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(Policy paper on housing)

THE WHITE HOUSE

To: Mr. Hartmann
From: Dick Cheney

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR : ROBERT HARTMANN

FROM: MILTON FRIEDMAN *m.f.*

Dr. Robert Goldwin spoke to me by telephone today with respect to his draft of remarks on the school issue. He said it was the President's desire to rapidly process the draft as a speech to be delivered by the President, from the Library of the White House one evening this week (before school re-opens).

Dr. Goldwin said the draft had been reviewed by Attorney General Levi, Alan Greenspan, Ron Nessen, and Dick Cheney, with varying responses. It was now his desire that the speech be processed by the editorial department and circulated generally to determine revisions and/or whether it should be used. He suggested that once the speech was finished and circulated, arguments could be made.

Professor Kirk Emert, a writer on Dr. Goldwin's staff, came to my office a number of times to offer assistance in the editorial processing of the Goldwin draft to expedite its release within the White House system.

Since this case differs from our normal editorial system in that neither you or Paul Theis have been involved in the conception and planning of the draft, I await your guidance and instruction.

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FROM: DICK CHENEY
TO: BOB HARTMANN

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 20, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: BOB HARTMANN

FROM: DICK CHENEY

Bob, the attached is a draft policy paper on bussing which the President asked me to send to you. He may want to talk with you personally about this draft and may call you this week.

No decision has yet been made as to whether it should be given and what the timing would be. The President asked that you have Milt Friedman call Bob Goldwin in Aspen and begin the process of revising the draft into speech form. A decision on the speech won't be made until we return to Washington and he has talked to a number of people. He did ask that it be held very tightly and not circulated to anyone other than you and Milt.

Regards.

Determined to be an administrative marking
Cancelled per E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983
By DWD NARS date 12/4/82

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My Fellow Americans:

I speak to you tonight on a subject of special importance to all of us, of every age, in every region of this land. Within a few days, public schools will begin to open for the new school year. In many school districts, in many cities and towns, there are new court orders and new plans for pupil assignment that will affect hundreds of thousands of pupils, teachers, parents, and officials.

My purpose in speaking tonight is two-fold:

-- first, to remind everyone, public officials and private citizens of every age, everywhere in this nation, as the schools are about to open, that court orders are the law, whether you like them or not. Everyone must obey the law. Lawbreaking will be treated as it must be treated, with strict and prompt severity, using federal resources if necessary;

-- second, to discuss with judges and other officials whether they ought to pause and reconsider the soundness and wisdom of the kinds of orders and changes they are trying to impose on many school systems.



My intention is to discuss this matter as calmly and as unemotionally as possible. I have chosen to speak directly to each and every one of you from the Library of the White House rather than before an audience. I do not want the reaction, or lack of reaction, of one particular audience to one part or another of my remarks to affect the way you hear me and understand me.

I have chosen my words carefully. I urge you to listen and consider my words with equal care and attention.

For example, I will avoid the words with which the school problem is usually discussed, because many of them have become loaded with emotions, have become code words that mean different things to different listeners.

Consider only the simple word "bus." A bus is nothing but a vehicle, a means of transportation, and yet audiences can be brought to their feet, cheering or jeering, by mention of the word.

Where school segregation was supported by state laws before 1954, the school bus was a symbol of segregation. To black children and their parents it meant a long bus ride past good schools to run-down schools a greater distance from home. In the decades since the Supreme Court's decision declaring segregated school systems unconstitutional, in those same states the buses became symbols of school desegregation, which has now progressed farther in those states than in most other regions of the country.



In places where race was not a significant issue in schooling, the school bus symbolized progress in the quality of education, as children were bused to consolidated schools that replaced the little school houses that were within walking distance, but could offer no great variety of subjects.

More than a third of American school children ride school buses every day with no relation at all to desegregation plans or court orders. All over this country, four-year olds walk with their school-age brothers and sisters to the bus stop, only to be left behind each day. These children long for the day when they too will take the bus. For them, the yellow school bus is the symbol of growing up, of liberation, of entering a new and wonderful world.

But in many parts of the nation the school bus has become a symbol of coercion, of bitterness, of strife, of resentment against government and law-enforcement, of destruction of neighborhoods, of unending divisions, controversies, frustrations and confrontations.

The words "bus" and "busing" have had so many differing emotional meanings attached to them--and so also with "segregation," "desegregation," "forced integration," "racial balance," "racially identifiable schools," and hosts of other words and phrases--that I have determined, for the sake of calmness, clarity, and reason, not to use those words in my remarks tonight.



Some people I have consulted have asked whether the President ought to speak on this subject. Isn't it a legal question, they ask, the exclusive business of the courts? My response is a direct one. All officials of the government, in every branch, take an oath of office to support the Constitution. But the President's oath of office is the only one written out, word for word, in the Constitution itself. His oath, to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution," means that the President's duty to think about the meaning of the Constitution is second to none.

President Abraham Lincoln raised this very question in his First Inaugural Address. He said:

"I do not forget the position assumed by some, that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court; nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding in any case, upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit...."

President Lincoln meant that as Chief Executive he acknowledged that a court order must be obeyed by all those subject to the court's jurisdiction. I agree completely. The orders of federal judges must be obeyed, whether in Boston, or Omaha, or Louisville, or Detroit, or wherever else there might be court orders. They are the law. Those who think they have some ground for defying, or opposing, or obstructing by illegal means because they disagree, are wrong. As President, I will carry out my constitutional duty to take care that the laws are faithfully executed.




But that is not all that President Lincoln said on this point. He went on to say:

"If the policy of the government upon vital questions, affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties, in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers...."

This part of what President Lincoln said is also true and applicable today. On vital matters that affect the whole people, the President and the people cannot neglect their duty, as "their own rulers," to speak out.

President Lincoln was referring to the Dred Scott decision, in which the Supreme Court had ruled, in effect, that neither Congress nor the President had the power to prevent the spread of slavery to new states or free states. The meaning of the Constitution and the fate of political liberty were at stake. Fortunately, there is no such disagreement today, among the Supreme Court, the Congress, and the President on the meaning of the Constitution and its application to our school situation.

It is a matter of public record that I think that recent court orders attempting to bring about massive changes in public school systems are misguided. They have worked badly. They get the courts into tasks they are inherently ill-equipped to manage. They often disrupt the schools. And they fail to take into account the real nature of American government and the composition of the American people. But they do not have constitutional status. They are only ill-designed remedies that can be changed.



This Administration, this Congress, and the Supreme Court all agree that efforts to use the law to separate pupils on the basis of race or national origin violates the Constitution. The disagreement I have with some judges--not all--is on the question of what to do to remedy such violations when they occur.

According to the reasoning put forth by President Lincoln, if the disagreement were over the meaning of the Constitution, the President and the Congress and the people would have a duty and a right to think, argue, disagree, and act. But this is not a Constitutional disagreement.

On the question of proper remedies, it certainly is the business of the President, the Congress, State governments, local governments, school boards, and citizen groups to be concerned with this "vital question." How should we proceed?

We ought to begin by asking, what kind of America do we want for ourselves, for our children, and for their children? Surely we want a just and harmonious America. We also want an America where differences are not only respected and tolerated, but admired and encouraged.

From the beginning, we have been a people of an amazing variety of national, religious, and racial origins. The United States never had to work at achieving diversity; we were born that way. Achieving unity has been our problem. For centuries our task has been to achieve a "more perfect union," to become truly "one people," and we haven't yet finished the work.



Fifty, and seventy, and one hundred years ago, great waves of new Americans were reaching our shores, by the millions. It is not surprising that then much of our national attention focused on the task of Americanization. We may be the only nation that has a word like Americanization, a word to describe the process of assimilating outsiders.

What makes newcomers Americans is not nationality, as ordinarily understood, but allegiance to principles, the principles of liberty, equality, and representative government.

At the beginning of this century, there was great emphasis on Americanization and a fear that loyalty to the ways of "the old country" would endanger or slow down the growth of loyalty to America. President Theodore Roosevelt used to insist that there was no room for hyphenated Americans, that it was necessary to be "American--and nothing else."

But decades of experience have shown us that it is possible to be American and something else, to be completely loyal to America and still retain attachment to the traditions, language, religion, music, foods, fashions, and customs of a distant homeland. These have persisted for generations, through family and neighborhood influences, even among third- and fourth-generation Americans who may never have seen with their own eyes "the old country."



For decades we fought against this tendency. Many tried to get rid of foreignness. Children were ashamed of their immigrant parents, and tried to be "100 per cent" American.

But those attitudes seem misguided today. Now we have a growing appreciation for variety among us. Living samples of the whole world dwell in our midst, foreign and American at the same time. Our tulip festivals rival those of the Netherlands. Our Polish sausage tastes like Warsaw's. Our pizza is as good as the best of Naples. There is little in the world that is not native to us.

"Black is beautiful" was a motto of genius. Once America got over the shock of that bold and true pronouncement, there began to be a realization by other Americans that so is Irish beautiful, so is Slavic beautiful, and Italian, and Spanish, and Jewish, and German, and Japanese, and so on and on in an almost endless list.

Now I don't want to seem to be making things sound rosier than they are. We do not always love differentness. There is a danger in this country of conformity of thought and taste and behavior. Powerful forces push us in that drab direction: mass media, mass education, big government, big business, big labor, and mass production and consumption tend to overwhelm individual differences, individual liberties, individual rights, and individual tastes. Some of the great protections of individuality,



I think, are the cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial differences I have been talking about. That is one good reason for protecting and encouraging the multiplicity of groups within our society.

We must also face candidly the bitter and unhappy truth about ourselves that as a nation we have often been harsh, even ruthless, in our treatment of new Americans. The way we treated the Irish, for example, when they first started coming to America, was a disgrace. Many others have suffered similarly: the Chinese, the Italians, the Jews, the Slavs, the Japanese. In their history--and many others'--there is a sorrowful record of suffering from prejudice and cruelty.

The story would be too ugly, we would be unable to hold up our heads as a nation claiming to be based on principles of equality, if it were not also true that, to a large extent, these peoples have fought their way clear, and have achieved respect and equality and a place of deserved honor in our land, as an integral part of the American people.


The worst stain on the national honor of the United States is the oldest and most persistent, and that is our treatment of black Americans. Almost 150 years of human slavery was followed by almost a century of abuse, intolerance, and discrimination.

Not until 1954, did the Supreme Court, greatly to their credit, take the decisive step that began the process irrevocably, of opening the way for black Americans to achieve what scores of other identifiable groups have achieved for themselves in America. The Supreme Court struck down the

hypocritical "separate but equal" school doctrine. This made it possible for black Americans freely "to assume," to paraphrase the Declaration of Independence, "the separate and equal station" among the American citizenry that every other racial, religious, or ethnic group is entitled to--to be fully and equally a distinguished part of the unity of the "one people" who constitute America.

The Supreme Court announced in its historic unanimous decision of 1954 that schools that are racially separate by official action cannot be equal. That decision destroyed perhaps the major barrier to full citizenship for black Americans. Since then there have been many terrible struggles and vicious deeds and heroic undertakings. Progress has been made, but there are still miles to go. I remind us of what has happened, of where we have been, the better to consider where we are, and how we ought to proceed with the work that remains to be done.

Reminding ourselves of the diversity of America helps us to guard against thinking of our school problems in oversimplified terms of blacks and whites. White Americans are not one homogeneous group, but an incredible multiplicity of groups. America is made up of groupings, voluntarily bound together by shared origins, or interests, or religion, or tastes, or customs. These things they share and value make them want to be in each other's company. They want to live near each other, near parents and other relatives, go to church together, join clubs together, vacation at resorts together, listen to music and dance together, eat together, debate



to charity together, and in general separate themselves from others, by choice, for many--if not all--of their important activities.

Most of our major cities have ethnic neighborhoods of long standing. These ethnic groups may have been herded together originally, decades ago, by the hostility of others, but after the prejudice abated, they remained together by preference. They bought homes, built neighborhoods, established shops, and make a distinctive way of life. And even when these groups have grown affluent, studies show that they have tended to move together to the suburbs.

It is also true that many individuals of these groups have chosen to leave the old neighborhoods, to live elsewhere, to give up the old traditions, to stop going to the old church--or to any church--and not to teach their children the language and ways of the old country.

Still others have made a combination, cutting loose and coming back, from time to time, at will. They may still think of themselves as Italian-Americans, Lithuanian-Americans, or Greek-Americans, but they are indistinguishable in their dress, their homes, their speech, their civic activities, from other Americans whose forebears have been here so long that the national origins are either completely mixed or else lost to memory.

This picture of a great multiplicity of distinct groups is an accurate depiction, I think, of the American people. As President, I have met with scores of such groups. It is wrong to think of white Americans as all cast in the same mold. We were a diverse people before we were a nation. That diversity has persisted and increased.



The lesson in all of this is that there is no harm in having, as we do, natural groupings of peoples within the populace. In this sense, separation of people according to their bonds of special affinity is actually beneficial -- as long as the whole people are bound together by an overarching allegiance to the principles of liberty and equality, and as long as these groupings are not used to abuse the rights and opportunities of others.

If we start from the facts of the composition of the American populace, several rules become immediately obvious:

-- No one can be deprived by official action of the opportunity to share in a good thing he may seek simply because he is or is not part of some group.

-- People have the right to live under the law as they choose, where they choose, and with whom they choose.

-- Group affinities cannot be used as an excuse for official support to keep others out of a neighborhood, out of a job, out of a school, or out of a profession.

-- Official force should be used to prevent coerced grouping, efforts to herd people together, to keep them together and down, to separate them from others as if they were inferior.



These rules have been the trend of American decision -- in executive, legislative, and judicial voice -- for the past two decades. The other side of the coin -- and here we have not been consistent -- is that official force should not be used to try to break up these groups. Officials should recognize them as a beneficial fact of American life -- legal, constitutional, and vital.

When we consider how Americans really do live, how America really is constituted, we get guidance on what is right and what is wrong. Everywhere in American adult life we see this sort of grouping -- if not by national affinity or religion or race, then by similarities of tastes and activities.

Suppose someone tried to change all this and outlaw the kind of grouping I have been describing. It would require the use of tremendous official force. Perhaps if a dictator wanted to do it, to destroy our liberties and our constitution, it could be done. But imagine the resistance there would be as families and neighborhoods and suburban enclaves were broken up, as households were ordered to move to other parts of town, as men and women were forced to change jobs or to sell their businesses.

And yet, if we think about it, that is not too different from what we have been doing to our children as we reassign them to schools other than their own -- assignments, by the way, based strictly on



race or national origin, contrary to existing laws which say that pupil assignment must be made without regard to race or national origin.

Adults usually try to avoid putting burdens on children that are too heavy for them to bear. Why then, in the case of the school situation, do we impose on our children what we would not bear ourselves? Are we using the children, are we exploiting them, instead of doing all in our power to help them grow and learn?

What is the point of all this moving around and grouping and regrouping of the children? Do we think it improves their schools? There is no evidence to support that hope. Some advocates of regrouping the pupils seem to think that black children cannot learn unless they are in class with a majority of whites. That sounds insultingly racist to me, and I know it is not true. The fact is that black children can and do learn very well without the help of white children. There are many schools, all black or predominantly black, whose pupils regularly score above national norms or standardized tests.

Now someone might say, we don't exactly mean that black children learn better when they are in class with a majority of white children. What we mean is that pupils from poorer, socially deprived homes learn better when they attend school with a majority of pupils from



better homes. Then I ask, is that thinking going to guide the next step? Are the courts, or some litigious organizations, going to seek to evaluate the families of all pupils -- black and white -- of all schools in a district and begin to redistribute the pupils according to some computation of socio-educational-economic family levels?

Where will such action end? In the guise of doing good for children we would be invading the home and imposing the kind of totalitarian control over the lives of persons and families that is typical of dictators.

I mention this absurdity not because I expect it to happen, but because -- to the best of my understanding -- that socio-economic reasoning is an underlying basis of many court orders for reassigning pupils and shuttling them about from one school to another.

Court orders regroup pupils on the basis of race or national origin to overcome what they consider unfair grouping on the basis of race or national origin. They seek to achieve what is thought to be a more fair distribution within a school district. Evidence is mounting, however, that these efforts are causing the opposite result in the larger regions.

In short, the effort to break down barriers between groups by order is leading to greater separation of groups, in the schools and in residential grouping. And this is happening against the will of most of those who are



moving away, at great cost, from homes and neighborhoods they would rather not leave, at great inconvenience to job-holders who must travel greater distances to work, and with a resulting decrease in the quality of the schools affected by the court orders.

This is all bad enough. In some cases, the relations of groups with other groups are increasingly embittered. In addition, an attitude of resentment against government is being fostered. People who have always been respectful of authority and have felt that they were free to run their own lives, now have their sentiments reversed. These same people now feel powerless to control the decisions that are most important to them as families and as individuals. And they resent the unseen and hidden forces of government that seem to control them.

Worst of all, perhaps, is that they feel they have no voice in these court decisions. These remedies are not worked out in a representative body of government in which they have a vote or a voice. It is hard to think of any development more dangerous to the survival of our representative form of government.

What, then, can be done?

Let me speak directly to each of those most directly involved.

First, I address the judges. I hope I have made it emphatically clear that I will support enforcement of federal court orders. Federal resources are available and will be used if necessary.



Second, I repeat my agreement with the basic Supreme Court decisions wiping out officially sanctioned school segregation. There is no constitutional difference between us. On these points we are in agreement and I want that to be clear before I speak of our disagreements.

My criticisms are not based on an anti-court sentiment. I remind you of an old and sound constitutional doctrine called "judicial restraint." It was long advocated by Justice Felix Frankfurter, and by many eminent jurists before and since -- all of them lovers of justice and upholders of the processes of justices.

My criticism is that you have gone too far in recent school decisions, beyond what the law or the Constitution demands. In some instances you have misread the evidence of social-science research and have relied more heavily on it than the authors themselves think is justified. You have neglected sound judicial advice that any remedy you impose be limited and temporary, because you are not legislators.

I urge you to reconsider and see if there are not more minimal and temporary actions you can honestly take when there is evidence of unconstitutional behavior. For example, instead of ordering sweeping, district-wide, compulsory reshuffling of pupils, you can do as many judges have urged and limit yourself to quite specific remedies: ordering a school board to redraw a boundary, to reassign some teachers, or to change the site of a proposed new school.



One rule can be for you to assign to some political body whatever it can do for itself. Another rule can be to seek remedies that are the least disruptive of existing, healthy, normal patterns of American life -- insisting only on invalidating misuse of official authority to keep some pupils down, or out, on the basis of race or national origin.

The goal we agree on is an all-inclusive society, a national community in which no individual or group is left out. Disadvantaged minorities must be helped to work their way into American society, to take their place among the groups that have a say and get their share.

Our mutual concern must be that when they get there, it still be a society worth joining, not a society that is disrupted and divided, embittered against neighbors and resentful of all authority.

Finally, I ask you judges to keep in mind that when we think of schools we keep children uppermost in our minds. If equal protection of the law means anything, it must require that any plan be designed to benefit every child it reaches, not benefit some at the expense of others. There is more and more reason to believe that your recent court orders have very seldom been educationally beneficial, more often harmful, and productive over-all of very mixed results.



It must not be an easy matter to run a good school, or else there would be many more of them. Your problem as judges is that you have a lot of other business to conduct in court, and all you can do is issue orders from afar -- which few educators would consider the best way to improve the quality of a school.

Many of you are probably now as aware as everyone else is that the courts are just not good instruments for running schools. But, like the man with a tiger by the tail, it is hard for you to know how to let go. My advice is to become practitioners of judicial restraint. You will be pleasantly surprised. I think, at how quickly the supposed tiger will become benign, friendly, grateful and cooperative.

The fact is that it is not a tiger, at all. you have by the tail, but the American people. Parents and children and teachers and school officials, of all races and creeds, just want you to let go.

To those who seek and support court orders to redistribute pupils, I wish to address these words.

First of all, you and I agree on the goal of making all Americans truly "one people." I oppose discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin, in every part of our national life, and consistently voted that way in Congress.



You and I disagree only on the best means of achieving the unity we both want.

As I have argued, your way to the goal just is not working. Ordering children to other schools in one school district often increases separation in the larger region. It therefore occurs to some to make the districts larger. But studies indicate that court orders are most effective in small districts, less effective in large districts.

There is no way to accomplish what you want by coercion or order unless you use sweeping dictatorial powers, forbid everyone to move his residence, prohibit private schools, and, in general, do things from which any person devoted to freedom should shrink in horror.

Do you wonder why many blacks as well as whites are opposed to the court orders? Many of them think, as I do, that their children are not getting better schooling and that education is being lost sight of.

Some also think there are too many hypocrites among the advocates of court orders. They notice that many of the vocal supporters of court orders don't send their own children to the schools that are affected. They live in the suburbs or send their children to private schools. If it is so good for the children, they wonder why they deprive their own children of the benefit of it.



Finally, there are those, and I am among them, who think there are other forces at work, and are willing to let jobs and education and savings and investment bring the change about, as they did for the other groups. In fact they are sure that is the only way the change can occur. The main thing is to make sure that we not allow discrimination on account of race or religion or national origin, to keep anyone out, or keep anyone down.

To opponents of the court orders, I address these next remarks.

If your opposition is based on the conviction that moving the pupils around from school to school is not an effective means of improving education and equal opportunity, then you and I agree.

But if your opposition is based on a belief that one race is inferior to another, or one nationality is inferior to another, then you and I could not disagree more.

But whatever your reason for disagreeing with a court order, I advise you, again, not to carry your opposition to the streets in any illegal behavior. There are three good reasons for this advice.

First, your argument with the court is a legal argument. You disagree with judges about the law and its application. The place to disagree on legal matters is in the courtroom, not in the street. And the way to disagree on legal matters is by legal argument, not by illegal obstruction or force.



Second, your whole position depends on your concern for the best education for your children. If you don't care about that, why should anyone take you seriously? And how can you persuade anyone that you care about your children and the way they will grow up if you set a bad example for them by actually defying lawful authority? By engaging in illegal actions you will be doing the greatest harm to your own children.

Third, and finally, the valid orders of federal courts will be enforced. I am sworn to execute the office of the President and to take care that the laws are faithfully executed, and I will do just that.

Those are three good reasons for doing what others have done in the past to oppose court orders. I hope you will give serious thought to my advice.

I have some words, too, for teachers and pupils. You need to be reminded less than anyone else that schools exist, first and last, for the purposes of teaching and learning. Whatever else is going on around you, keep that in mind.

There seem to be lots of people who are trying to use the schools for almost every other purpose than the one of advancing studies. They are trying to use you for their ends, not yours.

What should you do? Stay cool; keep your nose in your books; do your teaching; do your studying; and don't let others exploit or divert you. The



way for you to defend yourself is to insist on going to school, doing your work, and making the most of every minute to teach and learn. Years from now, what was learned this year in your school will be the only important thing in this whole overheated controversy.

To the whole nation, I address these concluding remarks. We sometimes become discouraged at the strains that grow among us as we try to resolve our differences. But we ought to keep in mind that we are attempting something unprecedented in history. No nation before us has ever tried to build one people out of such a huge population; with such a multiplicity of nationalities, religions, and races; and based on the principles of liberty and equality.

Remember how big we are. In 1790, when our first census was taken, our population was larger than the population of 40 per cent of today's members of the United Nations. Today we are more than 50 times more numerous.

Achieving unity and equality is easier if there is no concern for liberty. With enough coercion, the unity and equality of the prison can be achieved, even for hundreds of millions of people.

But if we insist on liberty and diversity and equal rights for all, have the patience to develop the understanding and moderation to negotiate our way to the unity we promised ourselves so long ago when we dedicated our Constitution to the forming of "a more perfect union."



I look forward to the day, not too distant, when the groups now called disadvantaged minorities will take their place with every one of the other racial and ethnic and religious groups that comprise so much of the American people: together as much as they want to be, no more no less; proud of themselves for their differentness; and proud to be, above all, part of the one American people.

That day will come, but not this year. We live in the here and now. Let the behavior of every one of us this year be at every moment another step toward that future day of unity we all hope for.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR : ROBERT HARTMANN

FROM: MILTON FRIEDMAN *m.f.*

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Cancelled per E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983

By 909 NARA date 12/4/83

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 29, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT T. HARTMANN *RTA*

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I profoundly disagree with what I consider to be its basic premises. This is not to say they are wrong, but that they can be -- and I think would be -- seriously challenged. Therefore, the end result would not be to calm passions but further to arouse them.

I believe these to be faulty premises:

1. That the lot of the Negro in North America is comparable to that of other ethnic and racial elements in our population. There is a fundamental historical, sociological and psychological difference between the condition of Black Americans and other identifiable minorities in this country. No matter how badly the Indians, Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, Japanese, Chinese and others may have been treated, no matter how hard they had to fight and claw their way upward to full citizenship, no matter how many social and legal barriers were in their way, they did come to America voluntarily and they were always regarded by the majority as human beings. The Blacks came in chains, and for two centuries or more were regarded as property and, in some instances, treated as domestic animals. The order of magnitude of their segregation from the rest of American society was, and to some degree still is, infinitely greater than that of any other minority group, and every Black American knows it.

2. That the perpetuation of differences in America is desirable. The fuel that has fired the unique American "melting pot" has been powerful social pressure

by the majority towards conformity. Except in the Constitutionally protected areas of freedom of speech, press and religion, we have been told from infancy that we are all alike and all Americans. Social pressures, primarily the universality of the English language and the pattern of elementary education, have worked to make minorities blend into the unhyphenated American mixture by talking alike, dressing alike, having the same values of good/bad, success/failure, smart/dumb, etc. This has enabled members of minority groups to escape their "foreigner" status in a single generation or less and made us a homogeneous people. (The glaring exception being the Negro, for reasons set forth above. No matter that they adopted the master's language, religion, dress and manners, they were not assimilated and remained, until very recently, locked in their ghettos.) I believe the vast majority of Americans subscribe to the Melting Pot concept and are proud of what it has done, even though painfully. I don't think a swing back to a separated or segregated society fits into the broad sweep of American evolution or conforms to our noblest ideals. Individual differences deserve cultivation and protection, but group or race differences do not.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 29, 1975

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[ca. 8/29/75]

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