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THE WHITE HOUSE

INTERVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT

BY

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WSCV & WSLE-FM

PETERBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

MR. GOBLASKAS: Mr. President, with the veto of the oil price control bill and reports that that sustained veto could really increase the financial burdens on America, do you have any encouraging news on the oil situation for the people of New Hampshire and the Northeast?

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, let me say most emphatically that I proposed to the Congress a phased decontrol program that would, over a period of 39 months, alleviate any sharp increase and, as a matter of fact, in the first 12 months in my 39-month phased decontrol program oil prices would be less, not more.

Now we are trying to work with the Democratic leadership in the House, as well as the Senate, to actually enact or approve the 39-month decontrol program that I have proposed. If it is enacted into law, actually fuel prices will go down the first year and we will be able to absorb in the months ahead the increases that will come over the succeeding two years and three months.

MR. GOBLASKAS: Mr. President, there have been several proposals that America should trade its surplus wheat to certain other countries in return for their oil. How do you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: In the first place, the Congress, as well as the President, urged the farmers of America last year to go to all-out production, and they did. The net result is we are going to have a record corn crop, a record wheat crop, a record soybean crop.

We can sell that wheat abroad to Japan, to the Soviet Union and others in place of storing it as we did for a good many years, at a cost of \$1 million a day in storage fees. So I think it is better to sell it rather than to store it.

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I know my good friend, Norris Cotton, used to fight against the storage fees of \$1 million a day. Can you imagine that?

We want to sell it and we can trade it, and we have a group of negotiators in the Soviet Union right now trying to make a long-term sales agreement that will mean that they will buy from us, not in sporadic, erratic ways but consistently, this great natural resource which we can use for humanitarian as well as diplomatic purposes.

So I think it is a good deal not only to sell it but it is conceivable, it is possible, that we can use wheat in a negotiation for oil, and I would not rule out the possibility that that might materialize.

MR. GOBLASKAS: Mr. President, with the primaries approaching, do you see this campaign for Mr. Wyman as a possible test of your strength among the voters of New Hampshire?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I came, Dave, on this beautiful day in New Hampshire to do what I could to help my friend, Louie Wyman, and on the other hand, it is delightful to start in Keene and end up in Portsmouth to get reacquainted with some people I knew a good many years ago and, at the same time, to make some new friends.

I intend to be up here next March. I like the people of New Hampshire and I will probably ask you for your support then, but today I want you to help Louie Wyman, and I hope you will.

END