

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 28, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Houston, Texas)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
UPON HIS ARRIVAL TO
INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT

4:03 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. It is nice to be here.

We have had a wonderful day and a half in Texas and are delighted to be in Houston.

I will be more than pleased to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ronald Reagan has just completed a couple of days in Texas in which he has been urging people to cross over and to vote for -- clearly Democrats -- to cross over and vote for him in the primary. Would it hurt you, and what are you going to do during your 24 hours or so in Texas to try to blunt that?

THE PRESIDENT: Naturally, we are very anxious to have any and all Texans support my candidacy. Naturally, we hope to get a very substantial part of the Republicans that normally vote Republican, but we would be very pleased to have Texans, Independents or Democrats, support us and we want all elements of the great citizenry of Texas to support my candidacy.

QUESTION: Are you badly hurt if you lose Texas?

THE PRESIDENT: We think, as I have said before, that we have been an underdog. We are closing the gap. We are going to make it a very close race, and I never predict what is going to happen in finality until the good citizens of Texas make the decision, and then we will analyze it.

QUESTION: But if you lose, will it hurt?

THE PRESIDENT: Any time you lose, when you finish second, of course you lose something, but we are going to continue work and we will make a decision on that when the votes are all counted Saturday night.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in talking and following up on Thomas' question here, are you interested in getting some of the supporters of George Wallace? You know the Reagan people are going after some of the Wallaceites in this State and I just wonder if you feel you should be getting some of those votes as well?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: I carefully stated what I said. I want all independent voters of Texas and all Democratic voters who traditionally have supported the Democratic Party who believe in my philosophy. My philosophy is the kind that I think overall will appeal to most Texans.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you seemed to say this morning that you thought that Mr. Carter might be replacing Mr. Humphrey as the front runner of the Democrats. Which candidate do you think would be the hardest to beat? Mr. Humphrey or Mr. Carter?

THE PRESIDENT: I always assume the Democrats are a very formidable contender or opposition and I will wait until the Democrats make the choice, and I am sure they will make a choice either by the primary or convention process or in a smoke-filled room, and we will wait and see who they pick.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has John Connally been of any help in advising you what to say or how to conduct yourself in Texas, and will you be calling him or visiting with him while you are here?

THE PRESIDENT: I have met with John Connally on several occasions recently and we talked about the political situation in Texas and the 49 other States. When you talk politics with a man as experienced and able as he, you inevitably gain a bit of advice and counsel, and we are trying to draw on that help and assistance that he gave without endorsing me.

QUESTION: Mr. President, have you made any better decision in terms of who you would want as your Vice President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we still think there is a wonderful reservoir of good Republican potential candidates for the Vice Presidency. It is a little premature to make any selection at this time.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: It is nice to see you all.

END (AT 4:07 P.M. CDT)