

**The original documents are located in Box 39, folder “Q & A - Reception with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 4/13/76” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

ETHNIC PURITY

Q. Can you tell us your response to Governor Carter's statements about "ethnic purity"?

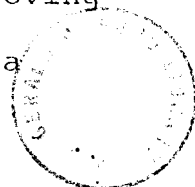
A. As the Governor himself has recognized, that was an unfortunate choice of words. Neither he nor I nor any other candidate, I believe, would use those words to describe our policies.

Basically, I believe that our ethnic heritage is one of the greatest treasures our nation has, and the powers of the government should never be misused to destroy that treasure.

At the same time, I am firmly opposed to racial discrimination against individual American citizens who are seeking to buy or rent a new home. Their rights are protected by law, and as President, I will continue to enforce our laws.

Under the law, the Federal government also has a responsibility to assist State and local governments in meeting the housing needs of their low-income citizens, as determined by those governments. That law shall also be enforced.

Over the long run, I believe that the key to improving the quality of housing for our low-income citizens is a



growing economy -- an economy that will provide better-paying jobs without devastating inflation. This is the central goal we are pursuing in this Administration, and if we stick to our policies, it is a goal that is attainable.

GERGEN  
4/13/76



(Note: You may wish to be generous toward Carter with remarks such as:

As the Governor himself has fully recognized, that was an unfortunate choice of words. It really seems like a slip of the tongue made in the tension and exhaustion of a campaign. Personally, I sympathize with his view that he should be judged on his record -- not on the basis of one ill-chosen remark.

PROS: Shows a President above the battle; shows understanding where others are villifying; recognizes that most people are going to forgive him anyway.

CONS: Might ease Carter's problem in winning Pennsylvania and beating HHH; might insert GRF too far into controversy.)

GERGEN  
4/13/76



## PRIVATE SCHOOL DISCRIMINATION

Q. Mr. President, do you have any comment about the recent Supreme Court decision regarding discrimination by private schools and, in particular, about the position of the Department of Justice in that litigation?

A. The Justice Department is participating in this case because of its duty to defend the constitutionality of an act of Congress. The Department believes its position is mandated by the statute and previous judicial decisions.

We should bear in mind that the case involves a statute which is within the power of Congress to change.



4-13-76

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DICK CHEILEY

FROM: EDWARD SCHMULTS

SUBJECT: Justice Department Involvement in  
Private School Bias Litigation

You requested some background for the President on this morning's news story concerning the position of the Justice Department in certain litigation affecting the right of private schools to discriminate on the basis of race. The material under "Background" and "Justice Department Involvement" was furnished to Dick Parsons by the Solicitor General.

BACKGROUND

The case in question was commenced by two private parties against several private schools in Virginia which discriminated in their administration policies on the basis of race. The contention of the plaintiffs was that such discrimination violated Section 1981 of the United States Code, which derives from the old Civil Rights Act of 1866. This law prohibits racial discrimination in the making of private contracts. The defendants in this case argue that Section 1981 could not be applied to private schools and, in the alternative, that if this section were applicable to private schools it was unconstitutional. The lower court and the U. S. Court of Appeals (Fourth Circuit) held for the plaintiffs. The case has been appealed to the Supreme Court by the defendants.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT INVOLVEMENT

When the constitutionality of a federal statute is challenged in litigation before the Supreme Court, it is required that the Department of Justice be notified of the litigation, the statute in question and the nature of the constitutional challenge. As a general rule, the Department will defend, amicus curiae, the constitutionality of the statute, unless a constitutional prerogative of the President is being diminished.



I have been advised by the Solicitor General that it is clear from previous cases that Section 1981 is constitutional.

If the President is asked about this situation, I think he should respond that:

- (1) The Justice Department is participating in this case because of its duty to defend the constitutionality of an act of Congress; the Department believes its position is mandated by the statute and previous judicial decisions;
- (2) He has been advised that the Department's position is that the statute applies only to most sweeping forms of segregation;
- (3) According to the Department, the statute would not be applicable to religious schools or those organized on some other right of association; and
- (4) We should bear in mind the case involves a statute which is within the power of Congress to change.



DEFENSIVE CAMPAIGN

- Q. Do you feel that Ronald Reagan has put you on the defensive in your campaign and, if so, what do you plan to do about it?
- A. No. I do not feel that he has put me on the defensive. In his campaign for the Republican nomination Mr. Reagan has focused on foreign policy and national defense. In both areas, my administration has a strong record, and I have not hesitated to campaign on that record.. But that is not being defensive.

JBS/4-13-76





CHANGING CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE

- Q. The Associated Press this morning carried a story saying that you were changing your method of campaigning - going out more in the middle of the week rather than weekends - to get better media exposure. Is that true?
- A. No. I have been very pleased by the way the trips have gone on the weekends. I will make some mid-week appearances, during the next month or so, but those have been determined by the dates of the primaries, not by any other factor.



REAGAN REMARKS ON FOREIGN POLICY

Q: What is your reaction to Mr. Reagan's attacks on your foreign policy?

A: Mr. Reagan's remarks on foreign policy reveal an extraordinary ignorance of what this country has been saying and doing over the last few years, perhaps because he has been so far removed from the main stream of America and the public debate on these issues.

Our nation is not "in danger," but it is damaging to the interests of this country when a politician declares to our adversaries and our friends abroad -- completely falsely and ignoring public statements by the President -- that we are in second place. Such statements are both irresponsible and dangerous. They alarm our people and confuse our allies.

-- It is meaningless to say the Soviet Army may now be twice the size of the US Army! Considering that the Soviets have been compelled to deploy close to half of that Army on the Chinese border, that isn't all that surprising. I suppose that if we had to defend our borders and thus had to double our forces, Mr. Reagan would be happier. Simplistic rhetoric such as this reflects a disturbingly shallow grasp of what military balance is all about.



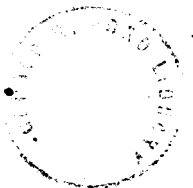
-- For example, Mr. Reagan conveniently neglects to point out that our strategic forces are superior to Soviet forces. Our missiles are far more accurate and survivable. We have over twice as many missile warheads and, after all, it is the warheads which actually reach the target. Our lead in this area has been increasing over the past several years. Mr. Reagan likewise ignores our vast superiority in strategic bombers.

In short, if Mr. Reagan wants to alarm with use of numbers he can; but it only portrays his superficial understanding of these matters and by inflaming opinion -- at home and abroad -- falsely, does not serve the public interest.

-- Let's look at actions as opposed to words. I am the one who reversed the trend of shrinking defense budgets. My last two defense budgets are the highest peacetime budgets in the nation's history. Mr. Reagan should speak to the Democratic Congress about its \$32 billion cuts in defense over the past six years.

Mr. Reagan's misstatements and misjudgments of our foreign policy show equal distortion or ignorance of the facts:

-- He has the facts completely reversed when he claims that Angola was not allowed to interfere with detente. We said and demonstrated exactly the opposite.



It was the Congress, not the Administration, that failed to provide enough support to the Angolan majority in its struggle against Cuban troops and Soviet arms.

-- The Helsinki Conference is clearly recognized as the biggest propaganda setback for the Kremlin in a decade. It is absurd to believe that after two years of hard bargaining, all the leaders of NATO and a representative of His Holiness the Pope went to Helsinki to be tricked into a sell-out of Eastern Europe. My statement in Helsinki, and my visits to Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia on the same trip, demonstrated that I was there to declare what we believed to be the standards of human rights and non-intervention that should govern East-West relations in Europe: Our policy in no sense accepts a Soviet "dominion" over Eastern Europe and I have said this repeatedly.



-- Mr. Reagan attacks our policy toward the Soviet Union and China. Is he opposed to efforts to resist firmly Soviet adventurism, to negotiate an end to the nuclear arms race, and to attempt to relax tensions and build a more constructive relationship? Does he think the American people want a return to the era of cold war confrontation?

-- He would handle the new Panama Canal Treaty by refusing to talk and simply dictating to the Panamanian Government. That is an especially good way to enhance our relations with all our Latin American neighbors who, without exception, support Panamanian aspirations with respect to the Canal. We want a satisfactory agreement that permits the Canal to operate efficiently and protects our national security interests, not a guerrilla war over what would be portrayed as US colonialism.

-- Mr. Reagan deliberately repeats totally false so-called quotes by Secretary Kissinger and ignores the Secretary's explicit denials that such statements were ever made.

-- Mr. Reagan apparently hopes to turn the clock back to 1918, to his childhood, to an era of greater freedom. But what he is actually proposing is a return to the Cold War, to saber rattling and cries of alarm. I regret that kind of defeatism. I say Americans do not want a jingoistic policy of rejection of our international obligations, international economic instability and a world, deprived of responsible



American leadership, that contains the seeds of nuclear conflict. Instead, Americans want calm, firm thoughtful leadership which deals with international problems as they are; keeping America strong, and steering the steady, deliberate course the world expects of us.



WOODSTEIN BOOK AND MOVIE

Q. You said in Texas last weekend that you thought the Woodward and Bernstein book on the final days of the Nixon Administration was essentially accurate, at least in the parts you had experienced. How do you feel about this type of historical journalism or journalistic history?

A. Well, as I said in Texas, I haven't read the book or seen the movie. And with all you talented editors here I don't think I should instantly become a book critic.

JBS-4/13/76



DEBATE

- Q. Federal Appeals Court here in Washington yesterday ruled that televised debates between major party candidates do not come under equal time provisions of FCC regulations. Would you, then, be willing to debate with your opponent during the rest of the primaries or the general election?
- A. I have always found that debates are helpful when the views of the participants are not well known. I believe most people know where I stand on the issues through the decisions I make every day and through my speeches and question and answer sessions with the press and the public.

I doubt it gives the voter much more information for an incumbent President to engage in rhetorical contests or debate with someone who is misinformed on the issues.

JBS 4-13-76





DEMOCRATIC BUDGET

- Q. Would you be willing to accept the Congressional Budget Committee Proposal for a \$416 billion federal budget?
- A. (You may want to wait to frame your answer until after the EPB meeting this afternoon)

JBS/4-13-76



US POLICY IN LEBANON -- MILITARY INTERVENTION?

Q: Why hasn't the US done more to help defuse tensions in Lebanon? Have you given any consideration to US military intervention should the situation become worse and would you consider this if the Lebanese Government asked?

A: Without getting into specific details, I can assure you that we have been actively involved in seeking a resolution to the present tragic conflict in Lebanon. We are pursuing those means we consider best calculated to achieve that end.

Let me state what our policy is:

-- We regard the situation in Lebanon as one to be resolved without outside military intervention. Such intervention would pose grave risks to stability in the area. Our views on this are known to all concerned.

-- From the earliest days of the internal strife we have encouraged efforts to bring about an agreement among the Lebanese on a basic political solution. We support a solution that gives adequate opportunity and security to all groups and communities and maintains Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity and national unity. In this regard, Syrian efforts to help promote a political compromise have been constructive.



US Policy In Lebanon - Military Intervention? (Continued)

-- We are prepared to assist in any way we can in efforts to obtain a ceasefire and promote such a political solution. I have sent Ambassador Brown to assess the situation and to be in closest touch with all parties involved.

-- We have also been providing emergency medical relief assistance throughout the period of fighting.

-- Finally, we made sure that all non-essential Americans left the country some time ago. And we are prepared for the evacuation of remaining Americans should continued fighting make that necessary.



CUBAN INTERVENTION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Q: You and Secretary Kissinger have both said that we will not permit further Cuban intervention in situations such as Angola and that possible US actions are under consideration. What measures are you prepared to take to prevent such interventions from occurring and what would you do if there should be further interventions?

A: As I have said before, Cuban intervention in the internal affairs of other countries is simply unacceptable. Our response to any such situations would be tailored to the specific circumstances. I do not believe it would be wise to speculate on the specific character our actions might take other than to reiterate that we would respond firmly and promptly.

Q: Are you considering a military response?

A: I do not intend to speculate on the specific character of what actions we might take in hypothetical situations.

Q: Is the US considering going to the Organization of American States to request reimposition of multilateral economic and political sanctions against Cuba in light of Cuban involvement in Angola?

A: I have already said that it simply is not useful to speculate on hypothetical situations.



## PANAMA CANAL

### Statement:

The Canal Zone is not a colonial possession. It is not a long-term lease. It is sovereign U. S. territory every bit the same as Alaska and all the states that were carved from the Louisiana Purchase. We should end those negotiations (on the Panama Canal) and tell the General: We bought it, we paid for it, we built it and we intend to keep it.

### The Facts:

Negotiations between the United States and Panama on the Canal have been pursued by three successive American Presidents. The purpose of these negotiations is to protect our national security, not diminish it. The issue is not between us and Torrijos. It is between us and all other Western Hemisphere nations -- without exception. No responsible American can ignore the voices of the Latin American states.

Governor Reagan's view that the Canal Zone is "sovereign U. S. territory every bit the same as Alaska and all the states that were carved from the Louisiana Purchase is totally wrong. The Canal Zone is not and never has been "sovereign U. S. territory." Legal scholars have been clear on this for three-quarters of a century. Unlike children born in the United States, for example, children born in the Canal Zone are not automatically citizens of the United States.