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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

THE SOUTH GROUNDS

2:51 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Obviously, it is a great pleasure to have a chance to talk with you on this Wednesday. I say this very emphatically, I don't think Betty and I had a more enjoyable evening than last evening since we have been in the White House. It is wonderful, of course, to get good results in any political campaign, but when you get such an overwhelming and unbelievable vote in your own area -- and I mean in this case the old Congressional district that I had the honor of representing, I think it went 85 percent -- and then, of course, added to the excellent endorsement in the State of Michigan as a whole, plus the very fine vote in Maryland, the whole evening was really a very enjoyable one.

I do want to thank the many, many thousands of people in Michigan who I know made an extra effort, from Governor Milliken on down. There was a total unanimity of determination and spirit and cooperation and we had, likewise, the same effort in the State of Maryland.

So, yesterday was a great day and I think it has restored the momentum that is needed for the remaining 12 primaries and the various convention States, conventions that will be held between now and the Convention in Kansas City.

The momentum has started, we are going to work at keeping it going, and we are optimistic for a good victory in Kansas City.

Yes?

QUESTION: Mr. President, how many of the six primary States do you think you will win?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't made any analysis as to the six as a whole, or individually. Our best judgment is we will come out reasonably well when you total the six up altogether.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you are expecting to win in Kansas City, but how do you expect to do in California?

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THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are going out to California, as you know, this week. We think we have a fighting chance in the State of California. We are going to make a big effort there.

I can't tell you just how we stand. We have some surveys being carried out at the present time. Those surveys will be very helpful in where we go and what we do.

On the other hand, the approach that we used in Michigan and the one we used in Tennessee and Kentucky of peace and growing prosperity and trust will undoubtedly be the thrust that we will use during the rest of our campaign.

QUESTION: Mr. President, Mayor Wilson from San Diego says, as far as he knows, you only will campaign for about two full days in California. With that being done in Reagan's own State, a big State, how do you expect to win in a State like that with campaigning only two days?

THE PRESIDENT: We will make another judgment after this trip, but we do have to live within the expenditures of the law and we are going to be very, very certain that that is done, and any further plans after this weekend will have to be coordinated with the availability of funds that are permitted under the law. So, plus the trip, plus the analysis of our funding, we will make some decisions later on.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you reserving the right to review any decision by Mr. Levi on the busing question?

THE PRESIDENT: It is contemplated that some time this week the Attorney General will come in and see me and undoubtedly tell me what his decision is. I think that is a very appropriate thing for him to do and a proper role for me to have, but he will make the decision.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how do you respond to some critics who read into your concern about a review of busing as an effort to play for votes in Kentucky where busing is a major issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the fact that these news stories broke over the past weekend and no decision having been made, and the controversy of busing in Detroit, is an indication that we in the Administration made a major effort to not interject busing into the primary situation. We didn't do any talking about what the Attorney General has been studying and what the Secretary of HEW has been working on.

This came from other sources than ourselves and we were disturbed that the stories did come out. We hope that we can keep this kind of matter away from the emotional involvement of this problem and the primary elections.

We certainly had no part of that, none whatsoever.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you encouraged by the progress that your Administration is making in the search that you ordered last fall for alternative ways to achieve desegregation without forced busing? Are you optimistic? Are you encouraged that you will have found a solution?

THE PRESIDENT: I have had two of the outstanding members of my Cabinet working with others, trying to find any new approach or a combination of several new approaches, and I am encouraged with their progress to date because I think it is a matter we have to settle and settle in a constructive way, and between the Attorney General, Mr. Levi, and the Secretary of HEW, I believe that we may have some ways in which we can achieve the results without the tragedies that have occurred in some of our major metropolitan areas.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us something about your discussions with Mrs. Golda Meir today?

THE PRESIDENT: We just discussed the current situation in the Middle East, which is, of course, a very excellent opportunity for me to get the benefit of one of our era's outstanding stateswomen. It was just a discussion bringing me up to date. She brought some messages to me from the Prime Minister and we discussed related matters concerning the Middle East as a whole.

QUESTION: Mr. President, concerning the great strength both you and Governor Reagan have shown in gathering delegates thus far, do you think it is still possible for either of you to get a first ballot nomination and avoid a floor fight?

THE PRESIDENT: We are optimistic that we can get a first ballot victory in Kansas City.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can I ask you a question that you were a little reluctant to answer in Michigan, prior to the vote? I think we asked you, could your campaign survive with a defeat in Michigan? I wonder if you could tell us your thoughts prior to the vote in Michigan? Do you think you could have survived a defeat in Michigan?

THE PRESIDENT: Wally, I repeatedly told you and anybody else who asked that question that we didn't contemplate a loss in Michigan. I had good reason to feel we would win, and when you have that feeling why worry about the thing that is not going to happen? Why don't you plan on what you will do when the good things happen? And that is what happened.

QUESTION: You had that feeling all along?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, of course.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 2:59 P.M. EDT)