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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

CLEVELAND-HOPKINS AIRPORT

5:10 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: It is great to be back in Ohio, Cleveland. I especially appreciate Governor Rhodes, Mayor Ralph Perk, and my good friend from the Congress Chuck Mosher and all of the other dignitaries who are here from the party. We are here in the next 24 hours to do our very best to make sure that the message of the Ford Administration comes across.

It is a message of restoration, of confidence and trust in the Federal Government, the Presidency itself. It is a message of turning an economy around which a year ago was in the depths of a recession. We have made substantial progress in reducing inflation in the last 22 months. We have reduced the rate of inflation on an annual basis from about 12 percent to 3 percent or less, which is a 75 percent cut in inflation, and this affects everybody.

We have added in the last 12 months 3,600,000 more jobs. In the last month, the month of May, we have added 300,000 more jobs. At the present time, according to the Department of Labor, we have 87,700,000 people gainfully employed in the United States, an all-time record.

But, we are not satisfied because unemployment is too high. I won't be satisfied until we have a job for everybody who wants a job. That is the objective of the Ford Administration. This Administration has followed a course of giving tax reductions to the American taxpayer. Last year, we recommended a tax reduction. The Congress went along with it.

In January of this year I proposed another \$10 billion tax cut that would come July 1. Included in that tax reduction is an increase in the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000 for every individual taxpayer. This is the kind of tax reduction that the American people want and deserve. It gives them an opportunity to spend their money instead of having the Federal Government spend it for them.

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In addition, the Administration has recommended a substantial reduction in the rate of growth of Federal spending. Unfortunately, the Democratic Congress has added some \$17 billion to the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

I can assure you that this Administration is going to fight not only to reduce taxes as of July 1, but to make certain that we cut as much as we possibly can below the budget-busting proposals of the Democratic Congress.

This country is on the road to sound and, I think, permanent prosperity under this Administration's policies, and we intend to pursue those policies for the next four years.

I will be glad to answer a couple of questions.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the advance text of your speech tonight you say America is tired of those who belittle the nation and are poisoning the political debate. Who is doing that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think as you look around the spectrum of Presidential aspirants, there are a number who do it, and I will let the record speak for itself.

QUESTION: In both parties, or the Republican Party?

THE PRESIDENT: I think there are some in both parties.

QUESTION: That would be Mr. Reagan in your party, because he is the only other candidate, I gather?

THE PRESIDENT: I will let the record speak for itself.

QUESTION: Aren't you getting a little tougher on Governor Reagan as you go along on this trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Yesterday, Helen, I was very kind and generous.

QUESTION: What changed your mind?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not changed significantly. We will just let the record speak for itself.

MR. NESSEN: We ought to have some Ohio reporters ask questions.

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THE PRESIDENT: I thought I saw some good looking people out there, (Laughter) not some old, tired faces. (Laughter)

QUESTION: President Ford, this morning Mr. Reagan -- he left about six hours before you arrived -- made reference to an ad in which your camp apparently stigmatizes him as a warmonger. He said you ought to fire the man who wrote the ad and if you don't, it is an indication that you approve of that type of campaigning. Do you have any reaction?

THE PRESIDENT: The President Ford Committee approved the ad. I have faith that they set the record straight as it is. The record is, of course, that my Republican opponent did indicate that he would think about stationing American military forces in Rhodesia. That is the record. The Ford Administration does not believe that there is any need and necessity, any requirement, for any U.S. military personnel in Southern Africa. That is the record. As I understand it, that radio short set the record straight. It is a fact.

QUESTION: Would you withdraw the ad, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a decision by the President Ford Committee, but if you speak the facts, I think the American people ought to hear them.

QUESTION: In other words, you are not going to withdraw it?

THE PRESIDENT: I will let that decision be made by the President Ford Committee, but if you say the facts, the American people want to hear it, I would think.

QUESTION: Mr. President, our mayor is supporting you because of your position on Federal revenue sharing, which is greatly different than Governor Reagan's. Can you be specific on what we have to look forward to?

THE PRESIDENT: There is a significant difference between my Federal revenue program and that of my Republican opponent. Mr. Reagan wants to turn the responsibilities for service back to the City of Cleveland, which puts the taxpayer of Cleveland and the mayor in a very difficult position.

If there is no Federal money available, then Mayor Perk and the taxpayers of Cleveland either have to reduce services or increase taxes. That is what the Reagan proposal is. The Ford proposal is to give to the City of Cleveland general revenue sharing and let the mayor and the City Council make the decision how it should be spent. I think the taxpayers of Cleveland would much more approve of the Ford proposal than that of my opponent.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

END (AT 5:15 P.M. EDT)