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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

DOUGLAS MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

9:05 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: It is great to be in Charlotte again along with Jim Holshouser and Jim Martin. Saturdays are always nice after you have gotten more good news on the economy like we got last Friday.

It must be a Democratic plane trying to drown out that good economic news we have been getting. (Laughter)

But anyhow, the increase in the cost of living was the lowest in four years. If we annualize that it means that it is going to be 1.2 percent for a 12-month period. That is too much to expect but we are certainly greatly encouraged because, as all of you know, when I came in it was about 12 percent or more and to get it down to this area certainly will have an impact on consumer confidence, and that is a real key to the overall recovery which is well on its way.

I think the people in North Carolina will like that good news, just like they have in the other 49 States, so it is just nice to be here.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have been talking about Ronald Reagan pulling out of the race. Are you afraid Ronald Reagan will take your momentum away in North Carolina?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have momentum on our own and I have no apprehension that it will be stopped by any forces that I see at all.

QUESTION: Mr. President, since you have been winning in the primaries, have any of your forces suggested that Ronald Reagan get out of the primaries?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't personally suggested nor have I authorized anybody on my staff to suggest to my opponent that he ought to get out of the race.

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QUESTION: Do you think it might be divisive to have him continue in the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: I said it had some potentiality if the campaign continues but I have not myself, nor authorized anybody on my staff, to contact the Reagan people for that purpose.

QUESTION: Do you wish he would get out?

THE PRESIDENT: I really don't care because our campaign is predicated on going to Kansas City and getting the nomination and that being, of course, the forerunner to a victory in November of 1976.

Thank you all very, very much.

QUESTION: Can you tell us the current status of the Bo Callaway matter?

THE PRESIDENT: I can only tell you that the Callaway matter is where it was a week ago today when Bo Callaway asked to step aside, and I agreed, until the investigation is complete. Until that is completed, there is no change in status and I wouldn't speculate on what might happen if there was a change.

Thank you all very, very much.

Yes?

QUESTION: Senator Helms said yesterday that if you didn't fire Mr. Callaway it might be another Watergate. What is your reaction to that?

THE PRESIDENT: We took the appropriate action with the request by Mr. Callaway for himself to be suspended until the investigation was complete. So there is just no comparability or connection whatsoever and any allegation like that is without foundation.

Thank you all very much.

END (AT 9:08 A.M. EST)