

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 29, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Houston, Texas)

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

WILLIAM P. HOBBY AIRPORT

3:40 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: I think the people of the great Lone Star State know of President Ford's deep commitment to a strong national defense program. Everybody here knows that I have worked for two years with the Congress trying to get the Congress to go along with the kind of a defense budget that is needed and necessary now as well as in the future. We were fortunate in the last Congress to obtain considerable success in that regard.

I am looking forward to a continuation of a strong national defense program. That is the most effective way to keep the peace, the most effective way to insure our domestic security.

I want everybody in Texas to know what a great contribution they have made to the security in the United States. Your military industry here in Texas, not only in the building of aircraft but in electronic communications systems, as well as all the other things, are very significant in making our defense program the kind that will produce results in deterring the enemy, maintaining the peace and meeting any challenge.

I also wish to compliment the young men and women who man the military installations from El Paso to Houston. They do a tremendous job on behalf of our national security.

So, it is great to be in Texas with all the fine people that have contributed so significantly to my campaign. And I might add one footnote, in the last five days there has been a very notable, very evident upturn in the polls, a very discernible increase in crowds all over the United States, whether it is in the Southeast, the Middle West, the Northeast or elsewhere.

We have the momentum going and we expect it to keep going, because we have the right programs and we have good leadership and good organization, and with that kind of momentum we are going to surprise some people on November 2.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. President, with the court decision today in New York regarding Mr. McCarthy, can you afford to lose Texas and still win the election on Tuesday?

THE PRESIDENT: We are very optimistic, of course, about winning Texas. It is a very key State. On the other hand, we don't write off New York even if by chance the court does decide in the final analysis that Senator McCarthy will be precluded from offering himself as a prospective candidate in New York State.

Texas is crucial. I think we have some good news that has been coming. It is getting better. And when you look at how well we are doing in California, how well we are doing in some other States, as I said a moment ago, we are going to surprise some people.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this has been a grueling campaign for you. Are you looking forward to the end of this on Tuesday night?

THE PRESIDENT: Do I look tired? (Laughter) I tell you, I get stronger every day, and for good reason.

QUESTION: How far behind do you see you are at this point, and is there time left to catch up?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are neck-and-neck, and when you have momentum and the opposition is trying to put their finger in every dike to try and stop the erosion, obviously we have the momentum going and they are frantic and frustrated and frenzied. And, gee, I just feel good about it, just wonderful.

Thank you all very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

END (AT 3:45 P.M. CDT)