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MAY 23, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Pendleton, Oregon)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

PENDLETON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

1:19 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: I have had a wonderful day and a half in Oregon. I had a great time in Medford and we had a delightful time in Portland, and now it is wonderful to be in the sunshine here in Pendleton.

The message that I am trying to get across here in Oregon, as well as throughout the United States, is very direct -- that in the last 21 months, under the Ford Administration, we have made a great deal of progress.

When I took office we had many, many problems. The problems were the restoration of confidence in the Government, particularly the White House. We were faced with some very serious economic problems. We were faced, also, with problems overseas that had to be resolved.

In the 21 months that I have been President, confidence and trust has been restored in the White House. We have met successfully the economic problems that included inflation of over 12 percent. We have reduced it to 3 percent or less for 1976. We have added 3,300,000 jobs in the last 12 months -- 710,000 jobs in the last month alone. We are well on the way to a surging economic prosperity, and I believe that during the 21 months we have achieved the peace, we are maintaining it and we expect to continue it during the next four years.

I appreciate the very warm welcome I have had in Oregon. It has been a delightful time, and we look forward to an optimistic result on next Tuesday.

I will be glad to answer a few questions.

QUESTION: In 1978, the moratorium ends on diverting water to the Southwest. I am wondering what your stand as President would be if this issue comes before Congress again?

THE PRESIDENT: When I was in the Congress, I supported the present arrangement. Unless the evidence is overwhelming to the contrary, I would support it in the future.

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QUESTION: The latest delegate count puts you ahead.

THE PRESIDENT: That is very encouraging news. We had a good day yesterday. I think the momentum has turned very directly on our side. We hope to keep the bandwagon rolling so we can have a first ballot victory in Kansas City.

QUESTION: Yet there are reports you are de-emphasizing in California. Is that true?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. I am going to spend 2-1/2 days in California. We are going to make a very major effort in California.

QUESTION: In your plan to cut away four years of red tape -- you mentioned industrialists and farmers -- how long do you think it is going to take your plan to help the little fellow with the corner grocery or the average small businessman in a town the size of Pendleton?

THE PRESIDENT: As we make an overall approach to the deregulation on a broad scale, and as we try in the next four years with the proposal that I have submitted to the Congress, I think you can see some real progress. It will take the cooperation of the Congress. We expect to get it because I think the American people want it.

QUESTION: Ronald Reagan says the attitude of the Attorney General apparently signifies some sort of change in attitude of the Administration toward busing. What is the attitude now of your Administration toward busing?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no change in my attitude. I have been totally opposed to court-ordered forced busing to achieve racial balance, because that is not the right way to get quality education. The Attorney General is investigating the possibility of filing an amicus curiae proceeding, as far as the Supreme Court is concerned. He will make the decision, if the facts justify it, and he will report to me when he has made that decision.

But the basic attitude of the Ford Administration is the same as it has been in the Congress and in the White House. Quality education is not achieved by court-ordered forced busing.

QUESTION: Mr. Reagan hit your agriculture policy very hard in his visit here yesterday. He said we must return to a free market system in agriculture.

THE PRESIDENT: During this Administration, we have had a free market system. We have sold more of our farm commodities overseas in my two years in office than any time in the history of the United States.

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Last year we sold about \$22 billion worth of American agricultural commodities overseas, an all-time record, and in 1976 we expect to do even better. We believe that the farmers are prospering because of our strong export program, and we have exported more American commodities during the Ford Administration than at any time in the history of American agriculture.

QUESTION: Can you maintain your delegates lead after Tuesday, the six primaries on Tuesday?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we will.

Thank you very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

END (AT 1:24 P.M. PDT)