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SEPTEMBER 21, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Stanford, California)

THE WHITE HOUSE

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH THE PRESIDENT
AND
TWENTY-FIVE STANFORD LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS

IRVINE GALLERY
CROWN QUADRANGLE
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

4:40 P.M. PDT

QUESTION: Quite likely you will have an opportunity to select someone under the Constitution for the Supreme Court. Of course, we have little guidance to go under on what type person you would select. We know and assume it would be someone highly competent.

The only guidance we have is that in 1970 you suggested that Justice Douglas was advocating rebellion in the United States, as James Reston reported today.

My question is to describe the type criteria you would employ in selecting someone for the Supreme Court, but hopefully be more specific than just saying someone that was a strict constructionist.

Also, a follow-up question is, all of the things being equal, would you perhaps lean toward selecting a woman, considering that we haven't had a woman Justice on the court?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, of course, it is premature to make any decision or imply that I was actively seeking one because all nine members of the court, of course, are still serving and, from everything I understand, the intention is to continue.

But, my feeling is that first you have to have a person who is very qualified in the law, as such. On the other hand, I don't think you can exclude certain classes of individuals because they don't happen to be a practicing lawyer.

We have some very knowledgeable people in the law who might have other current occupations. So, they have to have competence, a very high competence in the law, but that doesn't mean they have to be restricted within a certain framework in a very limited sense.

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They have to be a person of great integrity. I would hope it could be someone in a relatively middle-age group because I think continuity on the court in certain matters is important.

I wouldn't want to make any commitment as to ideology. I don't think that is necessarily something that you can tell precisely, and I wouldn't want to pre-empt anything in this area by any comment I make at this time.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you think you can match your wife's ardent support of the Equal Rights Amendment?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I voted for it in the House of Representatives. I can't do any more than that.

QUESTION: Would you do one more thing? Would you take this back to Betty Ford?(Laughter) A woman's place is in the world. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: She has been doing quite well lately, (Laughter) for which I am very proud of her.

QUESTION: Under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, the United States attempted to help achieve the violent overthrow of the Governments of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Chile. We would like to know under what circumstances your Administration will participate in the violent overthrow of Latin American countries, and I would like to know why you have not spoken out against heinous abuses of human rights in Chile and sought to bring pressure to bear on those who do?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't want to indicate that our Government is going to interfere with the internal operations of any Government any place in the world. I think it is a matter that has to be carefully considered in the context of how it relates to our own national security and to even imply that this country is going to get involved overtly or covertly I think is a mistake for the President of the United States.

I made a comment the other day to show how sensitive the subject is. I was asked a question about the situation in India, and I said it was sad and added a qualifying phrase. It created, apparently, some great stir in India.

So, it is a very sensitive subject, and I just don't think I should discuss it.

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QUESTION: Do you rule out the United States ever again participating in the overthrow of another country?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not want to rule it out or decide otherwise. It has been done apparently in some cases in the past but I don't think a President should, in this very sensitive area, make any commitment one way or another.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I was just wondering what your reaction was to the introduction of the economic charter by President Echeverria in the United Nations?

THE PRESIDENT: As I recall, Senator Chuck Percy, who is our representative at the United Nations, led a very determined fight against it and I have great respect for Senator Percy and Senator Percy, I know from personal conversations with him, was extremely well prepared in meeting the proposal that President Echeverria made, or was made on behalf of him at the United Nations and, as a result of Senator Percy's strong feelings and well-documented arguments, the United States was one of a limited number of nations that voted against it. He was acting for the United States. I was President, so I support him.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my question relates to a commitment to Israel to, I guess, discuss the possibility of providing them with the Pershing missile. In this morning's paper I guess you are quoted as commenting from Los Angeles yesterday, I believe, that you don't presently know whether or not the Israelis possess the nuclear warheads that could be carried on these missiles. My question is that before we would make a commitment to give them these missiles, is this something that we would undertake to find out and if it turns out they do presently have these warheads, would we still give them the missiles?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the basic shopping list that was submitted by Israel is a very extensive one. They want substantial arms aid, including some very sophisticated weapons systems and the Pershing missile and the F-16 are among those listed. In the case of the Pershing missile, the language, the precise language in the agreement simply says we will study whether or not Israel has a justification for the acquisition of that particular weapons system. I am certain that we will, in the process of studying this, cover the whole range of its deployment, its warheads, and everything else.

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QUESTION: Is there any justification now for giving the Israelis a nuclear capability?

THE PRESIDENT: We have no present intention of us giving to any Middle East nation any --

QUESTION: Any means to develop?

THE PRESIDENT We have no present intention of giving any Middle East nation a nuclear capability and that would include, of course, any expertise for the development.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in your address you mentioned a very brief and violent period of American history not too long past now. The news media has recently focused our attention again on a very violent extreme political group. Why do you suppose it is a society such as ours fosters groups committed to violence in a political form?

THE PRESIDENT: I am bothered about that. I honestly don't have the answer. I would welcome any observations or recommendations from all of you as to why, in a society I think by any other standard I have ever observed, and I have traveled in a good many countries, we should have violence and in some of those far more oppressive societies don't seem to have any. If you have any solution to the problem, I would welcome such observations.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, on that subject, perhaps when people are less inclined to trust the legal system, they may think of looking elsewhere in making their own law, which perhaps is where the violence comes from.

On the subject of giving all the people of this country some kind of legal ability to get legal help, it seems that there is very little chance now that people coming out of law schools who want to do public interest law, want to give legal aid and public defense can find a way to do that. It is very difficult to get a job in the law now anyway, but especially in those fields and I was wondering what your Administration proposes to do to expand those kind of --

THE PRESIDENT: I signed the basic legislation which set up the new legislation and I have appointed, or nominated -- have they been confirmed yet, the nominees -- the organization that will, I think, give greater opportunities for young lawyers or other lawyers to participate. As a matter of fact, I recommended for the first year's budget about \$81 million, which is, as I recollect, a slight increase over the existing amount or the previous amount that had been made available for the effort under the old set-up.

I hesitate to refer to my own experience, but there was a great challenge when I got through Yale Law School. I had an opportunity to practice in several eastern cities but it was a greater challenge to me to go back and open up a law office with another young law school student and we didn't have a client. We worked about hours a day and we actually made our expenses the first year.

That was one of the great experiences of my lifetime. I think that is a great challenge. You ought to try it. (Laughter)

QUESTION: My question concerns what has been termed the crisis of our large cities and one of the manifestations of this crisis are the recent problems we are having in Boston and other cities with busing for quality education. It seems to me one of the problems behind quality education in our big cities is that the big cities lack the finances or resources to provide that quality education.

Now, education is only one facet of this -- crisis. It also goes into the other social systems -- transportation, communications, recreation within the cities. I don't recall hearing any programs recently by this Administration, the past Administration, about reversing this, what I would term, a spiral downward of our big cities, to correct that problem, because if we don't correct the problem in the near future, killing the cities will thereby lead to a worsening of life in the United States, if you want to use a broader term.

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But with the exodus in cities of people going out to the suburbs, what you have is that the people in the cities just get worse and the financial structure will deteriorate, the job structure will deteriorate. So do you have any present plans or any future plans to maybe reverse this trend?

THE PRESIDENT: First, I think I ought to set forth a record you may not be familiar with. In 1971 or '72 the Congress passed on the basis of the then Administration's recommendations what we call general revenue sharing where five-plus billion dollars a year goes directly to cities, two-thirds to cities and local units of government and one-third to the States, free without any strings or limitations. That is a very substantial commitment and about two months ago I recommended its extension with \$150 million a year added so that in the first year of the second program, the second five-year program, the annual amount will be about \$6,250,000,000 a year that just goes to those cities and to those local units of government and to those States free of any limitations. So they did get a real shot in the arm for financial resources from the Federal Government to meet some of these local problems, plus the field of transportation, last November -- December -- I signed an \$11.5 billion transportation act and without getting into the details, I had a significant impact in getting the House and Senate to reconcile differences and to make that available. And this is primarily a mass transit act aimed at major metropolitan areas. There are other programs that I think have sought to help and assist major metropolitan areas, New York City included. And just in passing, New York City last year in all its Federal programs, all of them, got \$4,300,000,000 from the Federal Government. We have not neglected New York City.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I realize there are the various program that you have just mentioned, but it seems in my view that the amount of resources that have been devoted to the cities require a much more substantial amount than the programs you have just outlined because the cities are large, the problems are massive and should be tackled and must be tackled in a systematic, organized manner. I gather from what you are saying is that you think that the programs that you have outlined and maybe some others you haven't right now are sufficient to tackle the problem at this current stage?

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THE PRESIDENT: I think so. It has been my general feeling that just the massive piling on of more money to cities doesn't necessarily solve the problems. The programs have to be well worked out, coordinated, and I think there is a fair assumption, a basic assumption I make, that the Federal Government ought not to try and determine how those cities meet their local problems. We do make substantial contributions financially but the actual stimulation of new ideas to meet their problems ought to come from those communities.

With citizen participation in the Housing Act last year, where we went from an old housing program of about seven or eight categorical grant programs where we had urban renewal, model cities, a whole bunch of them, what we did was to eliminate the categorical grant programs, give them the same money. We had a hold harmless provision in that law so they got at least no less than they got before and we said now you get this money, you have community hearings and every city is required by law to have community hearings, so that the people make recommendations to their local authorities for the expenditure of this money.

Now in the communities that I am personally familiar with, I think the expenditure of that money is far better today under that kind of a system than under the old categorical grant program because each city is different, each city has problems that are unique to it and the people give the recommendations to the locally elected officials, they spend the money. All we do is audit that it is honest and we ought to have enough genius in each local city or local unit of government to come up with good programs. And I think we can but it has only been in operation a year.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, it is time to head outside.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I take one more here?

QUESTION: We would like to make sure you have this before you go, sir. It is a petition signed by over 200 students here.

THE PRESIDENT: Fine. I will read it, and let me take one more question.

QUESTION: You have expressed publicly your feeling that busing to achieve equal education is not the preferred way to achieve that goal. What suggestions do you have for attaining the goal of equal education for all children?

THE PRESIDENT: There are a number of Federal educational programs that are aimed at helping local communities in a very broad sense. But, the one that is aimed specifically at meeting the problem of those communities that are under court order or under HEW administrative requirement for the current fiscal year, if my recollection is accurate, it is about \$250 million.

In the case of Boston precisely, in the last year, out of this fund, the Boston school system has been given something over \$4 million to be aimed directly at trying to assist in upgrading the school system in Boston, meeting the challenge and in addition, we have had the top person in the Federal Government, HEW, Dr. Goldberg, who has gone up to Boston to try and work with the local officials in Boston to meet their unusual and difficult problems.

I really believe that this is the approach that ought to be taken. You just don't throw the money up there, you try to take the money and utilize it in an effective way as to student opportunities, student facilities, organization, et cetera.

I think a lot of things can be done, including the list of things that are set forth in the Education Act of 1974, called the Esch amendment, that are a better approach than the ones that have been used in a number of cases by the courts themselves.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 5:00 P.M. PDT)