my good friend and I think outstanding statesman in the United States Senate, Barry Goldwater, let me quote what Barry Goldwater said yesterday about the Secretary of State.

Here is what he said on Meet the Press. "I think the Secretary of State can be said to be doing a good job." I respect Barry Goldwater and it is my judgment that the Secretary of State has done a good job, and I am glad that Senator Goldwater agrees with me.

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QUESTION: The question is do the voters agree?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they will. I think they do.

QUESTION: How about tomorrow here in Indiana?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we will wait and see.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have praised yourself in several months, recent months at least, for reducing unemployment and also for reducing inflation. But the fact remains that in a number of large inner city urban areas a large percentage of minority and poor people remain unemployed and probably will remain unemployed despite the expansion of the economy.

My question to you is, given this fact and the fact that the current comprehensive employment training programs and summer youth employment programs are not absorbing a lot of people who would like to have jobs, don't you think it is time for the Federal Government to step in and on a limited basis, perhaps, have maybe an economic marshall plan?

THE PRESIDENT: Every year since I have been President I have recommended the full funding of what we call the summer youth program, which is primarily aimed at helping to give summer jobs to the youth in our major metropolitan areas.

This is a program which costs about \$450 million a year. I recommended it every year, and I proposed it for this coming summer. In addition, as our economy improves, we are going to get more job opportunities for the youth in our major metropolitan areas, including minority youth.

In addition, I have recommended the full funding of what we call the CETA program, which helps to train young peoples well as others to get better jobs or to get jobs in the first instance. That program, plus the summer youth program, plus some of the other programs that we utilize to help cities with their own problems, I think will be helpful in trying to get the problem that you raise -- which is a very legitimate one -- solved by this Government.

QUESTION: But the fact remains that there are literally millions of people in the innercity areas who would still not have jobs. I would like to know, as a Republican candidate for the Presidency, do you have any specific programs in mind that would solve this aspect of the problem?

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THE PRESIDENT: We have the program of getting the total economy back where it is prosperous, better than it ever has. Five out of six jobs in this country are in the private sector. That is where the best job opportunity is for young people, including those in major metropolitan areas.

So, with the summer youth program, with the CETA program and the other programs we have, we think we can solve that problem, and I believe we will.

QUESTION: Mr. President, given the upturn in the economy and corporate earnings and profits increasing, does the Administration expect to take a more forceful approach in seeking air and water pollution compliance as to purchase of expensive pollution control devices and implementation of these programs?

THE PRESIDENT: The EPA has the responsibility in that area for clean air and clean water. I believe that their program is basically sound. In some instances, they have gone too far, and I think up in Indiana, as I recall, in the Gary area they were too rigid and they required that several of the plants of one of the major steel industries up there close. I think in retrospect that was a bit too arbitrary.

So, I think the EPA has to have a balance in the way it approaches the responsibilities that it has. Sometimes they are too tough. On some occasions I think they may have been too lenient. But that is the responsibility of the EPA. I personally feel that we have to establish a balance between what is attainable in clean air and clean water and at the same time continue our economic prosperity.

QUESTION: Would too much forcefulness in applying this create some reverse economic problems?

THE PRESIDENT: Obviously up in the Gary area, when they forced the closing of several steel plants, it did have an adverse economic impact on that particular community. Whether that was totally arbitrary or not, I am not the best judge of it. But obviously the closing of those several plants had an adverse economic effect on that area.

QUESTION: Good morning, sir. Some of your aides tell me you are not too pleased about one aspect of the Texas primary, possibly several aspects, but particularly the fact that Democrats crossed over. You don't think Democrats should be selecting Republican Presidential nominees?

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THE PRESIDENT: We, of course, believe that Republicans ought to be the major factor in the selection of a Republican candidate for the Presidency. On the other hand, any Democrat who is philosophically in tune with my philosophy, I welcome as a supporter whether it is in the primary or whether it is in the general election.

But the basic responsibility of Republicans is to support their nominee for the convention in Kansas City.

QUESTION: I gather then that you are not terribly distraught at the idea of large crossover votes as long as you get them?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a very practical way to approach it. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Mr. President, this is not on the election, but I trust you enough to give you my vote tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: We thank you very much.

QUESTION: The reason I want to ask you this question is because this is a field that I am interested in because I work with international young people who come to our country to get an education. Now we have had problems here in Indiana. Many of these young people come on their own and they want a job, to work. Many of them cannot get permission from the Immigration to work, which makes it very hard on them even if they do have a job available.

I wonder, sir, if you might be able to give us directions in what we can do to help these friends because you see this is going to help promote good international relations for us when they get back home. So, that is why I am interested in this.

THE PRESIDENT: I am a very strong supporter of the student exchange program where young Americans go abroad and spend a summer and in some cases a year in many, many more countries, and I am a strong supporter of foreign students coming to the United States, whether it is for three months or 12 months.

But, we do run into a practical problem. The practical problem is we have unemployment at the national average of about 7.5 percent today, and it does raise the question whether these foreign students coming here take a job away from an American who wants a job to raise his family or to get his education.

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I believe that the Immigration and Naturalization Service has to be very discrete. In some areas of the country where unemployment is not serious, some cities such as those in some instances in Texas, I see no reason why there can't be flexibility and young people would have the opportunity to work.

But, in some areas of very high unemployment, unemployment of Americans, I think the Immigration and Naturalization Service has to take a somewhat different point of view because basically we have to be concerned about jobs for Americans.

So, it has to be on a selective basis and, if so, I think it can be handled appropriately. I agree with you entirely that these young Europeans or others coming to this country for an education, a living experience with American families, may go back in most instances and are good will ambassadors for the United States.

I strongly believe in the program, but there has to be a balancing when it comes to them getting jobs and competing with Americans who also need a job.

QUESTION: I see. One other question. Is there any provision in the United States Government which offers scholarship aid to international students who want to come to our country to study?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, the Fulbright program and related programs are aimed precisely at trying to get foreign students to come to the United States on a scholarship basis. That program, or those programs, have been very, very successful. As a matter of fact, a number of the heads of Government around the world today in one way or another have come to the United States and studied and gone back to their country and become leaders in their own individual country.

They did come here in many instances on the basis of scholarships.

QUESTION: Thank you very much, and good luck tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Governor Reagan has accused you of taking unfair advantage of your incumbency by dealing out Federal grants, two at fortuitous times in advance of primaries. Yesterday the Associated Press quoted your Interior Secretary, Thomas Kleppe, as acknowledging that at least part of the reason for awarding a \$1 million grant to Georgia for a river reclamation project was the upcoming primary there tomorrow. What is your reaction to this sort of candor?

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THE PRESIDENT: I had no information of what the Secretary of the Interior was going to do. I did know from a previous trip to Atlanta, Georgia that the people of Georgia were very interested in a reclamation or park beautification program on the Chattahoochee River. They have been working with the Department of Interior for a long period of time in trying to preserve the shore lines of that river in the metropolitan area of Atlanta.

The Secretary of Interior made that decision himself. I am sure it was meritorious, but if he made it in the last 24 hours, I think it won't be harmful, but I don't know how beneficial it will be.

QUESTION: Do you plan to speak with him about his timing either to commend him or --

THE PRESIDENT: I think a Cabinet officer can handle those kinds of matters himself, and I have no intention of contacting him concerning this very meritorious award. The money came out of the Land and Water Conservation Act. It is a preservation of a very historic area in the Atlanta area, and I think it is a good decision.

But you will have to ask him or get any question answered by him as to why he did it in the last 48 hours.

Thank you all very much. It is nice to be in Indiana.

END (AT 11:30 A.M. EST)

#33
5/24/76

PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 33

of the
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

7:01 P.M. EDT
May 26, 1976
Wednesday

In the Presidential Ballroom
East
At the Neil House Hotel
Columbus, Ohio

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. Won't you please sit down.

Before turning to your questions, I have a brief statement. Early next week the Congress will return from its Memorial Day recess. For many Americans, the summer will have officially begun and time for vacation will be at hand.

However, it is extremely important this not become a vacation for Congress. There is an immense amount of work piling up on the Congressional calendar and the country needs -- and deserves -- prompt legislative action in a number of important areas.

First of all, the temporary tax cut enacted last year will expire at the end of June. That tax cut must be extended.

I have recommended that the Congress not only extend the tax cut permanently but increase by some \$10 billion a tax cut in the future. Among the benefits the taxpayers would receive under my proposal is an increase in the personal exemption from \$750 per individual to \$1,000 per person.

This will be enough to permit many people to catch up on their bills and begin saving for the future. When we cut taxes, we must also cut Federal spending.

The Congress has not yet shown discipline enough to hold the line on Federal spending. That is why I vetoed so many big spending bills and my vetoes so far have saved the taxpayers some \$13 billion.

I will continue to use my veto until the Congress gets the message and Federal spending is brought under control.

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Another major legislative action urgently awaiting Congressional action is the immediate enactment of Federal revenue sharing. There has already been an inexcusable delay in passing this necessary legislation. Unless Federal revenue sharing is re-enacted before it expires this year, communities across Ohio and the rest of the country will be severely penalized. Communities here in Columbus and elsewhere would be forced to raise local property taxes and State taxes in order to continue vital public services which revenue sharing would provide. The Congress must re-enact my revenue sharing proposal without delay.

Two other items must also be given Congressional action in the next several weeks. One is the B-1 bomber program. In considering the military procurement bill, the Senate recently voted to delay the B-1 production until February of next year. That vote was both unnecessary and unwise.

Our armed forces are manned by the best trained men and women in the world, but they must have the tools to do the job. We need to get on with the B-1 program this year, not next year.

Finally, I urge the Congress to vote in the next few weeks for a full P. L. 480 program. Over the years, the Food for Peace program, in addition to playing an important role in the implementation of our foreign policy, has provided expanded markets for American farm products.

A provision of the security assistance bill presenting pending in the Congress would impose a \$175 million ceiling on P. L. 480 assistance to Korea. This action would severely hurt the American farmer who depends upon stable markets for his crops and would severely restrict the economic growth potential of one of our key allies.

We need strong agricultural exports and we need a full Food for Peace program. I strongly urge the Congress to remove this limitation.

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One other item of significant importance. Last June I proposed to the Congress legislation that would establish a major new private industry in America providing the enriched fuel for nuclear power reactors. My proposal, the Nuclear Fuel Assistance Act would make it possible for the United States to maintain its leadership as the world supplier of uranium enrichment services for the peaceful use of nuclear power.

The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in the Congress has made some modifications on my proposal and approved it. I have reviewed the changes in the bill and concluded that I will support it. The bill meets five fundamental objectives, which I stated a year ago:

First, an act to meet the future needs, domestic as well as international, for this essential energy source;

It would end the governmental monopoly on supplying enriched uranium for nuclear power plants;

Three, establish a procedure whereby private enterprise can bring into commercial use the techniques created by Federal research and development with proper licensing, safeguards and export controls;

With the payment of royalty and taxes by private enterprise to the United States Treasury;

Provided also in the bill is a complimentary back-up system for expanding existing Federal uranium enrichment capacity if private ventures are unable to meet on time the needs of U.S. and foreign customers;

Last, assist in controlling nuclear proliferation by persuading other nations to accept international safeguards and forego developments of nuclear weapons.

Finally, the bill and the committee report also authorizes and directs the Energy Research and Development Agency to begin manning and designing for the expansion of the existing uranium enrichment at Portsmouth, Ohio.

As soon as Congress passes the nuclear Fuel Assurance Act, I will ask the Congress to appropriate \$170 million for fiscal year 1977 to proceed with the design, planning and the procurement of long lead time construction for the Portsmouth plant. This, I think, is a good program, and I hope the Congress acts so that I can request of the Congress the necessary funding for the complimentary program at Portsmouth, Ohio.

I will be glad to answer the first question.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, Mr. Udall has accused you of playing politics with busing. Some Ohio civil rights leaders have indicated agreement. What is your answer to this criticism and also what is your advice to residents of Ohio cities facing court-ordered desegregation next fall?

THE PRESIDENT: First, let me say that I have vigorously opposed court-ordered forced busing to achieve racial balance as the way to accomplish quality education. I have opposed it from 1954 to the present time.

We all know the tragedy that has occurred in many communities where the court has ordered forced busing on a massive basis. I think that is the wrong way to achieve quality education.

Last November, well, before the Presidential primaries got going, I met with the Secretary of HEW and with the Attorney General and asked them to come up with some better alternatives to the achievement of quality education and court-ordered forced busing. The two Secretaries in my Cabinet have been working on alternative proposals.

The Attorney General is in the process of deciding whether or not, where and when he should appear on behalf of the Federal Government to see if the Court, the Supreme Court, won't review its previous decisions in this record. And secondly, the Secretary of HEW is submitting to me in a week or so the alternatives that he would propose to achieve quality education without losing the constitutional right of individuals so that we can do away with segregation and, at the same time, achieve quality education.

Now, the various communities in the State of Ohio that are in various stages of action by various parties, as far as busing is concerned, certainly ought to abide by the law. But, we hope that at least possibly the Supreme Court will review its previous decisions and possibly modify or change. We can't tell.

But, in the meantime, local communities, of course, have to obey the law and my obligation is to make certain that they do. But we must come back to the fundamental objective -- one, quality education, I believe there is a better remedy than court-ordered forced busing.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there are many civil rights groups who believe that the word "quality education" is a code word; that is, it is not in conformity with the Supreme Court's 1954 decision that we should have desegregated schools and that separate but equal are not equal. What is your definition of "quality education"?

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THE PRESIDENT: I respectfully disagree with some of the civil rights leaders. I think the best way to outline how we can achieve better or quality education and still insist upon desegregation is set forth in legislation under the title of Equal Educational Opportunities Act, which was passed in 1974.

If the court will follow those guidelines that were included in that legislation, we can protect the constitutional rights of individuals, we can eliminate segregation and, at the same time, we can give to individuals, the students, a better educational opportunity and accomplish quality education.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you feel the Wayne Hays incident and the prospects of a House investigation of Mr. Hays' conducts will fuel what seems to be an anti-Washington establishment tenor to the Carter and Reagan campaigns? If so, how will it affect you and as a long-time member of that establishment, how will you cope with it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe it is appropriate for me to comment on housekeeping problem involving the House of Representatives. I am sure the House will take whatever appropriate action should be taken. I can't see how, under any circumstances, it would affect me because at the time I was nominated for the Vice President 400 FBI agents investigated my life from birth up that point and 89 of them spent about a month in my home town, so I think on the basis of their investigation and the fact that a Democratic Congress, House and Senate, overwhelmingly approved the record that was made in the Senate Committee on Procedures and the House Committee on the Judiciary, where they cleared me of any problems whatsoever. I don't see how this incident would have any ramification or application as far as I am concerned.

QUESTION: You don't think it would contribute to that whole anti-Washington mood that Carter and Reagan seem to be exploiting?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't pass judgment on the anti-Washington feeling, but certainly it has no application as far as I am concerned.

QUESTION: Mr. President, following your victories in Oregon, Tennessee and Kentucky, you declared earlier today that you are the Republican with national potential and you had some reservations about Mr. Reagan. Could you elaborate on your reservations about Mr. Reagan as a Republican candidate?

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THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to pass judgment on his capabilities, but I can look back at the various primaries that I have won and they cover the wide spectrum of the United States not only in the north, the east, the west and the south, but they are broad in their application.

I think it does point out beyond any doubt that I am the most electable Republican candidate. If I am the most electable Republican candidate and can help elect Members of the House and Senate on our side of the aisle, plus State Legislatures, I am, I think, the candidate that is in the best interest of the philosophy of the Republican Party. I will let Mr. Reagan undertake a defense of his electability.

QUESTION: Throughout the campaign you have chided Mr. Reagan for perhaps moving Social Security funds into the stock market, and you said earlier today you thought perhaps his remarks on the TVA and returning it to private industry have hurt him there and suggested at times that he would be reckless in his confrontations. Do you have reservations about Mr. Reagan as a man who should sit in the Oval Office?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said, first, that I expect to get the nomination, and I expect to be elected in November. But, I have traditionally -- and I am proud of it -- always supported the Republican nominee.

QUESTION: Was that yes?

THE PRESIDENT: I said I always support the Republican nominee.

QUESTION: Mr. President, gasoline prices are on their way up again. Is the lack of a conservation ethic in the motoring public to blame, and what is your Administration doing to curb U.S. consumption of imported oil?

THE PRESIDENT: In January of 1975, about 15 months ago, I recommended to the Congress a comprehensive energy program. It took the Congress from January of 1975 to mid-December of 1975 -- ten or 11 months -- to come up with a bill that was half a loaf, but it was better than nothing. So, that legislation is what we have to work with.

The net result is we haven't moved as fast as we ought to in producing additional domestic resources for energy in this country. If the Congress had been wise enough to accept the energy bill that I proposed, we would be many, many months ahead of where we are at the present time and we wouldn't have the kind of uncertainty as to our energy independence in the future.

MORE

I am going to continue to do what I can under this restrictive legislation to free the industry so that it can produce more domestic oil. I hope the Congress is wise enough to pass some affirmative legislation so we get more new natural gas available. I hope that we can stimulate more coal production. I hope and trust that we can add to our nuclear power capability and to the necessary research and development on solar energy and geothermal energy.

Now, if the Congress would move, as I urged them to do better than a year ago, about 15 months ago, we would be a lot further ahead. I hope and trust that in the process where we are faced with growing demand and unfortunately growing reliance on foreign sources of oil, that we can get wholehearted public conservation efforts.

I can assure you that this Administration will do all it can under the law to provide for greater conservation.

MORE

QUESTION: Are you pleased with the way the American people are viewing the energy crisis as it is now?

THE PRESIDENT: It could be better but I think the Congress is the greatest culprit.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Secretary of State Kissinger is quoted as saying Cuba has pledged to pull its troops out of Angola. It is a positive development and he has expressed pleasure at this.

Do we have any indication other than Castro's message to the Swedish Prime Minister that this is in fact about to happen and has there been any contact, direct or indirect, between Washington and Havana on this subject?

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand the message that was from Mr. Castro to Prime Minister Palme in Sweden, it was that it went from Havana to Moscow to Sweden. I think that is somewhat significant. It does indicate that there is a planned withdrawal of some 200 per week, as I recall the figure. That is progress. We are encouraged but we have had no direct communication, as far as any such movement by Cubans out of Angola.

I hope that that trend will be accelerated. That would be even more encouraging. But, as far as any direct communication, we have had none.

QUESTION: Does the Cuban withdrawal carry with it any implied intent on the part of the U.S. to recognize the PMLA?

THE PRESIDENT: No. At this stage, certainly not.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this morning you said it would still be politically possible to win the nomination on the first ballot if you lost in California. Could you explain how that is realistic?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if we look at the number of delegates we have at the present time and the number we would expect to get from the remaining primaries plus the progress that we anticipate in the various States where they pick their delegates by State conventions, it is our belief that the momentum that started with Maryland and Michigan and kept through Pennsylvania and Ohio and certainly was good for us yesterday, we think with that momentum we can add up to about 1,130 or more.

QUESTION: But, wouldn't the California win by Governor Reagan still give him the momentum?

THE PRESIDENT: I would doubt it because we expect to do well in the great State of Ohio and we certainly expect to do well in New Jersey, and those two primaries come the same day that the vote comes in California.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, in view of the fact that Mr. Reagan will come to the Convention in August with a delegate total very close to your own, do you feel that if you receive the nomination there may be very grave and perhaps irresistible pressure on you to accept Governor Reagan as your running mate?

THE PRESIDENT: I have personally never excluded any Republican for consideration as a Vice Presidential candidate. But, as I am sure you recognize, Mr. Reagan has indicated publicly on a number of occasions he did not want to be considered for that opportunity to serve as a Vice Presidential candidate.

But, as far as I am concerned, I have excluded no Republican from consideration as a Vice Presidential nominee.

QUESTION: In view of the fact that each of you has demonstrated great appeal in the primaries, do you feel that there would be a tremendous unity factor in combining the two of you on a single ticket?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I should make any commitment at this time. It is premature because we have to wait and see how the primaries come up and how the State conventions work out. It is just too early for us to make any commitment of the kind that you are suggesting.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Congress passed the supplementary appropriation bill waiting your signature. Included in it is \$1.6 million for Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge to rebuild some badly eroded dikes. The people in Northwest Ohio want to know if you are going to sign that and, if you are, how soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly am strongly in favor of the project that you indicate. As a matter of fact, we have been pushing in trying to get that \$1.6 million for that project. We think it is good and I am personally in support of it, but I want to wait and personally analyze the overall supplemental appropriation bill before I make a commitment. I will do it the first thing tomorrow morning. And we have time before the 10 days expires.

But, as far as that project is concerned, I fully support it and, if that was a single item, not a part of a total supplemental appropriation bill, I would sign it tomorrow morning. But I have an obligation to take a look at all of the other items that are in the supplemental appropriation bill. I will do it tomorrow and hopefully I will be able to sign it because I am strongly in favor of that project.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, to follow up on the sex scandal that was discussed just a few minutes ago, you said that it was a housekeeping measure for the Congress. Yet, we hear that the Justice Department is looking into this for the possible misuse of Federal monies. I am wondering if you have asked the Justice Department to look into that at this moment?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not asked the Justice Department to look into it. The Justice Department is headed by a very able Attorney General, and I am sure if he or his associates feel there has been any violation of law under his oath of office, he will undertake that responsibility.

QUESTION: My next question is, you indicated that you didn't see how this could hurt you in any way. My question is, do you think this will hurt the Congress in campaign 1976, those incumbents who are running for re-election?

THE PRESIDENT: Those who are not involved I don't think will be adversely affected. I think that, as far as I know, one individual is involved. I can't see how it would be detrimental to those who have no part or have had no connection with it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think some of Ronald Reagan's popularity in the primaries is due to his attitude the United States should conduct foreign policy from a strong posture rather than the conciliatory position evident in the last few months, and what would be your remarks to a charge that the program is conciliatory?

THE PRESIDENT: First, I want to deny most emphatically that this Administration has been less than forthright and strong in the conduct of its foreign policy. We have been very strong, and let me cite you an illustration.

Back in December, when we knew that the Cubans were getting involved in Angola and we knew the Soviet Union wanted to be very helpful with some \$200 million of military equipment, the President Ford Administration took a strong position.

Regrettably, the Congress didn't stand up and support us. So, the Ford Administration was in the forefront and any charge or allegation to the effect that this Administration is anything but forthright and strong in the conduct of foreign policy hasn't studied the record.

MORE

So, I can assure you, because we have been strong, because we have been forthright, we have been able to convince our allies that we were reliable and we have been able to convince our adversaries that we mean business.

Now, the Ford Administration has repeatedly believed that if we can negotiate it is better than going to war, and I can assure you that we will negotiate, but negotiate from a position of strength rather than a position of weakness.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I was wondering if you could give us some hints about these alternatives that you are considering to forced busing. I just wondered what, beyond the Esch amendment, and what is spelled out in the law, and what the courts have already examined, what possibly could be an alternative that would hold up in the courts? What are the sorts of things that you are looking at?

THE PRESIDENT: When the proper time comes, Mr. Schieffer, we will reveal what Secretary Mathews has revealed to me and the options I have selected. I think there are some possibilities, but I think it is premature until I have made the final decision to indicate what he has thought might be an improvement over the way we have been handling the situation in the past.

QUESTION: Is it fair to say, though, Mr. President, that this is going to require some major legislative work, some major changes in the law?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily, not major legislative changes. It can have some legislative impact, but it is also what we can do administratively.

QUESTION: Why not just go for a constitutional amendment against forced busing?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is too inflexible and the facts of life are that that constitutional amendment has not gotten, or it can't possibly get a two-thirds vote in either the House or the Senate, and it certainly can't be approved by 75 percent of the States.

So, anybody who talks about a constitutional amendment is not being fair and square with the American people because no Congress that I have seen -- and this one is a very liberal one -- has done anything to get it to the floor of the House or even to the floor of the Senate.

So, when you talk about a constitutional amendment, you are kidding the American people and anybody who has been in Congress knows that.

MORE

QUESTION: I have some more questions.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

QUESTION: At least that is saying what you are for. What I am wondering is, why you can't give us a few hints about what the alternatives are that you think will solve the problems?

THE PRESIDENT: At the proper time, Mr. Schieffer, Secretary Mathews will have the option paper before me, and I will be glad to review it and make it public at that time.

QUESTION: Mr. President, since Governors Reagan, Carter and Wallace have all conducted, to some degree, an anti-Washington campaign, should you be the nominee and Governor Carter be the Democratic nominee, how do you propose to attract the votes of the Reagan supporters, particularly the Wallace crossovers to Reagan?

THE PRESIDENT: I want to appeal to as many Democrats as I possibly can and that is what I did in Michigan in the recent primary. My opponent very obviously wanted the Wallace element and only the Wallace element. I appealed in Michigan to all Democrats and all independents who wanted to cross over and vote for me if they believed in my record and believed in what I was trying to do, and we got a tremendous number of Democrats in Michigan to cross over and I am very proud of it.

Now, after we get the nomination in Kansas City, we will naturally want to get as many Democrats as we can because the Republican Party, according to statistics, has only about 19 percent of the public and the Democratic Party has 35 to 40 percent, as I recall. The rest of the people are independents.

So, a Republican candidate for the Presidency has to have a lot of support from independents and a significant support from Democrats. And the experience in Michigan, where I got a broad spectrum of independents as well as Democrats certainly is conclusive that I have a very good appeal to independent voters as well as broad-minded and I think very wise Democrats.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I think any number of people are a little confused about the status of the so-called alternatives to court-ordered busing. Just last week, you told a group of Kentucky editors just before the Kentucky primary that you had three alternatives that you were studying and that you would be making a judgment on them within a few weeks.

MORE

At that same meeting, you said the Justice Department may choose Louisville when, in fact, the Justice Department was not at that time considering Louisville. Do you **now** have those alternatives before you or, as you have indicated tonight, will they come from David Mathews? Finally, as a result of all this confusion, don't you see how the impression is left strongly that you may be doing this for political reasons?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you have confused it by not relating the whole sequence of events. I have repeatedly said that last November I called in the Attorney General and the Secretary of HEW and said I wanted a better answer so we could achieve quality education and not tear up society in a City such as Boston.

A month or two later they came back with a number of options. I said they ought to winnow them down. This was well before any Presidential primaries were on the agenda.

We have been seriously and constructively working together and the Attorney General, in due time, as he finds the right case, will go to the Supreme Court if he thinks the record justifies it. And Secretary Mathews will come to me with a more limited number of options at the proper time, and I expect some time within the next several weeks I will get those recommendations.

QUESTION: But did you not tell the Kentucky editors, as I recall it quite vividly, that you had three alternatives already that you were studying and that you would make a judgment on those shortly?

THE PRESIDENT: I had three and I asked Secretary Mathews to review them and to make sure that they might be alternatives that would really be helpful. And he has gone back to review those three alternatives and I expect shortly he will come up with a more complete recommendation.

QUESTION: Mr. President, 200 persons, or interested groups, are suing the Government to block the 1-1/2 million persons who might be dropped from the welfare rolls. What is the Ford Administration going to do to change that proposal to be sure that persons on welfare can have the adequate sustenance they need?

THE PRESIDENT: Which part of the welfare program are you talking about?

MORE

QUESTION: I am speaking about the part where the proposal states that many of the persons would either receive limited amounts or some would be dropped totally. I know it is a complete package, but how will you deal with that total situation?

THE PRESIDENT: There are a number of areas of welfare where we have sought to take corrective action. One of them is the food stamp program. I have made recommendations in the food stamp program to give more food stamps to the really needy and eliminate from the food stamp program people who are well above the poverty line and in the process save about \$1 billion 600 million.

There are other areas, and I cannot detect from the way you have described it which one you are talking about other than the food stamp program because that was \$1 billion 600 million, too.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have reiterated tonight that you are against court ordered busing to achieve school desegregation, a remedy that is the law of the land. You have also said that you told your Attorney General to get the Supreme Court to reconsider its busing decisions.

Just this week you also indicated that you would get your Administration to try and reverse a court order protecting porpoises against being killed by tuna fishing.

My question is this, sir. If the President of the United States does not accept court decisions, doesn't that encourage the people of the United States to defy court decisions and isn't there a danger the law of the land will be eroded?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all because whether I agree with decisions or not, this Administration, through the Attorney General, has insisted that the court decisions, whether they are in Boston or Detroit or anyplace else be upheld. I have repeatedly said that the Administration will uphold the law.

Now, in the case of court ordered forced busing, which I fundamentally disagree with as the proper way to get quality education, the Attorney General is looking himself to see whether there is a proper record in a case that would justify the Department of Justice entering as amicus curiae a proceeding before the Supreme Court to see if the court would review its decision in the Brown case and the several that followed thereafter.

I think that is a very proper responsibility for the Department of Justice and the Attorney General to take. They need clarification because all of those busing cases are not identical and if the Department of Justice thinks that they can't administer the law properly under the decisions because of the uncertainties. I think the Department of Justice has an obligation to go to the court and ask for clarification and that is precisely what the Attorney General may do.

MORE

Now, in the case of the decision by Judge Ritchie involving the tuna industry, that was a decision made by him under the Mammals Protection Act, but the net result is he has literally interpreted the law so that in effect it will ruin the tuna industry in this country and, at the same time, preclude the tuna industry from doing the things that they are doing to cut down the loss of life as far as porpoises are concerned. And the tuna industry, from my own personal examination -- and I think you were there -- they have considerably changed the kind of nets that they are using so the loss of porpoises has been cut significantly. And apparently Judge Ritchie, in interpreting the law, didn't take into consideration the tremendous improvements of the tuna industry in trying to save the lives of porpoises.

Now, in the meantime, one of the Members of the House of Representatives from California has introduced legislation to clarify the Mammal Protection Act and that legislation would give more flexibility so that the tuna industry can be saved on the one hand and the new procedures of the tuna fishermen, which protects the lives of porpoises, can be carried out.

I think that is a responsible position for an Administration to take.

QUESTION: Just to follow up my original question, sir, you said in reply to a question on busing on the West Coast, and I think I am quoting you correctly, that "maybe we need some new judges."

Mr. President, are you suggesting if elected, you might try to pack the Federal courts with judges favorable to your position on busing?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say that the one opportunity I have had to appoint a judge to the United States Supreme Court, he was almost unanimously approved because of his high quality. He wasn't selected because he had any prejudgments or conclusions concerning anything. He was a man of great intellect, great experience and good judgment. And I would expect in the next four years to appoint people of the same quality and caliber and I would expect the United States Senate to overwhelmingly approve them as they did Justice Stevens.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

END (AT 7:37 P.M. EDT)

#34
7/9/76



PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 34

of the

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

12:10 P.M. EDT
July 9, 1976
Friday

In the Oval Office
At the White House
Washington, D.C.

THE PRESIDENT: We have no set format. I don't know whose turn it is -- AP, UPI.

QUESTION: You have nothing in particular in mind this morning, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am just glad to see you all.

I feel very, very encouraged and very pleased with the results of the Bicentennial weekend. I was pleasantly surprised at the reaction throughout the country. I think it was well reported by the press that not only in Philadelphia, in Valley Forge, New York and Washington did everything move along extremely well, but it was reported all over the country that there was a real, genuine resurgence of good American feeling toward one another, toward the country, that I think augers for a real good third century. So, we are well on our way, and I think it will continue.

Frank, anything else?

QUESTION: Not right offhand. (Laughter)

QUESTION: In your race for the nomination with Governor Reagan, how do you think you stand now for delegates? Are you confident of a victory, initially?

THE PRESIDENT: I am very confident. The projections clearly indicate to me that when we get to Kansas City we will have the first ballot victory. You can read all the numbers, but when you analyze them, I think, objectively the Ford nomination will prevail on the first ballot.

We have had some very good movement in individual States. We have had good results, of course, in North Dakota. We expect good results next week, and so when we go to Kansas City, I am very confident that we will prevail on the first ballot.

MORE

QUESTION: Who do you want for your Vice Presidential running mate?

THE PRESIDENT: Fran, I don't exclude anybody. We have a wealth of talent, and I think it is premature to winnow that list down. We have to take into consideration a number of factors, the prime one, of course, being an individual to be an excellent President, but there are other factors that have to be taken into consideration.

Until we get closer to the Convention, I think it is too early to make any real speculation.

QUESTION: Would you rule anyone out like--would you rule Mr. Reagan out?

THE PRESIDENT: I repeat, I exclude nobody. I hope that individuals in the meantime will not exclude themselves because we want the best ticket we can get to win in November.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Governor Reagan made the statement when apprised of the Israeli rescue and raid in Uganda, "This is what Americans used to do." One of the hostages, who is an American citizen, said America did not "give a damn about us, Israel freed us."

I wonder, what is your reaction?

THE PRESIDENT: I can assure you that this Administration has taken a firm action wherever we have been confronted with any illegal international action in the past. The best illustration of course is what we did in 1975 in the MAYAGUEZ incident. I think that was a clear warning to any nation that violates international law that this Administration will act swiftly and firmly and, I think, successfully.

QUESTION: If I could follow that up, the State Department said, when asked "What is the United States doing," said that they had contacted numerous Governments, as well as the International Red Cross. What else did we do to compare with the Israeli action?

THE PRESIDENT: We took whatever action we felt was appropriate at that time to indicate our strong feeling against international terrorism, and we asked for the full cooperation of all Governments to make certain that the hostages were freed.

As you know, we indicated to Prime Minister Rabin that we were gratified that the Israelis had taken the very specific action to free the hostages and, at the same time, we reiterated a firm opposition to international terrorism.

MORE

QUESTION: Did we know in advance of that Israeli raid?

THE PRESIDENT: We did not.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is there not concern that if you should win a narrow victory at the Convention and receive the nomination by a small majority, that you will have some difficulty winning the election, being a member of the minority party?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. The competition has been close, controversial, and if you win, you win. I talk very affirmatively about the need and necessity for a unified party. I think we can leave Kansas City with a win and a unified party.

Once we get the nomination, we can start pointing out the distinct differences between the prospective Democratic nominee and myself; we can talk about the record that we have. It is a record that I think will be applauded objectively by 99 and 9/10 percent of the delegates to the Republican Convention.

I think it will appeal to a good many Independents, and I have already had some indications that there are some Democrats who think the record of the Ford Administration is a good one, so we will enter the campaign after the convention with a good opportunity to prevail November 2.

QUESTION: Mr. President, when you met with the Saudi official this morning, did he indicate to you that oil prices will be going up again at the end of the year or did you discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: There was no discussion of the prospect of any oil price increase. I expressed my appreciation for the action by OPEC in not increasing oil prices in their recent meeting. I pointed out I thought that was in the best interest of the free world and that it would be beneficial, not only to the oil consumers, but the oil producers in the long run.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this morning Tom Curtis, former FEC Chairman, who you know is now working for Ronald Reagan in his campaign, said he feels the FEC should take action, that the White House is getting unfair treatment at Kansas City -- you are getting more rooms -- and specifically, according to Mr. Nofziger, 388 hotel rooms allotted to the Ford campaign and the White House while only 100 rooms are allotted to the Reagan campaign; Ford groups have 650 gallery passes while the Reagan campaign has received only 300. And, because the conventions this time are using tax money, Curtis is saying that the FEC should take some action. How do you feel about it?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: You have to realize my good friend, Tom Curtis, is a Reagan delegate, so I would expect he would take that point of view. We are living up to the letter and the spirit of the law. The decisions in this case were made by the Republican National Committee. I understand they were made unanimously, and, as I am told, it does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Federal Election Commission.

I reiterate that in every instance where there has been a ruling by the FEC, this Administration has lived up to the letter as well as the spirit.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you plan to, in the interest of party unity, throw the Vice Presidential nomination up to the Convention; not mention any names, your preference, just let the Convention delegates decide?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not made any decision on that, Phil. As I said, I have excluded no one from my consideration as far as a running mate is concerned. Whether that would be a possibility, it is just premature to make any commitment.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what would you like for the International Olympic Committee to do to resolve the dispute between Canada and Taiwan?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is tragic that international politics and foreign policy get involved in international sport competition. I strongly feel that the Olympics are a healthy thing for the world as a whole. Competition between athletes from all countries ought to be stimulated rather than curtailed. So, I hope and trust that the diplomatic problems or the international foreign policy problems can be resolved so that this healthy competition can go on.

QUESTION: Have you done anything about it? Have you contacted the Canadian Government?

THE PRESIDENT: I am being kept abreast of it, but this is a decision that gets involved in Canadian Government decisions on the one hand and the International Olympic Committee on the other. I have expressed myself very clearly that we hope they will continue as broadly based as possible.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you believe that the Israeli violation of Uganda national sovereignty was justified?

THE PRESIDENT: The Department of State and our representatives to the United Nations will set forth our position very clearly in the debate that I think begins today, on one or more resolutions before the Security Council. I am told that our position is a firm one, on good legal grounds. I will wait and let that be expressed by them during the debate.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, can we talk about the delegates once again? Do you believe that before you get to Kansas City you are going to have more than you need to get a first ballot victory, that you can cite some names?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will, as I said a moment ago, have enough delegates to win on the first ballot, which I think infers certainly that we know who will be voting for President Ford's nomination.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us what you learned recently about the extent of the problems on the Alaska Pipeline and what the penalties might be in terms of cost and delay?

THE PRESIDENT: I got a very complete report late yesterday afternoon from the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Transportation. I think you know that the Under Secretary of Transportation John Barnum is either leaving or has left to go up there with a group of technical people to make an on-the-spot evaluation of the several reports as to the number of welds that are allegedly defective. I am going to be kept constantly advised as to what they recommend as to a procedure and as to the certainty that the pipeline meets all of the Department of Transportation's regulations for interstate pipeline safety.

We have not gotten into the added cost, whatever it might be, but I am confident that I will be fully advised at all times.

QUESTION: Have you talked with any people from the Justice Department as to the possibility of criminality involved in falsification of records?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a matter for the Department of Justice to determine. I have not personally communicated with the Department. I think they have to make any judgments over there, not myself.

QUESTION: Mr. President, will Southern support be vital, and will it be absolutely necessary for your election in November?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope to get support in all 50 States, Dick. We don't have any regional strategy. I have said repeatedly that I expect to run a national campaign and that certainly infers we want support from the South; we want support from the other regions throughout the country.

QUESTION: Do you think you can win without a good hunk of the South?

THE PRESIDENT: As I said, we want Southern support and I think we will get Southern support. That will contribute to our victory in November.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, Jimmy Carter has been holding auditions for a running mate. Do you have plans to do anything like that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I know most of the people that are among those that we know would be a potential running mate. I am sure that I will have consultations, but we have not set out any specific routine for it.

QUESTION: Do you anticipate public announcements of people coming in for briefing sessions?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't anticipate that kind of a routine, so to speak. As I said, I know all of the people quite intimately. I know their records. I know what they believe in. So, I don't have to go through that experience such as Governor Carter is going through, because I don't think he knows some of these people that he is considering as well as I know all of the potential Republican running mates.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I got the impression from what you said to Phil Jones that you might still be seriously considering throwing that choice open to the Convention, or at least giving them a list of names. Are you seriously contemplating doing that?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't mean to infer the conclusion you came to. I simply said that we have not made any firm commitment as to what procedure we would take at the time of the Convention.

I think a Presidential nominee ought to make his wishes known to the delegates. How he proceeds after that, we just haven't made a final decision of it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in light of your expressed displeasure over the decision by HEW regarding father-son/mother-daughter breakfasts, have you given any thought to perhaps curtailing the powers of the Office of Civil Rights in that Department?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not given any thought to curtailing their overall responsibility. But, as President, I have a responsibility to review any decisions that they make, and when I saw that decision I was shocked. I go a little stronger than Ron reported yesterday, and I took immediate action because I think that was a very wrong decision. If there are other decisions that I disagree with in the future, I will exercise my Presidential prerogative to suspend them or to change them. They have a responsibility to carry out what they think is the right determination, but if I disagree, I will certainly take affirmative action in the future, as I did in this case.

MORE

QUESTION: Your reaction to the WPI figures, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think those WPI figures of .4 percent fall within the guidelines that we have established. If you annualize that figure, it is less than 5 percent, so it is within the overall expectations that we have for the wholesale prices.

QUESTION: Mr. President, after you have, through this campaign, made some rather harsh observations about Ronald Reagan, how could you seriously consider him as your running mate, a man who could become the President? You have had some pretty tough things to say about him. I can't quite see how you could possibly consider him, if you feel that way.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we all have to understand in a very controversial political campaign you make a point, and sometimes with some political license. We have done that historically in this country. We can go back to the days of President Kennedy and the then Vice President Johnson. No one under any circumstances would have foreseen that that team would end up representing the Democratic Party.

All I am saying is that when you take a look at all of the Republican potentials, including Ronald Reagan, I think they all ought to be included for consideration.

QUESTION: But would it be fair to say that you certainly would not be as comfortable with Ronald Reagan as with some others?

THE PRESIDENT: Phil, I am not going to get into degrees that are comfortable (Laughter) with potential Republican candidates. When I pick that candidate, I expect him to be a good running mate and a good Vice President.

QUESTION: But you said there are no retakes in the Oval Office, indicating that he does not have the experience to handle this office. It just seems that you feel, or have indicated, that he is not qualified to be President.

THE PRESIDENT: I think when we pick the candidate, he will be a qualified person to be Vice President.

QUESTION: What can you tell us this morning about the health of Mrs. Ford? Is she feeling all right? Also, have you been in touch with the Nixon family about the former First Lady?

THE PRESIDENT: Mrs. Ford came down with a very bad cold yesterday following the church service at the Cathedral. She had a good night. She is going to take it easy for a day or so, and there is no concern, just a typical cold.

MORE

I stopped and saw Dr. Lukash when I came to the office this morning. He had not gotten any overnight reports on the condition of Mrs. Nixon. He is going to report to me as soon as he gets any information from her doctor.

QUESTION: Did you speak to President Nixon?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I called President Nixon.

QUESTION: Can you tell us something of what he told you?

THE PRESIDENT: He reported the sequence more or less as they had been reported in the press. I extended to him on behalf of Betty and myself our affection and best wishes for Mrs. Nixon's full and complete recovery.

QUESTION: Did you talk about politics?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all.

QUESTION: Mr. President, as I understand it, the Republican National Committee is supposed to be neutral until there is a nominee; am I correct in that assumption?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a valid assumption.

QUESTION: Thank you.

Now then, why is Mrs. Smith going to the Convention as a Ford delegate?

THE PRESIDENT: Because she has an opportunity, like any other citizen of this country, to run and express her personal views. She is running the National Committee on a very nonpartisan basis between my opponent and myself.

QUESTION: Mr. President, could we talk about the Alaska Pipeline? Another time -- you are from the Middle West and when the Pipeline Act was passed in Congress --

THE PRESIDENT: I voted for it.

QUESTION: Okay. There was quite a debate, though, about building a trans-Canada pipeline that would deliver oil to the Middle West where it is needed. There is still talk about that. Would you support legislation to build a pipeline from Valdez across Canada to the Middle West?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe that is an active possibility. I think you are referring to the possibility of a gas pipeline.

QUESTION: They were going to double-truck it, apparently.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: From Northern Canada or Northern Alaska to the Middle West is one of several alternatives. There are other alternatives that would involve bringing the gas down to the Gulf of Alaska. That matter is before the Federal Power Commission at the present time. It is also before -- in one way or another -- a comparable agency in the Canadian Government. There is legislation that is being sponsored which I think is good legislation, that would expedite the determination as to which route is the preferable one. It would be legislation much like that which was approved for the delivery of Alaskan oil -- If that gas is badly needed in the United States -- and I am not saying on the West Coast or the Middle West -- but I think a decision has to be expedited, and so I would favor such legislation which would expedite the determination by the proper authorities as to which route was the better of the two or which is the best, if there are more than two.

QUESTION: Mr. President, since this is an election year, I wonder if you think there is not much chance of getting startling developments in the area of foreign affairs, such as the SALT agreement or MBFR, or in any other area? Do you think it is very difficult to conduct negotiations at a time when frankly the occupancy of the White House is uncertain for next year? Are we sort of at a standstill for the rest of the year in foreign affairs?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said specifically, as far as SALT is concerned, if we can get a good agreement I will make that agreement regardless of any political consequences. We are in the process of thoroughly analyzing our last proposal, the Soviet Union's reaction or last proposal, and if we can move forward on a good SALT agreement I certainly will push for it, because I think it is in the national interest and in the best interest of mankind as a whole. So, politics won't enter into any decision, as far as SALT is concerned. I know of no other major areas that would have any political consideration as far as foreign policy.

QUESTION: How about the SALT agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I intend to push for it. I am not passing judgment as to whether it will come or won't come, but we are working on it and I intend to push for it. Whether we can achieve an agreement or not is uncertain. But, it is in the best interest of the United States and mankind as a whole if we can get the right agreement. And I will do it regardless of the political atmosphere that may prevail here because of our election.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can we pin something down? Is Ronald Reagan qualified to be President?

THE PRESIDENT: I said the person I select for the Vice Presidency will be qualified, and I don't exclude anybody.

QUESTION: Therefore, he is qualified?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a fair conclusion -- (Laughter) -- if he is the nominee. (Laughter)

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you satisfied with the way your campaign committee has performed through the primary and convention State season, and after the Convention do you foresee at this point any substantial reorganization of your committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't see any substantial reorganization. I have said, through Ron and otherwise, that Rog Morton is going to stay on. We intend to add people to the top echelon over there as the need arises for particular jobs that must be handled, such as the Convention, such as other responsibilities. I see no anticipated major reorganization. Like any other organization, you look back in retrospect as a Monday morning quarterback you might have done a little better here and there, but I think the President Ford Committee, considering all the problems, has done a good job.

QUESTION: Do you want Stu Spencer to stay on?

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly do. I think Stu Spencer is an extremely able person. He has done a good job.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what was your reaction to the Supreme Court's decision on the death penalty, and do you approve of the way they are going now?

THE PRESIDENT: I have stated on a number of occasions that I support the death penalty at the Federal level for espionage, treason, et cetera. I support the death penalty for the kind of crimes that involve murder, et cetera. I support the direction in which the Supreme Court is going.

QUESTION: Mr. President, one more question on Mr. Reagan, if you don't mind. At the end of your coming term -- I presume that you are going to be elected -- Mr. Reagan will be 70 years old. Do you still think he would be qualified at that time to replace you as President?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not speculate as to who the Republican candidate might be in 1980.

QUESTION: It has become a custom for the Vice President to sort of --

THE PRESIDENT: I can only say I don't intend to be there, the candidate in 1980, (Laughter) but I expect to be the nominee in 1976 and I expect to hold office until January 20, 1981.

QUESTION: Mr. President, to what extent do you personally get on the telephone and call delegates?

THE PRESIDENT: I do it occasionally.

QUESTION: Once a night? Twice a night?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: I don't keep a poll of it or a count, but I like to talk to people.

QUESTION: What do you say to them?

THE PRESIDENT: I thank them for their interest in the political system. I thank them that they are active and participating, and I compliment them on the job that I know they will do in Kansas City.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

END

(AT 12:40 P.M. EDT)

#35
7/19/76



PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 35

of the
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

1:30 P.M. EDT
July 19, 1976
Monday

On the North Lawn
At the White House
Washington, D.C.

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

Before responding to your questions, I have two announcements to make.

First, I am sending later this week a message to the Congress calling for prompt action on a number of legislative programs that Congress must act on before adjournment. I am recommending affirmative action, as quickly as possible, on my further tax reduction proposals, on the remaining portions of my energy independence recommendations, on my stronger anti-crime proposals, and, of course, general revenue sharing.

It seems to me that before Congress adjourns, it must undertake a vigorous legislative program if it is to maintain its credibility with the American people.

Secondly, I am sending to the Congress today a recommendation which would further advance our efforts to restore public confidence in the integrity of all three branches of the Federal Government, including the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, and the Judicial Branch. It is vitally important -- I am determined and I trust the Congress is -- to insure that those who hold public office maintain the highest possible standards and are fully accountable to the American people for their behavior while in public office. I hope the Congress will act very promptly on this legislation.

I will be glad to answer any questions.

Helen?

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think that you have the Presidential nomination now locked up and, if not, do you think you will have it by the end of the week?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: I am very encouraged with the results over the weekend. I believe that we are getting very close right now to the magic number of 1,130. I am confident by the time we get to Kansas City, we will have 1,130-plus.

QUESTION: How many delegates do you think you have now?

THE PRESIDENT: The best estimate, I think, is 1,103 and we expect some more good news this week. Therefore, by the time we get to Kansas City, I am confident we will have over 1,130.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is Governor Carter beatable?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

Q And if so, how?

THE PRESIDENT: By the kind of an affirmative program that we have developed in the last 23 months here in the White House under the Ford Administration. I intend to have an affirmative campaign based on the results of turning the economy around, achieving the peace and the restoration of public trust in the White House, itself.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Jimmy Carter has set forth some of his beliefs on foreign policy. Can you tell us whether you think there are major differences with what you are doing now in foreign policy and what are they?

THE PRESIDENT: Since I strongly believe that our foreign policy has been a successful one -- we have achieved the peace, we have the military capability and the diplomatic skill to maintain that peace -- I don't see, from what I have read, any legitimate complaints or objections by any of my Democratic friends, whether they are the candidates for the highest office or the Members of the Congress.

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir, do you feel that the selection of Walter Mondale as Vice President is going to change your selection of a Vice Presidential candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: I will make my choice known on the Vice Presidency based on the best person that could serve as President of the United States. My decision will not be predicated on my Democratic opponent's recommendation of Senator Mondale.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, Mr. Carter took a month to select his Vice Presidential nominee. Will you be able to take very long? Will you have enough time to consider?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been thinking about this matter for some time. I know all of the individuals who are being considered very well. I have worked with them, known about them. I have studied carefully their records. Therefore, it won't be a last-minute analysis. It will be one based on a good many years of experience and opportunities to know how they performed in public office or otherwise. So, it is not going to be a last-minute decision where we winnow out the individuals in a 48-hour period.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how do you assess the Carter-Mondale ticket?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it was obviously the choice of the Democratic Convention, which was well organized and well put together and well controlled. It is a ticket that can be beaten by an affirmative approach that I intend to have in setting forth the improvements that I have made domestically and in foreign policy during the time that I have been honored to be President of the United States.

It is a rather typical Democratic ticket when you add up the platform, its endorsement of the record of the Democratic Congress and the comments that I have heard, both in the acceptance speeches and in subsequent observations.

QUESTION: Can I follow up?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

QUESTION: You said that the ticket -- on Saturday, I believe -- that the ticket tries to be all things to all people. Just what do you mean by that?

THE PRESIDENT: If you look at the ticket itself, if you look at the platform and if you look at the record of the Democratic Congress, you can't help but come to the conclusion that they want to spend a lot of money on the one hand and they talk on the other about some restraint in Federal spending.

You can take almost any one of the many issues, and they are on both sides of the issue. So, I think it fits in very precisely with my observation that I made on Saturday.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, what is the biggest single issue between you and Governor Carter?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to discuss this campaign from that point of view. I think it is important for me to act affirmatively and indicating the results that we have accomplished. I will let Mr. Carter decide the issues where he has some differences.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if you do go to the Convention with the number of delegates that you think you will go with now, is there anything else at the Convention that could really divide the Republicans there?

THE PRESIDENT: I would hope not because the Republican Party does have to be as unified as possible if we are going to win the election in 1976. I think that unity can be achieved at the Convention in Kansas City, and I will maximize my effort to accomplish that result. Therefore, we will have the job of picking the nominee and I expect to be the nominee. We have to write the platform. I hope the platform will be one that all can support, and not divisive. When we leave, we, as a party, must be united individually and collectively.

QUESTION: Mr. President, isn't that, sir, going to be easier said than done? These Reagan people are very committed. They have worked very hard. It is going to take more than just going into that Convention, isn't it, and saying, "Just come on and be on our side." What are you going to say to them?

THE PRESIDENT: I think these delegates, all of them, the ones that support me and the ones that support Mr. Reagan, have a philosophical identity. They do represent delegates, one group for me and the other for Mr. Reagan. But the identity of the philosophy is such that I think when the Convention is concluded, they can be together on the need and necessity for a candidate who will put forth their philosophy against that of the opposition.

MORE

QUESTION: Wouldn't they be a lot happier if you put Mr. Reagan on the ticket with you? There is going to be a lot of pressure on you to do that, is there not?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to make the judgment here as to who will be the Vice Presidential nominee. We will have a good Vice Presidential candidate and, as I said before, we are not going to exclude anybody.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Democrats have already signaled what direction they are going to go by trying to tie your Administration with close ties to the Nixon Administration. How do you intend to handle that problem in the campaign and shed that yoke?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to use the Ford record of 23 months, which is a good one, in turning the economy around, and achieving the peace and maintaining the peace and the restoration of public confidence in the White House, and hopefully the restoration of public confidence in the other two branches of the Federal Government.

QUESTION: Excuse me. As a follow-up, inasmuch as you kept on such former Nixon intimates as Secretaries Kissinger, Simon and Butz and Messrs. Morton, Greenspan, Scowcroft and Rumsfeld, isn't their branding of your Administration accurate?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all because I have made the final decisions in each case.

QUESTION: Mr. President, does the United States have evidence or information that President Qadhafi of Libya is financing, planning, encouraging and serving as the central point of an international terrorist organization and conspiracy?

THE PRESIDENT: We do know that the Libyan Government has in many ways done certain things that might have stimulated terrorist activity, but I don't think we ought to discuss any evidence that we have that might prove or disprove that.

QUESTION: In the light of what you had to say about the Israeli rescue mission, or mission in Uganda, if you have any reason to believe that the Libyan Government is encouraging terrorist operations on an international basis, why, in the sort of classical phrase, why isn't the United States doing something about it?

THE PRESIDENT: We are working in the United Nations, we are working with many Governments in trying to put forward a very strong, anti-terrorist effort in order to stop this kind of very unwarranted, unjustified action and will continue our efforts in that regard.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to follow up on Ronald Reagan as a possible running mate. I am sure you read the paper every morning, and there is a quote in here today from Governor Reagan saying, "Once you become the Vice Presidential candidate, you have no authority over yourself," and he says, "I have expressed disagreement with a great many things with this Administration. No, there is just no way, I wouldn't do it."

Doesn't that really close the door on Ronald Reagan as a running mate?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to pass judgment on what his attitude may be. I will simply reaffirm and reaffirm very strongly, I am not excluding any Republican from consideration as a potential running mate.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has the United States decided, with or without the consent of Germany, France and Britain, not to extend any economic aid to Italy if the Communists join the Government in Italy?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said on several occasions that the United States Government, under this Administration, would be very disturbed by Communist participation in the Government of Italy. For one reason, it would have a very, I think, unfortunate, impact on NATO which is, of course, a very vital part of our international defense arrangement. The United States does have apprehension on a broader basis for Communist participation in the Italian Government.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in view of Jimmy Carter's strength in the South and the Northeastern industrial States, possibly of crucial importance, do you now think it may have been unwise for the Republican high command and you to have told Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to get lost?

THE PRESIDENT I certainly don't use those words when I describe the situation that you have sought to so dramatically describe. (Laughter)

The decision by Nelson Rockefeller was one that he made himself. He has been an outstanding Vice President. He has been a close personal friend and adviser and, I will, of course, abide by his decision, as I would by any others.

But, I repeat what I said a moment ago, in my looking around for a Vice Presidential running mate, I am not excluding anybody.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, what do you feel your major problems are now to hold the nomination?

THE PRESIDENT: Getting a few more delegates.

QUESTION: Where specifically are the problems?

THE PRESIDENT: There are around 100 uncommitted delegates on a pretty wide geographical basis. Of course, Hawaii has 18, Mississippi has 30, and the others are spread through a number of other States. So, we are going to make a maximum effort to convince individual delegates who are uncommitted, as well as those two major States that have not yet committed themselves.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a question on international trade. The American textile industry is very concerned about the increase in imports of textiles from the People's Republic of China. They would like you to negotiate a bilateral agreement with Peking. What is your view on that? Are you doing anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I made a statement about three months ago that fully covers that. If you will refer back to that, it will give you a detailed answer.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us some of the criteria that you will be using in selecting a Vice President? You have said here today that you will consider the Vice Presidential nominee only on his basis to become President should something happen to you, but will there be other criteria as well?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the principal one, of course, and any other criteria would have to be secondary to that. But, other criteria might be age, compatibility with my own philosophy, the experience both in domestic and international affairs. There are a whole raft of potential criteria that I think have to be put into the formula.

QUESTION: Let me ask you, if I can, then, about the process. As you know, Jimmy Carter had a well-publicized audition, if you will, of various candidates. Will you ask the people you have in mind to meet with you either here at the White House or a place of their choice so you can discuss with them their philosophy of Government and any personal differences you may have?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Over the years I have done that with all or most of the people that are being considered, so I don't think we have to go through the similar kind routine that Governor Carter went through.

As I understand it, he had never met several of the people that he considered. So, I could really understand why he went through that process. Because of my experience and knowledge about all of the individuals that I think are being considered, I don't think that kind of a process has to be carried out.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if I may follow up on the question of Italy, since it is possibly related to other European countries, is there an American formula, should the Communists go to power in Italy, that will be applied?

THE PRESIDENT: We aren't going to dictate any formula to the Government of Italy or to the people of Italy. That is a decision for them to make. But, I have expressed our views concerning Communist involvement in that Government as far as its impact on NATO.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can we ask you about the swine flu program? We understand it is in jeopardy now. The insurance companies will not insure the pharmaceutical companies which are making up the batch of vaccine. What can you do about it, can the Government supply insurance?

THE PRESIDENT: Last week the Secretary of HEW and Dr. Cooper met with the four manufacturers and their legal counsel. I got a report Friday from Secretary Mathews. He was more optimistic than some of the press stories seemed to indicate. I have not talked to him today, but we are going to find a way, either with or without the help of Congress, to carry out their program that is absolutely essential, a program that was recommended to me unanimously by 25 or 30 of the top medical people in this particular field.

So, we are going to find a way, and I think we will eventually do it, and I expect the full cooperation of the industry and all other parties involved.

QUESTION: Mr. President, that Watergate reform bill, the Senate version of it goes to the floor today. Until last week the Administration, I gather, was very much opposed to it. Now you are in with a major proposal to change it. Can you tell us how the Administration came up with these proposals at the 11th hour?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: The Administration has had many reservations about several of the provisions in the bill that is on the floor of the Senate at the present time. One, the Senate bill provides, as we understand it -- and we have gone into it with some outstanding legal scholars -- an unconstitutional method of the appointment of a Special Prosecutor.

So, what we have recommend is a completely constitutional method of selecting a Special Prosecutor, one that would call for a Special Prosecutor recommended by the President, confirmed by the Senate for a three-year term with that particular Special Prosecutor being ineligible to serve other than the first three years.

That is definitely a constitutional way to have a Special Prosecutor who would have criminal authority over any allegations made against a President, a Vice President, high executive officials, all Members of Congress and those involved in the Judiciary.

Our reservations was not as to the thrust but as to the constitutionality of several provisions, including the one I have just described.

MORE

QUESTION: What is your proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is our proposal that we feel would accomplish the job of restoring public confidence in all three branches of the Federal Government and do it in a Constitutional way.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in his acceptance speech, Senator Mondale specifically attacked you for your pardon of Richard Nixon and received prolonged applause from the people in the Hall. And later, Mr. Carter said it was an issue that ran very deep in this country. Do you consider your pardon of Mr. Nixon a liability?

THE PRESIDENT: I decided to grant the pardon in the national interest. At that time, the United States was faced with serious economic problems and we were still involved in a long and difficult war in Southeast Asia. We have very important matters to face and to solve. We could not be involved in the Nixon matter and concentrate fully on the more important matters. I decided in the national interest. I would do it again.

QUESTION: Mr. President, will you tell me, sir, what it is that you are accomplishing when you unite both wings of the party, when it is widely recognized that the party is a minority party in American politics and how do you win an election that way?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are going to unite the Republican Party and appeal to independent voters and a number of Democrats, just as the Republicans did in 1968 and 1972.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in connection with the pardon, in both Senator Mondale's speech and in Jimmy Carter's speech, there seemed to be a linkage between the pardon and Watergate, itself. Do you see any such linkage, number one, and secondly, do you think that Watergate should be an issue in the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: I granted the pardon because I thought it was in the national interest. I think the American people will make the decision, not me, myself, whether it will be an issue or not.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you expect a rules fight at the Convention that will allow some delegates to abstain on the first ballot and possibly the second, second ballot?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the Justice Amendment which we are proposing would require that all delegates vote according to the laws under which they were selected and I think that is a very proper amendment to carry out the wishes of the people that supported those individuals at the time they were chosen.

QUESTION: Can I follow up, sir? Do you have an indication from the Reagan people that they will not try and change the Justice Amendment?

THE PRESIDENT: To my knowledge, we have not consulted with them.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how many Vice Presidential possibilities do you have in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: Quite a few.

QUESTION: Like maybe a half dozen, a dozen?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to get into the numbers game. We have a fine, fine array of talent in the Republican Party and maybe elsewhere, and so we will just keep that open until we make the final choice.

QUESTION: When will you make that choice?

THE PRESIDENT: You heard me correctly.

QUESTION: Do your comments on the Vice Presidency here today rule out any possibility you will declare the nomination open and let the Convention in Kansas City decide the Vice Presidential selection?

THE PRESIDENT: I will certainly make a recommendation and I hope the Convention would follow my recommendation.

QUESTION: Mr. President, since you have known all of the people involved as a potential Vice President so long and so well, is it possible you have made your decision and are delaying the announcement until the Convention?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us what his answer is?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Use your imagination.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Governor Carter has said that if the Arabs were to impose another oil embargo, he would treat that as an economic declaration of war and would cut off all U.S. trade with the Arab nations. What do you think of that proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: We have been able, through diplomatic successes, to avoid the possibility of a Middle Eastern War and thereby avoided the possibility of an oil embargo. I am confident that the Ford Administration successes, diplomatically, in the Middle East, will preclude any such situation as was indicated by Mr. Carter.

If you are doing things right, if you have the trust of Arab nations, as well as Israel, I don't think we have to look forward to either a Middle Eastern war or an oil embargo.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, a question on the Olympics. Now that Taiwan and the African nations have pulled out, what is your assessment of the situation and what changes would you like to see made in the next Olympics?

THE PRESIDENT: I am very proud of the successes I read about of the American team there yesterday. They did very, very well in the 100-meter freestyle and several other events, and I think the American team has done well and will continue to do well.

Q Has it been overpoliticized?

THE PRESIDENT: We have tried to keep the athletic competition at the international level away from being pawns in international politics. We did our very best to achieve that result and the net result was, with some unfortunate circumstances, that the athletes are able to compete, and I am proud of the American successes.

QUESTION: Mr. President, will your race with Jimmy Carter be a conservative versus a liberal race? What is the difference between your philosophy and Mr. Carter's in those terms?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to pass judgment on my opponent's campaign. We are going to run our own campaign, which is one of a record of accomplishment in foreign policy, domestic policy and the restoration of trust in the White House. What they do is for them to decide.

QUESTION: You cannot then describe Carter as a liberal?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to pin a label on anybody. I am going to just say that we have done a good job and on the basis of doing a good job, I think the American people will want the same kind of a job done for the next four years.

QUESTION: Mr. President, when you were Vice President you said that you would not employ anything such as CREEP, as President Nixon had, that you would have no separate committee. Now we understand there will be a President Ford election committee and you will not be relying entirely on the Republican National Committee.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is caused by the Election Reform Act that was passed late in 1974. When I made that speech out in Chicago -- I think sometime in 1973 or early 1974 -- that election law had not been enacted. Once that law was enacted, it does require that you maintain a National Committee and that the candidate for the Presidency have a separate organization.

So, as much as I might want to put the two together, it is precluded by the law itself.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, Senator Mondale says that you don't have the intelligence to be a good President. What do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the American people will judge that.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can we assume that you will see all the noncommitted delegates by the time the convention begins?

THE PRESIDENT: I would hope I could, but I can't categorically promise that. I would like to, definitely.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Supreme Court recently handed down another decision on abortion essentially strengthening the first one. What does this do to your position that you would prefer a constitutional amendment turning it back to the States? Have you given up hope now for that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't see how that recommendation on my part is undercut by the recent decisions of the Supreme Court. I do not believe in abortion on demand. I do think you have a right to have an abortion where the life of the mother is involved, where there was a rape. I don't go along with those who advocate an amendment that would be so ironclad you couldn't under any circumstances have an abortion.

I reiterate what I have said on a number of occasions. I think an amendment which permits the voters in a State to decide whether in that State they want or don't want, is a proper way to give the people of this country or in their respective States the decision-making power.

QUESTION: Mr. President, don't you think the Supreme Court decision is going to make it more difficult to get that amendment, however?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you have any comment one way or another on that recent shake-up in the FBI on the Kelley dismissal of Mr. Callahan?

THE PRESIDENT: That was a decision by the Attorney General and by the FBI Director. Mr. Callahan was not a Presidential appointee so it was handled by the proper authorities.

QUESTION: Mr. President, presumably you watched a little bit of the Democratic National Convention on television. If so, would you tell us how Jimmy Carter came across to you as a personality, as a potential campaigner and as an opponent?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I really had any impression of him. (Laughter)

MORE

QUESTION: You didn't watch enough to get an impression of him?

THE PRESIDENT: I was pretty busy.

QUESTION: Mr. President, all 67 members of the New Jersey delegation are already in your column.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope.

QUESTION: Why are you bringing them down here this afternoon to a private meeting from which the press has been barred?

THE PRESIDENT: I am inviting them down because I want to meet them personally. Just as I said a few moments ago, I would like very much to have the opportunity of meeting all of the delegates and alternates to the National Convention, and this is a good way for me to do with the New Jersey delegation as I have with the other delegations.

QUESTION: What will be the nature of this meeting and do you have any thoughts about the exclusion of the press from --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't know until a few moments ago that members of the press were excluded.

QUESTION: Can we come?

THE PRESIDENT: We have had a number of such meetings, and the question never came up from the press before, and I just don't see why we should make an exception here.

QUESTION: Mr. President, why are you down so far in the polls when you are pitted against Jimmy Carter?

THE PRESIDENT: The only poll that really counts is the one that is going to come on November 2, when the voters of this country decide in all 50 States, and I will rely on that one.

QUESTION: But how can you account for the preferences there?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we should analyze the ups and downs of periodic public opinion polls. The real one that counts -- and that is the one that is going to decide this great election -- is the one that comes November 2.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. It has been very pleasant out here.

END (AT 2:01 P.M. EDT)