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JANUARY 23, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

ROOM 450
OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING

4:30 P.M. EST

Members of the Cabinet, Members of the Administration, ladies and gentlemen:

I welcome you all to Washington and to the White House, and may I say, Dr. Goodlett, that our new Vice President, a man who has had an outstanding record in State government, I am sure will undertake the same kind of liaison one of his predecessors had, and I personally spoke to Vice President Rockefeller, urging that such a similar relationship be developed, if that is the wish and the desire of this organization.

If I might make a comment or two about weeklies, I think the record will show that when I was campaigning 13 times for the Congress of the United States, 12 times for re-election, I put an abnormal percentage of my advertising budget into weeklies. I thought then, and I still believe, that weeklies are an outstanding means of communication between the publishers and their individuals who subscribe.

I also felt, as I traveled around my own Congressional district, that I could learn more about my Congressional district from those editors than I could from almost any other segment of my constituency. I am sure that all of you fit in the same pattern.

I think your visit here today is particularly well-timed. We are in the midst, as you can tell, of many important developments affecting you and all of your readers. I might just say I came from a meeting with 11 Governors from the Northern part of the United States where I spent a considerable amount of time to explain to them a problem that they are very concerned about, and I am too, of how we are going to equitably distribute the problems that are resulting from an energy conservation and an energy development program.

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This is only one of the many problems that we face here in the United States now, problems that will require considerable sacrifice, problems that will undoubtedly present some hardships, but because of your role, I would like to share some of the Administration's plans with you, and I obviously heard some of the members of the Administration were trying to not only listen, but explain some of the problems we have.

As newspaper publishers serving the black community, it is obvious to me that you occupy a very unique role in the communications industry. You have special insights and very special responsibilities. Sometimes in Washington it is possible to forget the press is much more than the very limited number of newspapers, magazines and national networks which cover the White House on a daily basis.

As I tried to say a moment ago, you represent the hundreds of newspapers that look out not only for Washington and the world, but inward to the cities, the towns and various neighborhoods.

Because of my 25-plus years in the Congress, I think I understand on an intimate basis the paved streets and the garbage collections and that they are just as important to our country and to your readers as oil imports. You are there where it counts, channeling local news to your communities and challenging them to solve some of the mutual problems.

In my judgment, one of the most exciting trends in recent years has been the increasing participation of Americans in their local affairs. This has been seen in everything from the formation of block associations to the revision of city charters.

This increased interest reinforces my great, great faith in democracy. The renewed concern for the community problems would not have been possible without the good work of news organizations such as those that you individually and collectively represent.

Local newspapers as well as television and radio stations are vehicles for community conversation, and community conversation even when there are disagreements are vitally important if we are to mobilize the kind of action that is essential to solve our problems.

Because this group publishes specifically for black communities which were neglected for too many years, you have had to assume some very special and greater responsibilities. Long before the civil rights movement became a national cause, you were communicating to your readers the difficulties faced by blacks, and I know this from the several black newspapers that were published in my own Congressional district.

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With your greater national awareness of black problems, your role is even more important than ever before. You are on the case, day in and out, and this continued attention is vitally needed.

Blacks in our society have too often been mentally segregated by some thinkers and planners who acted as if blacks did not have the same expectations and problems as other Americans. I promised at the very beginning of my Administration to be President of all the people, and I am keeping that pledge.

I can assure you I intend to do so. The Administration will not slice off a small portion of the pie and say, "This is enough for the 25 million Americans who are black." We know that many of the serious problems facing Americans--unemployment, unsafe streets and unequal education--too often press more heavily on blacks and other minorities.

In drafting the tax rebate proposal, one of the major concerns was to see that the burden of the recession did not fall on those least able to pay or to afford it. Our low income citizens -- but at the same time millions of middle class Americans, black as well as white -- have been caught between inflation and recession.

We cannot penalize those who have worked their way up because of their success. I know that you share with me a very deep belief in preserving the upward mobility of our society. In recent years, blacks have made economic and educational gains that must not be wiped out by leaving the middle class out of tax relief.

There are other areas, of course, of black progress that we will not ignore because of the economy. One of the continuing commitments that must be honored is full political equality for all Americans.

As Dr. Goodlett indicated, I told Congress last week that I plan to ask for another five-year extension of the Voting Rights Act first passed in 1965, renewed in 1970 and up for renewal at this time. This law must not be allowed to expire in August of 1975.

The voting rights law has helped open the way for the election of blacks in all parts of the Nation, and that movement must be continued. As I look back over the past 25 years, I am reminded of how far America actually has come, of how many barriers have fallen and the number of prejudices that have been laid to rest.

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More importantly, as I look ahead I know how much work remains before every child born in America has the same opportunities for long life, economic security and educational achievement. Much has been done. Much remains, but together we can make the necessary progress.

Thank you very, very much.

END (4:40 P.M. EST)