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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.  
BEFORE THE METROPOLITAN DINNER CLUB OF  
GREATER FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA  
SATURDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 25, 1969

FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. SATURDAY, OCT. 25, 1969

If I were to give my remarks a title it would be: "The Age of Reform: New Directions for the Seventies." We are definitely entering upon an age of reform, and we are traveling in new directions as we make new attacks on problems that have plagued us for years.

To know what the Nixon Administration is doing and why, we must first take a look at its legacy -- the situation it inherited upon taking office. I would like to give you a factual rundown on that situation without partisan bias of any kind.

Richard Nixon assumed the leadership of a country deeply emmeshed in a jungle war halfway around the world, a country which had suffered escalating inflation for nearly four years, a country in which the crime rate had climbed nearly 10 times as fast as the population, a country in which the problems of the cities threatened to turn urban crisis into flaming revolution, a country in which the Have-Nots continued to be the Have-Nots and the welfare system was like a constantly festering sore, a country in which local, state and federal taxes had driven taxpayers to the rim of revolt although the revenue had been inadequate to solve the horrendous problems rushing in on us from all sides.

Any new administration coming into office first takes stock and then charts a new course.

With the situation as I have described it -- and I think the rundown was truthful and accurate -- it was inevitable that the Nixon Administration should become a reform administration and should move in totally New Directions.

What has happened?

The new administration has moved toward peace in Vietnam and elsewhere. In Vietnam the problem is to make the enemy want to negotiate a political settlement. I pray that the President's critics will give him time to succeed with his policy of Vietnamization of the war. As the President has said, only the right of the South Vietnamese to choose their own destiny is non-negotiable.

In the general field of foreign policy, President Nixon has seized the initiative in dramatic moves aimed at promoting world peace. With his round-the-world trip, the President laid the diplomatic groundwork for possible

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new breakthroughs in East-West relations. By becoming the first American President to visit a Communist capital, Mr. Nixon opened new channels of communication between East and West.

It was an act of initiative when Secretary of State William P. Rogers declared his intention to seek improved relations with Communist China. It was also an astute move when he declared that the United States wants friendly relations with both Communist China and the Soviet Union and cautioned them to avoid war with each other.

In a little noted turn of events, Hungary and the United States have announced four modest steps toward better relations.

We are clearly entering into the era of negotiation which President Nixon promised us when he took office last Jan. 20 -- an era of negotiation instead of confrontation, an era when peace becomes more than just a word.

The President has laid the foundation of a new foreign policy -- innovative, flexible, adaptable and closely attuned to the nationalistic and regional interests of Free World and Communist nations.

The overwhelmingly cordial reception in Communist Romania had deep significance. The Romanians recognized that President Nixon no longer sees the communist world as a monolithic enemy alliance but as a group of nations whose common ideology is transcended by powerful nationalistic aspirations. President Nixon is keenly aware that United States policy should be adapted to those nationalistic interests.

This new concept of U.S. foreign policy also is reflected in the new Nixon Doctrine for Asia -- the "do-it-yourself policy" which President Nixon has laid down for the nations of Southeast Asia, the policy which declares to the world that there will be no more Vietnams.

To put it bluntly, the United States will play the Russian game in Southeast Asia but, hopefully, will play it better. We will provide arms and economic assistance to non-communist nations in Southeast Asia but we will not send American ground troops to fight other countries' battles there. We are a Pacific power, not an Asian power. An Asian presence, yes. An Asian power, no.

While gradually disengaging ourselves militarily from Southeast Asia, we are moving toward negotiations with the Soviet Union on arms limitation and stabilization of the situation in Europe.

By announcing in Bucharest that "the United States believes the rights of all nations are equal," President Nixon voiced a view with tremendous appeal for

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minor Communist nations as well as Free World countries. He also made clear to the world the sharp contrast between America's views and those of Soviet leaders who crushed Czechoslovakia in the name of the Russian doctrine which allows the socialist states very limited sovereignty.

Under President Nixon, we have seized the initiative in foreign affairs even in the face of Communist aggression. We have proclaimed and promoted doctrines of international law and justice which have given the United States a new and lofty standing in the court of world opinion.

Domestically, the President has succeeded in getting people to lower their voices...and their arms, too. We have entered into a period of healing and renewal.

Again in quest of domestic tranquillity, the Nixon Administration has launched a strong crackdown against organized crime. The President has sent Congress a detailed program for dealing with organized crime and the need for reorganization of the courts.

The Nixon Administration has made the fight against crime one of its central concerns. While other departmental budgets have been cut in a hold-down on Federal spending, the Justice Department budget has been increased and the level of enforcement activity and narcotics control has been stepped up.

The Nixon Administration recognizes, as do all of you, that the first civil right of every American -- black or white -- is the right to protection from crime and violence.

It is said that there can be no progress without order. I subscribe to that. I would add that there cannot long be order without progress. And I believe the Nixon Administration is promoting the kind of order and the kind of progress which will operate together to move this country forward.

President Nixon has adopted a responsible common-sense approach to our urban problems. His answer is jobs and job training. The accent is on the solid American ethic of working for a living. The President's approach is based on the idea that a man never stands so tall as when he stands on his own two feet. Workfare instead of welfare. That is the American way. That is Dick Nixon's way. A hand up instead of a handout. That's the only way to bridge the gap between the Haves and the Have-Nots in America.

President Nixon has managed to promote order in this country because he has brought order to the Presidency. The days of government by crisis have given way to crisis prevention. The scatter-gun approach is yielding to an assembling of new priorities.

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Also on the domestic scene, we are slowly but surely beginning to get hold of inflation.

Despite the actions of those who would have us cast aside the surtax and cast spending caution to the winds, the responsible forces in the Congress -- both Democrats and Republicans -- are determined to retain the surtax at 5 per cent for six months beyond next Jan. 1 and to build a strong surplus into the federal budget.

Much to its credit, the Nixon Administration has refused to knuckle under to those who have tried to play politics with the people's pocketbook.

Besides fighting inflation with appropriate fiscal and monetary measures, President Nixon in April 1969 recognized the urgent need for tax reform and therefore proposed 16 major changes in our income tax laws. The House Ways and Means Committee built on that foundation and came up with the most sweeping tax reform and tax relief bill in the 56 years since the Federal income tax first was adopted.

I strongly supported the House tax reform bill. It will undergo some changes in the Senate, but I believe it will emerge in basically the same form that it passed the House. Final passage by both houses probably will not come until perhaps December -- hopefully by January 1.

I spoke at the outset about reform. We are living in an age that demands reforms. I say that the Nixon Administration will be a reform administration. The course has been charted, and we will hue to it. The winds of change are blowing. They cannot be bottled up.

President Nixon has proposed a sweeping array of reforms which I believe the American people have long wanted -- welfare reform which will turn all able-bodied Americans from welfare to workfare; draft reform which will make the selective service system as fair as possible until we can establish a volunteer army; postal reform which will create a government-owned self-supporting postal corporation in place of the present impossible system; poverty program reform which keeps the Office of Economic Opportunity as an innovative agency but spins off successful anti-poverty programs to old-line Government departments; manpower training reform which consolidates Federal manpower training programs; tax reform which takes millions of poor citizens off the taxrolls, reduces taxes for millions of other low-income Americans and prevents the most wealthy in our society from escaping taxation; a New Federalism which provides an increasing slice of Federal income tax revenue for the cities and states and gives them new vigor as solvers

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of the problems to which they are closest.

This is indeed the Age of Reform, and we will move ahead quickly with these new approaches to pressing problems if the Congress will work hand in hand with the new national Administration.

Now let us look at the economy.

I firmly believe that the restraints presently being employed will strengthen our economy so that it will ride higher but in better balance in the Seventies. At this moment I see America standing on the edge of many years of dynamic and unparalleled economic growth.

Despite all the gloomy talk, 1969 will be the best year yet for our economy. Don't let stock market miseries obscure the basic fact that the American private enterprise system has great bounce in it and is headed for continuing growth.

We must fight inflation, but the end of the business upswing is not in sight -- and this is not a contradiction. The battle against inflation is simply a corrective maneuver -- an adjustment in the attitude of our economic vehicle so that it will travel a truer course.

Let us not look only to the national Administration for corrective maneuvers, however. We all have a responsibility in the battle to put the affairs of our Nation in order.

The Administration is moving to unify the Nation by correcting past failures but we -- all of us -- must abandon the attitude that "all is fine so long as I get mine." We must rather -- individually and collectively -- seek the greatest good for the greatest number.

The great English poet John Donne once declared that "no man is an island unto himself."

George Bernard Shaw put it this way: "We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth."

The responsibility for guiding the future of America rests not only with the Congress, not only with governmental leaders, not only with the President. That responsibility devolves upon all of us. Each of our lives impinges on the lives of others. To the extent that we all live the good life, the unselfish life, the lives of all others are enriched.

We all believe in the American Dream. Let us live so that all may share in it.

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