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JULY 30, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Jackson, Mississippi)

THE WHITE HOUSE
REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
ALLEN C. THOMPSON FIELD

6:50 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: We had a wonderful day, and I think very successful.

QUESTION: Do you think you have got the Mississippi delegation now in your Vest pocket, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I would never categorize my visit in those terms. We had a good day, very successful, a warm welcome. It could not have been better.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you have to have the Mississippi -- 30 -- delegates to get the nomination, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: We had more than 1130 ten days ago. We are very, very optimistic about additional votes in the Mississippi delegation. We have more delegates today than we had ten days ago.

QUESTION: Why did you find it necessary to come here, sir, then?

THE PRESIDENT: I like the people of Mississippi.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, you are going to poll all the delegates around the nation as far as getting their input as far as the Vice Presidential choice is concerned?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: If that choice turns out to be the unanimous decision of the people to be, say, John Connally, are you going to go along with that?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to poll all of the delegates and all of the alternates, asking them to give me their recommendations in a list of priorities. I will also ask the Members of the House and the Senate on the Republican side of the aisle.

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I will also ask the Republican National Committee and other outstanding Republicans, and their recommendations to me will be very significant in the choice that I make. I want to get as much an input, as broad a cross-section as I possibly can. I think that is the right way to do it, and I certainly will be guided substantially by their recommendations.

QUESTION: There has been some criticism of you, Mr. Ford, concerning your veto of certain programs dealing with social programs, what have you. Do you think that is warranted criticism, that you are not attuned to the poor in this country?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all because if you look at the budget, I recommended in almost every category more money for education, more money for health, more money for many of the social programs than had been previously recommended or approved. It is just that you can do just so much, and it was a sound recommendation and I fully stand by it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how many delegates did you meet with individually in the hotel room?

THE PRESIDENT: I met with the whole delegation. I did not meet with any individual delegates except some of the leaders in the Mississippi delegation.

QUESTION: What did they say?

THE PRESIDENT: It looked good.

END (AT 6:55 P.M. CDT)