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September 9, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
BEFORE ENTERING THE WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL

Chairman Mao was a most remarkable and a very great man. He had the vision and the imagination to open up the doors so that the United States and the People's Republic of China could do things in a new era and a new day.

It is tragic, of course, that a man of this great, remarkable ability and skill and vision and forth-sight has passed away.

END



September 14, 1976

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
AMERICAN BUSINESS VOLUNTEERS FOR FORD

THE STATE DINING ROOM

4:25 P.M. EDT

Thank you very much, Bob.

It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to welcome you here in the State Dining Room. As I look around the room, I see some very good and some very old friends. I see some of the faces that we welcome very fervently to the cause which we think is good.

I especially want to thank Bob because he did come down here when the going was tough and did a masterful job, and I express my appreciation, Bob, for your getting this group together, the American Business Volunteers for Ford. I like the title. (Laughter) I like all of you.

Let me say that we are on our way but there is one thing that I am not sure each and every one of us understands. We have seven weeks, 49 days to go. I ask myself every day, are we ready for the countdown, which is quicker than you think. I also asked myself, where are we?

We had a spirited, we had a healthy and a good Convention. The party is consolidated. We have a good organization at the President Ford Committee. I could go down the list and you would, I think, agree with me that we are ready with our phone banks, we are ready with our State organizations, we are ready with our advertising. But we have a lot to do between now and November 2nd.

The biggest problem, and the one where you can contribute the most significantly, is in our people program. All of you represent through out your communities



leadership in the business world and this Administration, as we look at 2-1/2 years, has done a good job for American business, but that is also good for America. We are darn proud of it.

I could run off the things I think we have done effectively and in the right way. You know them. So, I won't take your time but everything we have done to restore trust, to turn the economy around, to achieve peace and maintain it is only the foundation for what I think can be four glorious years beginning January 20, 1977.

We are kicking off -- if that is the right term -- the campaign tomorrow in Ann Arbor. It is sort of homecoming for me but we thought that would be an excellent place to show what our vision is for the next four years. It is a vision within the concepts that all of us believe in so deeply. It is not a vision aimed at one part of the country or another part of the country. This is a national campaign and I see people from all sections of America here this afternoon.

I want to destroy once and forever that this campaign is going to be regional, this campaign is going to abandon one part of the country or the other. As I said in the acceptance speech, we concede no State, we concede not a single vote. We are after full support in all 50 States.

MORE

As I look at the opposition, I wonder what path they are taking. I notice, Red, he is down in your part of the country talking a conservative line the same day -- as it was pointed out yesterday -- he accepted the Liberal Party's endorsement from the State of New York.

Now, there is a little contradiction if I understand my political philosophy a little. But, he is on all sides of all issues. He talks out of both sides of the mouth, wherever he happens to go, to appeal to any audience, and we are not going to let him get away with it.

We got some great momentum from that convention. We were 30 some points behind, but we have noticed in every poll, those that are public or those that we take, the momentum is on our side.

I think we have the programs, we have the ticket, we have the support of people that will keep that momentum going. I am really optimistic, and I get more so every day of this fall season. But, we need the people program; we need businessmen. We need all segments of our society -- veterans, older people, younger people. We have to have troops out there registering your fellow Americans and making sure they are sold on our program and go to the polls and vote.

I have heard or seen surveys that say 65 million Americans who are eligible to vote won't vote on November 2. It is unbelievable. I might tell just a simple story. Last week I had the opportunity to grant to a Lieutenant Belenko from the Soviet Union the right to come to the United States and live and he was asked why he wanted to come to the United States. He said, "I left a country where there is no freedom to come to a country where there is freedom."

Now, he left a country where you can't vote to come to a country where you can vote. It seems to me that if a person like that makes that daring escape to come to freedom so that he can enjoy the blessings that we have, that every American who can vote ought to vote, and that is your job.

Thank you very much.

END

(AT 4:35 P.M. EDT)

September 16, 1976

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO
THE YOUNG PRESIDENTS

THE EAST ROOM

5:15 P.M. EDT

On behalf of Betty and myself I am delighted to welcome you to the East Room of the White House. The opportunities I have had to meet with the Young President's organization over the years have been many and your officers, your Executive Board, I have participated in several of the functions where you get together and work and relax a bit.

It has been a great experience for me. I have made some good friends, and I have been the beneficiary of ideas and suggestions from you individually as well as a group. I could not help but notice that you, in your capacities as the chief executives of various organizations, and I as the President, have some similarities. We all have to watch expenditures. We have to anticipate revenues, and we have to make a final report to somebody -- you to the Board of Directors and I have to deal with the Congress. The Congress gives us some problems, both as to expenditures particularly and sometimes in many other areas where the interests of this Government do conflict between the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch.

I understand you have had the opportunity of listening to Frank Zarb, Bill Gorog and Jim Lynn. They are the experts in energy and economics and the area of expenditures. I am very proud of the contributions that they make to this Administration and they are, as you couldn't help but notice, relatively young, and they have contributed very significantly to the progress that this Administration has made.



As I was walking in here, it came back to my mind that a group much like this group was here in attendance when just about two years ago I took the oath of office in the East Room. It was a very, very awe-inspiring ceremony, and it was something that I did not anticipate, did not seek, but it was a responsibility that I have tried to carry out during this past two years.

As we review what has happened in that two years, I think we can say with complete confidence that there has been a significant improvement in the United States. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that we have restored public trust in the White House itself. This was absolutely important if we were to bring about the kind of healing that is needed and necessary in America as we go into our third century.

Secondly, I would say that the economic problems that we had thrust upon our shoulders shortly after becoming President have to a substantial degree been resolved. I am the first to say that we are not doing 100 percent, but when you look back at where we were two years ago with the rate of inflation 12 percent or more and we have got it down to 6 percent or less, with the trends all going in the right direction, even the most severe critic would have to be honest and fair and say that substantial headway in the right direction is the course of this country at the present time.

I have listened to comments by people that are complaining of the rate of unemployment. I don't like it, but they never add the extra feature, which is vitally important. We have 88 billion people gainfully employed in the United States today and we have proven beyond any doubt whatsoever that you can reduce the rate of inflation and, at the same time, increase the number of people working in America.

Many people said that you had to have a trade-off. That is completely and totally disproven by what has transpired in the last 17 months. We have added four million people to the work force in this country. We have added almost a half million in the last two months.

I think there will be increasingly optimistic statistics coming out within the relatively near future that shows that the pause that we suffered -- and we did -- for a period of some two months is now rapidly evaporating and that we are again going to find an increase in employment, a decrease in the rate of unemployment and increased industrial retail activity. These are all the kinds of signs that show that our economy is on a healthy road to recovery.

As we look around the world in 1976, there is no doubt whatsoever that the United States is looked up to, respected. We had some tough problems just about two years ago. We were still engaged in a war that we either couldn't win or couldn't end. We are in a much different situation today. Our allies respect us. Our adversaries likewise respect our unity at home and our military capability.

It is a great deal of satisfaction to me that in the course of some two years I have had the privilege of meeting personally with the heads of Government or the heads of State of 124 nations, more than any other President in a two-year period. In many, many cases, with leaders of the free world particularly, I have developed a personal rapport which is exceedingly important as you sit down to try and resolve differences between good friends, and good friends do sometimes have responsible differences.

But, if you develop the kind of personal relationship that it has been my privilege to develop with a number of our friends, the leaders of nations around the world, I am absolutely confident that in the months ahead our nation-to-nation relationship can get even better.

But, whether it is in Europe or in the Pacific or whether it is with the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China, the United States has the trust of our allies and the respect of our adversaries.

So, as we enter the third century of this country, I think we can look forward to a century of optimism.

It is particularly encouraging to me to go to college campuses and have an opportunity to speak to the younger generation. I was out home last night at the University of Michigan and the University has a reputation for having a fair share of somewhat liberal radical students, and they were there to some extent last night. We made a speech in the new basketball arena and they had 14,000 there.

The estimate is there were maybe a couple hundred that tried to be disruptive, but overall the reaction among the student body, among the leaders in the student body, the reaction among the faculty, was good.

Just look back a couple of years ago. Very few politicians from Washington could go to a college campus and be received. So, I have a great, great feeling of optimism about the younger generation. I find it among the friends of our children, and, after all, they are going to be the leaders of this country within a relatively short period of time.

They have a totally different response to the problems that we face as a country. You may be experiencing the same with your children. I know it is true with ours. So, I am a great optimist about where America is going. I know we have the economic strength, I know we have the military capability, to take care of our problems involving national security. I know we have the unity at home that didn't exist two years ago.

So, as I look down the road, I believe that we have got good programs, good leaders, we have the kind of support of the American people for what America is doing. It all seemed to come together on the Fourth of July, to travel as I had the privilege of traveling on that great occasion and to see the difference in views and attitudes and feelings.

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I know when I came back to the White House the night of July 4 I just felt good about America and I see nothing but good for us in the months and years ahead. How fortunate we are to have come out of a very traumatic experience. To have survived the kind of difficulties that we were faced with makes me feel that the next generation is going to have the kind of a country, the kind of an American dream that is so important if we are to stay the head of the free world and the leaders in the world as a whole.

Thank you all for coming. I would like to invite you to the State Dining Room for some refreshments. I am sorry that Betty is not here, but I left her in Ann Arbor last night. She was going to East Lansing to stay with the president and the wife of the president of Michigan State University. We have to be a little bipartisan. (Laughter)

I found last night that she says "hello" and gets a standing ovation and I speak for 25 minutes and get two, so she does much better than I. But, I like that kind of competition, so I will be the host and I look forward to having an opportunity of saying hello to as many as possible.

Thank you very much for coming.

END

(AT 5:32 P.M. EDT)



September 20, 1976

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
TO THE JEWISH LEADERS
THE STATE FLOOR

5:40 P.M. EDT

. THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Max. Betty and I are delighted and honored to have all of you join us in the East Room at the White House. We are delighted that you are here. Let me assure you we look forward to having you down here on many occasions in the next four years.

I just noticed my good friend and one of your very very good friends, Senator Jake Javits in the back there. Jake?

I am often asked why I think I ought to be President, and I will probably get asked that in one or more of these debates in the weeks ahead. I have given a lot of thought, and I think it is a good question, and I would like to give you a straightforward answer.

We can talk about the issues, we can talk about comments, but there are some very fundamental characteristics that I think almost transcends anything. I think a necessary qualification for President is, one, experience, integrity, judgment and reliability.

I think as you look over my 28 years of Government service with some two years in the White House, in each of those cases I think I can meet the highest standards.

I know this group is interested in the broad picture as far as this country is concerned. You are in effect devoted to the best interests of the United States, and you contributed very significantly to the success of this country, and we are proud of the contributions that you have made.

I believe that we have made unbelievable progress in the last two years, going from where we were to where we are today. We have consolidated our economic situation and are moving toward real sustainable economic prosperity. We have accomplished, I think, very significant results in our international affairs, and we certainly have restored trust and confidence in the White House itself.



But, I would like to make a few observations and comments concerning U.S.-Israeli relations. I could not help but read with great satisfaction a comment made by Prime Minister Rabin speaking in Jerusalem, printed in the Jewish Week American Examiner. The quote is as follows:

"One of its peaks, if not the highest one" -- speaking of the relations between the United States and Israel -- "The U.S. Government supports Israel in the international arena in the supply of arms and economic aid almost without precedence. The margin between what we want and what we get is very small."

I have developed over the years -- first when he was Ambassador and now as Prime Minister -- an excellent personal rapport with the Prime Minister of the State of Israel. I think all of us know that when individuals like the Prime Minister and myself have that rapport, and he knows that the decisions we make or that I make are indicative of our close allegiance and alliance with Israel, he knows I mean what I say, and I do.

But, let me give you some guidelines as to how this Administration believes. We have, over the last several years, tried to make real significant progress in finding a key and a solution to the problems that have long festered in the Middle East, and we hope that in the months ahead that additional progress can be made, but here are certain things that this Administration will stand by. We have in the past and we will in the future.

First, there will be no imposed solutions by a Ford Administration. There have not been in the past and there will not be in the future. Furthermore, there will be no one-sided concessions demanded of Israel as there are future negotiations between Israel and any of its Arab neighbors, and the record of our negotiations in trying to work with the Israeli Government and the Egyptian Government is a clear indication that there were no one-sided concessions.

In speaking of the Sinai II agreement, those who heard me speak at the B'nai B'rith meeting a week ago, I said there had been no young Israeli or no young Egyptian who lost his life in the Sinai since the signing of the Sinai II agreement, and that is progress by any standards.

Obviously, the past record shows that we have had very close consultation between Prime Minister Rabin and myself. I think the record shows that in a little over two years I have met with him seven times. I think for that short a span that is an all-time record. The record is also very clear as to the military and economic aid that this Administration has proposed for Israel, in a span of 27 months something over \$4 billion 300 million. It was for a good cause in a justifiable way.

We should not brag about it, but it is indicative of the action that this Administration has taken when Israel's need was very great and very severe.

I have said it many, many times. This Administration is totally committed to the security and safety of Israel. This Administration is committed to doing all that we can worldwide to combat the horrors of terrorism, and I can't help but repeat something that I feel very deeply.

The Entebbe raid on July 4 was a magnificent display of heroism and dedication really unmatched in recent history throughout the world.

The Ford Administration has made a tremendous effort to try and reverse the downward trend in Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. We all are familiar with the great increase in emigration that took place in 1972-1973, got up as I recollect to about 35,000 a year and then for a wide variety of reasons it fell off and it is now at a rate of about 12,000 per year -- much too low.

It is something that we have to work on, and I am not going to assess blame or point a finger at anybody, but the facts are that it is far too low and we have to find a way to get it up to the figure that was the peak of some 35,000 in 1973.

I can assure you, I pledge to you, that I will make every effort in working with the Congress, in working with the leaders in the Soviet Union, to make sure that we do get a broader opportunity for Jewish emigrants to leave the Soviet Union and go to Israel or go to the United States, wherever they might desire to travel.

One final comment. Last year, as you know, there were efforts made by some nations in the United Nations to take punitive action against the Government of Israel. This Administration fought those actions. This Administration in the new meeting of the United Nations will continue a strong, steadfast support for the State of Israel in the United Nations.

We won't capitulate. We will be tall and strong in supporting Israel's position as a member of the United Nations.

Now, before responding to some questions -- and I am looking forward to it -- a little practice for Thursday night -- I do want to wish you all a happy new year.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I believe in your commitment to Israel, I am wondering what policy this Administration has got as to the energy program which might very well give Israel the support in this country that it so badly needs.

We also want to get your wife back in the White House because we in Philadelphia --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I am very proud of the contribution that Betty makes. I get a little self-conscious occasionally. (Laughter) I keep saying I am trying to get my votes up to her polls. (Laughter)

You have raised a very critical question -- how do we stand in our energy program in the United States? We are all familiar with the fact that we had a very serious economic recession in this country and it was substantially pushed by the oil embargo and the oil price increases that took place following the Yom Kippur war.

What we have to do is to find a way to stimulate greater domestic production of energy in the United States, combined with more conservation practices of energy in the United States. In 1973, before the oil embargo, we were importing about 30 percent of our total domestic oil use in the United States. At the present time we are importing over 40 percent of our total domestic use of crude oil in the United States.

Imports are going up and, unfortunately, a higher percentage of those imports are coming from Middle East Arab nations. So, the situation today, if we had another oil embargo, would be more critical than it was in 1973.

In January of 1975 I submitted to the Congress a comprehensive energy program which aimed at stimulating domestic oil production and new natural gas production. Unfortunately, the Congress did not come through with a program in this area that would have brought us greater exploration and development of natural gas and oil.

Finally, in order to avoid the uncertainty after almost a year of pulling and hauling between myself and the majority of the Congress, we agreed on a bill that we are making headway with, but it is inadequate really to solve the problem of greater exploration and development of new natural gas and new crude oil in the United States.

But, in addition, I recommended to the Congress a program that would stimulate greater coal production. We are now producing roughly 600 million tons of coal a year. By 1985 we have to double that to 1,200,000,000 tons of coal. We are making some headway there, but we are being handicapped by a failure of the Congress to give us some reasonable modification so that we can use coal in place of oil because we have 300 years of coal supply in the United States.

We hope that some legislation will pass the Congress before they adjourn, which will give us a little more flexibility or modification there.

In addition, we hope that we can in a safe, more efficient way, with adequate safeguards, move ahead in the nuclear field. The nuclear development program has slowed down. While we are doing extra or additional research in safety and better efficiency, that is really a technical problem more than any legislation by the Congress.

A final point I would like to make is we are spending a substantial amount of money in research and development in the so-called exotic fuel area, such as solar and the others that really won't come on the line for another seven, eight to ten years in any sufficient amount.

Where do we stand? We are about half-way through on a comprehensive energy program. I hope before Congress adjourns that they will give us additional legislation that will give us more impetus so that we can really in the next several years make our country less dependent on foreign oil imports.

QUESTION: Mr. President, for the first time in a long time religion has become attractive in political campaigns. I wonder whether you would tell us, especially in the season before the holidays, what is your view about the role of religion in American life and if you don't mind the role of religion in your personal life and your family's life?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me talk about the family first. Our family, Betty's as well as mine, have been Episcopalian as long as I can remember, and we have brought up our children as we were brought up in the Episcopalian faith. We believe that our children as well as ourselves live by a personal commitment and dedication to that faith.

We are a family that does not talk a great deal about our belief in the Bible, our faith in the teachings of the Lord, but nevertheless, we feel we have a very deep commitment to the principles that are set forth in the Bible, and I think our public as well as private lives are a good example of our commitment.

Now, I don't raise the question of one's religion. I think the public has a right to know, but I respond by an answer to a question such as you have asked and I think it is a legitimate question, but I don't think that one should go out and say I am more religious than somebody else. I think you have to judge by one's actions and one's commitment, not in a vocal way or in a public way, but by the responses that we give and the way we live and what we say to your questions such as you have asked.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I am very glad to hear your last statement. Also, I will add that so many professionally trained people in prayer -- I will tell you how deeply moved all Jews all over the world were to hear Mrs. Ford say it so movingly a little while ago.

But, in that very same general area, many people, including myself, who have a great desire to support you and what you represent, have vigorously been confused by the abortion issue.

I wonder if you would care to clarify this, if it is not too complex.

THE PRESIDENT: I will be very glad to give you my views on this very controversial issue.

I do not believe in abortion on demand. I think there can be instances where abortion is justified involving the life of the woman or in the case of rape or something of that kind. I do not agree with the decisions of the Supreme Court. I think we have gone much too far in their last two decisions.

On the other hand, I do not believe that an arbitrary constitutional ban on abortions is the right answer, either. I don't think it is practical, and I don't think it is the right answer. It is my personal feeling that abortion is a deep moral problem and it is really something that ought not to be -- it is sort of like discussing religion in a public forum in a political atmosphere. I think it has a deep personal involvement and you almost have to resolve it within your own conscious and that is the way I feel about it.



I might add that Betty and I don't necessarily agree on this, but we understand each other. That is my personal feeling and I have tried to say it as carefully and as constructively as possible.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what is the Administration's viewpoint, what are they going to do about the secondary and also primary boycott of American companies dealing with the Arabs, especially some of the very large construction companies? It is difficult to do business with these firms as American firms because of their contracts with the Arabs.

What is the Administration able to do or could do to help our American firms?

THE PRESIDENT: The Arab boycott problem is a very difficult one. We have, in the Administration, tried to impose responsible regulations that will show our displeasure with the attitude of a number of the Arab nations because we basically disagree with that kind of discrimination that they are seeking to impose.

The Congress, however, has initiated legislation and there is a section or a title in the tax bill which will shortly be down on my desk, a 1500-page tax bill, which not only covers this problem but gets into anti-boycott tax provisions.

Now, the Treasury Department during the conference between the House and the Senate tried to work with the conferees to get legislation that would be understandable and legislation that would carry out the intent of what the Congress was trying to do and yet not be punitive as far as American business is concerned.

I have not seen the final language but I am told that the final language does permit the intent of the legislation to be carried out without a punitive impact in a responsible business way.

Now, there are going to be some tough regulations that will have to be worked out by the Treasury experts but I think this is the answer and a responsible answer as far as I understand the case.

QUESTION: I come from Miami, where we have a large uncommitted or undecided vote, and obviously it is that vote that is going to make the difference, as well as the Democrats who want to vote for you. The rumors are wild throughout Florida, at least in our part of the State, that you will have some commitment to Richard Nixon upon election, that he will have Cabinet posts, that he will have a voice in the Administration. We would like to hear you put a stop to this once and for all.

THE PRESIDENT: There is no possibility -- (Laughter-- there is no possibility that Mr. Nixon would serve in any capacity in the next Administration

QUESTION: Mr. President, pay very close attention to Max Fisher. As you will remember, he said in his introduction that there were some of us here who, by the constitution of their organization, are debarred from taking political positions in campaigns. So, why are some of us here? It so happens that those of us who are debarred from taking positions in campaigns are those of us who have sat across the table from you, or beside you, more often than almost anyone else in this room, presidents of the national Jewish organizations, who have been to your office quite frequently, who have always found an open door, who have found that our dialogue with you has been an easy and a friendly one, one conducted in friendship.

I feel a responsibility, a very non-political responsibility, to rise and say in this gathering that those of us who have dealt with you, I speak to you with exactly the candor with which you speak to us, sir, those of us who have dealt with you -- times almost without number now in two short years -- have found that we have not always agreed with you. You have not always agreed with us. But when you have disagreed, you have taken the trouble very patiently to explain to us what the problems were, as you saw them and we have always -- at least, I have always -- walked out of your office persuaded that your heart was on our side and that you cared for the things that we care for.

As a very non-political person, Mr. President, I am the president of the American Jewish Congress, which in its constituency is probably the liberal left end of the Jewish political spectrum and therefore, I am rising on a very personal point, and a point of personal affection and respect, to say that those of us who have dealt with you on those issues which can be labeled Jewish, whatever that

may mean, have found in you a consistent friend, and for that, Mr. President, thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I am the chairman of the National Conference of Soviet Jewry. For all of us who have been active in the cause of Soviet Jewry for these many years, the concern we have for the Jews in the Soviet Union and human rights in general -- indeed, there are many of us who can never forget your speech in Madison Square Garden at a time when you occupied another position, perhaps more powerful than the one you now have. (Laughter). And so, we are most grateful to you for the concern you have expressed.

I am sure you are aware, Mr. President, of the present condition and the plight of the Soviet Jews -- you referred to it in your opening remarks -- Soviet Jews presently still languishing in the horrors of Soviet prisons and continued harrassment of Soviet Jews and the most recent inhumanity, the position of what we call a package tax which makes it almost impossible for us to help those Soviet Jews who still remain within the Soviet Union to live and survive and to provide them with their daily sustenance.

In view of your past commitment, Mr. President, and the present condition of Soviet Jews, I wonder if you could tell us what it is you see down the road that we, as Americans, can do on behalf of human rights for the Soviet Jews?

THE PRESIDENT: It is my strong belief that if we are to get a substantial, significant increase in the immigration of Soviet Jews, we have to continue to build a proper relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States.

There were few, if any, Jews who could immigrate from the Soviet Union in the Cold War period. The greatest number of immigrants came when the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were the best, so to speak.

There have been some setbacks in that relationship that have arisen over one or more differences. I happen to believe that we should seek to restore the kind of relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States that would be built on economic exchanges, cultural exchanges, a wide variety of relationships that give them and us a feeling that even though we have totally different political systems and economic systems, that we can work together in some areas that are personal in nature, and certainly, the immigration of Soviet Jews is a very personal one.

So, it is the aim of this Administration to try and rebuild, in one or two areas where there was some disappointment, a relationship that would make it possible for a restoration of the kind of numbers and individuals that would come, or could come, from the Soviet Union to Israel or to the United States, or elsewhere.

That is a pledge from myself, as President, in the future.

One more question.

QUESTION: Mr. President, mine is not a question, but rather, a statement that on the 4th of July this year, a small group of us were on an island off the coast of Italy when we got first word of the Entebbe raid. Communications were bad, but the next word we got, I would say, that when we heard that we wept with joy. The next word we got was the glowing statement from the President of the United States about the support of that raid and we wept again, and we said, "God bless America." God bless you, Mr. President, for your wonderful stand.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: One more.

QUESTION: As President of the United Synagogue of America, which is probably the largest organized body of religious Jewry in America representing the conservative

feeling in terms of both wings of Judaism, I would be very much interested because there is not total agreement in the Jewish community on this question, if you would detail somewhat your position on Federal aid to parochial schools.

THE PRESIDENT: Jack, let me be very specific about that. When I was in the Congress, I was a sponsor of a proposed piece of legislation that would give in the one instance, a tax credit, or in another, a tax exemption, to non-public schools. I strongly believe today, as I have all the time that I have been in the public service, that the public school systems need the competition from non-public schools because when they have a monopoly, I don't think they do nearly as well as when they have competition.

Public schools are fine. I am a graduate of the public school system. But I know our public school system in my home of Grand Rapids, Michigan is better because they have a Catholic parochial system, they have a Dutch Christian Reform school system and they have a Jewish school system.

That competition improves the educational opportunities for young people and they are far better when you have that kind of non-public school support.

Now, I am very familiar with the serious problem that is caused by the people who send their children to non-public schools and at the same time, pay public school taxes. Obviously, they have to pay their local school taxes, but it seems to me, in order to keep that competition between non-public and public schools going, there ought to be some tax credit or tax exemption for contributions to the non-public schools.

Now, we do have a serious problem. The Supreme Court, in several recent decisions, one involving a State action in Pennsylvania and another in a similar action in the State of Minnesota, has put a real roadblock on these

proposed tax proposals to permit deductions for the support of non-public schools. I have asked the Attorney General, and the Domestic Council in the White House to see if they cannot come up with something that will give this kind of support at the Federal level for non-public, or private schools.

I firmly believe in them.

MORE

QUESTION: I think we are going to have to cut it off here. I think we have consumed 25 minutes more of his time on this thing here.

I think we are all indebted to you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to hear your frank expressions and to exchange these ideas.

• One thing I will say--

QUESTION: There was not one woman. Discrimination against women.

THE PRESIDENT: I was going to remind you, you didn't call on a single lady.

QUESTION: We didn't call on a single lady. There is one over there.

QUESTION: I hope that in two months I shall be addressing you in like manner.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

QUESTION: I noticed at the meeting preceding this beautiful reception in the White House that it was pointed out that there were not enough women here. Looking at the men, I think there are plenty.

THE PRESIDENT: Quality, not quantity.

QUESTION: I was told that there are very few of us here that are here as couples, a husband and a wife team. Each one of us is here for a different reason. He is here because of his work to get away from. (Laughter)

We are working for the same country and what I want to know, Mr. President, is that I hope that you and your beautiful wife Betty will be with us for many, many years so that we may work together for the causes of the people.

THE PRESIDENT: Again, on behalf of Betty and myself, we thank you for coming and joining us at the White House. We have enjoyed making new friends, and it has been wonderful to see old acquaintances.

Thank you very much.

END

(AT 6:19 P.M. EDT)

September 21, 1976

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
JOHN HART
PRESIDENT OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOMEBUILDERS
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

THE OVAL OFFICE

12:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: John, it is great to speak to you and to have an opportunity to make some observations and comments to you and the Board and the members of the National Association of Homebuilders that are meeting in Utah, Salt Lake, one of my favorite cities in this country.

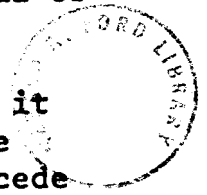
MR. HART: We are pleased to have you take the time out of your busy schedule to do this, and I appreciate very much your giving us a message on housing at this time.

THE PRESIDENT: John, and members of the National Association of Homebuilders:

It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to speak to you today. I deeply regret that I cannot be there in person, both to exchange ideas one-to-one, face-to-face, but also to breathe in some of that wonderful, beautiful fresh air out in the great State of Utah.

To begin with, let me share my thoughts with you on the vital domestic concern of good housing for all Americans. The majority of Americans we know from history as well as current attitudes want to own their own homes. Every American wants a decent place to live in a decent neighborhood, and I can say with conviction it is the goal of this Administration that these dreams be realized.

We all fully recognize that inflation today, as it has been for the last few years, is the greatest obstacle to home ownership and affordable rents. Most people concede that Government deficit spending primarily brought about by some of the irresponsible Congressional actions in handling of the budget has led to an unfortunately very high interest rate problem that we have in America today.



I have been struggling with the Congress using whatever powers I could to hold down the inflationary Federal spending, thereby hoping to take the necessary corrective action to do something affirmative about the high interest rates.

In addition to seeking to get control over deficit spending, my Administration has pledged to sustain the growth of the economy to assure steady jobs and steady incomes. We have made tremendous progress in not only adding jobs for Americans, some four million new jobs in the last 17 months, but we have also been able to reduce the rate of inflation.

I think the old theory that you could not increase jobs and make progress against inflation is out the window because in the last 12 to 24 months we have been very successful in reducing the rate of inflation and, at the same time, add new jobs to the work force in our country.

But, in addition to trying to be successful in those areas, I want it to be very clear that I favor tax relief for low and moderate income families, allowing them to keep more of what they earn.

In the tax message that I submitted to the Congress, I specifically recommended that the personal exemption be increased from \$750 per person to \$1,000. If you take a family of four, that means that that taxpayer has an additional \$1,000 in tax exemption. That is the kind of beneficial tax relief that is understood and meaningful to the middle income taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the Congress didn't act affirmatively on that this year, but I can assure you that we will fight for that in the next Congress because that is the kind of tax relief that we need in America for this vast middle income tax paying citizenry.

Now, if we can reduce inflation, if we can give this kind of tax relief, we can have more take-home pay and greater individual savings of the fundamental basis of a healthy housing picture in this country.

My Administration in addition has also addressed itself to specific problems concerning housing. I recently fully released the \$2 billion of additional tandem mortgage purchase funds to stimulate multi-family housing production and to insure adequate housing in the future for people who want to rent.

I am optimistic as to what I hear from the Secretary of HUD as to what is taking place as to the release of that tandem money.

Now, to help more American families to own their own homes, I will recommend changes in the FHA mortgage insurance program. These changes will accelerate home ownership by reducing downpayments on FHA loans for lower and middle priced homes by as much as 50 percent.

It would also increase from \$45,000 to \$60,000 the maximum priced mortgage FHA would insure. Our figures indicate that about 87 percent of all homes sold in 1975 were below this mortgage limit.

My program also contains an additional feature which would extend FHA insurance to mortgages with a graduated payment plan. This would allow a young family to have a lower monthly payment at the beginning of their mortgages and gradually increase them as the family's income increased.

This program, which we are going to push, will aid moderate income families, especially young families, to buy their own home. It will also prove a long-term stimulus to the housing industry because it will appeal to many of the 3,500,000 households in the \$14,000 to \$20,000 a year range who are not now homeowners.

Let me make one other specific point. You may be sure that so long as I am President we will preserve the tax deductions for mortgage interest rate and property taxes. Those who urge the abolition of these deductions simply do not understand the beneficial role that these deductions have played in helping billions and billions of American families become home owners.

In closing, let me pay my respects to the nation's homebuilders. We all owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude. As small businessmen, primarily, you daily struggle with the difficulties of rising costs, bureaucratic red tape and obtaining financing. Yet, over the years, you have overcome these problems to produce the finest housing in the world and provide millions of jobs for Americans.

I pledge to you that I will resist unnecessary Government red tape that inevitably adds to your costs. I will continue to work for lower interest rates and increase the production of quality housing and, finally, I will work to improve the diversity and delivery of Federal housing programs to insure decent housing for all Americans.

Thank you, John, and thank all of your associates. Good luck and God bless you.

MR. HART: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

END

(AT 12:34 P.M. EDT)

OCTOBER 12, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Brooklyn, New York)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH
JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS

YESHIVA OF FLATBUSH HIGH SCHOOL

1:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: George, Senator Javits, Senator Buckley, my former colleagues in the House of Representatives, distinguished citizens and Rabbis:

It really is a great privilege and a pleasure for me to have the opportunity of saying a few more words here at the Holocaust Center.

Before I made my earlier remarks, I had the opportunity of meeting with several of those who had survived those terrible concentration camps that the Holocaust Center is a vivid reminder of. And I would hope that through this Center and through what can be done in any other way we should once and for all eradicate from this globe any individuals or nation or society that might do what was done with the concentration camps of World War II. I believe that through the Holocaust Center and the lesson that it teaches, perhaps we can convince all individuals in every country that that shall never, never happen again.

May I express on behalf of my wife, Betty, who had hoped she could come with me -- but I must say that whenever she comes with me I have too much competition (Laughter) -- but she recalls vividly the very dramatic and sad, tragic dinner in New York a few months ago, and she asked me to extend to all of you who were there, and others, her very, very best wishes.

I might expand on one or two points and bring up another subject I feel very deeply about. I didn't mention it outside because I felt the speech was perhaps long enough. But I know that in the Jewish communities throughout this country you have a deep dedication to your own nonpublic schools, and let me say that I strongly believe in the perpetuation and expansion of those nonpublic schools.

I happen to believe that competition with the public school system is healthy. It makes the public school system better. I am a product of the public schools in my home community, but at the same time we have a strong parochial, nonpublic school system, and I think our local public schools were far better because of this competition.

MORE

Now what does that mean, and how do we seek to strengthen this element of our educational system? I know that there are other Members of the Congress in this room who feel as deeply as I do. We have tried by one or more means, either tax credit or tax exemption, to help in the assistance and the financing of nonpublic schools.

I would hope that, in one way or another, within Constitutional limits, we could give a stimulant and support for the religious schools, the nonpublic schools that I think are a very vital part of our educational system.

I didn't mention in any detail, but I would like to add a remark or two concerning Soviet Jewry. For most of the years that I was in the Congress, the annual rate of Soviet Jews leaving that country to go to Israel primarily was under 500 -- isn't that right, Jack? For most of the years that Senator Javits and I served, the number leaving the Soviet Union was minimal.

Then, beginning about 1972, 1973 and 1974, it got up to 35,000 per year. We had an opportunity to do better, and I am not going to assess blame or condemn anybody but I think since those incidents that transpired we are now down to approximately 12,000 per year -- from 35,000 to 12,000.

We must do better. I think we can open the doors to a better opportunity with some changes or elimination of some legislation. And I pledge to you that during the next four years, and as soon as possible, I will work with the responsible leaders in the Congress to change, amend or eliminate some of that legislation which caused some of the problem.

As a matter of fact, I was reading in the New York Times -- I think it was the New York Times -- today, that in the latest census the population of Israel went over 3 million -- 3,100,000, as I recall the figure. The emigration was 20,000 and the immigration was almost as much.

We must do everything we possibly can to increase the immigration into Israel and strengthen Israel not only with economic aid and assistance and military weapons, but with people who are as dedicated as all of you and all of the 3 million there are to the security and survival and the prosperity of the State of Israel.

With those observations, George, I would be glad to answer any questions, if some have questions.

MR. KLEIN: What we plan to do -- maybe I better paraphrase it. In our past experience in the White House we allowed everyone to stand up and ask questions, and we had two problems?

THE PRESIDENT: Me?

MORE

MR. KEIN: No, not you. The first problem was a lot of subjects were not covered. The second problem was that individuals sometimes had a tendency to make speeches and not ask questions.

What we did was ask individuals to write their questions down on cards and, if you will permit me, I will read the questions at random and try to cover as many as possible. If we finish the questions, I will call on some from the audience.

The first question is: Mr. President, your response to the New York City crisis created the impression you do not care about the plight of large cities. What is your plan to sustain the viability of the neighborhoods and maintain solvency and, specifically, to fight crime in these neighborhoods?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me give you a list of the specific things that I strongly favor as President, and which I supported when I was in the Congress.

Number one, I am signing tomorrow what we call general revenue sharing, which means that the Federal Government gives to 39,000 States, cities, communities, townships, \$6 billion 500 million a year in outright no-strings-attached money. For example, the City of New York gets \$8 million in gold, hard U.S. dollars a year for their use as they see fit. The City of New York -- I cannot recall the precise number, but it must be well over \$200 million -- it is \$250 million. That is one thing.

Another program is what we call the Community Development Act, which is a program that consolidated seven other programs into one and the money goes to a city like New York and, as I remember that figure, it is about \$120 million, is it not? And, again, that is a sum of money that goes to the city primarily to be used with great flexibility.

Number three, I worked out with the Congress when I was first President what we call the mass transit bill -- \$11 billion 500 million over a four-year period with a very substantial part of that money going to New York City.

Now the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, which is about \$750 million a year, New York City gets a very substantial part of that. And what we are trying to do with that -- it changes from time to time because over a six- or seven-year period that that law has been in effect, they have experimented, they have different solutions. But one problem that we have found must be solved, and with the Law Enforcement Assistance Act we have found in 12 cities where we had a career criminal or hardened criminal program that something over 70 percent of the crimes in 12 cities were committed by a relatively few number of people.

What the LEAA did was to move in with extra money to get more judges, more prosecutors and they had a 90-some percent conviction rate and the rate of crime went down in those 12 cities very dramatically.

We are going to expand it in at least 12 more cities. I can't tell you whether New York is on the list or not. If we can get the career criminals off this country off the streets, we will solve a very substantial part of our crime problem in America.

Now there are two problems that Senator Javits and Senator Buckley spoke to me about on the way from the airport which are specific projects here in the City of New York. One is the West Side Highway.

I used to drive down to New York and I am familiar with the old highway, and that was a long time ago so I know something has to be done about it. I can't make a firm, unequivocal commitment, but I know what a bad situation it is and we will do everything we possibly can to be helpful.

Then the Battery housing project that Senator Buckley and Senator Javits spoke to me about, we are working on that. I will have to consult with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to get the final answer, but I am familiar with it and I would hope that we could move.

Well, those are the kind of things we are doing for the City of New York as well as other communities.

But one final observation: If the President of the United States had done nothing during the financial crisis of the City of New York a year and a half ago, I think the City of New York would be in worse shape today than it is. We made -- or you all have made substantial progress, and I commend you for it.

We have sat down and worked with the mayor, the Governor, the responsible people in the Congress who represent this area, and the net result is the City of New York has a plan. It is being implemented. The Federal Government is loaning on a cash flow basis about \$1 billion 300 million during the time when the taxes are not coming in, and the ~~expenses~~ go on, and then the City repays the Federal Government when your income comes in and your expenses can be covered.

It is a good arrangement and I think it has been the kind of an arrangement that not only saved the City of New York but also has convinced other communities throughout the country that they have to solve their problems before they get to the precipice.

MORE

MR. KLEIN: Mr. President, the next question: There is a fear that in future peace talks in the Middle East the United States will unduly pressure Israel. Could you please advise us again on your position in this matter?

THE PRESIDENT: I said outside and I will regenerate here, under a Ford Administration there never has been and there never will be an imposed settlement, and there will be no one-sided concessions. So I think that answers it very fully and very completely.

MR. KLEIN: While we are on the subject of the Middle East, I would like to follow-up on that with another question.

Our Government has consistently refused to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as a representative of the Palestinian people or to agree to their participation in the working out of a settlement of the Arab and Israeli differences. Do you favor the continuation of this United States policy?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer is yes.

MORE

[REDACTED]: One more on the Middle East, and then we will go somewhere else. (Laughter)

Mr. President, what is your position on the future sales of arms to Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that the United States in a responsible way can sell arms to allies that are Arab nations. I believe that those nations, Arab in origin, that are allies of the United States, are better served by the United States selling arms to them than having some other nation selling arms to them.

Saudi Arabia is going to buy arms, period. Whether it is from the United States or from West Germany or from France, or Great Britain, they are going to buy the arms. They have the money and they will pay cash. Isn't it better to have us, the United States, sell the arms and, at the same time, be able to control the utilization of those arms because we control the repair and maintenance and supply lines. If they don't have a logistic flow, they cannot utilize those arms in any combat.

On the other hand, if another country, some Western European country, sells them the arms and they take aggressive action, just on the hypothetical case, we can't stop them. But, if we control the supplies, the logistic line, then we have a capability of stopping them from any aggressive action if they should undertake it.

So, I happen to think that on a selected basis with friendly nations it is better for us to do it than to have others.

Let me take not an Arab nation, but another nation in that area of the country -- Iran. Iran, if you look at the map, now just visualize that. It has a large border with the Soviet Union, it has a large border with India, it has a large border with Iraq. I think it is in the national interest for peace in that part of the world, the crossroads, the place where more oil exists than any other place in the globe, for us to have a friendly Iran where we can have the military supplies than to have some other nation supplying them with military equipment and hardware.

I just believe that it is in our interest, it is in Israel's interest, because we control it if we sell the arms.

MORE

MR. KEENE: Mr. President, the significant increase in acts of international terrorism over the past several years continues to pose a serious threat to all peace-loving nations. What specific policies should the United States pursue in curbing these wanton acts of violence against innocent men, women and children?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, the best way to stop them is the dramatic and successful operation that the Government of Israel did at Antebbe. I really don't think you are going to see many subsequent acts like that undertaken.

On the other hand, I think it is better to prevent them than to have to make a recovery operation. A year and a half ago the United States, with Great Britain, introduced a resolution in the United States to hold a United Nations convention and hopefully some action on trying to establish policies and programs aimed at preventing international terrorism. We were joined this year, in a somewhat different form, but aimed at the same problem -- by the West Germans. I think there is a gradual movement toward international action in this area and the United States, I am proud to say, took the lead in it better than a year and a half ago.

MR. KEENE: Mr. President, we now have a question back to New York City. There are many neighborhoods in the city that are continually deteriorating, and particularly some of those are because of the fiscal city crisis, which is exasperating the situation.

What specific solutions could you offer to resolve the problems of the neighborhoods where the majority of the communities -- and I will expand this question -- and where the middle class of this city reside? That, I think, is probably the key question that is being asked by the citizens of this city and by citizens in every city in this country in this area.

THE PRESIDENT: Approximately six months ago I established a Cabinet committee on urban development in neighborhood revitalization. The chairman of that committee is the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Mrs. Carla Hills. It has on the committee four or five members, plus the head of the Small Business Administration, plus any other Federal agency that has anything to do with cities and the like.

Mrs. Hills is coming up with some recommendations I think within a relatively short period, within ten days. She is a very able person. She has really devoted her time and attention to it, and with her recommendations I can answer your questions more specifically, but they will be hard, constructive proposals coming from this Cabinet-level committee.

MORE

MR. KLEIN: Mr. President, I will paraphrase this question because a lot of it was answered before. Regarding the position that you have taken on Soviet Jewry, and Rabbi Riskin does mention that we know of your strong commitment in the past through what you have done in this area, but what specifics could you recommend, if any, that could be done by this country to help alleviate those problems of, number one, increasing immigration; number two, allowing the rights of individuals within the Soviet Union to practice the religion they believe in; and number three, the prisoners of conscience and "refuse-niks" that are today rotting away in Soviet prisons?

THE PRESIDENT: When the Soviet Union ended our economic relations on a Government-to-Government basis and when they felt at least that they had been unfairly discriminated against because of the two amendments that were passed -- one, the Stevenson amendment and the other the Jackson amendment -- they broke off those economic relations and, at the same time, almost instantaneously, the number of Soviet Jews went from 34,000 down to the present level of 12,000.

I think we either have to amend or eliminate those two provisions and, if we do, I happen to feel very confidently that there will be a significant increase in Soviet Jews leaving Russia.

That was the case. I think it will be the case if the situation were back where it was in 1974.

Now, in the meantime I think we have to do as much as we can on a one-to-one basis where we find individuals who for one of a number of reasons ought to be given preferential treatment plus those who are on the waiting list.

But, the biggest relief would be to get up to 3,000 a month again. That would be the best answer to most of the problems that I think Soviet Jews face.

MR. KLEIN: This question, Mr. President, is would you use your Executive powers for the imposition of countermeasures against any new Arab oil boycott?

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to approach the problem a little differently. I don't believe we are going to have another Arab boycott, so I don't believe I will have to answer a hypothetical question because I don't think it will become a reality.

MORE

Let me tell you why. The one time you had an Arab boycott it was at the time of the Yom Kippur war. I don't think you are going to have another war in the Middle East. Therefore, I don't believe [REDACTED] are going to have an Arab embargo and so, number one, for that reason, I don't think you will have one.

But, let me add this, and answer it very affirmatively: Without getting into specifics, if there is one I can assure you -- and I use these words very, very restrained -- as President I would not tolerate it, period.

MR. KLEIN: This next question, Mr. President, will the Government disclose the names of companies cooperating with the boycott, when, and what additional action will the Government take regarding terminating Government contracts and other measures, et cetera, in this area?

THE PRESIDENT: As of last Thursday, when the order was issued by the Secretary of Commerce, all the names will be released of instances prospectively, and that will be on the issuance of the order that I directed the Secretary of Commerce to take.

Let me assure you that if there are any violations of any Executive Order or legislation, the Attorney General will take immediate action.

I am proud to say that the Ford Administration is the only Administration in the history of the Arab boycott that has taken any legal action, such as when Attorney General Edward Levi initiated an anti-trust [REDACTED] against the Bechtel Company and many others.

So, our record is pretty good. We have 100 percent batting average and nobody else got on first base.

FROM THE FLOOR: What about the [REDACTED]

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think you ought to change the rules in the middle of the game. The information was given when one set of rules existed, I just don't think you ought to change rules in the middle of a game. But, after last Thursday or Friday, absolutely.

FROM THE FLOOR: You changed your mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I never said they would go backwards.

MORE

MR. [REDACTED]: This next question is, will the Federal Government continue and expand the cooperation in delivering health and social services to people by aiding cities?

THE PRESIDENT: Will you repeat that again?

MR. [REDACTED]: Will the Federal Government continue and expand the cooperation in delivering health and social services to people? Mr. President, if you would like, we can ask Mr. [REDACTED] to expand on it.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I understand. (Laughter)

The Federal Government has for 16 categorical grant programs, including Medicare -- or Medicaid, I should say -- that provide Federal funds to cities and States for the health care of the disadvantaged and the aged. I recommended that instead of having 14 different categorical grant programs, we ought to have a lump sum, one that would go to the cities and the cities, or county, or the State, depending upon how the arrangement was set up, would have the flexibility on how to spend it.

Unfortunately, I think the Congress was wrong in not approving the consolidation program that I recommended, but nevertheless the amount of money, which is about \$11 to \$12 billion, was made available by the Congress, and we will send it to the cities and the counties under the old way with a lot of bureaucratic red tape and an extra bureaucratic cost.

I don't think the service will be as good, but maybe next year we can get the Congress to change it, with the same amount or more money.

MR. [REDACTED]: Mr. President, I think we have time for more question, maybe two if we can get it done.

We are survivors of the holocaust, and are deeply concerned about the preservation of cemeteries and historical monuments in Eastern Europe. Can you please expand on what the American Government can do in this area?

THE PRESIDENT: To be very frank, this is the first time that question has been raised with me. I don't believe in giving you an answer that I am not familiar with.

Jack?

MORE

SENATOR [REDACTED]: Mr. President, I would like to characterize you as a great friend of the Jewish people, and I believe in that spirit, if any of these instances -- and there are a considerable number we have all acted on -- if they are called to your personal attention, I am confident you would use your prestige and the other aspects of international relations with these countries to correct situations which would be offensive to your own as they are to our religious beliefs.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

MR. KLEIN: We would like to ask one more question. I have run out of subjects, so I would call on Rabbi Kowalski.

RABBI KOWALSKI: Mr. President, [REDACTED] cannot send packages to Russia, individuals can't send packages person to person because now the Soviet Government has put such a high tax on each package sent to Russia. There are many people crying out.

We are asking your office, you as a great friend of the Jews, as a great American, to really see if you can do something. If someone sends a little handkerchief, the tax is \$300 or \$400, which makes it impossible for anybody to send even the smallest package. We ask your help.

THE PRESIDENT: We have and we will maximize our efforts in this regard. I think it is unconscionable they have imposed these taxes. In fact, it makes it unattainable for the individual recipients. It is wrong and we have protested and we will continue to do so.

Thank you.

END (AT 2:00 P.M. EDT)

Mr. President, Christians believe that a personal commitment to Jesus Christ has to be an integral part in their faith. In the light of that, can you tell us what Jesus Christ means to you, and have you dedicated your life to Him?

I have said on several occasions, when asked, that I have a commitment to the Christian faith and I have a relationship with Jesus Christ through my church and through my daily life. My faith goes back to my upbringing by my parents when I was very young. It has been reinforced in my lifetime by a number of experiences that I have had. Faith means the dedication to His life and to His principles and I seek to follow in my own public, as well as private, life those principles.

Many Presidents have testified that Bible reading and prayer were essential to them in times of crises. Do you find this to be true in your experience as well?

Very definitely, and it has been all of my life, but it has been accentuated by the fact that our oldest son, Mike Ford, is currently going to seminary, Gordon-Conwell, up in Massachusetts. He is very dedicated and since he has taken that as his life work, whenever he is here, we do have an even broader experience in reading the Bible and studying it together.

He gave me one of the priceless things that I have in the Oval Office, a Bible, which meant much to him and now means an even greater amount to me. Both my wife, Betty, and myself read excerpts from the Bible on a daily basis.

How does that Christian commitment that you have made to Jesus Christ affect the political decisions that you have to make day by day?

It is somewhat hard to be definitive in that regard, but the fact that I have that commitment has a tremendous subjective impact on decisions that I have to make, and some of these are very "close calls" as we say.

When some of these very difficult decisions have to be made by me in the Oval Office, I don't hesitate to ask for guidance through prayer.

Prayer is very important to me. From Proverbs, I have a favorite verse which I express daily, and have for a good many years. It is a daily source of strength for me: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths."

How does a person's private moral conduct affect his ability to serve in public office?

As a Christian, I strive to live up to the moral code as set forth in the Ten Commandments and in the teachings of Jesus.

As a public official, I feel that I am responsible to conduct myself privately so as to earn the respect of those I serve and those with whom I work.

The most effective public servants I have known were those who had a high moral code in their personal life.

We cannot stand very long on the shifting sands of "situation ethics." History proves that power and prestige are slippery peaks from which the mighty have often fallen into disgrace. Jesus said, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

We stand in danger today of losing the soul of America to the seductions of material gain and moral apathy, to a new code of conduct which reviles the basic truths and mocks the fundamental beliefs on which this Nation and much of religion were founded.

Public officials have a special responsibility to set a good example for others to follow, in both their private and public conduct. The American people, particularly our young people, cannot be expected to take pride or even to participate in a system of government that is defiled and dishonored, whether in the White House or in the halls of Congress.

Jesus said, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." Personal integrity is not too much to ask of public servants. We should accept nothing less.

The American people have seen too much abuse of the moral imperatives of honesty and of decency upon which religion and government and civilized society must rest. To remedy these abuses we must look not only to the government but, more importantly to the Bible, the church, the human heart.

In your view, is there any threat to religious liberty by big government and expanding government regulations?

I have said on numerous occasions that a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have.

I have also stated that what we need is not bigger government but better government. I am sympathetic with most Americans who are fearful that government can become so large and we can be burdened with so many regulations that our individual liberties may be taken from us little by little. As long as I am President, I will resist government bureaucracies intruding into the free religious institutions of America.

We want the freedom in America to choose our own course, our own lives, to chart our own terms without having the government tell us everything we can or cannot do.

Do you propose any presidential initiatives on prayer and Bible reading in public schools?

I believe that prayer in public schools should be voluntary. It is difficult for me to see how religious exercises can be a requirement in public schools, given our constitutional requirement of separation of church and state.

I feel that the highly desirable goal of religious education must be principally the responsibility of church and home. I do not believe that public education should show any hostility toward religion, and neither should it inhibit voluntary participation, if it does not interfere with the educational process.

As long as this is the case, I do not plan any initiative.

~~You have already stated your opposition to abortion on demand. What actions do you propose to take to reduce the number of such abortions, especially those performed at governmental expense?~~

I have a deep concern about the rising tide of secularism. There is an apparent increase of irreverence for life. I do not believe in abortion on demand. I think the Supreme Court went too far in its 1973 decision which validated the rights of the states to make their own decisions on abortion. I disagree with the recent Supreme Court decision which permits abortion without the parents' permission. As I know, I have consistently opposed the 1973 decision of the Supreme Court, but as President, I am sworn to uphold the laws of the land, and I intend to carry out this responsibility. In my personal view, however, this court decision was unwise.

As Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, I co-sponsored an amendment which would restore this authority to the States, and I have consistently supported that position since that time. My position has been based on three fundamental convictions:

- I am against abortion on demand
- The people of every State should have the Constitutional right to control abortion
- There is a need to recognize and provide for exceptional cases.

I should also point out that the Republican Platform which I support is fully consistent with these views.

Some problems are better dealt with by the church or in the home. Government cannot in and of itself solve every problem.

Americans have benefited greatly by our rich spiritual heritage. The sound, sensible lessons of goodness imparted by religious teachers and devoted parents have done more than anything else to prepare our children for life.

What is your view of homosexual relations?

I hold a personal viewpoint that homosexual relations are wrong. I have always tried to be understanding and fair about people whose views are different from my own. That does not mean that I always agree with what they do or with what they believe. I just think we have to be considerate and respectful of others.

The teachings of the Bible are very explicit on this matter and when you consider it in a Biblical context, in my view homosexuality is morally wrong.

~~Many Christians are more interested in freedom to operate their religious and non-public schools without influence by and interference from governmental agencies than they~~

~~from governmental agencies than they are in subsidies. Are you concerned to safeguard this freedom?~~

This question gets back to the subject of big government and excessive government intrusion through a morass of bureaus and regulations. I have already stated my opposition to this.

This question also suggests the reaffirmation of something that I believe in very strongly, that there should be a wall of separation between church and state. Government should not be allowed to control any of our religious institutions.

I have a long standing commitment to diversity in American education. We need our non-public schools. I also have a long standing commitment to limited government, freedom of religion, and the separation of church and state.

If any alleged abuses by the FBI and the CIA are proven true, what do you think should be done?

America's intelligence agencies are vitally important to our Nation's security. They are essential in wartime, but they are also essential in peacetime. They are the best insurance we have that we will not be caught napping.

We have to keep strong our intelligence gathering arms, the FBI and the CIA. Without the excellent crime fighting skills of the FBI this country would be at the mercy of lawlessness, and without the intelligence gathering mechanism of the CIA, we would be at the mercy of international lawlessness.

As to proven and alleged abuses, as President I will not tolerate any improper activities. I have attempted during my Administration to strengthen the intelligence community and at the same time to assure the prevention of abuses by the intelligence community against American citizens. We now have very specific guidelines defining what the intelligence agencies can and cannot do. If those guidelines are ignored, the persons responsible will be held fully accountable.

I have great confidence that both the FBI and the CIA will do an effective job in helping to keep Americans safe at home and America safe in the world.

Do you think world Communism is a threat to freedom in the world today, and if so, what responsibilities does America have in this regard?

The actions of our adversaries, as we have known them over the last four decades, have indeed been a threat to freedom in the world, but it is not nearly as great a threat to freedom and world peace so long as America is strong and determined. I see clearly the expansionist desires of some countries and their leaders, and as President I have sternly resisted their efforts. It is essential to world stability that American defenses and those of our allies be maintained. As President, I have consistently proposed the necessary funds to make sure of our military capability in order that we may play our necessary role in helping to maintain peace and stability in the world.

While I have often stated my opposition to the basic philosophy of our adversaries, I would not like to see us return to the cold war or return to an uncontrolled arms race. Confrontation is not only costly; it is very dangerous. Therefore, we continue to maintain lines of communication and to create an improved climate, one with a minimum of distrust, so that hostilities are much less likely to occur.

From the standpoint of the world-wide missionary effort, I recognize the importance of world peace and world stability, for only then can these humanitarian efforts flourish.

Does the current state of crime and punishment call for any reform in the American judicial system, and if so, what do you recommend?

I share with millions of Americans their concern about the problem of crime. The preamble to our Constitution seeks "to insure domestic tranquility." It was John Locke who said "Where there is no law, there is no freedom."

- Establishment of "career criminal" programs designed to assure quick identification and prosecution of persons who repeatedly commit serious offenses.
- Continuation and expansion of programs designed to divert certain first offenders into rehabilitation prior to trial.
- Creation of additional Federal District Court judgeships and expansion of the criminal jurisdiction of United States Magist
- Upgrading of prison facilities, including the replacement of large, outdated prisons with smaller, more modern ones.
- An increase this year in U.S. Attorneys prosecuting Federal crimes and reinforcement of the number of U.S. Marshals.

To keep a convicted criminal from committing more crimes we must put him in prison so he cannot harm more law-abiding citizens. To be effective, this punishment must be swift and certain.

I disagree with the concept of so-called "victimless crime." In many instances, although it may not be possible to identify a particular individual who is the victim, society itself is often the victim. For example, prostitution is a major source of income for organized crime. And clearly drug abuse is responsible for much of the more violent crimes in America today.

Society has made a judgment that these activities are illegal, and I firmly believe that those convicted of such offenses should be brought to justice. The law must be fairly, but firmly, enforced.

More importantly, these offenses threaten the moral fiber of our nation.

Some political observers feel that for the first time in over a decade religion has become an issue in a Presidential campaign. How do you feel about this emphasis on the religious views of a candidate?

I believe a candidate's personal religion is a proper concern for voters when they are choosing their President. However, I do not believe that it is proper for any political figure to deliberately exploit religion for his or her political advantage.

If I am asked about my beliefs, I will respond for I am proud of the convictions I hold.

If you are elected to a full, four-year term, what is your foremost hope for America?

My hope is that in working together we can build an America that does not merely celebrate history, but writes it -- that offers limited government and unlimited opportunity -- that concerns itself with a quality of life marked by strong and free religious institutions, homes which nurture the young, weaving a strong moral fiber for future generations, an America where the other basic institutions in education and industry are solidly grounded and productive for the good of all who live in this great land.

NOVEMBER 16, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT A RECEPTION FOR
THE REPUBLICAN EAGLES

STATE DINING ROOM

5:30 P.M. EST

MR. MILBANK: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, it is a very great honor for me to express to you on behalf of all of these wonderful people who worked so very hard for so long for our cause the very great and sincere admiration that we share for you both and for the wonderful leadership that you have given our country and for the tremendous campaign effort that you both put forth.

I just want to say that it has given us all great heart and inspiration to go on from now to the future elections of 1978 and 1980. We thank you so very, very much.

Mr. President, it is now my pleasure to report the results of a determination made jointly by the chairman and by the finance chairman of the Republican National Committee in the selection of a person who during the year 1976 has won a very special award of our committee, presented for the first time on this occasion.

Even though the accomplishments of our winner stand out very strongly, we wish in announcing our decision to emphasize again our deep appreciation for the tremendous effort that has been put forth by so many people, many of whom are right here in this room with us today. We believe that the award to our winner will enhance the stature of the effort by all here who worked so hard.

The award is the original painting of the American Bald Eagle by the distinguished wildlife artist John Ruthven, who is also with us-- we are happy to have you with us today; John is standing right there -- donated by him, generously, to the Republican National Committee. It will be presented each year and kept in the possession for the ensuing 12-month period by that person who has done the outstanding job of raising funds for the committee. The name of the winner each year will be inscribed on a gold plate to be fitted on the frame and we hope that in future years both the award itself and the names of

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past awardees will serve as an inspiration and challenge for those who worked to support the National Committee.

I would like to read the accomplishments of our first winner.

As the principal spokesman of the National Committee at eight fund-raising meetings across the country, he raised \$362,000 directly from major contributors, and another \$330,000 through the mail. With a single letter to sustaining contributors which added many new names to our contributor file, he brought in \$2,400,000, substantially more than any single appeal in the history of the committee. This grand total of what he raised exceeded \$3 million.

He served, furthermore, as co-chairman of our committee and responded willingly and promptly to all our requests for his help.

His name, Mr. President, is John B. Connally.

Mr. President, it would be a great pleasure and privilege for us if you could say a few words to our group and then present this award to our winner.

Thank you very much, sir.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT. Thank you very much, Jerry, John, Nel, all of you. Obviously in the last two weeks I have regained my voice. That of course means that I won't have to call on Betty to give the concession statement, but I don't want to automatically and dogmatically pre-empt her time I have learned. She did such a wonderful job not only in the campaign, but otherwise.

In the last two weeks, in the process of regaining my voice, I have also restored and actually fortified my determination not to back away from the principles that we fought for, to not back away from the support that 38 million people gave to us. I certainly feel that I and many others such as yourselves have a commitment to 49 percent of the people who voted.

So, although we will leave here on the 20th of January, let me say with emphasis that Betty and I, the family, will continue our battle for what we think are the principles that are essential for the future security of this country, both at home and abroad. We are going to be in the ball game. We will work with all of you, Jerry, John Connally, and the others who have given so generously of your time and your effort.

I was reading some letters today that were on my desk when I came back. The last one I read started out like this. I hope I can remember his words because they were so impressive. He said the battle has been lost. A few tears have been shed. We are gnashing our teeth, but we are going to be out there fighting again.

Of course, one who has been in the battle -- and I mean really in the forefront of the battle traveling all over the country -- I know because in August or July of 1973 he was in my Congressional district attending a fund raiser that I asked him to participate in on behalf of the party and my prospective candidacy for re-election.

I don't know of a person in the Republican Party today who has given more of his time, his talent, his effectiveness than John Connally. And to see him be rewarded with this eagle painting I think is a reward that he richly deserves.

So, John, it is a great privilege and a great honor on behalf of all of the Eagles to make this presentation to you as the leader of the pack, so to speak. I know that you are proud of him, Betty and I are proud of him and we will be in

there working with each of you because the principles are just too vital, essential for our country and all that it stands for for us to back away. We will be there helping you, John, and Jerry and others in the months ahead.

We look forward to it. John, congratulations. You deserve it and it is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to make this presentation on behalf of Jerry and the others.

Congratulations.

MORE

MR. CONNALLY. Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, distinguished Eagles, Jerry, Mary Louise, may I first say to you that I really feel a deep sense of humility about this. The only thought I have at the moment is that I wish I had done more. I think that is a feeling that all of us have as we stand here today. We wish we had done a little bit more. We wish we had been more effective. We wish we had raised more money. We wish we had started earlier and worked later. I think, Mr. President, you did all you could do and, Mrs. Ford, you did more than you should have done.

Mr. President, I hope in the minds of all of those who look on this magnificent painting of the American bald eagle that they will remember this occasion in which it was first exhibited and that on what for some of us has to be a rather sad as well as joyful day that we will remember that you and Mrs. Ford through all of your days in the White House, through all of the days of the campaign, conducted yourselves really with the grace and the poise that is always a part of the great American eagle.

I hope that it also will come to symbolize the strength of this party and the strength of the determination that is in the heart of each of us to do better. I hope that we will always remember as we look at this magnificent painting and see the outstretched wings of the eagle to remind ourselves that he comes from lofty heights, that he soars above all other birds in this great American nation and that he is unrelentless in his determination to survive and to progress and to reproduce and to create.

That is what we need to do in this great party and that is what we are going to do. We are going to live by at least one creed that always drives this magnificent bird. That is the law of self-preservation. We are going to be motivated by it just as he is motivated by it. I assure you that where we have done something before, Mr. President, we are going to do something more and more and more in the years to come because it behooves us to do it not for ourselves, not even for the party, but for the Nation we love, for the privileges we have, for the opportunities we seek and for the hope of this Nation.

So I thank you with a deep sense of humility. I will do my best. I know in all selfishness that Nelli and I will become attached to this. And I was just going to say that I will tell you this: If any of you think we are going to be

easy marks to take it away from us next year, you couldn't be more wrong.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT. What was that? Somebody said three times in a row and they keep it.

MR. CONNALLY. Mr. President, if they will adopt that rule, I will work even harder.

END

(At 5:55 P.M. EST)

EMBARGOED

NOVEMBER 24, 1976

FILMED REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO A DINNER HONORING
GOVERNOR AND MRS. DAN EVANS OF WASHINGTON

(Cabinet Room)

10:58 a.m. EST

I am honored to join in this well deserved tribute to the outstanding Governor of Washington and my good friend, Dan Evans.

Twenty-two centuries ago the philosopher Aristotle said, "A man who aspires to any high office should have three qualifications: First, he should be prepared to support the constitution of his country; second, he should have a special aptitude for the office he desires; and third, he should have virtue and justice as they are understood by his fellow citizens."

Dan Evans has met all those tests and proved once again the simple wisdom of those ancient words.

For the past 12 years, Dan Evans has served the people of Washington with such distinction that he is invariably included in any list of the best Governors in America by the press, in academic circles and among Republicans and Democrats alike. His good judgment, his progressive instincts, his remarkable intelligence have all contributed to his own success and to the benefit of all Washingtonians.

He is a strong leader, bold, courageous and imaginative. Working with Dan Evans in both governmental and political councils has been a special pleasure for me. He has earned the enduring respect and affection of the people of Washington and set an example which public servants all over America would do well to follow.

Betty and I join all of you in wishing Dan and Nancy Evans and their three fine sons, Danny, Mark and Bruce, all the best in their future pursuits and in congratulating Dan for a job he has done so well.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦



December 1, 1976

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
ROCKEFELLER PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM
THE OVAL OFFICE

AT 10:15 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just say that it is a real pleasure to see you, Mr. Rockefeller and the others, and particularly to have an opportunity to participate in a recognition ceremony of these outstanding individuals at the State, local and Federal level who have contributed very significantly to the improvement of public service.

I am very pleased to see that the awards have been broadened beyond just the Federal level for the first time this year. We all know that Federal employees play a very important role in making government work better but it is also equally important at the State and local level. Equal contributions are very, very important.

So I am very pleased that this has been brought. I was looking over before you all came in some of the programs that have been recognized in the awards to individuals.

Whether it is a program on the which we are trying to move from an emergency program to one that has a long-range impact to better programs so that justice can be achieved as far as time is concerned, whether it is expansion of employment opportunities, I think the range of awards is a very, very impressive recognition that the public servants do a fine job.

(Identification?) Also, Mr. President, it is extended beyond government service to private citizens as well. You mentioned the three levels of government, but the private citizens are also included as potential recipients.



THE PRESIDENT: I think that is indicative also of the need and necessity that not only the public sector but the private sector can play a very important role in making their government work better.

(Identification?) It is based on private initiative, individual initiative which can be in government or outside of government.

MORE

- 2 -

(Identification?) Mr. President, I would like to say if I could just a word of thanks to you for your steady support of this program, not just in this year, but in the years past. It certainly does. One of our major purposes as you know has been not only to recognize outstanding individuals -- and we have them here today again -- but also through them to recognize the importance of public service and certainly your participation and your support has been very critical.

So we are very grateful to you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I am honored and it is a pleasure for me to participate in the honoring of all of these people and I thank you again, John, for the fine job in making the funds available for the recognition of these outstanding individuals.

END

(AT 10:20 A.M. EST)