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INFORMAL QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE PRESIDENT
LIFT 6
VAIL, COLORADO

11:30 A.M. MST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, everybody.

Q Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you might be tired of me, so I brought Susan along.

Q Mr. President, can we ask you a couple of questions?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

Q Can you give us any indication of what kind of time frame you are operating on on this amnesty question?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll do it as promptly as possible.

Q Would you think within the next week or so?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a fair time span.

Q Can you give us any feeling for your inclination at this point? We know that you have opposed this in the past. You said that you were going to look into it. Are you leaning one way or the other at this point?

THE PRESIDENT: We are having a thorough analysis made of the success of the program that I instituted in 1974, which showed about 21,000 out of 105,000, or thereabouts, took advantage of the program. It was a good program. I regret that many, many more didn't participate. But we have to take an overall look as to the impact on military morale, public reaction, equity as far as those who participated and went through their process of earning their way to clear their records and then see how it equates vis-a-vis a blanket order. I can't give you any particulars as to what the decision will be at the present.

Q Mr. President, I would like to get on to something else. I wonder if you have decided whether to give your former colleagues in Congress a pay raise or not.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are looking at that and studying very carefully the Peterson report.

Q Are you going to have a recommendation before you go out of office?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to make a recommendation before I leave office or else leave it up to Mr. Carter.

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Q Do you plan to leave it up to Mr. Carter?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't made a decision yet.

Q Mr. President, would you have initiated the amnesty study but for your conversation with Mrs. Hart?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe I would have. She made a specific request as the widow of a dear friend of mine, and at her request I thought that it would be appropriate to do so.

Q Mr. President, one other thing: we know that you are considering lifting Federal controls on gasoline prices. Some of your aides have said that if you were going to make a decision, you would probably have to make it by the 4th of January in order to allow Congress the 15-day period to approve or reject it. Have you given any thought to that yet?

THE PRESIDENT: We have given it a lot of thought, Dick. We will make a recommendation. We haven't decided on the details yet, but there will be a proposal to Congress, because I made a commitment at the time I signed the Energy Act in December of 1975 that we would eliminate controls as rapidly as possible, and we have in the case of distillates, middle distillates, and the others. This is the last to be included, but we haven't finalized the details yet.

Q So then when we say that you will make the proposal, you will make the proposal to lift them. Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: It's highly likely.

Q Sir, have you finished work on your State of the Union yet?

THE PRESIDENT: That will be finished the night before we give it, and maybe the day we give it.

Q Ms. Chafee, what kind of a skier is the President?

MS. CHAFEE: He is a gutsy skier. I skied with him last year. I think he is a good skier.

THE PRESS: Have a good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Same to you.

END

11:35 A.M. MST