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Question:

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Answer:

First, I am sorry that the series of interviews on which this article was based occurred at a time when the Secretary of State was out of the City for a series of negotiations in the Middle East because I think that would have given a somewhat different perspective to John Hersey, the author, on how the subject of foreign affairs is considered on a day-to-day basis.

Although as he explained it was not anticipated he would sit in on the foreign policy sessions with Secretary Kissinger, nevertheless had the Secretary been here, I believe there would have been a number of situations in other meetings Hersey would have had the chance to view the interchange of people and ideas in this particular area.

Also it should be observed that those who are involved in foreign policy from NSC are somewhat different persons from those John Hersey met on the senior White House staff.

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Q. Mr. President, the Congress thus far does not seem to be moving on an energy program. What do you predict is the future of this program on Capitol Hill?

A. Well, I always prefer to be optimistic. The energy problem is a serious one, and we are faced with the possibility of great shortages next year which is going to hurt industry and the economy. I hope the Congress is aware of this. It is not too late, and I hope that the Senate, as they consider the House bill, will make those changes to bring it in line with the recommendations of that program. We're also working closely with the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, and I hope they are going to respond.



Q. Mr. President, you have had success on your vetoes. However, isn't George Meany and others correct when they charge you with being negative in governing by vetoes? Doesn't this lead to confrontation?

A. Confrontation occurs when there is a lack of communication with Congress, and I do not foresee that breaking down. The veto is a constitutional means given the Executive to prevent the enactment of legislation which the President believes is contrary to the national interest unless two-thirds of both houses feel otherwise. It is also used to help shape and mold legislation into more acceptable form in the national interest. The fact that I may have vetoed certain proposals does not mean that I am totally opposed to the subjects they wish to address. I simply believe that there is a better way of approaching the problem.

Q. Mr. President, you have been meeting recently with a number of members of the House who have been active in the Turkish aid cut-off. What are your plans, and what do you think your chances are of success to revoke this ban?

A. As you have observed, we have met with members of both sides of the aisle that are closely associated with this matter.

We are hopeful that we will be able to work the matter out, and come up with an approach that will be favorably acted on by the House.

[8/74?]

Q: Mr. President, when did you first learn that there might be material in the new tapes which would be damaging to President Nixon's case, and how did you learn this?

A: Like many others I had heard there may be material in the new tapes which would be damaging shortly prior to their release, which I recall was on Monday or Tuesday, the 5th or 6th of August.

However, I did not examine these new transcripts when they were first released and did not read them until the following day, which was when I first learned of the information they contained relating to the participation in the cover-up.

You recall just prior to their release there was considerable speculation and discussion about the contents of the tapes the Court had ordered to be released to the Special Prosecutor.

I had made a trip into the South that weekend and departed Washington on Friday. I was enroute back from New Orleans when word was passed to me by radio telephone from my Washington office that President Nixon would be making a significant announcement concerning the Watergate matter about 4 o'clock that afternoon. I was not aware of this until



I received this message about three hours before the event.

Q: In recent days there has been discussion in the press of certain transition plans that had been undertaken some period of time before President Nixon's resignation. What was your role in this and when did you learn of it?

A: As I have previously stated, I was not aware of this effort and the formation of this group was not discussed nor authorized by me. I was not aware of their efforts until a day or so before the President's resignation plans became eminent.

Let me stress, however, the efforts of this group were not directed in any way toward precipitating a resignation, rather simply would be responsive should one occur or should the House and Senate act affirmatively on a bill of impeachment.



Q: Were you aware of the concerns leading to the steps taken in the Department of Defense to assure that orders to various military commands followed a regular chain of command during that time period just before and during the President's resignation?

A: First let me state emphatically, I was not aware of these concerns and did not share what might have been the concern of some in this regard. However, let me distinguish between two situations: First, during those rather critical days just before, and , in fact, after resignation, there were steps taken to assure that American military forces would be exceptionally watchful in those areas of the world that might be determined crisis spots or pressure points where either there could be a sudden outbreak or testing which would not have occurred but for the unusual situation that had developed at home. I was aware that special efforts were made to the collecting of intelligence as well as to demonstrate readiness by military forces so that others would be dissuaded from thinking they could catch us off guard or think that there was any breakdown in command response. I think this is the principle activity to which your question should be addressed. I was aware and approved these steps.



Second, in reference to unauthorized orders, I did not share these concerns for the following reasons:

(1) Transition itself is the best evidence there was no need for concern.

(2) President Nixon and his associates had demonstrated their respect for the constitutional process in a number of ways including

(a) Surrender of the tapes pursuant to order of the Supreme Court.

(b) Assistance and cooperation on the transition including dispatch of an Air Force aircraft to pick up the Chief Justice at The Hague, as well as offering military aircraft for other special missions.

(c) The manner in which the President cooperated in turning over all the White House facilities.

(d) The excellent help and assistance from his staff.

The tradition of civilian control of our armed services is so deeply ingrained in our military officers that I did not consider obstruction of the constitutional process by the military to be a real danger.



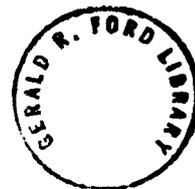
Q: What are your plans for General Haig?

A: General Haig is a young man with a great future and he has many career options. I have been most impressed by him and pleased by his performance and have not indicated to him that he should leave the Presidential staff.

It should be recalled that when he came to the White House, he was ordered to this assignment while serving as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. In my opinion, he should be commended for the manner in which he has performed this last assignment undertaken at the direction of President Nixon, which interrupted his Army career.

Q: What are your plans for 1976?

A. I am more concerned about my plans for 1974 and 1975 than I am about 1976. I am more concerned about doing the best job I can today without being tempted to make election year promises. If I can do the kind of job that needs to be done between now and 1976, I believe that 1976 will take care of itself.



Q: Mr. President, your statement in reference to amnesty has raised many questions aroused much interest. What are your plans in reference to amnesty?

A: The first thing that I would ask is that each person before forming an opinion would carefully read the statement I made on this subject.

I do not propose unconditional amnesty and I have not offered a free ride to anyone who fled from military service or evaded the draft.

We are looking at this question and I will be receiving recommendations shortly from officials in the Department of Justice, Department of Defense, and other agencies as well as my staff.

After that meeting I should be in a much better position to more fully advise how we expect to proceed.

Q: How do you plan to use Governor Scranton?

A: I have invited Governor Scranton to remain on for an indeterminate



period to devote personal attention to matters that relate to personnel questions. There are a number of personnel matters involving a whole host of Federal appointments that need attention. I want him to head up a talent search team and to bring into these vacancies the most able men and women available.

Governor Scranton is not interested in a permanent position in the Administration but he does have an excellent background in the Federal Service, particularly having been a House member and in State service as Governor of Pennsylvania.



7[8/74?]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Question: Reports from Cyprus are that your Administration did not stop the Turks from seizing a good part of the island, and that therefore the Administration is anti-Greek on this issue. Is this true?

Question: The cease-fire between Israel and Egypt and Syria is very fragile and both sides seem to be threatening to fight again. What are you going to do about it?

Question: Besides your plans to go to Japan late this year, do you have any other foreign travel plans this year or next?



NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY (Continued)

Question: The French President has criticized the United States, particularly your Administration for not showing sufficient concern about our European allies? Do you have a response?

Question: Were you aware that Defense Secretary Schlesinger and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs apparently shortened the lines of Command at the Pentagon to prevent your predecessor, or his aides at the White House, from bypassing them in some military way?



7

GENERAL

Question: How long is General Haig staying on and other Nixon holdovers?

Question: Do you think former President Nixon should be immune from prosecution on Watergate matters and would you grant him clemency if he were indicted?

Question: Should the Nixon tapes and records be considered his property or governmental property? If they are his, why is your White House holding them? -- Or, do you plan to send them to San Clemente?



GENERAL (Continued)

Question: Will you be campaigning for Republican candidates to Congress and the Senate, and for Governors this year?

Question: How can an "Open Administration" be against the Freedom of Information Bill now before Congress?

Question: Your Administration appears to be against the Consumer Protection legislation pending in Congress. You appear to have taken the pro-business side. Why?



GENERAL (Continued)

Question: Do you plan to appoint a woman to your Cabinet? -- Or a Black? --
Or a Democrat?

Question: We all know how much you like to swim. Do you plan to build a new pool at the White House or do away with the Press Room so you can reclaim the old one?

Question: Your new Veteran's Administration Director, Mr. Roudebush, is supposed to have been a member of the Ku Klux Klan and is reported to have been anti-Black. Were you aware of this when you appointed him last week?



GENERAL (Continued)

Question: What will Governor Rockefeller's role be in the Ford Administration?

Do you agree with his views on abortion and clemency for Mr. Nixon?

Question: You have said you probably will run for the Presidency in 1976 -- will Gov. Rockefeller be your running mate?

Question: Your Transition Team has given you recommendations for reshaping the structure of the White House. Can you tell us how you plan to do this?



GENERAL (Continued)

Question: You like playing golf at the Burning Tree Country Club. Are you aware that the Club discriminates against women and minorities? Do you plan to continue to use the Club?

Question: There are reports that you will Veto a Veteran's Benefit Bill that would give Vietnam Veterans the same kind of benefits that those of World War II and Korea received. Isn't this discriminating against men who happened to fight in an unpopular war?



[9/74?]

H/K

File

POSSIBLE PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTIONS

- Q. Mr. President, why did you pardon Richard Nixon before he had been charged with any crimes...before the legal process had even started?

- Q. Polls taken since you pardoned former President Nixon indicate the American people were overwhelmingly opposed to such action in advance of prosecution. Do you now regret having issued the pardon?

- Q. Mr. President, why have you asked Congress for \$244,000 more in transition funds for former President Nixon than are required by law?

- Q. Senators Montoya and Hatfield have asked why the tapes and documents could not be stored in some secure federal office building instead of in a special \$100,000 Watergate tapes vault. Would you comment on that, please?

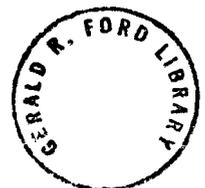
- Q. Mr. President, how do you reconcile asking Congress for \$850,000 for Mr. Nixon while urging the American people to tighten their belts?

- Q. Mr. President, did you personally approve the agreement which gives Mr. Nixon the right to deny requests for access to the Watergate tapes and to wage a court fight against any subpoenas for such material?

- Q. Mr. President, do you believe the remaining Watergate defendants can get a fair trial?



- Q. Mr. President, was the question of pardoning the remaining Watergate defendants a trial balloon?
- Q. Mr. President, the latest report is that Democratic congressional leaders are planning a lame duck session of the Congress. How do you feel about such a session? Do you think it would accomplish anything? If so, what?
- Q. Mr. President, do you agree with those observers who say your pardon of Mr. Nixon has damaged Republican prospects for November?
- Q. Mr. President, is continued aid to Turkey legal?
- Q. Mr. President, don't you think your chances for delaying the congressional pay raise have been damaged by your pardon of Mr. Nixon?
- Q. Mr. President, labor leaders and many economists are urging a relaxing of the tight money policy. Do you favor such action?
- Q. Mr. President, does the drive to lift OAS sanctions against Cuba have your approval?
- Q. Mr. President, the public is angry over skyrocketing health care costs. Are you planning to take any action which would bring greater federal controls over the practice of medicine?



- Q. Mr. President, Mrs. Ford has said her views on abortion are closer to those of Mr. Rockefeller than Senator Buckley. Is that also your position?
- Q. Mr. President, violent crime has risen 47 per cent in just five years. Are you planning to do anything about it?
- Q. Mr. President, Senator Jackson has declared that the decision to supply nuclear reactors to Egypt should be reconsidered. Are you reconsidering that decision?
- Q. Mr. President, Benton Becker is looked upon by many people as a person of questionable reputation. Why did you employ Mr. Becker as a liaison person in connection with your pardon of Mr. Nixon?
- Q. Mr. President, White House aides have said that certain of your advisers lied to Jerry terHorst when he asked if you were considering a pardon for Mr. Nixon. Had you instructed them to lie if they were asked that question? And do you believe they were right in lying about it?
- Q. Mr. President, did concern about the physical and mental health of Mr. Nixon play a key role in your decision to pardon Mr. Nixon? And did Julie Eisenhower appeal to you to pardon her father?



- Q. Mr. President, the wholesale price index rose nearly 4 per cent in August -- the second biggest increase in 28 years. Are you still going to wait until January to do something about inflation?
- Q. Mr. President, you have repeatedly said you are opposed to forced busing. Are you in favor of the busing boycott going on in Boston?
- Q. Leon Jaworski has said he "probably will" issue a comprehensive report on the Watergate scandal that will include the role of former President Nixon. Do you favor such action, Mr. President?
- Q. Mr. President, there is said to be a secret Watergate memo which provided you with a major reason for pardoning Richard Nixon. Is that report true? And if so, what was in the memo?
- Q. Mr. President, are you considering a pardon for John Connally?
- Q. Mr. President, some Americans are calling your pardon of Mr. Nixon a coverup of the coverup. Do you have any comment?
- Q. Mr. President, at your August 28 press conference you said you could make no commitment regarding a pardon for Mr. Nixon because the legal process had not even started yet. Two days later, according to reports, you instructed Mr. Buchen to gather information regarding a pardon. What happened in those two days to make you change your mind?



- Q. Mr. President, an Environmental Protection Agency official says catalytic converters will emit a fine mist of sulfuric acid, which could develop into a health hazard in two years. Are you doing anything about this?
- Q. The Palestine Liberation Organization is seeking direct talks with the United States. Do you favor such talks?
- Q. Mr. President, the continued operation of lotteries by 13 states is threatened because of action taken by Attorney General Saxbe. Do you favor action by Congress to legalize State-operated lotteries?
- Q. Mr. President, what is your position on the tax bill the House Ways and Means Committee is working on? Do you favor tax cuts for the poor?
- Q. Mr. President, a congressional investigator has alleged improprieties in the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and says they may be part of a wholesale subversion of civil service regulations. Are you taking any action to get at the truth of this matter?
- Q. Mr. Ford, is Charlie Goodell one of your closest advisers? And was he influential in your decision to nominate Nelson Rockefeller for Vice President?



Q. Mr. President, is it going to continue to be the United States' policy to intervene in a clandestine way in the operations of a democratically-elected government if that government happens to be Socialist or Communist?



[1/75?]

Question:

What is your view on changing the Filibuster Rule (Rule 22) from two-thirds to three-fifths?

Answer:

This is a matter involving the internal organization and procedures of the Senate. I do not feel I should respond to that question.

Question:

In your opinion, should Vice President Rockefeller rule procedurally or vote for or against such a rule change?

Answer:

Your question addresses the Vice President ruling as President of the Senate and my answer is the same as to the first question.



Question:

Have you discussed with the Vice President the matter involving this rule change and if so, what did you say to him?

Answer:

I pointed out to the Vice President that this is a matter within the provinces of the Senate and a matter in which his vote was one that was up to him.

In fact, this is my attitude in all matters in which he might be called upon to rule or vote in the Senate.

Question:

The Proclamation deadline on your offer of amnesty expires on January 31. Do you intend to extend it, and if so, for how long, and if not, why not?

Answer:

Answer should reflect current decision.



Question:

What's your assessment of the recent developments in reference to the organization of the House of Representatives?

Answer:

I am very careful about expressing opinions on matters that are solely within the purview of the Congress, particularly in the workings of the other Party. This is a matter for the Congress.

Question:

There are a number of revelations about CIA activities including White House pressure to get CIA involvement in domestic activities. Do you think these charges are accurate, and did the CIA operate illegally?

Answer:

The reason that I have established the CIA Panel was for the purpose of trying to ascertain the accuracy or inaccuracy of the questions you have raised.



Question:

How do you expect your CIA Panel to make an objective evaluation in light of the fact that there is no minority representation in this membership and it does not have a woman member? Doesn't its membership represent an Establishment viewpoint?

Answer:

I am certain that members I have selected are objective and fair-minded people who will seek out the truth and let the chips fall where they may. They were selected on the basis of distinguished public service and achievement which was marked by good judgment. I believe the product of their work is satisfactory and the citizens will believe that they are doing a thorough job that reflects an interest in the rights of all Americans with regards as to how to protect those rights.



Question:

In light of the recent allegations concerning the operations of the FBI, what action do you intend to take, and have you considered expanding the Charter of your CIA Commission to include unauthorized FBI activities?

Answer:

I am not in a position at this time to fully respond to your question because I have asked the Department of Justice for a complete report on these allegations and wish to consider this and discuss it with my Advisors in order to determine just how to proceed. Let me say, however, that I expect to take prompt steps to insure that the FBI operates within its statutory authority and to that end, I have advised officials at the Department of Justice and the Director of the FBI that files are not to be maintained on Members of Congress or other officials unless they are a part of an on-going criminal investigation.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

M

January 17, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: MAX L. FRIEDERSDORF
THRU: VERN LOEN VL
FROM: DOUG BENNETT DPB
SUBJECT: Questions and Answers
for the President

The attached questions have been raised to me by a variety of Ways and Means members. The answers were in part prepared by Treasury - Fred Hickman and may help blunt the problems raised re the President's program.

cc: Counsellor Marsh ✓
Vern Loen
Charlie Leppert
Bill Kendall
Pat O'Donnell
Bob Wolthuis

WALD S. FORD LIB.

January 16, 1975

Question: Do you think the tax relief you have recommended for individuals is enough particularly in light of increased fuel costs?

Answer: Yes. There will be increased fuel costs as a result of the excise tax and decontrol. However, the government will return in the form of tax relief the increased amounts that will be paid by individuals, and will provide another \$16 billion in temporary tax relief to boot. ~~That~~ Tax relief will go proportionately more to low- and middle-income taxpayers.



January 16, 1975

Question: Will the import fees disadvantage particular areas of the country that rely heavily on imported oil?

Answer: Not when the program is fully in effect. At the present time, areas that rely heavily on imported oil are paying higher prices than those areas that rely on domestic oil. When the entire proposal is in effect, the price of oil should be the same everywhere: there will be a uniform \$2 excise-import fee on all oil, and decontrol will remove the price advantage presently enjoyed by those areas relying primarily on domestic oil.

During February and March, it is true that there will be additional costs for imported oil but not for domestic oil. An equalization system will be used to prevent this from impacting on the regions which rely heavily on imported products.



January 16, 1975

Question: Why is the one-shot tax rebate to be paid in two checks?

Answer: --Part of our recession problem is lack of consumer confidence. We felt that a check of significant size would heighten awareness of the benefit and a second check would reinforce that awareness.

--At the same time, we did not wish to distribute checks so large that people would be unduly tempted to save the rebate (although some saving is desirable). Dividing the payment into two checks seemed to minimize that problem.

--Paying the amount in two checks spreads out somewhat the difficult job which the Treasury will have in financing these enormous deficits. The Treasury's problem is not whether it can raise the money, for it always goes to the head of the line. The problem is to raise the money without creating a major credit drouth for private borrowers and without increasing the money supply so drastically as to set off another inflationary spiral.



January 16, 1975

Question: The wealthy taxpayers in the country are most able to withstand our economic problems. Why are you also cutting taxes for these upper tax bracket individuals?

Answer: Solving our economic problems is everybody's business. We cannot solve every problem by letting upper income persons pay the bill--if for no other reason than the fact that there are not that many upper income taxpayers.

It is our aim to treat everyone fairly. In order to do that, we must keep in mind:

- . Only about 12% of all taxpayers have gross incomes above \$20,000, and they now pay about 52% of total individual income taxes. They will pay an even higher percentage of individual income taxes if our proposals are enacted.
- . Upper income individuals have been adversely affected by inflation, just as lower income individuals. The prices of the things they buy have increased too, and since they buy more, the increase is greater. Also, inflation causes the income tax system to take an increasingly larger share of taxpayers' real incomes as money incomes (which is what is taxable) are pushed into higher brackets even though real incomes remain the same. This feature of the income tax law has adversely affected high income taxpayers just as it has affected lower income taxpayers. Everybody has had, in effect, an income tax increase because of inflation.
- . Finally, we must also keep in mind that upper income taxpayers play a disproportionately large role in providing the investments which help everyone's income to increase.



January 16, 1975

Question: The imposition of an import fee and excise tax on crude oil will cut into individual's pocketbooks in some sections of the country more than others, i.e., the northeast and the northern border states, since they will consume more oil and gasoline. Do you have any plans to relieve this added price burden?

Answer: Some households use relatively more products that reflect the price of oil than do other households and will be affected more by the proposals. It is far from clear, however, that there will be major differences between geographical regions. It is true that winters are more severe in northern states than in the south and heating will cost more for those that heat with oil or with oil generated electricity. On the other hand, air conditioner costs are much higher in the south. And in the west and southwest, it is probably true that people tend to drive much longer distances. So there are many offsetting factors.

In any event, the tax cuts have been designed to be very generous for lower and middle income classes and should be more than ample to compensate for such differences.



January 16, 1975

Question: Why two steps for tax relief? Why not a one-shot permanent relief program?

Answer: We must not give permanent tax relief until we also provide commensurate reductions in expenditures or other sources of revenue. Otherwise, we shall guarantee major deficits for future years.

This year we want a larger deficit than would otherwise occur in order to get the economy started upwards. But a guaranteed escalation of deficits for future years would be a disaster. It would start inflation all over again at higher levels.



JAN 20 1975 *m*

FBI SPYING ON CONGRESS

Question

Does the FBI collect information on Congressmen? Do you approve of spying on Congress?

Answer

Of course, I do not approve spying on Congress. Nor does the FBI. As I understand it, the FBI legitimately gets information on legislators in three situations:

1. When the legislator, like any other citizen, is the subject or victim of a criminal investigation,
2. When the legislator, like any other citizen, is being considered for an appointment to an executive or judicial post, or
3. When, like any other citizen, unsolicited information is received about the legislator.

Unsolicited information is received from time to time about individuals in public and private life. When such allegations do not appear reasonably related to the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI, the FBI tells its correspondent exactly that. The correspondence and the official reply are retained as a record of official FBI actions. Because it is not possible to predict, when information is received, whether the subject will or will not at some future time be given consideration for an executive or judicial appointment requiring an inquiry into his suitability, all such information voluntarily submitted is retained.

The FBI assures me, and I have no reason to doubt it, that such information is used only in criminal investigations and in suitability checks for prospective appointees and is never used to influence the judgement or action of any Member of Congress or anyone else.



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Question:

Do you see the Congress acting in such a way as to frustrate and obstruct your requests, particularly in light of the influence of the Caucus and the role of the freshmen Democrats?

Answer:

My hope is that Congress will act responsibly. I do not think their constituents sent them to Congress to either frustrate or obstruct the President nor to engage in confrontations with the Executive Branch. In our country, it takes two to govern. Only the Congress can legislate, and only the Executive Branch can execute the programs and policies of the government. In the critical times in which we live, there is nothing to be gained by stalemate, but much to be lost through inaction. I am willing to meet the Congress more than half-way, and it is my hope they will do their part. I am convinced the new members of Congress are responsible and intelligent individuals who want to do the best thing for the country.



2-3-75

Question:

Some of us have observed that your Clemency Program has not been successful, in which case why did you extend the time for applications?

Answer:

I do not agree that it has not been successful. It is a program of clemency available to those who wish to earn their way back into the main stream of American life. The program was extended principally for two reasons. In general, the Clemency Board had begun an extensive nationwide educational program through advertising which accelerated substantially the number of applications and that, together with a substantial increase of applications as the deadline ended, made it feasible to extend the program for one month.



Question:

In recent days there has been considerable comment about President Nixon's future in public life, including Senator Goldwater's statement of his role in Party affairs as well as reports that President Nixon would like to be named Ambassador to Red China. What do you see the former President's role to be?

Answer:

My first hope is complete and speedy return to a state of good health for the former President. I believe the former President's future role will be determined in large measure by his health, and until he is fully recovered, it is too early to speculate on what that role might be.



Question:

What is your view of the recent changes in the organization of the Congress, resulting in the deposing of several Committee Chairmen?

Answer:

The situation you have described has occurred largely in the organizational efforts of the Democratic party. When I was Minority Leader, I was cautious about making remarks on the internal workings of the other party. As Chief Executive, I believe it is sound advice to forego comments on Congressional organization in general.



Question:

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Answer:

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Question:

What do you think will happen to the Defense program now that Hebert has lost his Chairmanship of the Armed Services Committee?

Answer:

The question of the Defense program in the Congress is one of concern notwithstanding who the Chairman is. As you are aware, Mr. Hebert has long been a strong advocate and great supporter of the Defense program; however, I have known and served with his successor, Mel Price, for many years. He too is deeply committed to a strong National defense, and I believe that he will do everything he can to promote that cause in his Committee and on the Floor.



Question:

Do you see the Congress acting in such a way as to frustrate and obstruct your requests, particularly in light of the influence of the Caucus and the role of the freshmen Democrats?

Answer:

My hope is that Congress will act responsibly. I do not think their constituents sent them to Congress to either frustrate or obstruct the President nor to engage in confrontations with the Executive Branch. In our country, it takes two to govern. Only the Congress can legislate, and only the Executive Branch can execute the programs and policies of the government. In the critical times in which we live, there is nothing to be gained by stalemate, but much to be lost through inaction. I am willing to meet the Congress more than half-way, and it is my hope they will do their part. I am convinced the new members of Congress are responsible and intelligent individuals who want to do the best thing for the country.



JDM
2-3-75

Question:

Some of us have observed that your Clemency Program has not been successful, in which case why did you extend the time for applications?

Answer:

I do not agree that it has not been successful. It is a program of clemency available to those who wish to earn their way back into the main stream of American life. The program was extended principally for two reasons. In general, the Clemency Board had begun an extensive nationwide educational program through advertising which accelerated substantially the number of applications and that, together with a substantial increase of applications as the deadline ended, made it feasible to extend the program for one month.



Question:

In recent days there has been considerable comment about President Nixon's future in public life, including Senator Goldwater's statement of his role in Party affairs as well as reports that President Nixon would like to be named Ambassador to Red China. What do you see the former President's role to be?

Answer:

My first hope is complete and speedy return to a state of good health for the former President. I believe the former President's future role will be determined in large measure by his health, and until he is fully recovered, it is too early to speculate on what that role might be.



Question:

What is your view of the recent changes in the organization of the Congress, resulting in the deposing of several Committee Chairmen?

Answer:

The situation you have described has occurred largely in the organizational efforts of the Democratic party. When I was Minority Leader, I was cautious about making remarks on the internal workings of the other party. As Chief Executive, I believe it is sound advice to forego comments on Congressional organization in general.



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Question:

What do you think will happen to the Defense program now that Hebert has lost his Chairmanship of the Armed Services Committee?

Answer:

The question of the Defense program in the Congress is one of concern notwithstanding who the Chairman is. As you are aware, Mr. Hebert has long been a strong advocate and great supporter of the Defense program; however, I have known and served with his successor, Mel Price, for many years. He too is deeply committed to a strong National defense, and I believe that he will do everything he can to promote that cause in his Committee and on the Floor.



2/25/73

Question:

Mr. President, press accounts indicate Vice President Rockefeller has tilted in favor of those who advocate change in the two-thirds rule in the Senate. Is this a reflection of your desires, or do you agree this is the case?

Answer:

This was a complicated parliamentary situation which required the rulings of the Vice President. Let me point out that as Vice President, he serves as President of the Senate under the Constitution, and that I feel it is not appropriate for me to make a comment on a parliamentary matter involving the rulings of procedure involving a separate branch of the Government.

Update



1/21/75

Question:

What is your view on changing the Filibuster Rule (Rule 22) from two-thirds to three-fifths?

Answer:

This is a matter involving the internal organization and procedures of the Senate. I do not feel I should respond to that question.

Question:

In your opinion, should Vice President Rockefeller rule procedurally or vote for or against such a rule change?

Answer:

Your question addresses the Vice President ruling as President of the Senate and my answer is the same as to the first question.



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Question:

On February 9 the transition officially ends. What, if any, relationship will you continue to have with former President Nixon, in an official sense?

Answer:

There are two statutes in question here. As you observed, the Transition Act terminates on February 9, six months after my swearing-in. However, President Nixon ~~will~~, as of that date, ~~come~~ ^{came} under the Former Presidents Act, which by law provides him with certain continuing benefits which include pension, a staff allowance, office space and limited operational costs. This is the same statute that has been available to other former Presidents in recent years.

The number of people who ~~will be~~ ^{are} working with him ~~will be~~ ^{was} substantially reduced from the transition period. It should be kept in mind, however, that under separate statutes, he ~~will be receiving~~ ^{receives} Secret Service protection, and there ~~will be~~ ^{is} some support furnished from time to time pursuant to Secret Service requirements.



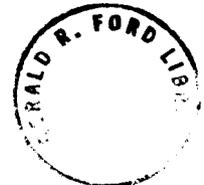
OK

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Question:

Mr. President, recent press stories indicate that you withdrew the nomination of Mr. Silberman to be Special Trade Representative at the request of Senator Long in order to gain support for your veto position on the oil tariff bill.

Answer:

These press stories are inaccurate. There was no quid pro quo with Senator Long on this matter. Quite some time ago, he made suggestions in reference to the selection of the STR and there were also suggestions from the Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Committee on Finance, Senator Curtis. In light of the special relationship that the STR has with the Senate Finance Committee and the Ways and Means Committee, we were especially attentive to the suggestions from senior members of these committees on the selection of a Special Trade Representative.

Let me say that Mr. Silberman is a highly qualified individual who has had a distinguished career in public service. I have the greatest confidence in him, and I felt he would have made an excellent representative.



Question:

Why didn't you extend the deadline for making application for the Clemency Board, inasmuch as there was a rise in applications since the first of the year?

Answer:

You will recall that when I announced this program last Fall, that I placed a deadline of slightly over four months on it, which I felt was sufficient for all those who were eligible and interested. I extended it for an additional month, namely the 28th of February to accommodate those who might not have been aware of the program. It is my view that this would be sufficient time to make application, otherwise we are likely to find ourselves in a series of extensions which I do not feel is in the best interest of the program.



Question:

The House of Representatives is about to consider a tax bill which varies somewhat from your tax bill. Do you plan to sign it when it comes to the White House?

Answer:

It is my honest desire that the Congress will act on a tax bill and I hope the one they send to me, I can sign. However, at this stage in the legislative process, it would be premature to predict what I might do, since it cannot be foretold what may happen through special amendments in the House or what the Senate version might be.



Question:

What was the nature of the Congressional objections to Mr. Silberman for the position of Special Trade Representative?

Answer:

As I pointed out, Silberman has had a distinguished public career, and I have great confidence in him. Among some Congressional leaders, there was a desire to have an individual whose background was more in the field of international trade and foreign affairs.



Question:

Mr. President, much has been said about the growing role of Vice President Rockefeller in your Administration, particularly the key part he will play in the Domestic Council as well as members of his staff who will occupy positions of leadership.

Answer:

Vice President Rockefeller is an able man, which is the reason I selected him to be Vice President. I think he has much to offer. It is my hope to incorporate his talents and energies in the Administration to the fullest extent. He has associated with him some highly capable people, and I named them into key positions for the same reason.

On the outset, I have sought to include the Vice President and his staff in the day-to-day operations of my Administration and this is simply evidence of that effort.

