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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
AT THE
LA CROSSE AIRPORT

7:05 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: It is great to be in Wisconsin, and one can't help but be greatly impressed by the warm and friendly and very large turnout.

La Crosse has always been one of my favorite cities. I was here in 1972 and, of course, I have been in Wisconsin generally a great many times over the years campaigning for Members of Congress and others. So it is just nice to be back and we are going to be back some more.

With that, I will be glad to answer any questions from the local press.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the head of one of Wisconsin's milk marketing co-ops has criticized your Administration for opposing a bill which would not set standards for foreign dairy imports equal to those of domestic products. Do you indeed feel that they should be equal?

THE PRESIDENT: We have the Department of Agriculture looking into that at the present time. I think the matter is under review and the department will make a recommendation to me.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Karl Hess, who was the principal author of the 1960 and 1964 Republican platforms, has dropped out of society -- he is living in a homestead in West Virginia. In the March 25 Rolling Stone he predicts that we might be witnessing the downfall of the Republican Party. In his words, it is abandoning the middle class that it once seemed to so solidly signify and that it has become the party of the rich and the party of big business.

How would you respond to those charges?

THE PRESIDENT: That is categorically wrong. If you will go back and look at the tax reduction recommendations that I made a year ago and reiterated this year, I strongly recommended to the Congress that there be greater equity and greater reductions made in tax cuts for the middle class so that in and of itself, I think, indicates to Mr. Hess that he is totally wrong.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, any indication that the Soviet Union or Cuba has heeded your warning?

THE PRESIDENT: There has not been any action taken that we would define as adventurism, such as they did in the case of Angola. I hope they understand what we said. We said it very plainly and I can assure you we mean it.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, what is your stand on revenue sharing?

THE PRESIDENT: I am a strong advocate of revenue sharing. I led the fight in 1972 to get it enacted in the first place and it has brought or will bring by the end of this year to the State of Wisconsin about \$750 million. It will bring to La Crosse County, as I recall, about \$3 million and it will bring to La Crosse City about \$3 million.

I recommended a year ago that the Congress extend general revenue sharing for another 5-3/4 years, which would mean that the State of Wisconsin would get over a billion dollars over that period and, as I recall the figures, La Crosse County and La Crosse City each would get about \$5 million.

So I am a firm believer in the program. I think it is the right approach -- it gives Federal money to local communities and to States so that they can make the decisions as to where they want those resources expended at the local level.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, who would you rather have as opposition in November for a President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't really have much choice on that but I happen to think that my good friend Hubert Humphrey will be the nominee. The rest of them are all nipping at one another and not getting, as I see it, sufficient Democratic delegates to prevail when they go to New York City next July. So it is my judgment that in the final it will be a brokered convention and Hubert will probably be the winner.

QUESTION: Is there present a situation, sir, in which you would consider military action in Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would not speculate on any possible diplomatic or military actions because we hope that the words we have said will be understood and it won't be necessary or required.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you support reconstruction aid to North Vietnam in exchange for names of POWs?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: All we have said -- and I said it in Honolulu when I came back from China in December of last year -- is that we look to the future rather than to the past and that, as a result of a Congressional delegation that went to Hanoi several months ago, it looks like there is a distinct possibility that we will start talking, but there are no commitments and anything that was done is absolutely predicated on a full accounting of our MIAs and where we go from there is a matter of discussion.

QUESTION: Do you support further study on solar energy?

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly do. When I was considering the make-up of the budget for the next fiscal year I increased research and development funds in the solar energy area by about 40 percent. In fact, as I recall the figures, in this current fiscal year we are spending around \$80 million and I increased about 40 percent for the next fiscal year. This has a great potential long-range payoff and I think we have to get on to the basic and the applied research as quickly as possible, and the figures that I put in the budget for the next year indicate my strong support for that program.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much.

END (AT 7:15 P.M. CST)