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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

FORT SMITH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

5:22 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say with great emphasis how much I have enjoyed being at Fort Smith, both at the hospital dedication, as well as at the Fort Chaffee refugee facility. One can't help but be most encouraged by the progress of the refugee program. After all, we had about 134,000 refugees come into the program, and we are a little over halfway through.

I want to commend the people who have handled it locally, both in the Federal Government, and one can't help but be impressed with the fine people that I see in the refugee camps.

We hope to complete the program on schedule, and I am confident that America will be better off as a result.

Obviously, it is nice to be in Arkansas and be so warmly received by so many nice people. If I am invited, I would love to come back sometime.

QUESTION: When is the refugee program to be completed here at Fort Chaffee?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the anticipation is that the program will be concluded sometime late this fall. We are going to make every possible effort to do it, and we are going to phase out the other three, and I hope we can complete the total program late this fall.

QUESTION: Mrs. Ford has toured another camp in California. Did she have any feelings as comparing the two?

THE PRESIDENT: Mrs. Ford did go to the one at Camp Pendleton, California. I really haven't had a chance to talk to her about her reaction out there compared to my reaction here. Of course, Camp Pendleton was visited by Mrs. Ford when the program was almost in its beginning, and we have now had, what, four months or thereabouts.

Things are running more smoothly now. Things are, I think, going to run smoother in the future. So, I am confident it will work out very well.

MORE

QUESTION: What have you heard about the reaction of the Fort and the area to the camp being reactivated? What have you heard as far as the attitude and so forth?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't heard any serious criticism. At least it never came to my attention.

QUESTION: And you feel the camp should be closed by the end of the year?

THE PRESIDENT: I would think so.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, what do you think is going to happen to the oil decontrol program?

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime in the first part of September I have to make a decision. The heavy odds are that I will veto the control program. I think that is the way to stimulate additional production. I believe that there won't be any serious inflationary reactions.

I can take -- and, if I do veto the extension of the control program I will take -- certain administrative actions that could mitigate any inflationary problems.

END (AT 5:26 P.M. CDT)