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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

SNYDER PARK

1:03 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. It is great to be in Bud Brown's district, with the Governor. We have had a very good day, as I think most of you would agree who have traveled with us, exceptionally large crowds, friendly audiences, and I think it looks real optimistic for tomorrow.

Do you have any questions?

QUESTION: Mr. President, what will you do after tomorrow's primaries to increase your chances at the convention?

THE PRESIDENT: We have a number of State conventions that have to take their final action. It is possible -- it is not certain yet -- that we will visit some of these State conventions because we certainly want to maximize our vote and be sure we get the nomination on the first ballot.

QUESTION: Which States might you visit.

THE PRESIDENT: We really haven't decided yet.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you keep saying Ronald Reagan can't win, but in the popular vote he has won just about as many votes as you have.

THE PRESIDENT: If you talk to the Members of Congress who have run in races all over the country, about nine out of ten of them would agree with me that my being on the ticket would significantly help their re-election and help to get more Republicans, and they are convinced from their practical experience that I can win and that it is very, very doubtful if my opponent can.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, you haven't said much about that issue until fairly recently. Why didn't you push that earlier on?

THE PRESIDENT: We are getting down to the final days, and we want to make sure the public understands I can win and I can help the ticket win.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if he is such a loser, surely you wouldn't want to have him on your ticket in November, would you?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that is the way you judge a person for Vice President. There are a lot of other qualifications. He does have a lot of friends. He won a few primaries, but I wouldn't want to prejudge that matter until we get further down the road.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you indicated you might be able to win in California. Have you had any late word to lead you to believe that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, some of our phone banks show a swing toward us. I think it is significant. We are still an underdog, but the pendulum is beginning to swing and I don't rule out the possibility we could surprise them.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you attribute that strength to the Rhodesia comments of your opponent?

THE PRESIDENT: I am sure the public in California, like that in Ohio and New Jersey, are interested as to what a President would do, whether he would commit U.S. military personnel to Rhodesia or South Africa. That is a matter of deep concern to an awful lot of Americans, and undoubtedly has had some effect.

QUESTION: Mr. President, your campaign ads in California say Governor Reagan could not start a war, President Reagan could. Do you, in your heart, believe that Reagan as President could start a war?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, he said that he would commit U.S. military troops to Rhodesia. That is what he said.

QUESTION: I mean, is it just on that basis that you are saying or your sponsor is saying President Reagan could start a war?

THE PRESIDENT: When you send troops --

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QUESTION: It sounds like he is a warmonger.

THE PRESIDENT: -- well, when you commit U.S. military troops to what 8,000, 10,000 miles away in a hotbed of a conflict between two very controversial sides, you are sending American boys to get themselves involved in a conflict that is inevitable. That has been our experience, and I don't see why anybody seeking the Presidency should make that kind of a commitment.

QUESTION: Is he a warmonger?

THE PRESIDENT: I said what he said. He would commit U.S. military personnel.

QUESTION: Mr. President, apparently today Ronald Reagan was asked if he would endorse you if you got the nomination, and he said he would not say what he would do. He said he was not sure what he would do. Would you have any response to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I am very disappointed that someone might -- I say might -- put a personal view above the party view and above the team's view. I have said that I have always supported the Republican Party, its candidates, and I would hope that a person could be unselfish, could be generous, could be more interested in the party and its principles than any personality. I am very surprised.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you saying Governor Reagan would get us into another Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT: All I am saying is he has said he would commit U.S. military personnel to Rhodesia. I have not said anything beyond that. That is what he said.

QUESTION: Do you yourself regret your earlier support for Vietnam now, in view of your statement?

THE PRESIDENT: That is not an issue. The war is over, settled.

QUESTION: Would you commit troops to Philadelphia if (Laughter) your Attorney General recommended it and if Governor Shapp concurred with Mayor Rizzo that he could not keep order on Independence Day.

THE PRESIDENT: If my advisers, after analyzing Mayor Rizzo's request, recommended to me that in the best interests of security and safety for the public that some U.S. military forces be in Philadelphia on July 4 of course I will do it. But, I have not gotten that recommendation yet. When I get back and have a chance to get their recommendation, we will make a decision, but I think it would be the responsible thing, if on the basis of the request the responsible people said it was in the best interest of the situation in Philadelphia.

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QUESTION: Is it really that bad?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I have to wait until I get some advice from people who have looked into it. The mayor says it is bad, and I will wait and see what the others say.

QUESTION: Mr. Pnesident, wouldn't you have to have the word from the Governor? I mean, wouldn't you have to go in on an indirect --

THE PRESIDENT: Helen, all I am saying is when we get back and make a thorough investigation of the mayor's request, if it is justified, we will help.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what are the possibilities of another grain embargo, particularly concerning this year's crop?

THE PRESIDENT: Zero.

QUESTION: Can you expand on that, please?

THE PRESIDENT: We have got a great carryover of American wheat and corn and soybeans. We have got a good wheat crop in prospect. We have got excellent planting conditions for corn. We expect to have a good corn crop, a good wheat crop, so when you have that, plus our carryover, there is no prospect, as I see it, zero prospect of any grain embargo in 1976.

QUESTION: How will you try to convert the uncommitted delegates between now and the convention?

THE PRESIDENT: By pointing out the record that I have talked about. I think they are interested in winning. They are not interested in nominating a candidate that is not going to win. That does not make a very happy trip to Kansas City or a very happy November 3. They want a candidate who can win, and they want a candidate who can help the ticket from top to bottom, and therefore, when they look at the cold, hard facts of the record I have achieved and I think the success we will get in the November election -- they want a winner, and that is how we will sell them.

QUESTION: Are you going to talk to them personally?

THE PRESIDENT: We may to some.

QUESTION: Have you started yet?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not yet.

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QUESTION: When do you plan to?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not had much time.

QUESTION: Mr. President, some of your Cleveland supporters are threatening to withdraw their endorsement of you unless the ads in California are removed. Have you been informed of this?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not.

QUESTION: Do you have any response to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard about it. I would like to find out who they are. Nobody has talked to me about it.

QUESTION: Right now is there any plan to pull the ads off in this final day of campaigning in California?

THE PRESIDENT: None that I know of.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: It is good to see you all.

END (AT 2:12 P.M. EDT)