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JANUARY 14, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
ANNE ARMSTRONG
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE
TO THE UNITED KINGDOM
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
THE OVAL OFFICE

10:45 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say just a word, if I might. I am extremely pleased and very, very happy about the fact that Anne Armstrong is going to Great Britain to represent the United States as our Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

I can add Secretary Kissinger likewise feels she will do a superb job, as I do. I should add a postscript. You will have to give some of the credit for this appointment to Betty, who keeps persistently reminding me that we need the most qualified and extremely able women representing us, whether at home or abroad.

So, I think we have unanimity that she will do a superb job. I know that she will be well received in Great Britain, and I think what you will do will be a credit to you, as well as to our country.

MRS. ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Betty. Thank you, Henry.

I am very pleased. I am very grateful to you, Mr. President, for this honor, which I consider the greatest one of my life. If I merit the confidence of the Senate, as I have yours, I think I have a double opportunity. I want to do a good job as a person in strengthening the ties between our two countries, which are unique both historically and in the present and, secondly, I don't downplay the fact that I am a woman.

I think it is just great that an American President is the first one to nominate a woman to be Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Because of that, I am going to work doubly hard to be a credit to all women, and to American women in particular.

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Finally, I am particularly looking forward to this position because my other jobs in Government have caused me to be separated from my family a lot. This time most of our children will be with us at least part of the time, and my husband has arranged so that he can go with me.

I think he is going to be an asset to our country, and I know he is going to be a joy and a help to me.

Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Congratulations.

MRS. ARMSTRONG: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Sometime I will go over and see you once in a while.

MRS. ARMSTRONG: I will count on that.

I would be delighted to answer some questions.

THE PRESIDENT: Henry has got a press conference of his own, and I know he is almost late, so if you will excuse him.

MRS. ARMSTRONG: I will see you later.

You realize that I can't get into matters of substance out of respect to the Senate, but I would be delighted to answer any questions that don't have to do with my views on foreign policy at this time.

QUESTION: Have you ever been to London before?

MRS. ARMSTRONG: When I was 21 years old, Fran, but luckily Great Britain is part of our bones as Americans. We learn about it from childhood, and though I know there is plenty left for me to study, I feel confident I can do a good job over there.

QUESTION: Mrs. Armstrong, on the whole level of women in Government, do you think you are doing anything toward the job of getting women appointed to boards and commissions and that sort of thing?

MRS. ARMSTRONG: I think that this President, and his wonderful Betty -- he claims she prods him -- I think they have done a fine job. None of us is ever satisfied that it comes fast enough. But yes, I think that great progress has been made.

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I remember when the President had faith in Carla Hills, that she could do a fine job as a Cabinet member, as head of HUD. Her qualifications were questioned by a number of people at the time, but to me, the President's confidence in her has been completely justified. I think she is doing a fine job.

THE PRESIDENT: I might add that, of course, we have as head of the NLRB, one of the most important agencies or commissions that we have in the country, Betty Murphy, and to put a woman in those very delicate relationships between labor and management with the great responsibility that the NLRB has, I think, proves faith in persons such as Betty Murphy. I am certain that she has done a fine job and will continue to do a fine job.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how about in all those boards and commissions where you named 17 men and two women?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are doing quite well, Fran, and we are going to continue to do better.

MRS. ARMSTRONG: Did you know you are the only President to have two women in your Cabinet? We didn't overlap, but I was a member of your Cabinet and Carla Hills is now.

THE PRESIDENT: Both very attractive, too.

It is nice to see you all.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 10:54 A.M. EST)