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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

AMARILLO AIR TERMINAL

7:14 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. I would be delighted to answer any questions from the local press, and particularly from the pretty girl here.

QUESTION: Not many of the Presidential candidates are really speaking to the problems of the farmer. What kind of specifics do you have for the wheat farmer, who is losing money right now?

THE PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, there are some wheat farmers who, because of weather and other problems, may have had a bad crop in the winter wheat situation. But we have a crop insurance program, we have a disaster program to help the unfortunate farmer who has lost a crop because of the weather or other unforeseen difficulties.

We will make certain, we will make positive that those programs move in and take care of those emergency situations. There is no question the Federal Government has a responsibility, and we will do our best.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how much do you think the pardoning of Richard Nixon will hurt you in the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it will hurt at all. I think most responsible thinking people believe that it was far better to get that chapter of American history out of our system and to tackle the problems that we had -- the high inflation, the prospective unemployment, the reassurance of our allies. Those problems were infinitely more important than having a dragged on legal battle that undoubtedly would have been the case.

So, I think most responsible thinking Americans understand that it was the right decision.

MORE

QUESTION: You just said that we are unsurpassed in military supremacy. Why did Mr. Reagan accuse or say that Mr. Kissinger said that?

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone who knows the facts knows that the Soviet Union does not surpass the United States in military capability. Our military forces, when you consider the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines, are unsurpassed by any foreign Government. We have the most survivable missile system. We have the most accurate ballistic missile system. We have three to four to one warheads over the Soviet Union, and it is warheads, not missiles, that do the destructive action on another enemy or another force.

Anyone who says that the United States is less than number one doesn't understand all the facts.

QUESTION: Mr. President, who are some of the Vice Presidential hopefuls you are looking at?

QUESTION: John Connally?

THE PRESIDENT: We are looking at a whole number of Vice Presidential potential candidates. We have some outstanding Members of the United States Senate, the House of Representatives, Governors, former Governors, people in public as well as private life. But, I think it is premature to start winnowing down the field. We expect to win in Kansas City. I am certain we will, but until we get closer to it, I think it is premature to make any decision.

QUESTION: On this defense budget, I read the paper this morning about your budget, especially the arms authorization. What is this going to have to do with our taxes in the future?

THE PRESIDENT: The House Armed Services Committee added primarily some extra money for some naval shipbuilding. We are delighted to have the Congress take such action, and I was pleased that the House as a whole seemed to reaffirm what the House Committee on Armed Services recommended.

We are going to have some specific recommendations for perhaps some extra shipbuilding in a month or two, but in the meantime I certainly don't object if the Congress wants to do as they have done in this case.

Thank you all very much.

END (AT 7:17 P.M. CST)