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RE RELEASE

JUNE 20, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH THE PRESIDENT

THE ROSE GARDEN

1:20 P.M. EDT

QUESTION: Could we just get a few words about your feelings about the evacuation operation in Lebanon so far?

THE PRESIDENT: The evacuation was a big success. I wish to congratulate the Department of Defense, the Department of State and all other agencies which were involved. Their plans were well executed.

I am grateful for the cooperation of the other States and other organizations in cooperating to restrain any violence or keep the area secure while the evacuation went on.

The United States will continue its role of a peacemaker in Lebanon. We will continue our role as a party to try and achieve the long shot of peace and security in the Middle East.

QUESTION: One other question. The role of the PLO is a little unclear to us. Can you tell us how that evolved?

THE PRESIDENT: The PLO and all other parties in the Lebanon area have cooperated completely in making it possible for us to evacuate the Americans and other nationals without any incident whatsoever.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.