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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION  
WEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

8:55 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much, Dr. Watkins, Senator Tower, my former colleague and very old and dear friend, Bob Bryce, Mayor Bryan, distinguished guests, students, faculty, wonderful people from Canyon, Texas. It is a great, great evening, and I am delighted to come here at the conclusion of two wonderful days and have the inspiration of all of you great people from West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas, and thank you for the very, very warm welcome.

Not long ago you probably know that I spent a little time in Florida, and some of my friends in the Miami area, as I was campaigning down there asked me to bring you a message this evening, a message to the Buffalos. (Laughter)

They asked me to thank you for sending them Mercury Morris. (Laughter)

I have got a long speech here which I have read over, and it is a very good speech, but I would rather sort of discard it and let the press -- they have all written about it anyhow -- (Laughter) -- stand by their stories and make a few observations and comments and then I would more thoroughly enjoy and far greater benefit from your questions, so if you will excuse the discarding of the text and let me say a few things and then we will get to the questions.

It would be much more enjoyable from my point of view, and I think a fine climax to the two great days here in the State of Texas.

I have read about West Texas State University, and back a long time ago at the University of Michigan, I played a little football and have had a long and continuing interest in athletics, and I still read the sports page first because you have a 50-50 chance of being right on the sports page. (Laughter)

On the front page, those odds change. But anyhow I have watched, you know, the progress of those that were in the top 20 or top ten in basketball. Michigan sneaked up there and almost made it, but you had a good season, you are going to do better next year. Good luck to you.

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As I travel, I make a very determined effort to come to college and university campuses because I think the future of this country is among our young people. I have a lot of faith, I have tremendous belief in what the younger generation of this country is going to do in the years ahead.

I know that a period of time over the last ten years there was some lack of rapport between what the younger generation and some of our older generations, but as I travel and visit college campuses around the country, I find that there is a strong belief among younger people today that our form of Government, that our form of economic development, that our aims and ambitions, our hopes and aspirations are what appeals to them, because America, as you look at what we have and what we have gone through and what we can expect, by any standard, comparing us with any other country, America is a great country, and you will make it even greater.

We know it and you know it, and it will be a country that is better than anything we have had and better than anything we can compare it with.

We have gone through a tough period. Twenty months ago when I had the honor and privilege of becoming President, we were suffering some severe economic problems, inflation virtually out of control. We were sliding in at that period even then into the worst economic conditions this country has had in 40 years. Employment was beginning to drop, and unemployment was beginning to rise.

Many people said the answer to our problems was to load up the Federal Government with thousands and thousands and thousands of more employees, to spend ourselves really virtually into bankruptcy.

There were these critics who said we were going to have unemployment of 10 percent. There were those who were, as doomsayers, saying we were going to have a depression like we had in the '30s, and some of you remember it very vividly.

But the American people didn't panic. The American people didn't buy these quick-fixes that look good on paper but hasn't worked, never will work. The American people believed in the free enterprise system. The American people believed in our Government and the net result is the skies are getting brighter, everything that should be going up is going up, and everything that should be going down is going down. Employment is going up, unemployment is going down. The rate of inflation is going down, and the American people have confidence again.

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One survey after another in recent weeks indicate very clearly that the American people have again the faith and the belief in our system, not only our economic system, but our political system, and believe me this is what will make America what our forefathers wanted it to be and what we can make it be.

But, we have responsibilities around the world that fall on our shoulders. Not that we necessarily in every instance want them, but fate has decreed that the United States has a responsibility to work with our allies, to negotiate with our adversaries, to help the less advantaged, to make this globe in which we live not only a better place for us, but a better place for all people.

As we look around the globe today, I think we can say that despite a problem here or a problem there, the world is getting a better place in which to live. It may take longer, but we should never give up the ambition and the hope and the aspiration for that.

Now, one quick comment or two about what I try to stand for, one principle. I will never promise more than I can deliver and we will deliver everything that I promise.

There is one basic truth that I believe in. I think it cuts across all the rhetoric that most people use. It is a basic truth that is so fundamental that I state it this way -- we should never forget that a Government big enough to give us everything we want is a Government big enough to take from us everything we have.

Finally, I think as Americans we can stand tall and strong and say without hesitation, qualification or reservation, when we look at what we have gone through for 200 years and what we have gone through for the last 20 months, we can say individually and collectively we are proud to be Americans and we are proud of America.

The first question.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that Mrs. Ford has a CB radio, and I was wondering what her handle is. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: This is a matter of very high discussion among the Ford family. (Laughter) I am sure what she decides it should be it will be. (Laughter) And I am sure when it is decided, it will be public very quickly. (Laughter)

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QUESTION: I would like to know what your views are on the new book by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, "The Final Days."

THE PREISDENT: I haven't read the book. I was not interviewed by Mr. Woodward or Mr. Bernstein. I can only personally testify as to the parts that I understand he wrote concerning the last few days where I was in a position of moving from Vice President to President.

It appears from what I have heard -- and I haven't read it -- that it is reasonably accurate. It seems, as I understand it, to coincide with the testimony that I gave to the House Committee on the Judiciary in October of 1974 when they asked me to come up and testify as to that period.

I hope that the book is accurate. I am not qualified to pass judgment on all of the incidents or stories that are alleged. In some way I am a little saddened. I am not sure that going back and writing that tragic period in our history is necessarily good, but if it is accurate, that is the record.

If it isn't, I think it is very, very tragic and not having read it, I can't testify to anything more than that.

QUESTION: Mr. President, we -- the farmers and the ranchers of the Pan Handle -- have really inherited a rich and fulfilling future, but we have also inherited some problems, just as you yourself have. But, we feel that without the passage of the Burleson-Curtis estate tax bill we are going to have -- raising the floor from \$60,000 to \$200,000 -- we are going to have trouble affording to inherit, or have trouble affording this inheritance.

Would you elaborate on this, and would you tell us if you plan to sign this bill as it is coming in out of the committee going to both Houses and it should go across your desk in the next several months?

THE PRESIDENT: I fully recognize the need and necessity for increasing the exemption in our Federal estate tax. As a matter of fact, in January of this year in my State of the Union Message, I indicated that we had to give some relief if we were going to permit owners of so-called family farms to pass them on from one generation to another or small businesses to pass the controlling interest in small businesses from one generation to another.

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At that time I recommended that we ought to have a five-year moratorium in the payment of any estate taxes. No payments would be made under the estate tax laws, plus a 20-year annual payment of whatever the taxes were on annual increments at a 4 percent interest rate.

In checking into the matter further, we have made an additional recommendation that would take that \$60,000 exemption which was passed in 1942 up to \$150,000. Now, that is a modification of the so-called Burluson bill. I know that arguments can be made that it ought to go to \$200,000 rather than \$150,000. I know that other figures can be used that might even take it higher than that.

All I can say is I understand the problem. We have submitted what I think is a good increase in the exemption, particularly with the phasing of the payments, if any, beyond the \$150,000 so that in effect the Federal Government is financing the transfer over that rather than forcing the new generation to go to the banks.

So, I think our proposal is a good one. If the Congress wants to modify it, of course we will take a look at it. You have no hesitancy to believe that I honestly feel very strongly that we have got to make changes along the lines we have discussed, and I don't think we are too far apart.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, pertaining to the three national health insurance plans that the Congress has been discussing, which of the three are you for, and would you support?

THE PRESIDENT: Are you talking about national health insurance?

QUESTION: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not sure we can identify three. We have had the Kennedy proposal, which up until this year was the Kennedy-Griffith proposal, which would have encompassed a total Federalization of the health delivery system of the United States.

It would have put the Federal Government in the patient-doctor relationship. It would have in effect made the Federal Government collect the payments or the taxes and handle all the monetary transactions and really control medicine in this country. I am opposed to that program, period.

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If you go from that extreme, you can go to the attitude that nothing should be done. I think not now, maybe not for three or four years, there is a potential that we can utilize the private health insurance companies. They are good, they cover now about 80 to 85 percent of the American people, and the Federal Government could utilize their capability, their experience, and have in effect total coverage.

That is, I think, a possibility. But even in that instance we can't go to it now until we get our Federal finances underway; straightened out, I should say.

Now, I should add a postscript. I suspect that many people in this audience tonight are familiar with what we call insurance of catastrophic illness where a person in a family, old or young, or a neighbor or friend, a relative, or even in your own family, has suffered tragic illness where the costs are unbelievable, they wipe out the resources.

It is my feeling that under Medicaid or Medicare some three million people who have had that tragedy ought to be covered for what we call catastrophic illness care. I favor that, but it is a very limited number of cases, and they are the saddest, most tragic in our society.

So, I have recommended that, but that is a far cry from total coverage of what we call national health insurance. We have an obligation to find a mechanism to take care of those who have catastrophic illness, and I will push for it. I will fight for it because I think it is right, and I think it is justified.

But, other than that, no, at this stage, anyhow, any national health insurance program.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that you will be receiving a petition from E. Howard Hunt next month concerning a pardon.

How do you intend to reply to Mr. Hunt's appeal?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not familiar with that petition. That petition will be handled just like any other request. It will go through the Pardon Attorney's Office in the Department of Justice. It is a well-established office that has years and years of experience in handling pardon requests.

If and when they make a recommendation to me from the Office of the Pardon Attorney in the Department of Justice, of course, I will consider it. But for me to pre-judge that without having their recommendations, I think, would be unfair and improper.

I can only say he, along with everybody else, will get the same consideration, and if it comes to my desk, we will give it the same consideration any other person in our society would get.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, quite frankly, I am nervous as a cat at a dog show. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: So was I when I came in.

QUESTION: I am from Memphis, Texas, and I am from the agricultural part of the country, as we are in the whole State. And I would like to ask you what you feel about the farm programs or what type of farm programs might you favor in the next Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, during the 25-plus years that I served in the Congress, most of the time the Congress perpetuated those farm programs where we had the Government running virtually every farm in America with acreage limitations, price supports, et cetera, and the net result was we had vast surpluses of wheat and corn, et cetera, and these vast surpluses were costing the Federal Government about \$1 million a day in storage fees, and they were depressing the market where the farmers were trying to sell their commodities.

I think those programs were wrong, and about three years ago, we went to the current farm programs where the net result is farmers produce for the open markets, where we have no surpluses and where American agriculture has shown that, it can out produce any other country in the history of mankind, where we sell about \$22 billion a year of American agriculture all over the world.

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It has been the greatest insurance for us in the balance of trade to offset the importation of foreign oil. This present farm program, which I think is a good one, is going to expire next year, and next year, as President, I am going to recommend the extension of this program for the next four or five years.

I think it is sound. I think it is good for agriculture. I think it is good for America, and I think it is good for the world.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you being an ex-football player and presumably a BMOC --

THE PRESIDENT: You are giving me a big build-up. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Well, that is all I know about you so far. (Laughter)

What is your concept of winning in America, your concept or your philosophy about America has to come first in everything and win?

THE PRESIDENT: I did compete in athletics at the University of Michigan. I competed athletically as well as scholastically. I have competed all my life. I think competition is good. It has to be fair. But, competition stimulates me, and I think it stimulates the vast majority of Americans to do better.

The net result is our country has advanced more rapidly and in the process of advancing more rapidly, we have done more things for more people in this country than any other country in the history of mankind, materialistically, but we haven't lost our spiritual and moral and religious dedication, either.

So, competition, if it is within the rules, is good for each of us, and I think it is good for our country to compete with other countries because in that process we have advanced scientifically and technologically. We have, as a consequence, improved our capability to produce in agriculture, in industry.

This competition has helped us retain our form of Government which, by any standard, is the freest in the history of mankind. So, I am a believer in competition. I can be a good winner and I can be a good loser, but the competition is good, and I hope we never lose it in America.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, first I want to thank you for vetoing the irresponsible child care bill.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. That was Number 47. I think the Congress will sustain it because it is bad, I think, organizationally speaking. I think it is bad for many other reasons, plus it just was another instance of the Federal Government setting standards and pre-empting the right of individual States to set standards when the record is very clear that States do set high and responsible standards, dependent upon the circumstances in each State, and there is no reason whatsoever why the Federal Government had to set a national standard in this area. So, it wasn't hard to veto it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that over 90 percent of our nation's businesses are self-employed and family businesses, yet our politicians insist on referring to this large segment of our economy as small. Is it possible, Mr. President, to begin action in Washington to remove the stigma of "small," a most repugnant title placed on this most energetic segment of our economy? The IRS at least refers to us -- I must include myself -- as self-employed. It sounds better.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't get the impression in Washington that we consider small business or the self-employed as a title of stigma. If I can recall the many debates on the floor of the House of Representatives and discussions I have had with the Democratic and Republican leadership in the Cabinet Room, Members of Congress as well as myself honor and respect small business, including the self-employed.

Most of the condemnation that you are getting today, some of it fair and much of it unfair, comes at what we call conglomerates or massive business organizations that employ literally thousands and thousands and do billions of dollars worth of business.

I think the Congress, as well as we in the Executive Branch, are grateful for and appreciate tremendously, the contributions of small business. You are not going to be hurt by anything done by us or in the Congress, I can assure you of that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a year ago I wrote you a letter on how us kids should get involved in the energy crisis, and I received a letter in return. Now I would like to know what the Government is doing to conserve our energy for our future?

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THE PRESIDENT: That is a very good question, but let me answer it this way. About the time that you wrote me that letter a year ago, maybe a little longer, I submitted to the Congress a comprehensive energy program aimed at achieving energy independence for the United States by 1985.

There were two basic concepts: One, the stimulation of more production of energy in the United States on the one hand and, secondly, to conserve energy on the other. Among those legislative proposals to stimulate more production, I recommended the decontrol of domestic oil production and the decontrol of natural gas production.

Unfortunately, the Congress, after pulling and hauling for about 12 months, finally sent down to the White House, the Oval Office, a marginally acceptable oil bill, which I with some reluctance signed. I signed it because it had some provisions which were very helpful in the conservation field, and it had some advantages over a period of time of decontrolling our domestic oil production, a 40-month period. I can assure you I will use every possible provision of that legislation to accelerate the decontrol of the domestic oil industry.

Secondly, the Congress has not acted on deregulation of natural gas. The Senate passed a good bill, the House passed a terrible bill, and I am afraid they are at loggerheads. But now let's turn to conservation. In the energy proposals that I submitted, we recommended about eight individual items that would conserve energy. Congress passed four of them. They are being implemented, and it is encouraging to note that our domestic utilization of oil and gas, energy as a whole, is down about 2 percent from 1973 and 1974.

Now, some of that has come about because we have had an economic recession. I concede that. But actually, if you compare it, 1975 to the two previous years, the American people did quite well. They drove less fast, or drove slower, they turned down their thermostats, Industry had a great program of using less energy in the manufacturing of their products.

In many, many ways the American people undertook a good conservation program, not as well as we would have liked, but we did make headway and if we can get several more pieces of legislation, I think we will do even better.

We have to conserve, we have to stimulate our domestic production of oil and gas, we have to spend money in research and development, in the exotic fuels, solar energy, and I might quote for you, if it would be helpful, two years ago we spent about \$40 million in research and development for solar energy. This year we are spending \$116 million, and next year \$160 million.

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This is a great potential. Your Government is making a massive effort to the extent that we can to conserve on the one hand and to increase production on the other.

QUESTION: Mr. President, we have time for one more question.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, gosh, can we take a couple more? If you can stand it, I am enjoying it. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Mr. President, what qualities in a leader do you deem necessary for a person in the Presidency to possess? As we go to the polls as voters in November we need to be aware of these qualities of leadership. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: From my 27 plus years in public life -- 25 years in the Congress and two plus years as Vice President and President -- I would summarize it this way: I think a person in public life has to be honest with himself and frank and candid in his relationship with people, whether he represents a Congressional district or represents the 215 million people in the United States. That is number one.

Number two, I think there has to be a basic intelligence that is related to your education, whether it was in school or whether it was in the business world or whether it was in your profession. You have to have not only an educational background, but an experienced background. Experience is vitally important as one sees day after day the kind of problems that come across the President's desk.

I can assure you that it is not an eight-hour day, and don't get me wrong, I love it. I can't wait to get to the office every morning, and I don't go home tired and worn out and otherwise unhappy at night.

But I think you have to have some experience because the wide spectrum of problems that come to the desk, say yes or no, you seldom can say maybe. You have to have experience, you have to be able to make decisions decisively. You have to have a capability of coming forth with constructive suggestions to solve our problems.

You just can't sit back and say this is wrong, it is terrible, or that is wrong, and I can't do anything about it. You have to look at the problem through experience, through education, through good judgment, through honesty. You have to come forth with some solutions, not just be critical, and those are the kinds of ingredients that I think are essential and vital for any President, whether it is President in 1976 or whether it is in the future or whether it has been the case in the past.

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QUESTION: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you support legislation that would repeal the Buckley amendment and do you think that this amendment has had an adversary effect on the effectiveness of educators in making unbiased reports and recommendations on students?

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, the Buckley amendment, which requires the public disclosure of all school applicants as well as the school records of students who are in colleges and universities, is that correct?

QUESTION: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the experience that has been held in the last 12 or 18 months since that went into effect would argue very affirmatively that there ought to be modification in that legislation. I know that Senator Buckley, when he offered the amendment and when it was passed by the Congress, did it with the best of intentions.

But, I think experience has proven that it went too far. It is inflexible and there ought to be some changes, and I hope that the Congress will do so.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I am sure that you are aware that scientists in our country are working toward a cure for paralysis in spinal cord injuries, and these men must have money for research. I would like to ask you if you plan to support these men in every way so that thousands like me can get out of the wheelchairs?

THE PRESIDENT: I know that the Veterans Administration asked for additional funding and help and assistance to continue or to expand research in the areas in which you have indicated. It is my best recollection that we recommended an additional amount of money for the expansion of such research to try and find some answers, not only answers in the United States but to work with other scientists around the world.

I was told at the time we considered the budget that there were some excellent programs in other countries, including the Soviet Union, in this particular field. So, I can assure you that whatever funds the VA or the National Institute of Health or any other agency of the Federal Government can come up with a program, there will be no hesitancy as far as I am concerned, in recommending the funds they request.

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QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like for you to comment on what your personal fiscal policy is and what it will be in the next year. I would also like to know what you think the unemployment rate will be at the end of this year and at the end of the next Administration.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer the last question first. In the budget that we submitted for fiscal year 1977, we forecast that during 1976 the unemployment rate would end at the end of this calendar year at a rate of about 7 percent. In the first two months or three months of 1976, the actual results have been better than we anticipated.

I respectfully refer you back to a year ago when it was 8.9 percent. It is now, according to the figures for March, 7.5. It is my judgment that by the end of calendar year 1976 we will have an unemployment rate below 7 percent, and it will continue downward in the months ahead after January 1, 1977.

Now, as a fiscal policy, I submitted this year a budget that calls for a 50 percent cut in the rate of growth in Federal expenditures. If you go back for the last ten years and look at the Federal budget, you will find that during that period of time the expenditures in the Federal Government grew at a 10 to 11 percent rate per year.

Let me illustrate what it meant in dollars. For the current fiscal year we expect the Federal Government will spend roughly \$372 or \$373 billion in 13 months. If we don't change a program, if there is no new law passed, just more people going on this program or that program or the cost of living escalators in the many programs, the rate of growth in dollars in the Federal budget will be over \$50 billion in 12 months. That is just the growth factor at a 10 to 11 percent increase.

We can't sustain, we can't justify that kind of growth. So, I recommended a budget for fiscal year 1977 that cuts that growth rate in half from 10 to 11 percent down to 5 to 5-1/2 percent and set a spending ceiling of \$394.4 billion.

Now tragically, the Congress and the two budget committees have already added to that spending figure by -- well, from 394 to 413 to 414. So, that is the practical problem we face.

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I can assure you that we are going to do our utmost to hold the spending line at the figure that I indicated -- \$394.4 billion -- and we are going to veto, as we have in the past, any expenditures over the budget figures. As you look at the record for the last 19 or 20 months, I have vetoed 47 bills, 39 have been sustained, and we have saved \$13 billion, and we are going to continue to do it in order to keep control over the rate of growth of Federal spending.

Now, what will be the net result? If Congress will go along and the American people will support it, we can have a balanced budget in fiscal year 1979 and we can have an additional tax reduction at the same time.

One more here, and then one over there.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this is in reference to the Federal housing assistance program that you signed into law in 1974. As it stands right now, Amarillo has a five-year contract with HUD on this program, but Congress has only appropriated money for one year. How do you feel that Congress will react on this program for the succeeding four years?

THE PRESIDENT: Are you talking about the Section 8 program?

QUESTION: Yes, I believe that is it.

THE PRESIDENT: I recommended for fiscal year 1977 I think it was 400,000 units of Section 8 housing.

QUESTION: That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: Naturally, I hope the Congress will go along with it. I think it is the best of the subsidized housing programs that have come from the Congress or from the White House.

I personally believe that Congress will go along with it, and we hope so because I think it is a good program. We will certainly try to prod and push them.

What is your impression, John? (Laughter)

Senator Tower is the senior Republican on the Committee on Banking and Currency in the Senate. He probably knows a lot more about housing legislation than I. But, I think it is the best of our subsidized housing programs, and I hope the Congress will go along with it.

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QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: You have probably been asked this before, but what are your feelings on abortion and, if you are against it, would you support an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the United States Supreme Court decision went too far. I think in effect it went further than it had to. On the other hand, I do not agree with those who would seek to amend the Federal Constitution to have an inflexible approach to abortion, either. I think that is much too drastic.

Furthermore, I don't think you will get two-thirds of the Members of the Congress to pass it, and I don't think you will get three-quarters of the States to adopt it. So, it is not a realistic solution, even though I think it is too drastic in one respect.

So, you have a Supreme Court decision that I think goes too far and some of the other proposals to amend the Constitution likewise go too far. It seems to me that we have got to move the decision of the Supreme Court to a position more to the middle, and I think the Supreme Court, when it recognizes the overall attitude of the American people, it will respond to a more moderate approach than the one that they took several years ago.

That is the kind of approach that I would strongly support.

QUESTION: Mr. President, last year we had trouble, the farmers had trouble, in the grain deal with Russia that blew everything -- it was all over the papers, and I was wondering, foreign markets are agricultures -- we have to have foreign markets. Are we going to have to look out in the next four years to see whom and how much we can sell grain to?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that under my Administration you have had more grain sold abroad in the last two years than any other Administration in the history of the United States. I think that is good.

Now, the problem you raise of that temporary suspension in 1975 is one that I think if you are objective and analyze it, it was for the benefit of the grain producers in this country. Bear in mind that it was precipitated by what? There was an action taken to have a strike on the docks of Houston and New Orleans, et cetera.

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If those strikes had not been ended, you would have had no ships taking American grain from the harbors, you would have had the grain piled up on the docks, you would have had the railroads stopped, they couldn't have handled the grain from your elevators and from your farms. It would have been an unbelievable mess, and it wouldn't have gotten one bushel more of grain overseas.

Now, the best way to solve it was to get an agreement with the Soviet Union, as we did, for a five-year program with a minimum sale of six million tons per year and anything above that that they want to buy.

What does that do? That guarantees the grain producers of this country a market for five years, beginning next September of six million tons per year instead of one year having no sales to the Soviet Union, the next year ten million tons, the next year no sales, the next year five million tons. You have a sustained, guaranteed market in the Soviet Union, plus those markets in Japan, plus those markets in Eastern Europe, plus those markets in Western Europe.

I think this is a good deal, and the temporary suspension that we had in the sales was necessary to consummate this agreement for a five-year market of six million tons or more for the American farmer. I think it was the right thing to do. I don't think it was harmful in the long run. I think it was beneficial to American agriculture.

One final aspect of that. I would like to make very clear the allegation has been made in some quarters that this President capitulated to Mr. George Meany. There is nothing true about that accusation, and may I use as a good illustration of my independence from Mr. Meany, I vetoed the common situs picketing bill, which he wanted very badly.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: Could I ask a question?

THE PRESIDENT: You sure may. I couldn't turn you down. (Laughter)

QUESTION: What I wanted to ask was, are you going to have John Connally as your Vice Presidential runningmate?

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THE PRESIDENT: I have to get nominated myself first. But, I have said before, and I repeat here, John Connally is a very good personal friend of mine. He has had a fine public record -- six years as Governor of Texas, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of the Navy. He certainly has all the qualifications.

But, I hasten to add we have some other outstanding potential candidates, and John Tower, with his experience, certainly should be one who would qualify for consideration. I think it is just premature to make any decision at this time. We are lucky in the Republican Party to have such a wealth of talent from all over the country, and it will make a good team, let me assure you.

Thank you very, very much.

Thank you all. I have loved being here in Canyon. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to have an opportunity to try and respond to the good questions and the wonderful spirit of the West Texas State University students, faculty and townspeople of Canyon.

I thank you for your generous and very wholesome and warm feeling. It has been a wonderful conclusion to a wonderful two days in Texas.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 9:46 P.M. CST)