

SWEARING IN CEREMONY
THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C.
12 NOON, AUGUST 9, 1974

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE, AND MY DEAR FRIENDS:

THE BIBLE UPON WHICH MY HAND JUST RESTED WAS OPENED TO
PROVERBS, THIRD CHAPTER, THE FIFTH AND SIXTH VERSES. I LEARNED
THESE VERSES MANY YEARS AGO, AND HAVE OFTEN SAID THEM AS A PRAYER.

TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL THINE HEART;

AND LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING.

IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE

SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS.

Mr. Chief Justice / my dear friends / ²⁻

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

THE OATH I HAVE TAKEN IS THE SAME OATH THAT WAS TAKEN BY
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND BY EVERY PRESIDENT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION.
BUT I ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, NEVER
BEFORE EXPERIENCED BY AMERICANS. THIS IS AN HOUR OF HISTORY THAT
TROUBLES OUR MINDS AND HURTS OUR HEARTS.

THEREFORE, I FEEL IT IS MY FIRST DUTY TO MAKE AN
UNPRECEDENTED COMPACT WITH MY COUNTRYMEN. NOT AN INAUGURAL ADDRESS,
NOT A FIRESIDE CHAT, NOT A CAMPAIGN SPEECH. JUST A LITTLE STRAIGHT
TALK AMONG FRIENDS. I INTEND IT TO BE THE FIRST OF MANY.

I AM ACUTELY AWARE THAT YOU HAVE NOT ELECTED ME AS YOUR
PRESIDENT BY YOUR BALLOTS. SO I ASK YOU TO CONFIRM ME AS YOUR
PRESIDENT WITH YOUR PRAYERS. AND I HOPE THAT SUCH PRAYERS WILL
ALSO BE THE FIRST OF MANY.

IF YOU HAVE NOT CHOSEN ME BY SECRET BALLOT, NEITHER HAVE
I GAINED OFFICE BY SECRET PROMISES. I HAVE NOT CAMPAIGNED EITHER
FOR THE PRESIDENCY OR THE VICE PRESIDENCY; I HAVE NOT SUBSCRIBED
TO ANY PARTISAN PLATFORM; I AM INDEBTED TO NO MAN AND ONLY TO ONE
WOMAN -- MY DEAR WIFE BETTY -- AS I BEGIN THE MOST DIFFICULT JOB
IN THE WORLD.

I HAVE NOT SOUGHT THIS ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY, BUT I WILL
NOT SHIRK IT, ANY MORE THAN I DID THE SUDDEN SUMMONS TO THE SECOND
OFFICE OF OUR GOVERNMENT ONLY EIGHT MONTHS AGO, } THOSE WHO NOMINATED
AND CONFIRMED ME AS VICE PRESIDENT WERE AND ARE MY FRIENDS. THEY
WERE OF BOTH PARTIES, ELECTED BY ALL THE PEOPLE, AND ACTING UNDER
THE CONSTITUTION IN THEIR NAME. IT IS ONLY FITTING THEN, THAT I
SHOULD PLEDGE TO THEM AND TO YOU THAT I WILL BE THE PRESIDENT OF
ALL THE PEOPLE.

THOMAS JEFFERSON SAID THE PEOPLE ARE THE ONLY SURE

RELIANCE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR LIBERTY. AND DOWN THE YEARS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN RENEWED THIS AMERICAN ARTICLE OF FAITH, ASKING:

"IS THERE ANY BETTER OR EQUAL HOPE IN THE WORLD?"

I INTEND, ON MONDAY NEXT, TO REQUEST OF THE SPEAKER OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE
THE PRIVILEGE OF APPEARING BEFORE THE CONGRESS TO SHARE WITH MY
FORMER COLLEAGUES AND WITH YOU, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, MY VIEWS ON THE
PRIORITY BUSINESS OF THE NATION, AND TO SOLICIT YOUR VIEWS AND THEIRS.

EVEN THOUGH THIS IS LATE IN AN ELECTION YEAR, THERE IS
NO WAY WE CAN GO FORWARD EXCEPT TOGETHER, AND NO WAY ANYBODY CAN
WIN EXCEPT BY SERVING THE PEOPLE'S URGENT NEEDS. WE CANNOT STAND
STILL OR SLIP BACKWARDS. WE MUST GO FORWARD, NOW, TOGETHER.

TO THE PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS OF ALL FRIENDLY NATIONS,

(AND I HOPE THAT COULD ENCOMPASS THE WHOLE WORLD) I PLEDGE AN

UNINTERRUPTED AND SINCERE SEARCH FOR PEACE. AMERICA WILL REMAIN

STRONG AND UNITED, BUT ITS STRENGTH WILL REMAIN DEDICATED TO THE

SAFETY AND SANITY OF THE ENTIRE FAMILY OF MAN AS WELL AS TO OUR

OWN PRECIOUS FREEDOM.

I BELIEVE THAT TRUTH IS THE GLUE THAT HOLDS GOVERNMENT
TOGETHER, AND NOT ONLY GOVERNMENT, BUT CIVILIZATION ITSELF.
THAT BOND, THOUGH STRAINED, IS UNBROKEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.
IN ALL MY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACTS AS YOUR PRESIDENT, I EXPECT
TO FOLLOW MY INSTINCTS OF OPENNESS AND CANDOR, WITH FULL CONFIDENCE
THAT HONESTY IS ALWAYS THE BEST POLICY IN THE END.

MY FELLOW AMERICANS, OUR LONG NATIONAL NIGHTMARE IS OVER.

OUR CONSTITUTION WORKS; OUR GREAT REPUBLIC IS A GOVERNMENT

OF LAWS AND NOT OF MEN. HERE THE PEOPLE RULE. BUT THERE IS A

HIGHER POWER, BY WHATEVER NAME WE HONOR HIM, WHO ORDAINS NOT ONLY

RIGHTEOUSNESS BUT LOVE, NOT ONLY JUSTICE BUT MERCY.

AS WE BIND UP THE INTERNAL WOUNDS OF WATERGATE, MORE
PAINFUL AND MORE POISONOUS THAN THOSE OF FOREIGN WARS, LET US
RESTORE THE GOLDEN RULE TO OUR POLITICAL PROCESS, AND LET
BROTHERLY LOVE PURGE OUR HEARTS OF SUSPICION AND HATE.

IN THE BEGINNING I ASKED YOU TO PRAY FOR ME. BEFORE
CLOSING I AGAIN ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR RICHARD NIXON AND FOR HIS
FAMILY.

MAY OUR FORMER PRESIDENT, WHO BROUGHT PEACE TO MILLIONS,
FIND IT FOR HIMSELF. MAY GOD BLESS AND COMFORT HIS WONDERFUL WIFE
AND DAUGHTERS WHOSE LOVE AND LOYALTY WILL FOREVER BE A SHINING
LEGACY TO ALL WHO BEAR THE LONELY BURDENS OF THE WHITE HOUSE.

I CAN ONLY GUESS AT THOSE BURDENS, ALTHOUGH I HAVE
WITNESSED AT CLOSE HAND THE TRAGEDIES THAT BEFELL THREE PRESIDENTS
AND THE LESSER TRIALS OF OTHERS.

WITH ALL THE STRENGTH AND GOOD SENSE I HAVE GAINED FROM
LIFE, WITH ALL THE CONFIDENCE MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND DEDICATED
STAFF IMPART TO ME, AND WITH THE GOODWILL OF THE COUNTLESS AMERICANS
I HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN RECENT VISITS TO 40 STATES, I NOW SOLEMNLY
REAFFIRM MY PROMISE TO YOU LAST DECEMBER 6: TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION,
TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT AS GOD GIVES ME TO SEE THE RIGHT, AND TO DO
THE VERY BEST I CAN FOR AMERICA.

GOD HELPING ME, I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN.

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