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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
UPON HIS ARRIVAL AT
ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

10:17 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: How are you all this morning? It has been a great day so far, not only yesterday but so far this morning, and I am looking forward to a real fine time on this trip to Florida, and we hope to come back.

QUESTION: When you said anything to the right of your philosophy cannot win in Florida, are you speaking specifically of the philosophy of Ronald Reagan and Ronald Reagan in particular?

THE PRESIDENT: I have said that anyone further to the right than my philosophy, on a nationwide basis, can't win the general election. I think it is important for that philosophy, which is middle-of-the-road philosophy, is the right philosophy for the United States, and anyone on the right or on the left of my philosophy just can't win because most Americans believe in a moderate middle-of-the-road philosophy.

QUESTION: Would you put Ronald Reagan in that category?

THE PRESIDENT: I will let the American people make that decision. I am not going to.

QUESTION: How do you plan to alter your campaign strategy to have at least a confident victory or feeling of victory in Florida?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been tremendously encouraged by the fine turnouts I have received in Orlando, in Ft. Lauderdale and elsewhere, and the one here this morning, which was supposed to be a closed reception is tremendous.

So, I think we have got the initiative, we have the right programs, we have some great leadership, in Lou Frey and Bill Young and Skip Bafalis and all of the others.

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QUESTION: But have you got the votes for it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the votes will turn up on March 9.

QUESTION: Are you planning to step up your Florida campaign, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we had a pretty busy day yesterday, as well as today, and as I said, we are most likely to come back again. I have to emphasize -- this is very important -- that my principal responsibility is to be President of the United States, and that takes a good bit of time.

We will find a way to come down and see our friends and encourage workers and to give recognition to our leaders.

QUESTION: There has been an interpretation of your campaign, sir, as being one of giving a picture of a President at work rather than a campaigner for the Presidency. Is this an accurate reflection?

THE PRESIDENT: I think my principal job is to work at the responsibilities of being President. On the other hand, I think it is equally important, with the time that is available, to come out and see the people and let the people know from me personally what my philosophy is and what my programs are so we will try to mesh the two.

QUESTION: Two years ago, when you were Vice President, you defended President Nixon then, and it was only a few months before he resigned. Isn't that association with President Nixon going to hurt you in this campaign, and isn't it hurting you already?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't see that that association has been harmful, not at all.

It is really nice to see you all, and thank you very, very much.

END (AT 10:22 A.M. EST)