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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 2, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JAMES CAVANAUGH
RICHARD CHENEY
DAVE GERGEN
ROBERT HARTMANN
ROGERS MORTON
RON NESSEN ✓

FROM:

MARGITA WHITE *man*

Attached are the President's answers to questions submitted by the Boston Herald American. They will be published Wednesday ~~or~~ ~~Thursday~~ of this week.

Attachment



BUSING

Q. Boston, more than any other city in the nation, has seen its people divided, its racial tensions increased, its classrooms become centers of conflict, and its streets become battlegrounds because of the forced busing of thousands of its schoolchildren. There is growing agreement among parents, politicians, sociologists and educators that though desegregation of the schools is a desirable end, forced busing is an imperfect and ineffective means to achieve it. You have added your voice to the critics of busing by saying that you oppose it and that there are better alternatives to it. But you have never really spelled out, in specific detail, what these alternatives are and what you propose to do as President to bring them about.

Exactly what do you advocate to bring about integration in the schools and reduce the racial tension in our city--and what actions will you take to achieve those goals?

A. The first question we must answer is, "What are we really trying to do by busing?" All of us--white, black, every American, in my opinion--want quality education.

Second, let me strongly emphasize that the Supreme Court, in 1954, decided that separate but equal schools were not constitutional. That is the law of the land. As far as my Administration is concerned, the law of the land will be upheld and we are upholding it.

Subsequently, the Federal Court decided that busing is one way to desegregate schools and perhaps improve education at the same time. But there is always more than one answer,

and I have the responsibility to give what I think is a better answer to the achievement of quality education, which is what we all seek.

I believe that quality education can be enhanced by better school facilities, lower pupil-teacher ratios, the improvement of neighborhoods and possibly by other alternatives.

Accordingly, I directed the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, the Attorney General, and members of my staff to develop better methods of achieving quality education within an integrated environment for all children.

The development of these alternatives is going on now.



VICE PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITIES

Q. Since you announced your shakeup in the Cabinet and the CIA to bring your "team" into the Administration, and Vice President Rockefeller bowed out of the 1976 picture, political questions have been raised. In bringing Ambassador Elliott Richardson back to the U.S. to assume the post of Secretary of Commerce, are you readying him for possible consideration as your running-mate?

Senator Edward W. Brooke has also been mentioned as an attractive addition to whatever ticket the convention might endorse. Have you considered Brooke as a possible vice presidential candidate next year?

A. As I have said on other occasions, one of the blessings of the Republican Party today is that we have so many able men and women who are qualified for the highest offices in the land. I certainly include Elliott Richardson and Ed Brooke among them; both are superb public servants. To go beyond that would, I think, be premature.

HEALTH INSURANCE .

Q. Even advocates of legislation to set up a national health insurance system concede that, in view of the recession, there is no likelihood it will be adopted soon if ever. But a year ago you proposed a program to insure all Americans against the high costs of catastrophic illnesses. Is the Administration still pushing for enactment of such a program by Congress?

A. Yes. As outlined in the State of the Union address, I am proposing catastrophic health insurance for everybody covered by Medicare -- and that includes both the elderly and the disabled. Under this proposal, no one who is 65 years or older would have to pay more than \$500 a year for hospital or nursing home care nor more than \$250 a year for doctors' bills. In order to finance this program, it will be necessary to impose slightly higher costs upon beneficiaries for initial medical treatment, but this strikes me as a small price to pay for insurance against catastrophe.

SELECTIVE SERVICE

Q. The draft has been suspended for several years now, and our armed forces apparently have been able to meet their quotas with volunteers. Why do the American taxpayers still need to spend millions of dollars to operate a Selective Service System which no longer has anything to do? Do you support and will you urge Congress to abolish the Selective Service?

A. Recognizing that the all-volunteer force has been a great success, I have recommended that expenditures for the Selective Service System be cut from \$37 million in 1976 to \$6.8 million in fiscal year 1977. At the same time, we are dropping the requirement that all young men be registered.

The success of the all-volunteer force represents, I believe, one of the most significant advances in the last quarter of a century. For a whole generation of young people, it means greater personal freedom -- the ability to plan one's life without fear of conscription. Now our job is to maintain that freedom by maintaining the peace.

HEALTH INSURANCE

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CRIME

Q. Despite many new programs and a very large increase in government spending to combat crime, the problem continues to grow faster and faster every year. Are you willing to try new and different laws or strategies to curtail it?

Will you, for example, support the legislation which Senator Edward Kennedy recently proposed to mete out mandatory sentences for serious offenses, especially those involving "recidivists" or repeaters?

Would you support federal legislaion, modeled after a statute enacted earlier this year in Massachusetts, requiring mandatory jail terms for persons convicted of carrying guns outside their homes without a license or for using weapons in the commission of a crime?

A. None of us should be satisfied that we have all the answers to crime until we achieve one fundamental objective: we put the criminals on the run in this country.

To do that, we must be tough and unrelenting.

I have asked the Congress for legislation that will require judges to lock up persons convicted of Federal crimes involving the sale of hard drugs. No one is certain whether hard drugs are a major cause of crime, but we do know that such drugs degrade both the spirit and the bodies of those who use them. And they very likely are related to the high incidence of crime today.

We should also recognize that some judges are reluctant to sentence felons to long sentences because of poor prison conditions. In my new budget, I have asked for money to build four new Federal prisons.

I am also asking for funds to expand the number of Federal prosecutors, to expand the number of Federal judges, put 500 additional Federal agents in the Nation's eleven largest metropolitan areas in order to control illegal trade in handguns, and to provide financial assistance to local and State law enforcement agencies.

I am not in favor of Federal legislation modeled after the Massachusetts gun control law. As I said in my State of the Union address, "the way to cut down on the criminal use of guns is not to take the guns away from the law-abiding citizen, but to impose mandatory sentences for crimes in which a gun is used, make it harder to obtain cheap guns for criminal purposes, and concentrate gun control enforcement in high crime areas."

Under our Constitution, responsibility for controlling and punishing crime rests primarily with State and local authorities, but with crime posing such a threat to many citizens, the Federal Government cannot -- and will not -- turn its back. We are an active partner with local police officers, and we will keep the pressure on until we succeed.



TAX REFORM

Q. One of the proposals now before the House Ways and Means Committee, submitted by Rep. James A. Burke of Massachusetts, would change the social security tax law to lessen the payments now made by employers and employees and would raise the income limits so that wage earners with an income of \$25,000 would pay a social security tax on that full amount. Do you support that tax reform?

A. As I spelled out in my State of the Union address, it is vital that we maintain a sound, reliable Social Security System. I have therefore proposed that the full cost of living increase be paid to all Social Security beneficiaries.

We must also recognize, as Rep. Burke has, that the Social Security Trust Fund -- the foundation of the system -- is running out of money. I have therefore proposed that in order to preserve the integrity of the trust fund and to protect future benefits, we enact a modest increase in Social Security payments, effective January 1, 1977. For employees, this will mean an increase of less than a dollar a week in additional payments.

Rep. Burke's proposal would result in a significant portion of Social Security benefits being financed from general revenues. I oppose this approach for two reasons. First, Social Security was set up as a form

of personal insurance; we ought to maintain it as such, and not turn it into a general welfare program. Secondly, we just don't have general revenues to put into Social Security. As matters now stand, the Federal Government during fiscal year 1976 will be borrowing over \$70 billion to pay its bills. It makes no sense to me to keep living beyond our means and expect the future to take care of itself. Social Security was intended as a means to provide for the future, and we ought to stick to that sound principle.

Q. What else would you suggest to make the Federal tax laws more equitable than they now are?

A. It is clear that the Federal tax law must be reformed in the interests of achieving greater fairness among taxpayers, and I have submitted legislation to that end -- legislation that would require high income taxpayers to pay a reasonable tax, that would restrict the use of artificial accounting losses as tax shelters, and would gradually reduce the double taxation on corporate dividends so that we might encourage greater investment in the country's future. I hope that the Congress will join with me in this effort to make our tax system fairer and more equitable.

WELFARE

Q. When Caspar Weinberger resigned a few months ago as your Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, his parting shot was a call to end the present welfare mess before it bankrupts the country. In place of the present chaotic and costly system, he urged adoption of a new program of case grants which would be tied to a work requirement for everyone in need. His proposal was essentially the same as the Family Assistance Plan advocated by former President Nixon and Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Do you support that kind of welfare reform? Do you think Congress will go along with a total overhaul of the present system? Wouldn't this be one way to ease the fiscal pressure and avert the danger of bankruptcy in New York and other cities and states where welfare costs have gone out of control?

A. It is clear to everyone that the current welfare system is in a mess, and one of our prime objectives must be a sweeping overhaul -- hopefully before the end of the decade.

For a number of reasons, however, I do not believe that 1976 is the proper year to enact a major new welfare program. We will be approaching national elections soon, and it would not be fair to turn the futures of millions of disadvantaged Americans into a political football. Moreover, we are still in the early stages of economic recovery, and we must not take a major detour.

Given those considerations, I think that 1976 can nonetheless be a year of substantial progress.

I believe that in 1976 we must concentrate on making improvements in the existing programs. Specifically, I have sent to Congress proposals for reform of the Food Stamp program so that benefits can be concentrated on the truly needy. In addition, I will be sending to Congress a proposal to enable the President with approval of Congress to tighten up rules to make programs of assistance more equitable and efficient.

FOREIGN AID AND TRADE

Q. You recently approved another major purchase of wheat by the Soviet Union, which many consumers fear will add to the price of bread and other commodities sold in America's supermarkets. Wouldn't it have been a better deal if we had swapped our wheat for Russian oil on a quid pro quo basis, which could have lowered the price of petroleum products and made us less dependent on -- and subject to blackmail by -- the Arabs?

A. The United States is extremely fortunate to have the most productive farmers in the world. They not only put food on our tables at prices that are generally more reasonable than food prices elsewhere in the world, but they also sell so much abroad that they keep our balance of trade in the black. Indeed, because of our bumper crop, the price of bread was not adversely affected by grain sales to the Soviets last year.

The problem we have had with the Soviets with regard to wheat is that in the past they entered our markets unexpectedly and with massive unpredictable orders. In 1973, for instance, prices were disruptively forced up for American buyers. I believe the answer to such disruptions is not to shut the Soviets out of the market but to convert them into more regular customers, so that our farmers can plan ahead. That was the purpose of our efforts to negotiate a grain agreement with the Soviets --

an agreement that was successfully concluded in October of 1975. Under this accord, U.S. farmers during the next five years will have a substantial market for their crops, the U.S. consumer need no longer fear disruptive Soviet orders, and our international financial position will be strengthened.

Oil imports from the Soviet Union at a favorable price would make us marginally less dependent on OPEC. Last year we negotiated a letter of intent with the Soviets which may lead to U.S. purchases. Negotiations on this matter resumed late in January.

Q. Last week you proposed nearly doubling the cost of the U.S. foreign aid program next year. Can we really afford to be so generous abroad when there are so many domestic needs going unmet today and crying out for funds?

A. Our resources are indeed limited, and we must husband them carefully. The needs of the American public must always be given great weight when considering the competing needs of other nations. At the same time, it is in our own best interest -- and it fulfills our own humanitarian impulses as a people -- to continue our assistance and support for others who will help themselves.

In actual dollar terms, the 1975 budget called for an authorization of \$5.0 billion for foreign aid, the 1976 budget called for \$6.6 billion, and the 1977 budget reduces the proposed amount to \$5.8 billion.

As you can see, there was a fairly sizeable increase in the 1976 figure. This was in large measure attributable to additional security assistance for Israel and Egypt -- an investment in peace that was worth every penny. The other major portions of aid were either for economic or humanitarian assistance -- assistance that I regard as a vital contribution by the United States to a more stable and more hopeful world.

STRIKES BY PUBLIC WORKERS

Q. In recent months there has been a rash of strikes by teachers, firemen, policemen and other government-employees. Do you think the time has come for federal legislation to prohibit such work stoppages? If so, would such a law require compulsory arbitration, or are there other alternatives?

A. No. I think it would be better for the employers and employees at the State and local levels to work these problems out for themselves. A number of States have experimented with approaches to this problem -- some of them with a high degree of success -- and others can draw upon that experience.



FISHING RIGHTS

Q. If the Senate passes a bill already adopted by the House to establish a 200-mile limit to protect American fishermen from foreign competition, will you sign the measure into law?

A. This is a delicate problem that must be handled with care.

Basically, I share the desire of those who want proper safeguards for U.S. fishing interests. We are now working vigorously to protect those interests through negotiations with several nations whose fishing fleets come near our coasts.

At the same time, the U.S. is participating in the U.S. Law of the Sea Conference, seeking a settlement within that framework of a number of important issues, including those relating to fishing rights. Over the long run, an international agreement would, I believe, serve our fishing interests better than a domestic law, but I would still sign a new U.S. law if it is properly written.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Q. The jobless rate today has become a serious problem almost everywhere. But here in New England, the percentage of persons out of work has reached intolerable levels nearly double the national levels.

What can your Administration do to ease this crisis and put individuals back to work? Are steps being taken or considered to provide employment for the thousands who were laid off when the Defense Department closed the Navy Yard at Charlestown, Otis Air Force Base and other installations?

A few months ago, you indicated that the Federal Government should embark on a major public works program if unemployment nationally hit the 10 percent level; it is well above that already in Boston and other New England cities -- shouldn't such a program begin right now in these places?

A. One of the greatest disappointments of my Presidency has been the difficulty our society now has in providing enough jobs for everyone who wants to work. As much as I would like to, I simply can't flick a switch and put the country back to work -- nor can anyone else.

What, then, can be done?

One alternative frequently advanced is to spend far more Federal money on public service employment and public works programs, hiring people under government auspices until the economy has regained its full strength. On first glance, such programs may appear promising. In the last few months, however, I have spent a great deal of time reviewing such proposals. I have had to conclude that the benefits of any massive expansion of these programs would be far less than the risks they pose.

In the past, our experience with such programs is that on a dollar-for-dollar basis funds for public service jobs have not created significantly more jobs than other Federal policies to combat unemployment, such as tax cuts.

It is very important to recognize the distinction between jobs paid for and new jobs actually created with Federal funds. Evidence shows that public service employment funds tend to be used for financing jobs in State and local governments which ordinarily would be financed with their own funds. Some studies indicate that after one year or so, only 40 percent of jobs paid for under public service employment programs are actually net additions to employment that would not otherwise exist. After two years the net increase could be as low as 10 percent. Moreover, Federally funded public service employment cannot be expanded very quickly because it takes time for State and local governments to create meaningful new jobs.

Problems also arise in connection with any large and new public works program that might be devised. Given the lengthy start-up times, such programs tend to have their greatest impact only years after their inception. They could thus undermine budgetary control in the advanced stages of the current recovery, just when budgetary control will be most needed.

I am therefore persuaded that the road to public service employment and public works, though paved with the best of intentions, is also the road to disappointment. We can no longer

afford to hold out false hopes to the unemployed; we must offer real hope -- and real, lasting jobs.

My economic program to restore full employment is simple and straightforward:

-- I am proposing a Federal budget that is large enough to reinforce and strengthen the process of recovery but is also small enough not to bring a new wave of inflation and unemployment.

-- I am proposing tax cuts and spending cuts that will let every taxpayer keep more of his or her earnings. Money left in private hands will ultimately do more to increase consumption and increase capital investment than what the government would do.

-- I am proposing a series of changes in the tax code that will spur private investment in new jobs and will encourage middle-income Americans to invest in common stock.

-- Finally, to ensure that the hardships of unemployment are reduced, I have signed into law major expansions in the duration and coverage of unemployment insurance, which eased the financial burdens of 3.6 million Americans who were unemployed last year. Programs in my fiscal year 1977 budget will also provide 3.6 million Americans with opportunities for training and employment.

This is a comprehensive program to combat unemployment -- not by expanding the government but by expanding and invigorating the private sector where five of every six jobs are still located today. And as I said earlier, this is a program that works: since March, we have provided 1.3 million new jobs. The process

of economic recovery is much slower than any of us would like, and unemployment is still intolerably high, but we are making substantial progress. As long as we stay on course, that progress will continue to be steady and sure.

ENERGY

- Q. Periodic shortages and chronic high costs for heating oil, gasoline and electricity have hit the average consumer harder in New England than anywhere else. How much longer must we wait for the administration and Congress to develop a comprehensive -- and equitable -- energy policy that will begin to meet the long and short-term needs of all Americans?
- A. Washington's debates over energy during 1975 were long and frustrating for many Americans, but in December the Congress passed and I signed a bill that enacts a part of my comprehensive energy program.

While the bill is not perfect, it will over time give us a means of encouraging greater domestic oil production and help end our vulnerability to foreign producers' control over the supply and prices of energy. Moreover, it gave me formal authority to begin setting up a strategic reserve of oil as well as other authorities we need to help meet our near-term energy goals.

As consumers in New England have found, the Nation can ill afford prolonged delays and debates over energy. Our people cannot be at the mercy of foreign producers, nor can our foreign policy. It is therefore urgent that in 1976 we build upon the foundations of the 1975 act.

Specifically, I hope that the Congress will act quickly to permit the deregulation of new natural gas, to authorize production in the Naval Petroleum Reserves, to

stimulate effective conservation; and to amend the Clean Air Act, to permit the commercialization of synthetic fuels, to permit greater use of nuclear energy, to set up an Energy Independence Authority, and to accelerate the development of advanced energy technology. All of these are essential steps in obtaining our energy independence.

Q. Is there anything you can do to speed up the development of off-shore oil or the building of refineries in the Northeast?

A. It is clear that if we are to achieve energy independence, one of the resources we must tap is the oil on the outer continental shelf. The Interior Department is now moving ahead with an aggressive program to ensure that such development takes place in an environmentally safe manner. Under its schedule, there should be a decision this summer on a lease sale in the Georges Bank area off New England.

The principal problem relating to refineries is to decide upon suitable locations. Local, state, regional and national interests are all involved. While the Federal Government is not the final arbiter on such decisions, it can and should help to smooth the decision-making process and to ensure that all interests are taken into account. Accordingly, I have submitted legislation to the Congress to improve the process for making decisions about the location of major energy facilities, including refineries. I hope that the Congress will act favorably on this legislation in 1976.

Q. Can Federal and State environmental regulations be relaxed to permit coal to be used more extensively for the generation of power?

A. Coal is our most abundant energy resource, and we are only shortchanging ourselves if we fail to develop it. America is really the Saudi Arabia of coal deposits. Unfortunately, the Clean Air Act as now in the statute books unnecessarily discourages greater coal production. I have therefore asked for modifications in that law which will permit greater use of coal without relaxing standards that are set to protect public health. For the longer term, my Administration is seeking to work with private industry to find better ways to produce and use coal in environmentally acceptable ways. We have greatly expanded efforts to develop modern technology to help overcome obstacles to greater development of America's coal riches.

Q. Do you favor New England as the logical place to build the new Solar Research Institute?

A. Organizations in over 30 states have indicated a strong desire to accommodate the proposed Solar Energy Research Institute. While New England would be an attractive site for the Institute, it is too early to tell where the Institute may be located. The Energy Research and Development Administration will soon spell out functions the proposed institute might perform to advance the solar energy program and criteria that should be followed in deciding on the location. This will help ensure orderly and fair decisions. ERDA will then welcome proposals from all interested parties, and I hope a final decision can be made before the end of 1976.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

ROGERS MORTON

DICK CHENEY

✓ RON NESSEN

JERRY JONES

JIM CAVANAUGH

DAVE GERGEN

MILT FRIEDMAN

FROM:

MARGITA WHITE *man*

Attached are the President's answers to a series of questions submitted by the New Hampshire Times.

Attachment



1. THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY

Q. There is a great amount of cynicism concerning the political leadership in the nation today. What do you propose to do to restore the faith and confidence of the voters in their government and in their leaders?

A. One of the most important reasons for the erosion of public trust is that the Government has become too long on promises and too short on delivery. A story in one of our leading newspapers, summarizing the reports of various polling organizations, reported recently that four out of 10 people now say that it really doesn't make much difference who wins elections. For them, government has apparently become so unresponsive and so dishonest that it is irrelevant to their daily lives. Clearly, these public feelings must be changed.

So I think the first requirement of government is to be honest with the American people -- to promise no more than we can deliver and deliver all that we promise. It means that we must stop trying to sell the public grand illusions about how much we can accomplish in Washington. We must be realistic about how much we promise and then follow through on our commitments. This is the policy I am pursuing, and I sense that there is growing public trust in the Presidency today. For the sake of our democracy, I hope that we can continue on that upward trend.



2. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Q. Should the size of the federal government be decreased? If not, why not? If your answer is yes, please indicate which general programs and which departments you would either reduce or eliminate?

A. The Federal Government has been growing almost like Topsy. The government today is the single biggest employer, the biggest consumer and the biggest borrower in the country.

It is the firm policy of this Administration to stop and reverse this trend. The unchecked growth of government at all levels would represent a major threat to our long range economic prosperity and to our fundamental liberties.

The goal of restraining government growth must be approached firmly but carefully. Cutting government expenditures requires a scalpel, not an ax. Hard choices are necessary, requiring that we pick and choose from among these competing demands on government.

The budget that I recently submitted to Congress makes those hard choices. I have proposed that hundreds of individual programs and activities be reduced. These reductions--totalling about \$28 billion--are needed as a first step toward supporting further tax cuts, weeding out marginal activities, beginning to reverse the mounting intrusion into our daily lives of mushrooming bureaucracy, combatting inflation, and restoring lasting prosperity to the nation. These proposals will not be popular with the thousands of special interests that are favored by these programs and activities, and many will no doubt encounter rough sledding in Congress; but I believe that they are necessary to put America back on the right track.

3. WELFARE

Q: Should a uniform national welfare system be implemented? If not, how would you reduce the red tape in our present system? If your answer is yes, should a base income be established for individuals and families in such a program?

A. Our welfare programs are clearly in need of reform. Taxpayers, beneficiaries and administrators alike find current Federal, State, and local programs to be inefficient and inequitable. While in Congress I supported welfare reform and I continue to believe that a fundamental overhaul is necessary if we are to use our limited resources to assist those most in need.

As of the moment, however, there is no clear agreement on how the overall reform should be accomplished so that it is unrealistic to expect major legislation to be enacted in 1976. But we can and should act in those areas where action is possible now. Accordingly, I am proposing to move now to straighten out the food stamp program and to make specific improvements in existing programs to eliminate work disincentives, to remove inequities and to improve the provision of assistance to those in need.

I believe these changes are important, but they will not solve all the problems of the welfare mess. Therefore, my Administration will continue to analyze more comprehensive reform alternatives which embody the principles of fairness, equity, adequacy, work requirements for those who are employable, and administrative efficiency.



4. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Q. Should the Central Intelligence Agency be abolished? If not, why not? And how do you propose to increase congressional and public control over this controversial agency?

A. As long as I am President, the Central Intelligence Agency will not be destroyed; it will be strengthened. I said during the ceremony to swear in George Bush as the new CIA Director, "We cannot improve this agency by destroying it."

I have ordered an unprecedented study of the foreign intelligence community and as a result of that work, and after consultation with experts in this field, I will announce my decisions on the steps I believe are necessary to strengthen our foreign intelligence operations. My actions will be consistent with two very fundamental principles. First, we must have a strong and effective capability to gather and to evaluate foreign intelligence and to conduct necessary covert operations; and second, these activities must be done in a Constitutional and lawful manner and never be aimed at our own citizens.

In order to rebuild the confidence of the American people in their intelligence community, we must have clear charters for the intelligence agencies and assign responsibility to specific individuals to adhere to these guidelines. My actions will establish accountability within the intelligence community and as a result we should get an improved, lawful intelligence establishment that will win the confidence of the American people.

5. ABORTION

Q. Mr. President, what is your position on abortion?

A. I guess you would have to classify me as a moderate on abortion. I do not favor abortion on demand. On the other hand, I also do not favor a Constitutional amendment that would prohibit abortions in all cases. There are some specific cases -- such as rape or incest -- when I think abortion should be permissible. If there were to be any amendment, I would prefer one that left the matter to the States to decide. Until then, it is my duty to enforce the law of the land. That is my responsibility as President, and I intend to do that.

6. NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

Q: Should a moratorium on the construction of nuclear power plants be declared? If not, how do you propose to alleviate public and scientific concern regarding the safety of these plants?

A: No, there should not be a moratorium on the construction of nuclear power plants. Progress toward our goal of an adequate and dependable supply of energy requires expanded use of both coal and nuclear energy, at least until newer and better sources of energy can be developed.

We already have more than 50 commercial nuclear power plants in operation providing dependable, safe, clean and economical sources of energy.

We have created an independent Nuclear Regulatory Commission to regulate and assure the continued safety, reliability and environmental acceptability of nuclear facilities. An extensive study recently completed by a group of non-government safety experts concluded that nuclear power plants are very safe. (In fact, they concluded that the chance of any member of the public being killed in a nuclear plant related accident is one in 5 billion--which is slightly less likely than the chance of being struck by a meteor and over 2,000 times less likely than being struck by lightning.)

Expanding the production of electricity from nuclear power is so important to our energy independence and economic strength that I believe we must take all reasonable steps to assure further the safety of nuclear power and to answer questions that might be of concern to the public.

7. MARIJUANA

Q. Should the use of marijuana be decriminalized?

A. A great deal of controversy exists about marijuana. On the one hand, recent research indicates that marijuana is far from harmless and that chronic use can produce adverse psychological and physiological effects. On the other hand, there is no denying that the use of marijuana has become widespread and that many individual users believe they should be able to smoke marijuana as a matter of individual right.

Personally, I do not approve of the use of marijuana and believe that its use should be strongly discouraged as a matter of national policy. I do not support decriminalization because I believe that this would be interpreted by potential users and by other nations as a signal that the U. S. Government no longer opposes marijuana use. I do, however, support reduced Federal penalties for simple possession, such as contained in the proposed Criminal Justice Reform Act of 1975 [which would reduce penalties to a maximum of 30 days].

8. KISSINGER

Q. What is your evaluation of the performance of Secretary of State Kissinger?

A. Secretary Kissinger will be remembered in history as one of the ablest diplomats this country has ever had. For the past seven years he has brought to American foreign policy a new sense of direction and strength.

Dr. Kissinger has already achieved three interim peace agreements in the troubled area of the Middle East. He has helped lead the United States to a new and growing relationship with the People's Republic of China. He has been one of the primary architects of a new era of Russian-American relations, which has included agreement on arms control, economic issues, and a host of other bilateral matters -- all of which have lessened tensions between our nations. Most recently, he has concluded another round of negotiations with General Secretary Brezhnev which can lead to a second important strategic arms limitation agreement. Through periodic consultations with our allies, Dr. Kissinger has reinvigorated our relations with Europe and Japan. I could go on, but I think you already know of his many accomplishments.

In addition, Henry and I have an excellent working relationship and he has served me in an outstanding way throughout an important period in our history. I am proud to have him as a member of my Administration.



9. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

- Q. Do you believe the present Defense Department budget is too low, about right, or too high? If you believe it's too low or high, please indicate which major programs or weapons systems you feel need to be expanded or reduced.
- A. The FY 1977 Defense Budget represents a strong and lean program to meet our national security needs. The FY 1977 budget continues the effort, begun in 1976, to reverse a seven-year decline in defense purchasing power. After adjusting for inflation, it provides a real increase of more than \$7 billion in total obligational authority over last year's budget to buy the new weapon systems we need, to improve the readiness of our existing forces, and to increase selected combat forces.

At the same time, the Defense Department is sharing in the general restraint in the growth of Federal spending. I am limiting the increases in defense spending to those absolutely essential for our national security. In this respect, the budget proposes actions to increase the efficiency of the Defense Department by reducing programs that do not affect combat capability.

World peace depends on a strong American defense posture. Strength is fundamental to deterrence; it is the underpinning of our alliances; and it underwrites our diplomatic strength and initiatives. I intend to continue to support a strong defense posture, and I am confident the Congress and the American people will continue to do so also.

10. BUSING

Q. What is your position on forced busing to achieve racial integration in the school? Do you support a constitutional amendment to restrict this practice?

A. Let's be clear: all of us want quality education. The key question is how to achieve it. Since becoming President, I have signed into law the Esch Amendment which provides guidelines for desegregating schools. I think both the courts and the Executive Branch should follow those guidelines. They are both sound and sensible.

And I think by following more moderate policies, we can make progress. For instance, in Detroit, a judge a few years ago issued very harsh orders requiring massive busing in Detroit and in Wayne County. A new judge then took charge of the matter and modified the order very substantially toward less busing. And today that new system is apparently working in Detroit.



11. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

- Q. Should the present process of Presidential nomination be retained, or changed to a regional or national system? Or do you have any other suggestions for improving the nomination procedure?
- A. The nominating process, especially our system of primaries, has served the country well in the past. I would certainly hope that we retain some form of primaries because they give party members an excellent opportunity to review the field of candidates and to choose their party's candidate in a highly democratic fashion. At the same time, I am concerned by the extraordinary proliferation of primaries that has occurred in recent years. We are still in the initial stages of the process in 1976, and some candidates have already found that it is extremely grueling and very expensive to run for President.

What I would suggest is that as 1976 progresses, we keep a close eye on the nomination process and then after the campaign is over, we should reassess it and determine whether changes should be made.

12. HEALTH CARE

Q. Do you favor a national health care program? If not, why not? If your answer is yes how would such a program be funded and what would it cost?

A. I have come to the conclusion that we cannot at this time realistically afford national health insurance for all Americans. Both the costs of such coverage and the experience of other countries with programs of national health care raise serious questions about the quality of care that is possible under such an approach.

The costs of health care are a very real concern to all of us but most particularly to the elderly and the poor. I have proposed, therefore, provision of catastrophic health insurance for everyone covered by Medicare. Short term fees shared by individuals will increase but nobody after reaching age 65 will have to pay more than \$500 a year for covered hospital care or \$250 a year for doctors' fees.

To assist the States meet the health needs of their citizens, I have proposed consolidation of 16 existing Federal programs including Medicaid into a single \$10 billion program distributing funds through a formula which provides a larger share of Federal funds to States with the greatest number of low income people.

13. THE ECONOMY

Q. In the present recession, the Northeast lags behind the rest of the nation in terms of economic recovery. What specific plans do you have to aid the Northeast economy?

A. Employment in New England is highly sensitive to changes in the business cycle. As the overall economy recovers from the worst recession in the post World War II era, we anticipate that the recovery will be widespread and employment opportunities will expand in New England as elsewhere.

New England tends to have higher rates of unemployment than other regions, in part because of the greater effect of seasonality on jobs. In spite of this, incomes are higher and the incidence of poverty is lower in New England. The most recent regional poverty data are for income in 1969 from the 1970 Census of Population. In 1969, 6.7 percent of the population in New England was below the poverty level, compared to 10.7 percent for the U.S. as a whole. Median family income in New England was \$10,731, compared to \$9,596 for the U.S.

Experience has shown that specific measures to reduce unemployment are not more effective in stimulating more jobs than a tax cut of similar magnitude. Jobs funded by Public Service Employment tend to replace job slots that would be created in any case. Countercyclical public works projects tend to take too long to get started and are expensive to slow down when a recession ends.

I am confident that our policies of stimulating non-inflationary growth through my program of general tax reductions and expenditure reductions will promote economic recovery both in New England and in the economy as a whole. Our objective is to promote the creation of permanent and productive jobs in the private sector. I have proposed tax measures which will spur investment in high unemployment areas. If it becomes apparent, however, that for some structural reason a particular region is lagging far behind -- and that is not yet the case -- I will examine the problem closely and consider policies to mitigate the structural impediment to growth.

14. EQUAL RIGHTS

Q. Do you favor the Equal Rights Amendment?

A. I support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and I have urged its adoption by the States. The Nation cannot afford discrimination against any individual based solely upon race, creed, sex or national origin. As we enter our third century as a Nation, it is particularly important that we reaffirm our commitment to equal opportunities for all of our citizens.

15. OFFSHORE DRILLING

Q. Do you support or oppose offshore drilling for oil? Why?

A. We must proceed with the development of oil and gas resources of our Outer Continental Shelf areas off our coasts in order to achieve acceptable progress toward energy independence.

There are large potential reserves of oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf areas. Oil and gas production from these areas could reach the equivalent of 3 million barrels of oil per day by 1985.

I support offshore leasing and development which is consistent with a fair return to the Government for the energy resources leased and with necessary protection of marine and coastal environments. The programs we have underway will achieve these objectives.

