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NOV 12 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date 11/12/74

TO: Don Rumsfeld

FROM: Paul A. Miltich

FYI ACTION

OTHER :

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PRESIDENT FORD'S FIRST HUNDRED DAYS

The first 100 days constitute a magic number in the life of a new national administration.

Newsmen are fond of taking stock of a new regime at that point in its young existence.

Looking at the Ford Administration at this time, we find a notable number of achievements -- some full-blown and others still formative.

Immediately upon taking office, President Ford set a tone of stability and continuity in foreign policy, openness and candor in domestic affairs, cooperation and reasonableness in his dealings with Congress.

In line with his pledge of an open administration, Mr. Ford took an unprecedented action. He not only sponsored a series of mini-summit conferences on the economy culminating in a two-day televised Economic Summit, but personally presided over many of the meetings. He has had the broadest exposure to economic views of any of our Presidents.

Following up on the Economic Summit, President Ford laid a 31-point program before the Congress designed to attack slumpflation -- both spiralling prices and a variety of weaknesses in the economy. The President called it a program of action which will help bring balance and vitality to our economy.

In other actions directed at economic ills, President Ford zeroed in on possible price-fixing in the food industry and spearheaded an effort to reduce our dependence on foreign petroleum.



On President Ford's orders, the Justice Department is probing the pricing of meat, milk, bread, sugar, eggs and other food staples and is planning to throw the book at price fixers. Also, he has asked the Justice Department to move against fixed fees by professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and real estate agents.

On the oil front, President Ford took two-pronged action. He appealed to his countrymen to voluntarily cut back on the use of gasoline and ordered a cutback on fuel use by the Federal government. Most recently he created a new energy program management team, which will concentrate both on conserving energy and expanding energy supplies.

Determinedly pursuing peace, President Ford dispatched Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on a number of overseas missions and pressed repeatedly for solutions to the Cyprus situation and the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis.

The President underscored the continuity of American foreign policy and a constant striving for peace throughout the world. He met with the Ambassadors of the various countries and with the NATO ambassadors, met with the leaders of Israel, Poland, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Mexico, Bangladesh, Somalia and Liberia, met with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Israel, India, Argentina, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, Indonesia, Italy and West Germany, announced plans to visit Japan, South Korea, and the Soviet Union, scheduled meetings with the French President in Martinique, and established diplomatic relations with East Germany.



From his very first day in office, President Ford has felt that one of his chief responsibilities is to work with the Congress in a spirit of conciliation and compromise. He has done that, and the fruits are visible for all Americans to see -- landmark legislation in the fields of education, housing, pension reform, campaign reform and energy problem-solving.

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 was far-reaching because it helps boost the longrange prospects for the housing market. But it is also historic -- because it replaces seven categorical grant programs with a single block grant program for community development.

Acutely aware that the housing industry had fallen into a depression, President Ford also acted to bolster it by asking Congress for emergency legislation. The Congress quickly responded with a bill designed to help ease the home loan credit crunch and spur the building of 100,000 homes.

Subsequently the President also signed another bill boosting the availability of mortgage money -- a measure returning to institutions insured by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC) more than \$1 billion in insurance premiums not now required by the FSLIC.

Latest estimates are that housing starts next year will go up by 200,000 from this year's 1.5 million.

A hallmark of the Ford Administration is its atmosphere of friendliness. At the outset, President Ford declared that his would be an open and candid administration. He has proved this by holding frequent press conferences and giving reporters the opportunity for followup questions.

Briefly, here are some of the other actions that have distinguished the Ford Administration. President Ford has:

- * Called upon all Americans to enlist in a volunteer campaign to fight inflation;
- * Established a National Council on Wage and Price Stability;
- * Succeeded in getting a \$54 rollback in the price of 1975 General Motors cars;
- * Issued an Executive Order limiting White House access to income tax returns;
- * Launched a program of conditional amnesty for draft evaders and military deserters;
- * Helped shape a mass transit bill into a 6-year \$11 billion measure that probably will be passed during the lame-duck session in a form he can sign;
- * Worked out an acceptable compromise which will hopefully permit passage this year of much needed foreign trade reform legislation;
- * Moved to cut fiscal 1975 Federal spending by \$5.5 billion and send Congress a balanced budget for fiscal 1976.
- * Met, individually, with five national labor leaders -- George Meany of the AFL-CIO, Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters,

Leonard Woodcock of the United Auto Workers, Arnold Miller of the United Mine Workers, and Paul Hall of the Seafarers.

- * Met with leaders of national women's organizations.
- * Met with representatives of the National Governors Conference, the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and National League of Cities, and State legislative leaders.
- * Met with the Congressional Black Caucus and with civil rights leaders from throughout the country;
- * Met with representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce;
- * Visited the House and Senate and held a series of open door Congressional meetings in the Oval Office.

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A MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT TO MEMBERS OF SIGMA DELTA CHI

You are all concerned about my recent veto of the Freedom of Information Act Amendments -- and understandably so.

Upon assuming the Office of President, I assured my countrymen that mine would be an open and candid Administration. My veto of the Freedom of Information Act Amendments appeared to be inconsistent with that pledge, hence your cries of dismay and even outrage.

The Freedom of Information Act should be strengthened. I would be delighted to sign legislation providing for more prompt, efficient and complete disclosure of information. To that end, I have sent Congress proposals for modifying the legislation I vetoed -- proposals that would meet my objections to the bill while giving us a strong, workable Freedom of Information Act.

There were three major problems with the Freedom of Information Act Amendments recently placed on my desk. These problems probably could have been worked out beforehand except that most of the House-Senate Conference Committee's work on the legislation had been completed before I assumed the Presidency. So I had been playing catch-up ball.

My chief objection to the bill I received is that it would authorize any Federal judge to overturn the classification placed on certain material by an agency simply because the judge found the plaintiff's position to be just as reasonable as the Government's.

In my view, that provision would endanger our diplomatic relations and our military and intelligence secrets.

I can accept court review of classified materials. But the courts should not be forced to make what amounts to the initial classification decision in sensitive and complex areas where they have no particular expertise.

What I have proposed to the Congress is that the courts could review the classification but would have to uphold it if there is a reasonable basis to support it. And in determining whether the classification is reasonable, the court would have to examine all other available evidence before resorting to private examination of the document itself.

My second objection to the vetoed bill is that it gave an agency only 10 days to determine whether to furnish a requested document -- and then allowed only 20 days for a ruling on a decision to withhold the document. An additional 10 days would be permitted in unusual cases.

These time limits are unrealistic. Therefore I have proposed that the two ten-day periods be increased to 30 and 15 days, respectively. If an agency needs more time, it could seek an extension from the court. This additional time would make it possible for the Government to be more responsive to requests, and still would make for a prompt response.

My third objection to the bill I rejected was that millions of pages of FBI and other investigatory law enforcement files would have to be disclosed at the request of any person unless the Government could prove to a court -- paragraph by paragraph -- that disclosure would cause a particular harm specified in the amendment.

I have proposed that if there is a substantial possibility that specified harms would be caused by disclosure, then the document could be withheld. The potential harm we are talking about here is that of depriving a defendant of the right to a fair trial, invading personal privacy, compromising our law enforcement operations, and endangering the lives or the physical safety of law enforcement personnel.

I want to sign good sound legislation strengthening the Freedom of Information Act -- and I have therefore submitted to the Congress specific language dealing with the three problems I have outlined for you.

As I have told the Speaker of the House and other congressional leaders, enactment of the Freedom of Information bill with these changes would produce truly significant and beneficial legislation.

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