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THE WHITE HOUSE

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
OF THE PRESIDENT
ABOARD THE THERESA JANENE

SAN DIEGO HARBOR

6:36 P.M. PDT

QUESTION: Mr. President, what was your decision on the tuna issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I indicated very strongly that the Administration does not agree with Judge Richey's decision, and if it requires that there should be new legislation, the Administration would support something like the legislation recommended by Congressman Leggett of California.

The tuna industry will be ended, will be destroyed, if the full impact of Judge Richey's decision is carried out, and I have been very impressed with the innovative and the constructive new nets that have been just shown to me. It is my understanding that the loss of porpoises because of the new net is very substantially less than when the larger nets that you saw a few minutes ago were used.

I am told there is even a smaller net that is probably going to be in use. So, the industry, the tuna industry, is seeking to correct the situation itself, and I applaud them and I think we ought to work with them so that we can save the tuna industry and, from what I am told, these new nets will also save the porpoises, so it is a plus for both sides, if the action is taken both within the industry and by the Congress.

QUESTION: What will you be submitting to the Congress on this?

THE PRESIDENT: We will have spokesmen from my Administration cooperate with the Congress to try and pass the legislation that will take care of the judicial decision.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, these are tuna fishermen who have had their vessels shot at in the past. They have tried very vigorously to maintain the conservation regime. Do you feel a sense of sympathy or compassion for what these men and what this town has been through, and can you comment about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I certainly have had long sympathy for and admiration for the tuna industry and all the people involved in it.

Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 6:41 P.M. PDT)