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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

SPRINGFIELD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

3:50 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much, Kit. I appreciate the hospitality here in Missouri. I am looking forward to spending a good part of the rest of the day here. I hope to meet as many as possible -- all of them if possible -- of the 1400 and some delegates to the Republican Convention in Missouri.

I will talk affirmatively about the progress that we have made in this country under the Ford Administration for the last 22 months. We have restored the confidence of the American people in the White House. We have turned the economy around. We have made real headway in the battle against inflation and we have added significantly to the number of jobs in the country to an all-time high of 87 million 700 thousand as of May. And we, of course, have achieved the peace.

No Americans are dying on any battlefield and overseas at the present time and we are just going to just talk affirmatively about peace, prosperity and trust.

I will be glad to answer any questions.

QUESTION: President Ford, does this fierce fight for the nomination in your opinion create a split in the Republican Party and, if so, can it be healed by November?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it necessarily causes an irreparable split in the Republican Party. The people who are Republicans in the various States, I believe, will join together after the convention in Kansas City.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what is the White House estimate of your lead as of now?

THE PRESIDENT: We feel that we are getting very close to the one thousand mark in delegates which means that we have to get something less than 200 more delegates to get the nomination, and we think we will.

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QUESTION: How many more than Reagan?

THE PRESIDENT: We figure 100 or more.

QUESTION: At this point?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: Mr. President, will you continue to attempt to raise Reagan delegates while you are here in Missouri?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope we can talk to all delegates and make sure they understand what the differences are, the record that I have. We think all elected delegates to the national convention ought to have an open mind and have an opportunity to listen to all individuals.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what are the issues you plan to present to the 19 Missouri delegates to add to your collection before going to Kansas City?

THE PRESIDENT: The record of the Ford Administration for the last 22 months which is peace, prosperity and trust. It is a record that I am proud of and it is a record that I think will give us victory in November of 1976.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

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(AT 3:55 P.M. EDT)