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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH
RONALD REAGAN

THE ALAMEDA PLAZA HOTEL

2:05 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Governor Reagan, I came over to the hotel for the purpose of congratulating you on a very fine campaign and expressing to you our compliments for the outstanding organization that you had. You really got us in shape.

I think the campaign you waged and the organization you put together was beneficial to the campaign that we have, beginning right away to defeat the Democratic nominees and to make certain that our philosophy prevails for the next four years.

I thank you for your indication of full support and again, I congratulate you for a fine campaign. Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR REAGAN: Mr. President, my congratulations to you.

It was a good fight, Mom, and he won.

My congratulations and, of course, you know that as we both agreed all the way from the very beginning, once the fight was over, we are on the same side and we go forward together.

QUESTION: Mr. President, did you discuss the Vice Presidency with Governor Reagan?

THE PRESIDENT: I talked about a number of possibilities. We had a discussion in that regard, yes.

QUESTION: Mr. President, was Mr. Reagan one of those possibilities you discussed?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a private matter between Governor Reagan and myself and I don't think we should comment further.

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QUESTION: Governor Reagan, are you prepared to campaign actively for President Ford in the election?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: Yes, as I said before, and that is what I have always done and believed in with regard to the party and I will do all I can.

QUESTION: Governor Reagan, your wife said earlier this evening that she would be happy to get back to the ranch when this is all over. Is that what is going to happen, sir?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: I want to tell you I will be happy to get back to the ranch, too, but I don't think we mean permanently settle down on the ranch, but I know what she meant. We are both tired -- I think we are all tired -- having been through this campaign. We are looking forward to a breathing spell.

QUESTION: Governor Reagan, are you going to stand by your statement you would not accept the Vice Presidency?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: I shall stand by that statement, yes.

QUESTION: Governor Reagan, could you turn down a draft by the Convention?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: Well, now you are asking, Barry, one of those hypothetical questions. I will answer that if and when it comes.

QUESTION: Mr. President, why did you send Ben Becker out to California to negotiate the pardon of Mr. Nixon when he was under investigation for criminal tax fraud at the time?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are discussing matters that are of much more interest at this time. I have answered it in the past. If you go back and look at the record, you will find out.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is there a place for Ronald Reagan in your Administration?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course there is. As came out during the campaign, I wanted Governor Reagan to be a part of my Administration and there certainly would be. He is a person whose philosophy is virtually identical with mine and he certainly has indicated a great capability as an executive of the largest State in the Union. The answer is yes.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, how long is the Vice Presidential list?

THE PRESIDENT: We will make the announcement tomorrow.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you now in principle have the votes of approximately 20 percent of the electorate. How do you propose to go about getting the votes of another 31 percent?

THE PRESIDENT: That is very simple. Our philosophy, I think, is believed in by a majority of the American people today. In my opinion, the Democratic ticket, the nominees for President and Vice President, have embraced the Democratic platform. They have embraced the record of the Democratic Congress. Both are very vulnerable and I don't think they coincide with the views, the philosophy of the American people today and we are going to go out and campaign against them as candidates, against the Democratic platform and against the Democratic Congressional record. I think the American people will support us and defeat them.

QUESTION: Will you debate Jimmy Carter, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: We don't rule it out.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you haven't said whether you have or you have not made up your mind yet about a Vice President.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not.

QUESTION: Can you tell us who is on your Vice Presidential list?

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you who the choice is tomorrow.

QUESTION: What time?

THE PRESIDENT: How early do you want it? (Laughter)

QUESTION: Now. It is past 2:00 a.m.

THE PRESIDENT: We will advise you at the appropriate time.

QUESTION: Mr. Reagan, do you consider your philosophy almost identical with that of the President?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: I think basically it has to be pretty much the same philosophy, as I said it was when I picked Senator Schweiker, or we wouldn't be in the same party. I think there are differences. I think we have different approaches to a number of things, but I think, basically, a basic philosophy, yes.

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QUESTION: Would you be willing to serve in the Ford Administration?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: I had the honor of having that offered to me once and turned it down because there was something else that I thought I would rather do and I still believe I would rather take up again what I was doing before I became a candidate, which was in the communications field.

QUESTION: If the Convention were to draft you, sir, would you reject any move by the Convention?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: I just said that that is a hypothetical question. I haven't seen any signs of such a thing happening. I will answer when I see any such signs.

QUESTION: Since most of his campaign has been fought, do you think you would have any trouble selling Mr. Reagan to the American people, I mean, as bitterly as you have contested him?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think our fight has been a bitter one. It has been a very hotly contested campaign. I happen to think the campaign was beneficial. It took a lot of time and a lot of effort, but the net result is good for the Republican Party.

QUESTION: Governor Reagan, are you saying you will permit your name to be entered for the Vice Presidential nomination tomorrow night?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: No.

QUESTION: You will not permit it?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: No.

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you reflect on the course of the campaign and would you explain why you think it was so difficult for you, an incumbent President, to get the nomination in your own fight to --

THE PRESIDENT: Governor Reagan is probably the most effective campaigner in the United States today and when you are competing against a man with that skill, ability and dedication, of course it is a tough contest. I have complimented him for a fine campaign. He had a good organization. That makes it very difficult.

QUESTION: Governor Reagan, you seem to have left the door open for a draft, or at least not closed it entirely?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: No.

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QUESTION: Are you going to instruct the States not to enter your name in nomination tomorrow evening?

GOVERNOR REAGAN: I am not going to be so presumptuous as to go out there and suggest that maybe they are going to do it. That is what I meant by I haven't seen any signs of that. I will treat it at that time, but I am not going to go running out and saying don't you dare do something and they might look at me very astounded and say, "We didn't have any intention of doing that."
(Laughter)

QUESTION: Mr. President, will Governor Reagan be invited to address the Convention tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: Quite frankly, I haven't thought about it.

QUESTION: What is your instinct about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I will talk to the Governor about it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you still feel that Governor Reagan's comments about the Panama Canal in the campaign were irresponsible?

THE PRESIDENT: I support the Republican platform, which was agreed to by his people and by my people.

QUESTION: I don't think that answers the question.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the way I will answer it.
(Laughter)

QUESTION: Mr. President, California, Texas and several other States were very solid for Ronald Reagan. Tonight after the nomination, I was quite pleased to see Texas, who fought so hard, waving Ford signs. How do you plan on carrying these States, being sure they go to Ford in November?

THE PRESIDENT: I think all during the campaign the Ford people that I talked with indicated they would have supported Governor Reagan and the Reagan people that I had the opportunity to talk with or heard from otherwise said they would support President Ford. I think that is true across the spectrum as far as the Convention is concerned. Our principles transcend personalities, and I think we can solidify the party, strengthen it and win in November.

Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR REAGAN: Thank you.

END (AT 2:22 A.M. CDT)