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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
UPON ARRIVAL AT
DOBBINS AIR FORCE BASE

3:58 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen:

It is great to be in Atlanta. We had a wonderful day and a half in Indiana, we are looking forward to the opportunity of being here in Georgia today.

With those observations I will be glad to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Welcome -- welcome back.

THE PRESIDENT: My ninth time in recent years.

QUESTION: Mr. President, recently in Texas you played the role of underdog and you said even more recently should you lose Texas it could affect your chances in neighboring States, one of them Georgia, I believe. Do you feel like you are the underdog in Georgia?

THE PRESIDENT: I suspect that we are at the present time but just as in Texas -- we started in Texas as an underdog, we are making very substantial headway. I think we might surprise them in Texas. We are here in Georgia because we want to expose our views and myself to the people of Georgia, and I think if we have the kind of response here that we have had in Texas, we might surprise them here in Georgia.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think you will win in Georgia?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, hopefully -- we are going to try very hard.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, is there any possibility that you might ask Vice President Rockefeller to run again with you?

THE PRESIDENT: I can only go by his statement to me three or four months ago when he said he did not want to be considered for the office of Vice President.

QUESTION: There is a local political feud brewing here, President Ford, about your visit -- whether it is purely political or whether you are here as President. Some of your Democratic opponents from DeKalb County where you will speak tonight will not attend that because they say you are coming as a candidate and not as a President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I very deeply regret their attitude. I think I might learn something from some of their questions and they might learn something from some of my answers. I am very sorry that they have taken that attitude.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there are more and more rumors going around that John Connally might be the Vice Presidential nominee. Do you have any further comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I said before that John Connally is a man who has had an outstanding record in public life as Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of the Navy, Governor of Texas three times. He certainly is qualified for any office in the United States, from the Presidency on down.

QUESTION: Is that a possible yes for the Vice Presidency?

THE PRESIDENT: I am simply saying that he is certainly a contender for that outstanding office and in my Administration.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you are being pressured to put more pressure on Congress to get the Federal Election Commission back in business. Will you do that?

THE PRESIDENT: You know, the Congress has had, since January of this year when the Supreme Court made the decision -- that is almost 90 days ago -- to make a very simple amendment to make the law which Congress passed in 1974 constitutional but they have higgled and they have haggled and they have delayed and they have had two vacations. They are on vacation now. I think Congress ought to come back, finish its job and send the bill down to me.

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Some of the critics and some of the Presidential candidates who are complaining about me not doing something are Members of Congress -- they ought to be back on the job and finish the job so I can see the legislation.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you care to comment on the discussions, if you will, between Vice President Rockefeller and Senator Henry Jackson?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as I understand it--in the first place I have never seen the actual comments. I said yesterday or the day before that I assume, from my 25-plus years in the Congress, that all employees that work for the Congress -- for Democrats or Republicans, House or Senate -- are not members of the Communist Party, and all I can, that is an assumption that I believe to be true.

Very nice to see you all. See you tonight.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think Lockheed has been the scapegoat for every company that has dealt in international payments for years doing much the same thing.

THE PRESIDENT: What I have done to meet the problem, not just Lockheed but all companies that have reported that they made payments overseas, is to appoint a Cabinet level committee headed by the Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Elliot Richardson, and I have asked that group to look into what the problem is not only in the United States but what the problem is overseas.

QUESTION: And not just Lockheed.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a comprehensive investigation involving all countries that have businesses overseas and have been involved in the past so-called payments. It is not going to be pointed at Lockheed, it is pointed at the whole problem.

QUESTION: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 4:02 P.M. EST)