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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

EL TORO MARINE CORPS AIR STATION

4:30 P.M. PDT

MR. SEAGREM: Mr. President, we know that you are a former athlete and avid sports fan, and it gives me great pleasure on behalf of the ITA, the Professional Track Association, to present you with a pair of running shoes. These running shoes have helped athletes run, win and maintain, or accomplish their ultimate goal in sports, and we hope they will help you run a good race and obtain your ultimate goal of reelection.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Bob, those look great. (Laughter) I can run faster and jump higher and do better in California. That is why I am here, and I deeply appreciate your being here and your thoughtfulness.

This is a good way to make a rapid finish and we are going to do it in Kansas City and then in November

But it is nice to be in California. We had a wonderful trip up in Oregon. We are looking forward to spending two days here or so in California. We expect to make a real strong and, I think, optimistically fight here in California. We believe that the leadership of the President Ford Committee in California is excellent.

We have a good many friends, because I have been in California a good many times. I have worked with the Members of the Congress from California. I have worked with your State people. I believe that with the kind of programs that we have where we have achieved the peace, maintained the peace and have the prospects for peace in the future, where we have turned the economy around, where we are on the way to a solid and prosperous America, where we have restored public confidence and trust in the Government -- these are the programs that are of interest to and supported by the American people.

So, the time that I will be here in California will be devoted to talking to as many people, doing as strongly as we can, the persuasion of the people in this great State that the President Ford Administration is a good one for California as well as for the country.

Thank you very, very much.

You might have a question or two.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you expect to have any contact in any form with former President Nixon?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no such plans.

QUESTION: After Kansas City, how do you propose to bind up the wounds of the Republican Party from the primary battles?

THE PRESIDENT: I think those are wounds that can be taken care of. At least as far as I am concerned, the Republican philosophy and the Republican Party is broad enough to take care of any pre-convention problems, and I will do my best to achieve that.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what kind of strategy will you use against Mr. Reagan here in his own State?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't hear it all. Would you ask it again, please?

QUESTION: What type of strategy will you use against Mr. Reagan here in his own State?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I have laid it out. We will talk about the affirmative achievements and accomplishments of the Ford Administration in the last 22 months. Those are the accomplishments that have appealed to the American people, and I believe those are the kinds of programs that the American people want for the next four years. So, we will be talking affirmatively in that regard.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what do you propose as an alternative to forced busing?

THE PRESIDENT: The alternatives are well set forth in what we call the Esch amendment, the Esch amendment which was approved when I was a Member of the House of Representatives, and I signed it as a law in late 1974, provides a list of alternative steps which, if the courts of this country would follow, they wouldn't get down to the last one, which is forced busing to achieve racial balance.

The courts, in my judgment, have to look at the guidelines prescribed by the Congress. The Congress is interested in quality education, as I am, and they -- the Congress -- are also against segregation, but we can find a way for quality education if we follow the Esch amendment, and I hope and trust that the courts will in the future.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 4:36 P.M. PDT)