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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

WEIR-COOK FIELD

6:25 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Bill.

Of course, I have been in Indianapolis on a number of occasions and it is great to be back. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to be here and to get this key from you as the Mayor of Indianapolis. I thank you very much.

Of course, it is a great privilege to be here with the Governor, who is an old and very dear friend of mine. It is just nice to be in Indiana.

We had a great experience a couple days ago. We had some of Indiana's outstanding heroes when we had the Indiana basketball team down at the White House. They certainly are nice young men and they had a great record.

With that, I will be glad to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you tell us, sir, give us a summary of the condition of your campaign finances and why, in your judgment, we are unable to continue with the Federal dollars for the Presidential campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me answer the last question first. The reason there is no continuation of the law that was passed in 1974, which would give to candidates for the Presidency in both parties a Federal financing, in part is because the Congress, since January 30, has done nothing to amend the unconstitutional provisions in the law that the Supreme Court on January 30 said had to be corrected.

On January 30 of this year, the Supreme Court said certain provisions were unconstitutional. It is almost three months now and the Congress has not yet sent to my desk for my signature a bill that would correct these deficiencies.

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So the blame for this controversy is solely on the shoulders of the United States Congress. They have been on two vacations, they have not done a thing in passing a final version, and once the Congress moves then we can make a decision.

QUESTION: Would you respond to Congressman Udall's complaint that your finances are in good shape so you are not going to be hurt by this delay, but that his financial condition is not so good and neither is Ronald Reagan's so that they are harmed by the delay?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, the blame for this whole problem goes right to the United States Congress. As I said a moment ago, Congress has had almost three months to correct a very simple deficiency in the law as determined by the Supreme Court. Three days after the Court acted, on January 30 I said to the leaders of the Congress, both Democrat and Republican, pass a simple amendment and the whole matter will be taken care of.

It is now almost 90 days and Congress has not yet acted to send a bill to correct the problem, so when Mr. Udall or Mr. Reagan or Senator Jackson or any of the others complain, they ought to get hold of the Congress. They have not completed any action that would have taken about maybe a page and a half of very simple corrections to straighten out the mess, and they have wasted 90 days and they have still not done a thing to correct it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how important is the Indiana primary to you, especially in light of the statement by Rogers Morton that you may be in trouble in Alabama and Georgia the same day and that Texas, three days earlier, is a toss-up?

THE PRESIDENT: Indiana is a very important State. I have a great affection for Indiana. Michigan and Indiana have gotten along together for a good many years. I have a special personal reason for wanting the support of the people of Indiana. I know many people here always enjoyed being here and, aside from the political side, I would certainly like to get a successful campaign here in Indiana so that we could have the delegates when we go to Kansas City.

QUESTION: The first question that we asked was, how much money do you have?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, our campaign for the moment is in the black, but we have done that by, I think, spending our money that has been contributed in a very responsible way. We have not wasted the President Ford Committee money and, as a result, we are in the black.

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We don't owe anybody; we are operating in the black instead of the red. I kind of like to operate a balanced budget, whether it is in the Federal Government or whether it is in the President Ford Committee. So we have been husbanding our funds.

Some of these other candidates have apparently either wasted their money, or have not planned it properly so they are in some trouble. But the President Ford Committee, because we spent it wisely, we have handled it well, we are in the black.

QUESTION: Would you tell us what is the effect on the chances for an arms limitation agreement, the effect of the debate between you and Ronald Reagan over whether this country is first militarily?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would not let any partisan or nonpartisan political charges interfere with responsible negotiations involving an attempt to lower the nuclear capability of two super-powers. If we don't negotiate a responsible nuclear limitation on both parties, we could have a runaway nuclear holocaust that would be disastrous from the point of view of the entire globe.

So I am going to approach the problem in the future as I have in the past, regardless of the political campaign, and try to lower the number of ballistic missiles, of nuclear potential, and this will be done regardless of any party or partisan politics.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. Nice to see you all.

END (AT 6:30 P.M. EST)