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8/9/75
Vision of America

The President has been asked many questions about his "blueprint" (or other words to the same effect) for America's future. And reporters and columnists and editorial writers have found him lacking in his failure to set forth some kind of long-range *vision or plan* for the nation. The following answer is ~~what~~ suggested to deal with that sort of question.

A: I have two different kinds of remarks to make about that question. First, almost 200 years ago, a plan or blueprint was devised for the United States. We call it the Constitution. It set forth how all of our officials would be chosen, what their powers would be, and what sort of matters they should and should

It set forth goals like justice, security, tranquility, and freedom.
not deal with. It covered political, economic, social, and cultural affairs, both domestically and in foreign relations. It has

guided us, with minor modifications, for a long time, ~~and~~ I question whether we need another blueprint or "road map."

Now I realize full well that you mean something a little less sweeping and far-reaching. You mean a program that could have a name like the New Deal or the Fair Deal or the War on Poverty.

I am ~~very~~ skeptical, ~~of each "blueprint,"~~ and ~~I think~~ you should be, too. *9* ~~More and more,~~ *P* People who think about the present and

(think of the past) the future, and do not take ~~all~~ of their *g* guidance from ~~the~~ events of ~~ten~~ years ago or ~~twenty~~ years ago, see that much of this so-

called ~~planning~~ blue-printing is based on seriously mistaken understandings of American life, American politics, and the American people. Grandiose schemes for solving everything through government action have benefitted little the supposed recipients and greatly the ~~exporters, bureaucrats, and other~~ professionals who propose, design, and administer the programs. ~~From journalism has been affected, with every reporter now covering highly specialized subjects, to actual~~

~~the narrowing specialization in government operations.~~ One consequence has been, ~~however~~ not increased gratitude and respect from the people for the supposed benefits, ~~resulting from all of these programs developed in accord with blueprints,~~ but rather a sharp decline in public ~~respect and~~ approval and trust of almost all higher authority--all branches of government, and the press as well.

My preferences ~~are~~ ^{are} to stay with the kind of guidance we get from the Constitution, ~~be~~ ^{be} very skeptical of proposals for blueprints for reshaping America or the world, ~~and~~ ^{and} to turn the question back ~~to the advocates of blueprints~~ ^{to you:} What reason is there to think that we need a blueprint, a long-range comprehensive plan for the future, or the powers that would be necessary to put into effect ~~any plan to reshape our nation?~~ ^{such a} ~~that it would be good for the government to have~~ ^{such a} ~~reshape our nation?~~

I do have long-range hopes for America. I hope that we will make progress toward the fulfillment of equality, liberty, and justice for all Americans. I hope that we will achieve a greater measure of domestic tranquility. I hope that we will make a major contribution to lasting peace among nations. And I hope that ~~my Administration will give some guidance in advancing us~~ ^{guide our advance} toward those goals. ~~But those are~~ ^{none of is} not new. They are/novelties. ~~And they depend no more on the government than on the energy and initiative of the people in their private capacity. That latter point is, perhaps more than any other, my reason for being very skeptical, to say the least, about government blueprints: They usually~~ ^{often} ~~add to government power and taking away~~ ^{diminishing} private innovation and responsibility.

fully aware of growing interdependence in the world.

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TO: RONALD NESSEN

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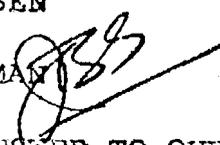
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 12, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN

FROM: JIM SHUMAN 

SUBJECT: DRAFT ANSWER TO QUESTION ON LACK OF
PROGRAMS, LACK OF VISION

Attached is a draft of my answer to the question that
the President lacks vision and has no program.

It differs somewhat from Bob Goldwin's.

BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

- Q. In assessing your first year in office, many observers have noted that you seem to have no blueprint for the future, no sense of vision about what direction the United States should take. There also was a newspaper column recently which said you were deliberately planning not to introduce new programs because you feel there are enough government programs already. What is your vision for the United States, and will you propose government programs to help carry us toward that vision?
- A. That is a complicated question. Let me answer it in three parts.
- I. Long range hopes for America.
 - A. My long range goals are those expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
 - 1. Like to see a society in which everyone can partake of the right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.
 - 2. Those, really, have been the goals of all Americans.
 - 3. The dispute in national politics has been over how to achieve those goals.
 - II. Specific Ford Administration Philosophy
 - A. During past half century the debate has been over how much the government should be involved in the life of every citizen in an effort to reach those goals.
 - B. Government does have an important role.
 - 1. It must maintain peace both at home and abroad so that we can create the type of society we envision.
 - 2. It should act as the co-ordinator in national affairs.

3. It should ensure justice to see that the strong do not deny the rights of the weak.
4. But it should not become a force so powerful that it destroys freedom, the very right it seeks to protect.

III. Specific programs

- A. With these goals in mind, I plan in my State of the Union address next January to outline a broad program to help us reach the goals we all seek. It will be a program based, I believe, on a realization of the natural limits of government, on a clear perception of today's world, and with faith in the American people's demonstrated ability to solve problems, with only a minimum of help from the federal government.