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MAY 5, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

THE ROSE GARDEN

12:40 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I am glad to be here on May 5th and to have an opportunity to respond to any of your questions. I suspect you may have some.

QUESTION: What is your reaction to the three losses?

THE PRESIDENT: Naturally I am disappointed. We had hoped to do better, but let me say this very strongly. I am going to Kansas City, I am going to win in Kansas City, and we expect to win in November.

QUESTION: Mr. President, with whom are you discussing your strategy and what sort of changes do you have in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a matter that Rogers Morton and the people at the PFC will basically undertake. They will keep me apprized, but I think that is their basic responsibility and we will work with them, but they have the responsibility.

QUESTION: Mr. President, has your confidence been shaken by this turn of events?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think my confidence has been harmed one bit. As I said a moment ago, I am going to Kansas City, I expect to win in Kansas City, and I fully intend to be elected on November 2nd.

QUESTION: Well, what has gone wrong?

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THE PRESIDENT: That is something that Rogers Morton and the others will assess. I believe that we have a good program, we have straightened out the economy, we are on our way to real progress as far as prosperity is concerned. We have gotten ourselves straightened out as far as foreign policy is concerned. We are out of the war in Vietnam, we are making headway around the world. We have restored confidence and integrity in the White House, so our job, apparently, is to do a better job of selling it and we intend to do it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, following on that, you don't mean to suggest that the White House is not having any role in this reassessment.

THE PRESIDENT: The Administration is looking at it but the basic study will be done by the PFC under Rogers Morton.

QUESTION: Mr. President, following your victory in Wisconsin you said that that vote justified your faith in Henry Kissinger. What have the last primaries done to your faith in Henry Kissinger?

THE PRESIDENT: We are in the process of analyzing the total picture, not just one issue. I can't give you any immediate assessment as to what issue or whether all of the issues had a contributing factor, but I certainly would not say that the results in Indiana or the other two States can be attributed to foreign policy alone. I am sure it was a combination of many, many things.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in your reassessment, what parts of the campaign do you feel were not going well and why?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you why. I think we have a good program. I think we have done a fine job on the economy. I believe we restored integrity in the White House, we have restored the confidence of the American people in, I believe, the conduct of the Presidency. I believe that we have made success around the world in our day-to-day operations of foreign policy. We have peace; we are going to keep peace.

QUESTION: Do you expect to win on the first ballot, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will go to Kansas City, Helen, and win. I have no doubt about that whatsoever. With only two candidates there, that is about the way it sorts out.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, did you mean to suggest that if the analysis proves that Henry Kissinger was an issue in losing the primaries that his tenure is in doubt?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you concerned about your own home State. How do you feel about the crossover problem in view of George Wallace's past performances there?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to comment on any individual State. I said we will win in Kansas City and that means that we expect to win our full share of the contests between now and the middle of August.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you feel you have been hurt on the Panama Canal issue?

THE PRESIDENT: If we have, I don't think it is a legitimate decision because I am absolutely convinced what this Government is doing, what this Government has done for the last 13 years is the right policy, and we are going to continue to negotiate rather than to accelerate the possibility of a military conflict and so we are going to do what we believe is right, which I think is negotiate in the Panama.

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you agree with Rogers Morton that Governor Reagan now has the advantage in the race between you?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because you have to look at the uncommitted and you have to take an honest appraisal of where some 300-plus of those uncommitted delegates are more likely to go. So we think it is going to be a tough race, but we expect to win and we will be at Kansas City to do so and to carry on from there for a victory in November.

Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 12:45 P.M. EDT)