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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TCHAK 7277

TO COVEY/PASSAGE/RODMAN FOR THE SECRETARY

UNCLAS VIA BLACK PATCH WH61349

TCHAK 72

BY LEWIS LORD  
UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL  
THE NATION'S MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES SPLIT TODAY -- STRICTLY ALONG PARTY LINES -- OVER WHO WON THE FIRST CARTER-FORD DEBATE. A QUICK NATIONAL TELEPHONE SURVEY, HOWEVER, GAVE THE EDGE TO THE PRESIDENT.

THE ROPEB POLL REPORTED ITS SURVEY OF 600 PERSONS FOUND 39 PER CENT THOUGHT PRESIDENT FORD DID BETTER, 31 PER CENT CONSIDERED JIMMY CARTER THE WINNER, AND 30 PER CENT THOUGHT IT WAS A DRAW.

NEITHER CANDIDATE CLAIMED AN OUTRIGHT VICTORY, THOUGH FORD SEEMED ELATED AND CARTER SUBDUED.

"I THINK WE BOTH DID ADEQUATELY," SAID CARTER.  
"FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, WE DID ALL RIGHT," FORD TOLD CHEERING SUPPORTERS. "AND WHEN WE GET TO THE NEXT ONE AND WE TALK ABOUT NATIONAL DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY, WE'LL DO EVEN BETTER."

"WE'RE AT A TURNING POINT IN OUR CAMPAIGN," FORD SAID. "THE MOMENTUM IS ON OUR SIDE."

NUMEROUS POLITICIANS AND CAMPAIGN AIDES ON BOTH SIDES USED TWO WORDS -- "IN COMMAND" -- TO DESCRIBE THE POSITION OF THEIR FAVORITE.

"THE PRESIDENT CAME ACROSS AS BEING IN COMMAND OF THE SITUATION AND IN CONTROL," SAID WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY RON NEBSEN.

CARTER PRESS SECRETARY JODY POWELL SAID CARTER WAS "VERY IMPRESSIVE AND CLEARLY IN COMMAND OF THE FACTS." POWELL ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT FORD "VERY ABLY SPELLED OUT HIS POINT OF VIEW."

FORD'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER, JAMES BAKER, SAID FORD "DID AN EXCELLENT JOB. HE WAS IN COMMAND OF THE FACTS, DECISIVE."

\*\*\*\*\* WHSR COMMENT \*\*\*\*\*

HYLAND, MCFARLANE, SECFILE

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HE WAS SPECIFIC."

HAMILTON JORDAN, CARTER'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER, SAID CARTER "WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS AT FIRST, STARTED A LITTLE SLOW, BUT 10 OR 15 MINUTES INTO THE DEBATE I FELT HE TOOK A COMMAND OF THE DEBATE AND HAD COMMAND WHEN THE POWER FAILURE OCCURED."

"I THINK OUR MAN DID EXTRAORDINARILY WELL," SAID SEN. HUBERT HUMPHREY, D-MINN., WHO ADDED THAT FORD ALSO DID WELL.

HUMPHREY SAID CARTER "MORE SIMPLIFIED MATTERS SO PEOPLE COULD UNDERSTAND THEM" AND "SHOWED A GREATER SENSITIVITY TO THE HUMAN ASPECTS OF POLITICS, THE PEOPLE PART OF GOVERNMENT."

ON FORD'S PART, HUMPHREY SAID, "THERE WAS A LACK OF ANY TALK OF PEOPLE'S NEEDS."

SEN. BARRY GOLDWATER, R-ARIZ., SAID CARTER "SHOWED SUCH A FRIGHTENING IGNORANCE OF GOVERNMENT PROBLEMS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY. HE WOULD MAKE A DANGEROUS PRESIDENT."

"JIMMY CARTER MADE A VERY IMPRESSIVE SHOWING," SAID SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, D-MASS. "I THINK HE DEMONSTRATED AN EXTRAORDINARY UNDERSTANDING OF BASIC HUMAN PROBLEMS LIKE JOBS, HEALTH AND TAXES THAT ARE A REAL CONCERN TO THE PEOPLE OF MASSACHUSETTS AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS NATION."

SEN. ROBERT DOLE, THE GOP VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, SAID CARTER "BLEW IT" AND THE RESULT WAS A CLEAN CUT VICTORY FOR PRESIDENT FORD."

"IT JUST SEEMS TO ME THE PRESIDENT ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO THE ISSUES AND TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE... AND DIDN'T TRY TO APPEAL TO THE PREJUDICE OF VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS," DOLE SAID.

SEN. WALTER MONDALE, THE DEMOCRATIC VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE, WAS ASKED WHETHER FORD HAD PLAYED "DIRTY" BY CLAIMING THAT CARTER INTENDED TO RAISE TAXES ON MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES. "THERE'S NO QUESTION ABOUT IT," MONDALE SAID.

"PRESIDENT FORD LOOKED LIKE A PRESIDENT, HE HANDLED HIMSELF LIKE A PRESIDENT, HE IS THE PRESIDENT," SAID ASSISTANT SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER ROBERT GRIFFIN OF MICHIGAN. "JIMMY CARTER SHOULD PLEAD NO CONTEST AND GO BACK HOME TO PLAINS."

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CHAIRMAN ROBERT STRAUSS TERMED THE DEBATE "A GREAT NIGHT FOR JIMMY CARTER." BOTH CANDIDATES "DID WELL," STRAUSS SAID, BUT HE WOULD "SCORE ONE CLEARLY FOR GOVERNOR CARTER."

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