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AUGUST 24, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Vail, Colorado)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

THE BASS RESIDENCE

10:15 A.M. MDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

It is my very strong conviction that the American people have a right to know where I stand on the issues and where my opponent stands on the issues. I challenged my opponent to a series of debates. I feel very strongly that the first debate should come a day or two after Labor Day, and I suggest perhaps September 8, September 9 and September 10.

I think there should be four debates and each debate should involve no less than 90 minutes on each occasion. The subject matters, of course, are those issues that the American people will want to know where my opponent stands and where I stand. They have a right to know.

I feel, for example, the first debate ought to involve national defense. The other three issues would be domestic policy, foreign policy, economic policy.

With that overall format and with the debates starting as quickly as possible, I think we will get this campaign off on the right track.

I look forward to the first one and each of the next three, and the sooner we get started, the better.

Thank you very much.

I issued a very special invitation last night to have all of you join me this afternoon, and I hope that you will walk or ride, and no interviews on the 19th hole, Helen.

We will see you this afternoon and look forward to the chance to see you from time to time here.

Yes?

MORE

QUESTION: Have you passed this word to Carter yet on the debates?

THE PRESIDENT: I am depending on all of you to transmit this information.

QUESTION: Mr. President, before we get to the 19th hole, there has been a report this morning criticizing the Administration's leadership on desegregation and blaming it forefforts to limit the scope of this legislation. Can you tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Department of Justice and the Department of HEW have followed the law, and I have faith in the Attorney General and the Secretary of HEW.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are these debates designed to help you pull up in the polls?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the debates are designed specifically to give the American people the right to know that I stand here on a particular issue and Mr. Carter stands differently. The American people, I think, will benefit from an in-depth discussion of the four issues -- defense, economic policy, domestic policy and national defense.

QUESTION: Will this be one-on-one, or --

THE PRESIDENT: Those details are going to be worked out by one or more people representing me and whoever Mr. Carter decides on his behalf.

QUESTION: Can you tell us who those people will be?

THE PRESIDENT: We will make an announcement on that in the next day or so.

QUESTION: Have the Carter people agreed to these plans?

THE PRESIDENT: Those are negotiations that I think will have to be worked out by those representing me and those representing Mr. Carter.

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us if you have decided yet whether you will be spending a lot of time out on the stump or whether you will be spending a lot of time in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: Those decisions will be made before I leave Vail, and that will be in a day or two.

Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 10:20 A.M. MDT)