

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 10, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Plattsburg, New York)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
UNITED STATES OLYMPIC TEAM
ON THE TRACK FIELD

NEW YORK STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

3:05 P.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much. I wish I could say I earned it.

All of you, because of the competition you have gone through, the challenges that you have met, the training that you have carried on for a good many years, you have earned it, and we are proud of you, and I wish that I could join you up in Montreal, but let me assure you I will be watching. We might even suspend some of the business in the White House.

I have always had a great interest in athletics. It goes back a good many years. I was looking at a book on the way up here -- a friend of mine gave it to me -- "The History of the Olympics" -- and I was thumbing through the various Olympics that were held for a good many years, and the ones that I remember go back to, well, about 1924, 1928. I always had a great ambition that was never fulfilled because I was not good enough.

I remember the names of Eddie Tolan, Jessie Owens, and a good many of the others who set great records in those days. But the competition gets tougher every four years, which is the way the world is, and all of you have great opportunities to do better than those who have come before you, and I know you will because you have the right desire and you worked hard. Let me say you have the 100 percent support of the American people.

I might take just a minute -- if you look back four years or eight years ago, we in this country, for a variety of reasons, were not unified. We had difficulties within our country. But if you watched any of the activities on the Fourth of July of our Bicentennial year, you could almost feel -- not only in Philadelphia, in Valley Forge and in New York, but the news media reported all over the country -- a real new rebirth of American unity and spirit and determination.

That is a great way for us to enter our third century. That is a century all of you are really going to live in and work in and help to make a better America, and the job that you are going to do up there in Montreal, where you are going to run faster, jump higher, shoot better, swim better, do all the things that you have been training for for a long time, you will have the full and wholehearted support of 215 million Americans, including your President, who will be darn proud of you. The very best to you.

END (AT 3:08 P.M. EDT)