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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION  
AT THE  
NATIONAL AVIATION FACILITIES  
EXPERIMENTAL CENTER

11:18 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: It is great to be in sunny New Jersey. We left the snowy banks of Illinois this morning, so it is nice to be here.

It is always a great pleasure for somebody in politics to be able to correct the record. I understand one of the members of the opposition ticket was in New Jersey, maybe in this area a few days ago, and made some inaccurate statements about the National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center. I know a little bit about that.

I was here in March of 1974, and at that time Senator Case and the then Congressman Charlie Sandman had briefed me very fully about the deep concern of the people of this area for the possibility of a movement or closing of this famous facility in this part of the State.

I went back to Washington, looked into it, and we started the action which culminated in my decision as President to keep the facility here. And it had been contemplated, or at least talked about, being transferred from here to Oklahoma. It is here because I made the decision to keep it here, and I am glad to report that as a result of Secretary of Transportation Coleman's analysis, he has recommended and the Ford Administration has decided to put \$50 million into this facility here in this area.

So, any allegations by anybody, for political benefit, to the contrary is just inaccurate. The facts are the Ford Administration is keeping it here, a \$50 million decision, which will lead to about 1,800 construction jobs and it will also lead to about 2,000 more jobs in the facility itself as it expands.

So, I want that record clear and very well understood. The Ford Administration did it.

Now I would be glad to answer a few questions. May I first get some questions from the local press?

Any questions?

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QUESTION: Mr. President, Jimmy Carter says that your political organization is slandering he and his family by publishing a cartoon in the Heartland PFC publication in the Midwest showing him holding a Bible in one hand and a Playboy Magazine in the other. Is that the kind of advertising you would sanction?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that everything in that pamphlet was in the public domain. It was nothing that was generated by the President Ford Committee. It was material that was already published by other sources in the public domain.

QUESTION: Including the cartoon?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is. That is true.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in a town that is a week away from a statewide referendum on gambling, just for Atlantic City -- this is strictly for Atlantic City -- do you have anything to say on that?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a decision, of course, for the voters of this area, or the State of New Jersey. Although I have reservations about legalized gambling, I would not want to interject myself into a strictly local issue.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how would you assess your chances now, sir? Do you think you have it locked up?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have lots of momentum. The traveling press that have seen the wonderful crowds we have had in California, in Oregon, in Washington, culminating in an unbelievable, fantastic crowd in Chicago last night of about 40,000 to 50,000, can't help but be impressed with the fact that we have the momentum.

It reminds me just a bit of the kind of momentum that one of my idols, a Democrat, Harry Truman, experienced in the final days of his campaign. We have the momentum going, the people are interested, and I think we are going to surprise some folks.

QUESTION: Mr. President, why is it that you only made a strong statement about the Nixon Administration in response to a question -- you never made that on your own, about the imperial White House?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I was asked last night the difference between the Ford Administration and the Nixon Administration, and I made the very accurate comment that the Ford Administration is not an imperial Presidency. We don't have the ceremony and the pomp and the dictatorial attitude.

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As a matter of fact, I have significantly reduced the power and authority of the White House Staff and we have turned decision-making over to responsible people like the Secretary of Transportation, Bill Coleman, to the Attorney General, to the Secretary of HUD.

The White House performs the function that was set up in the Constitution, and we believe that an imperial Presidency is not in conformity with my own personal ideas nor is it in conformity with what I think our Founding Fathers believe.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in your last comment on the question of the Patman investigation, you said that you had been cleared by committees and the Attorney General. Now it turns out that the Attorney General made the most cursory examination -- he didn't even talk to Mr. Timmons. Can you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have full faith in the total integrity of the Attorney General, Mr. Edward Levi, and his decision, I think, fully and completely ends that matter.

QUESTION: Do you think the case is closed on that, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I have full confidence in the Attorney General. He is a man of great integrity. I think he has done a good job and I am sure the decision he made is the right one.

QUESTION: Mr. President, as it stands right now, Eugene McCarthy will be on the New York State ballot next Tuesday. If this decision is made final, how will this affect the fight for New York State's 41 electoral votes?

THE PRESIDENT: I am really not the best judge of that. Eugene McCarthy is a very fine person. I have known him ever since both he and I took the oath of office on January 3, 1949. We came to the Congress simultaneously. Gene McCarthy has made a very excellent record in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. He ought to be on the ballot under State law where it is permitted, and I think the people of New York or elsewhere ought to have a chance to vote for him if they feel it is the right decision.

Thank you all very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 11:25 A.M. EDT)