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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 9, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROBERT T. HARTMANN

FROM: JERRY H. JONES 

The attached was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation to you:

-- Some good material in Bob's speech.

cc: Don Rumsfeld
Max Friedersdorf

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Bob Hartmann

Some good material
in Bob's speech.

from the desk of

...Senator Bob Griffin

Mr President —

Recently I spoke
to the Gerald R. Ford
Class of 32nd degree
Masons in Detroit.

Thought you might
be interested in some
of the things that were
said about The Mason
after whom the class
was named.

Take a look particularly
at the comparison with
Toussaint beginning on
page 4. Bob

orig. to Frederick of w/ P. reply

Excerpts from Remarks
of
U. S. SENATOR ROBERT P. GRIFFIN
before the
Spring Reunion of Scottish Rite Masons
Detroit Michigan
April 26, 1975

Thank you, Hicks Griffiths. Commander-in-Chief Ken Green, distinguished State officers, members of the Gerald R. Ford Class, officers and members of Scottish Rite Bodies of the Detroit Valley and from points beyond, including those who have come all the way from the Upper Peninsula:

I know that this Spring Reunion Banquet is a very significant and a very proud occasion for all of you. I am highly honored by the opportunity you have given me to share in it.

Of course, this weekend has been especially important for each member of the Spring Class of 1975, who has achieved a goal and distinction that is not only rare but highly honored, in and out of Masonry. I congratulate and salute this special class which honors the 14th Mason to serve as President of the United States.

This evening I would like to share some reflections about this President and some of the problems which he -- and we -- face as a Nation.

During these difficult days, voices of distress are rising in an ever-mounting chorus around the world. Our hearts go out especially to the suffering people of Indochina.

As we view the scene on our television screens every night -- as we agonize with ourselves, while our hearts ache for the people -- the refugees and children -- who flee to the South (not North) for their very lives -- it is not easy to know what to say.

It is too early to assess the wreckage -- and it would serve no useful purpose to point the finger of blame.

Yet, I suggest, that we cannot afford to ignore the meaning of our tragic mistakes in Southeast Asia.

Now, for better or for worse, we face a very challenging, very difficult period ahead -- as a Nation.

Like the kid on the block who ended up with a bloody nose, we need some repair work on our self-respect.

At first, it will be a period of rationalization, of re-evaluation -- of re-assessment and of re-adjustment.

In the process, we will have to start by taking a new look at the stirring words of John Kennedy in 1961 -- when he said:

"Let every Nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

If those stirring words reached too far, our re-adjustment must not carry us to the other extreme either.

There will be a strong tendency at a time like this, to turn inward as a Nation -- to withdraw into a new isolationism. But in 1975, the world is just too small -- to interdependent -- for that to be a realistic option.

Indeed, the world was too small even in 1949, when a great statesman of the past from the State of Michigan, Arthur Vandenberg, made an important point with these words:

"Much as we might crave the easier way of lesser responsibility, we are denied this privilege. We cannot sail by the old and easier charts. That has been determined for us by the march of events. We have no choice as to whether we shall play a great part in the world. We have to play it in sheer defense of our own self-interest. All that we can decide is whether we shall play it well or ill."

Those words are even more meaningful today. America will play a decisive role in the world -- whatever we do. What we do -- or fail to do -- will have profound consequences, for good or ill -- consequences which we dare not ignore.

It is too late now to do much more for our friends in Indochina -- except to offer some humanitarian aid and to evacuate as many as possible of those whose lives are in danger because they collaborated with, and believed in, the United States.

Let us hope that it is not too late to have learned some important lessons that will be needed to navigate the turbulent international waters that lie ahead.

As a people, we have reason to be a bit sadder these days -- but that need not prove fatal if, in the process, we have also become wiser -- wiser with a more realistic understanding of the limits of our resources and power.

As never before, the period ahead will be a time of testing. If we are wiser -- and if, as a people, we can muster the strength and courage to pull together -- not apart, this can be a time of positive, constructive challenge that will enable us once again to throw our shoulders back, proud and true to ourselves -- to our friends -- and to the cause of liberty.

Because you honor not only a Mason -- but a former member of the Michigan delegation in Congress, who is President -- and with whom I have been associated for many years, I trust you will indulge some personal but non-partisan comment, of course, about his performance in the White House.

You know, when he was being sworn in as Vice President, Jerry Ford drew applause and cheers from his former colleagues in the Congress as he appeared before them and said: "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln."

The humility reflected in that statement is very typical of the Jerry Ford I've known for nearly 20 years. And, you know, humility is one of a number of important characteristics that could just make it possible for a Ford yet to become a Lincoln.

Needless to say, Jerry Ford was thrust very suddenly into the Presidency. He has made some mistakes -- and he would be the first to admit it.

But somehow he has managed to keep his head -- while others about him in Washington have been losing theirs.

Through it all, I've watched him grow very rapidly in high office, and yet, in so many ways, I watched him remain the same.

Very important, I think, he has retained the capacity and willingness to laugh at himself; somehow he has maintained a marvelous sense of balance, perspective and direction.

It's often said that a politician tends to follow public opinion -- at a safe distance! But President Jerry Ford has been out in front of public opinion -- trying to shape it -- trying to alert and educate the people, often actions that as a politician he knows are unpopular -- but actions that he believes are essential and in the public interest. He is providing direction and leadership.

Indeed, President Ford has been so apolitical that the Washington press corps keep questioning whether he will really run in 1976.

I may not be the most unbiased observer in the world, but I believe that this President, for the most part, has forthrightly and honestly charted a wise course of action to meet some of the toughest problems this Nation has ever faced.

Needless to say, many of the President's critics -- in and out of politics -- spend a lot of time throwing darts at his efforts. Take his energy program for example.

You know what it all boils down to is this: there are no easy, painless ways to solve the energy problem that we face today.

No program that really goes to the root of our difficulties is likely to win Brownie points for any politician.

But the longer we delay in moving forthrightly to meet such a challenge -- the more we will have to pay as the price for doing nothing -- and the greater will be our jeopardy as a Nation.

You know, as I've thought about our President and the very complex, almost overwhelming problems that he faces, I've reflected upon a comparison that some of the commentators often make these days -- comparing him with Harry Truman.

Putting party labels and political philosophy aside, I suppose it is possible to find some similarities between Ford and Truman. Like Truman, Ford is an unpretentious, plain-spoken man of the people -- and he doesn't flinch when the tough decision have to be made.

But while there are some similarities in background and personalities of the two men, I wonder if you have ever thought about the vast differences in the situations and the challenges faced by the two Presidents.

Consider the America that Harry Truman dealt with when he inherited the Presidency in 1945:

Truman had to make an awesome, agonizing decision about dropping the atomic bomb. After that, Truman's America emerged victorious from the biggest war in history, as the unchallenged, unchallengeable, Great Power of the world -- the sole possessor of the atomic bomb -- a giant among pigmies.

Things were pretty clear-cut in those days. We could tell our friends from our enemies in the world. Our enemies were prostrate -- and our friends, for the most part, were still grateful to the United States of America.

Our economic machine was unparalleled and running full tilt, emerging from wartime restraints, ready to shift from massive war production to meet pent-up demand for consumer goods.

Indeed, our economic power was so great that we were able, singlehandedly, to subsidize the postwar recovery of the rest of the world -- we proceeded to rebuild the shattered economies not only of our allies -- but of our former enemies as well.

Our energy and our natural resources were not only adequate to meet our needs; they seemed to be inexhaustible.

As a Nation, we were bursting with self-confidence and optimism.

At that stage in history, the world was our oyster. That was Harry Truman's America of 1945. When he said, "The buck stops here," he meant it, and it really did -- but all in all, it wasn't such a bad time to be the man in charge.

You know, the contrast with Jerry Ford's America of 1975 is striking -- and rather sobering, when you stop to think about it.

As a Nation, we are emerging from a long involvement in another war -- a bitter, inconclusive, divisive war that stirred turmoil at home and has sown doubts abroad about our leadership and the fabric of our society.

No longer are we the unchallenged military, economic and moral leader of the world -- unfortunately.

Indeed, we struggle now just to maintain a semblance of arms parity with the other super-power in the world.

Our energy resources not only are inadequate; but we depend so much on imported oil that we are increasingly vulnerable to international blackmail at the turn of a Middle East spigot.

Nuclear proliferation is the order of the day -- almost every Nation seems either to have the bomb, or is about to get the bomb.

World peace teeters on a shaky detente, and it has become difficult to tell our friends from our enemies.

That national self-confidence has eroded. There is a growing tendency now, it seems, to turn inward -- away from international problems -- and away from the responsibilities of world leadership.

Tripped up on energy shortages, we have plunged into the deepest recession, with the highest unemployment rate, since the great depression.

For a quarter of a century, we have been living high on the hog, beyond our means. Lulled by the illusion of inexhaustible resources and the siren songs of opportunistic politicians, we have been over-spending both our energy and our fiscal resources.

We have spent energy and money as if both were going out of style -- and they nearly have. Our reckless use -- and abuse -- of credit have given us double-digit inflation. Our reckless use -- and abuse -- of energy have produced a recession that borders on a depression.

Frankly, in so many respects, the challenges we're called upon to meet today are a lot tougher than the problems America faced after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In those days, at least, the challenge was straight-forward and clear. A foreign enemy had attacked us.

There was no question what our response would be -- we rallied together, we pulled the wagons around in a circle, and we fought back with everything we had.

What we had to do then wasn't easy -- but at least we realized as a people that it was necessary -- and that it had to be done.

You know, the challenge to America today brings to mind Pogo's classic line: "We have met the enemy -- and he is us."

Somehow when the enemy is us -- the challenge becomes fuzzy -- more difficult to delineate and identify. And many simply refuse to be convinced that there is a crisis or problem.

Sure, there was an Arab oil embargo -- but it was lifted, wasn't it?

Gas prices did go up -- but they've leveled off, now, haven't they?

The guy who fills up his tank now at the gas station, with no pain or delay, finds it pretty hard to get excited or worked up about all this crisis talk. When the enemy is us, it's just not the same as an attack on Pearl Harbor.

But here are a few facts that responsible national leaders cannot ignore or overlook.

Our economy depends and runs on energy. Per capita we consume 8 times more energy than the average for the rest of the world.

Our domestic oil and gas supplies have been steadily declining. We've been using up our oil faster than we've been discovering it now for nine years.

So, we have to make up the difference by importing oil from foreign countries. Our dependence on foreign oil has been rapidly increasing. In 1970, we imported 26% of the oil we consumed; today it is 40% -- and it will be 50% or more by 1977 unless we do something to reverse this alarming trend.

Year by year, day by day, we grow more vulnerable to oil blackmail by foreign countries.

We worry about another Arab oil embargo, and we should.

In 1973, the Arab embargo cost us an extra 500,000 unemployed and it slashed our Gross National Product by almost \$20 billion.

It isn't just the possibility of another Arab embargo that must concern us.

We also import a lot of our oil from Canada. In fact, about 50% of the oil we use in Michigan comes from Canada.

Some say, "Well, that shouldn't be alarming; after all, Canada is our friend and neighbor." But Canada has energy needs, and Canada is growing. Canada has served notice that she intends to put her own energy needs first.

In fact, she's indicated politely but firmly that she is going to begin reducing her exports and that she may cut off all exports of crude oil to the United States by 1982.

Now, when a good friend and a neighbor like Canada gives you a polite warning like that, surely as a country we've got to sit up and take notice.

But how do you convince the American people that the energy problem is real? That it is necessary to sacrifice to solve it? Frankly, that is one of the toughest, most challenging jobs faced by President Jerry Ford -- to convince the American people that this problem is real -- that we really do have to pitch in to meet it.

You know, Paul Revere could ride out in the night and sound the alarm -- but where would we be now if the good people of New England had just rolled over and gone back to sleep?

Somehow, those in and out of Congress have got to be shaken out of their complacency -- and into a realization that there is a real crisis -- even tho there has been no attack on Pearl Harbor.

And at a time like this, I suggest, the Congress should be measuring up -- should be reaching up -- to exhibit the qualities of responsibility and statesmanship that we used to see in people like Arthur Vandenberg and Harry Truman.

Frankly, this is a time when any President of the United States of America -- regardless of party -- needs help and support -- from Congress as well as the people -- not for his own sake, but for the country's sake.

Perhaps there was a glimpse of that thought on his mind when President Ford a few months ago flew back to Washington on Air Force One and talked with an Associated Press correspondent about the

Nation's mood. You might have read about it. He was quoted as saying:

"There seems to be a kind of a self-destruct attitude in this country."

And he went on:

"I don't blame the press. I don't blame partisanship. But somehow we have gotten that attitude. We condemn ourselves so much. We're hurting ourselves -- when we ought to be doing just the opposite."

I think the President was right in not laying all the blame on partisanship or the media -- but frankly, he was a bit more generous than I might have been.

You know, I hesitate to say it -- but I think it's true -- that the politicians (particularly those in Congress) and the media (particularly network TV) tend to bring out the worst in each other. Have you ever thought about it this way?

The news media thrives on controversy, color and conflict.

Politicians, on the other hand, thrive on public attention and coverage by the media.

A Senator can give a dozen speeches supporting the President of the United States but, if he does so, he is likely to attract little or no attention. The way a Senator -- any Senator -- can get widespread instant national attention is to kick the President of the United States in the shins -- by criticizing his programs and his leadership.

Unfortunately, in my view, this tempts -- and rewards -- those in the political arena who are willing to act like political animals.

Frankly, it's high time that the people got fed up and demanded higher standards of both the media and the politicians.

During the very critical period of testing that lies ahead -- President Ford, to be sure, will be on trial. And the other branch of Government involved in the legislative process, the Congress, will be on trial too.

But even more important, I suggest, the people of this great country will be on trial during this difficult period, when the enemy is us.

You know, in the aftermath of Watergate, it's been tempting for many people to tune out on politics and the politicians. It's obvious that a lot of voters did just that in the last election.

They slept in -- or slept through that election. Indeed, only 38% of the eligible voters bothered to go to the polls.

I'd like to close with a thought which I have used before -- but it is a thought which, I believe, could bear some repetition.

In the long course of history, freedom has died in various ways. Freedom has died on the battlefield, freedom has died because of ignorance and greed. But I should like to suggest that the most ignominious death of all -- is when freedom dies in its sleep.

I hope I may have challenged you this evening -- as members of a great fraternity -- and as individual American citizens -- to do your part in these difficult times to make certain that our precious freedom does not die in its sleep.

Congratulations again to the Class, and thank you very much.

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