

TELEGRAM

POOL REPORT--AIR FORCE ONE--YPSILANTI/WASHINGTON--SEPT. 15, 1976

the president left the field house about thirty minutes late, driving past a few hundred pickets, just outside the gates, students interspersed with some pickets hoisting amnesty and abortion placards. the trip to the airport was uneventful, the departure was closed to the public, the president shook hands for about 90 seconds in a moderately heavy rain before boarding air force one, which was wheels up at 9:50 p.m.

nessen came back to announce an add to thursday's schedule. after the dropby at the italian-american dinner, the president will motorout to catholic u. to attend a reception at the shrine of the immaculate conception in connection with National Hispanic Heritage Week. (He won't arrive in time for a mass being celebrated as part of the observance but will mingle with worshipers at the reception which follows.)

nessen said the president will speak off-the-cuff at the italian-american dinner for a couple of minutes. he first said carter was supposed to be there when the president spoke but had "backed out" and wouldn't be showing, he understands, until after ford's speech.

without being queried, nessen launched into an analysis of this evening's festivities. The president is "very pleased by the events at the university and feels he was well received. he thought it went well and it was a great way to kick off the campaign."

asked about the booing, nessen said "no problems...that was fully expected." he recalled ford's trip to the university as veep in 1974 and said that this reception was "pretty mild" compared to then. he said the president made no mention of the firecracker episode.

"It would have been so easy to find a hundred percent supportive audience...he could have gone to a republican fundraiser... but he wanted to go to his own university to start the campaign...we all expected much worse than that (the booing)...he doesn't have any problem with it."

nessen, however, volunteered that he wanted to make a speech looking to the future and what he sees for america and "he felt the speech was uniquely suited to a college atmosphere." and once that decision was made, the president decided his alma mater was the best choice.

nessen said the election will turn on two things--the president's record of the last two years and what he proposes to do in the next four years. tonight's speech laid some of this out and he intends to spell out additional agenda items in future speeches.

asked about why the speech wasn't televised, nessen said it was partly money (\$100,000 air time and high production costs) and other reasons which he didn't fully know about since he hadn't sat in on all the discussions. but the booing was not a factor, he said; "if the idea was to avoid any adverse reaction it would have been easy to do."

WU 1220 (R1-70) FYI - NS - PRESS CONF. THURS

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