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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

INTERNATIONAL JETPORT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

4:07 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I spent five years here when I was a few years younger so I know New England very well. I know a good many people up here. I love the country, and I think I am a good candidate.

QUESTION: Your oil policy doesn't make you a good friend of New England.

THE PRESIDENT: We have to integrate New England's oil policy with the overall policy of the United States. It is more important to New England that we have a good energy policy than it is any other part of the United States.

What we are seeking to do is find an energy policy that will solve it for New England and solve it for the United States as a whole. We cannot be dependent on foreign oil sources, and we are working with the Congress -- and I hope they will work with me -- to try and achieve this oil policy.

QUESTION: Do you think you have found that policy yet, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: We are working hard at it.

QUESTION: Is there anything new on the decontrol of oil?

THE PRESIDENT: We had a very good meeting yesterday with Senator Mansfield and Speaker Carl Albert, and we have laid out a plan that if they can produce the votes, I think we will find an answer.

QUESTION: A good many of the Congressional leaders are very uneasy about the possibility of American civilians going to the Middle East and officially being the influence to secure the peace there.

What is going to be your answer to them and to their objections to another Vietnam?

MORE

(OVER)

THE PRESIDENT: If there are a limited number of American civilians who would go to the Middle East, they would go in the area controlled by the United Nations and they would be there in a noncombat capacity, acting as technicians.

The final decision has not yet been made, but I can assure you they will be civilians if they go. They will be technicians, not military personnel, and they will be in a U.N. zone.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you have any message for the State with the highest unemployment rate in the country right here?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think we are making some headway. In the last six months, we have had an increase of one million two hundred thousand in employment throughout the United States. We are gradually edging down the unemployment throughout the United States. It is slow, but more importantly we are doing it the right way as we try to achieve success against inflation.

QUESTION: But it is not going down here, sir. It is going up.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you will find it will go down.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 4:12 P.M. EDT)