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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

STANDIFORD FIELD

4:40 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

It is real nice to be here with my good friend Tim Lee Carter and Thruston Morton and Ambassador John Sherman Cooper and other leaders of the Republican Party. We have a good, full day in Tennessee, and now it is great to be in Kentucky.

I know that some people have raised the question from time to time, "Well, why doesn't President Ford get out and spend seven days a week on the campaign trail?" The answer is very simple. We have to have a President. I work pretty full-time at that, and the net result is we have, I think, had some good programs and great success, whether it is in the field of foreign policy--and I think John Sherman Cooper could be a good witness to that--our success in Western Europe.

We have had good success in coming out of a recession, the worst in four years, where we now are well on the road to sound prosperity and most importantly I think we have restored the confidence of the American people in the White House.

We have done all of this in 21 months of success, and I think the American people are interested in progress in substance rather than in campaigning.

I will be glad to answer some questions.

QUESTION: Sir, the mere fact that you brought Ambassador Cooper in with you today, or is here with you today, does this mean you feel like maybe you are in bad straits here in Kentucky? Mr. Reagan is fairly popular here.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will do all right in Kentucky. I have been here a number of times. I have been up to Tim Lee Carter's district in London. They had 3,000 people up there a couple of years ago. I have been in Louisville a good many times, Lexington, and I think we have got a lot of friends in Kentucky, and I am delighted to see some good friends like Ambassador Cooper and Thruston Morton and Tim Lee Carter. They are good friends of mine and I think I have got a few others, so I think we will do all right.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, it was one of our Congressmen here, Gene Snyder, who is responsible for releasing Ambassador Bunker's testimony on the Panama Canal negotiations. Do you think that was a proper move on his part?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I wouldn't pass judgment on whether it was proper or not.

QUESTION: He hasn't got you in trouble, has he?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no, no because we have been very frank about what the aim and objective was. We were negotiating as President Johnson did, as President Nixon did for a long, long-term 50-year treaty. There was nothing deceptive about it. I understood that Congressman Snyder did it for whatever reasons he felt, good or bad, but there was no attempt on our part to decide otherwise as to what we were aiming at. We were doing the same thing that Mr. Johnson had, what Mr. Nixon was doing, and I am glad that Senator Barry Goldwater supports me in this effort.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you agree with some of those who say that the type of campaign that Ronald Reagan has been waging has hurt the Republican Party in its chances for victory in November?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't describe it as that. He has been campaigning full-time. He doesn't have the responsibility that I have, but I am not going to pass judgment on the kind of campaign he has been running. We expect to win regardless of his campaign.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Jimmy Carter has suggested today that your decision on holding up the signing of this nuclear agreement was based on your problems with Ronald Reagan, and he says that it has reached the point where foreign policy is being made on the basis of this Presidential Republican primary contest.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think I know a little bit more about that treaty than Jimmy Carter does, and I know a little bit more about the negotiations that took place and materialized in that treaty. That treaty is a very complicated one. We had to take some extra time, and we did. It is a good treaty, and that is the most important thing. We have got a breakthrough by being very hard negotiators with the Soviet Union, and I am proud as President Ford that we got for the first time in some 25 or 30 years on-sight inspection in the Soviet Union. No other President before me has accomplished that. That is a real breakthrough. I think if Jimmy Carter took a look at it, he would make any such allegations about it.

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QUESTION: When will we be doing that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: We will do it as quickly as we can get the whole thing fully analyzed, fully organized for the signing. There is no set time on it.

QUESTION: I think the point that he was trying to say was not that it was a good or bad thing, but that he --

THE PREISDENT: I am sorry, I cannot hear you, Mr. Jones.

QUESTICN: I think the point of his comment was not whether it was good or bad but the fact that you had delayed signing it for political reasons.

THE PRESIDENT: I think Ron Nessen answered that well yesterday when he said politics had no impact on whether it was signed yesterday or a week from now or two weeks from now.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you said earlier that you wouldn't give consideration to Mr. Reagan as possibly holding a spot on your ticket as the Vice Presidential candidate. Can you tell us why?

THE PRESIDENT: That is very simple. Mr. Reagan indicated publicly he wasn't interested.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

END (AT 4:49 P.M. EDT)