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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

LUBBOCK REGIONAL AIRPORT

12:09 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: It is nice to see you all and to be in Lubbock again. It is nice to see my very old and very good friend, Sarah McClendon, but I think if any of you from the local press would like to ask any questions, I would be delighted to try and answer them.

QUESTION: Mr. President, now that you are here at the airport, I would like to ask you if you know of any plans of the Civil Aeronautics Board to expand air flight service in Lubbock?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that those requests are before the CAB. Because that is an independent regulatory agency, I don't think it is proper for me to make any decisions for them. That is why they were established, for Congress to make an independent evaluation, and I am sure that the Board will actively consider and come up with a fair and proper decision.

Lubbock is a growing community. Lubbock is an important part of not only Texas, but this part of the country. With the facts you have, I would expect you would do pretty well.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ronald Reagan this morning attacked your Administration's economic policies by saying we are not having a sound recovery, that actually we have a very sick patient in America and the only difference between New York and Washington is that Washington has a money printing press. Would you comment?

THE PRESIDENT: I strongly disagree with the Governor's observations and comments concerning our economic recovery. It is a very inaccurate comment concerning how well we are doing. When you look at the fact when I became President 20 months ago, we had inflation of over 12 percent and then compare it with the rate of inflation for the first three months of 1976, which is a rate of under 3 percent.

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We have reduced the rate of inflation by 75 percent. I am amazed that Governor Reagan wouldn't understand the difference between a 12 percent rate of inflation and under 3 percent. We have a sound, constructive, affirmative economic recovery for not only prosperity in 1976 but prosperity in the years ahead.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the wire services are saying that you have now predicted a victory in Texas tomorrow. How did you come to that conclusion?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't gone quite that far, but I have said that we were an underdog. We have made very significant progress in the last ten days or two weeks. Our volunteers are doing a superb job. We are geared up with the last 36 hours, I think, since we have explained our programs for prosperity and our policy of peace in the United States, the people of Texas are responding to it. When they respond, I think we have narrowed the gap and I think we have an excellent opportunity to win and we are going to try very, very hard to do so.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Mrs. Reagan was in town last night and she was asked about your comments saying her husband doesn't have the experience to run the country. She countered that by saying he was elected twice by the largest populous State in the Union. Would you comment on that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: It seems to me there is quite a bit of difference in running one State, as big as California is and as important as California is, in trying to coordinate and effectuate the policies for all 50 States in the Union. Now, a person who has had the experience I have had not only as President but as Vice President, certainly has a background and a knowledge not only to handle our problems domestically where we have made very significant headway in coming out of the recession, and we are well on the road to economic prosperity and the experience that I have had in the Congress of handling military matters and foreign policy.

This is a different experience than being a Governor of a single State out of 50. So, when you add up the experience and the success of our policies, I think that voters of Texas will respond.

QUESTION: To follow up, what do you think the effect of Mr. Humphrey's statements of yesterday will have on the overall campaign?

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THE PRESIDENT: I certainly can't judge that. That is primarily a Democratic Party problem at this moment. I think we will just have to wait and see.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to know, concerning your domestic policies, is there anything in your policies that should you be elected will have a direct effect on this area concerning the natural gas price regulations, independent trade before nations?

THE PRESIDENT: As I think the people of this part of Texas know, in January of 1975 I came out very forthrightly for the deregulation of domestic crude oil prices. I came out very strongly for the deregulation of new natural gas development.

So, in this area my policies of deregulation for crude oil and for new natural gas ought to be very appealing. Furthermore, the agriculture policies of the Ford Administration I believe would be very receptively received here in this part of Texas.

We believe that the Government should get out of the hair and the field and the farms of farmers all over the country. We believe that farmers ought to be able to run their own farms without Government interference and without Government surpluses hanging over their heads.

We believe that the Ford policies in agriculture of selling overseas to the extent that we have sold and will continue to sell would be very appealing to agriculture in this part of Texas.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. It is nice to see you.

END (AT 12:15 P.M. CDT)