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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
AT THE
WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL LUNCHEON

ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

1:28 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Mersman, Mrs. Feinstein, distinguished guests, particularly our guests from the People's Republic, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great privilege and a very high honor to have the opportunity of joining you on this occasion, and I thank all of you for the honorary membership in your organization, and I am deeply grateful also for being a transmittal belt for my long, overdue membership card in the Grand Rapids World Affairs Council.

This morning I had an opportunity to announce a very important proposal for a \$100 billion Government corporation to work through the private enterprise system to develop energy independence for the United States by 1985.

It is spelled out in a detailed bill which I will send to the Congress next week. It is my very deep conviction that the United States must not surrender its destiny to those foreign nations on which we now depend for oil. We must move very decisively to give foreign nations a new look at what Americans can do with their great resources when we set out to do it.

The program I envision would enhance America's future at both home and abroad. It would serve the national interest of the United States and would safeguard American jobs and the American economy. I envision a dramatic crash program to develop coal, nuclear and other sources of energy, such as geothermal power, which I saw last spring on my visit here to this part of California, and including oil shale resources which alone are more vast in their potential than all the oil resources of the Middle East. Without such energy independence authority, which would be a Government corporation, our vast natural energy resources may be developed too late to bolster America's leadership in the world for the rest of the 20th century.

As America completes its first 200 years as a nation, we must resolve to solve our energy problem. It is the key to our future.

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At home and in our relations with the rest of the world, it is my conviction that energy independence is vital to protect ourselves against any arbitrary price increases or future embargoes by foreign nations. It is the way to end an intolerable situation in which America's export last year totaled more than \$25 billion to pay for imported oil while plentiful energy is potentially available to us here at home.

The money we now pay out to foreign oil in one year would put over one million more Americans back to work. We must have the earliest possible action to spend these rapidly growing sums at home and to strengthen America domestically as well as internationally.

With those observations, I will be glad to respond to questions.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is William Sumner and I am not sure what Mr. Mersman meant by my associations but for your sake I am a registered Republican.

THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate that. We need more in California. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Well, I have worked on getting a tough question for you. Over the years, Mr. President, foreign aid programs have proved themselves quite long lasting and very costly, some have met with success, probably many others have met with obvious failure. Very clearly, the American electorate is disillusioned with foreign aid and both parties have promised to cut it back as best they can.

However, every Administration has favored foreign aid at some time or another, frequently to buy itself out of a jam overseas. The recent Sinai Accord can be said in part to follow this example and I deliberately use the Sinai example to make the question as tough as possible. We all hope it works, but, Mr. President, in balancing the near term practical usefulness against the huge cost and the growing unpopularity of foreign aid, do you think it is realistic for the American electorate to expect perhaps some cut in the foreign aid bill during the remainder of your five-year Administration? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Let me assure you that at the time that Secretary Kissinger and I had to make some very hard decisions on what we could do to help facilitate the negotiations between Israel and Egypt, we took into consideration the request by both countries for us to make available not more than 200 technicians in the UN buffer zone plus the prospects of substantial economic and military aid to the State of Israel and to some extent, the same to the State of Egypt.

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Let me say that, as we analyze the alternatives -- and the alternatives were simply two -- if we did not play a meaningful role in what we have recommended to the Congress, it would be my judgment that the stalemate in the Middle East would continue with all of the potential volatility, increasing tensions and the high likelihood of another military conflict and each one seems to get bloodier and more costly. That was one alternative.

The other choice was to do what we have recommended to the Congress. I believe it is a good investment in momentum and a long range possibility of an equitable and secure peace in the Middle East. I believe that it is a way in which we can participate in a fair and proper way to achieve the momentum and to hopefully avoid a conflict. And in balancing the difficult choices, the decision by myself, and with Secretary Kissinger, was that this is a better course of action.

And may I say that it is going to be costly, but the general figures used are somewhere between \$2 billion to \$2.3 billion for economic and military assistance for the State of Israel.

I only point out that earlier this year at the time that I was conducting the reassessment of our Mideast policy, I received a letter signed by 76 Senators asking me to make certain that I recommended \$2,600,000,000 for Israel without any participation by Israel in the negotiations with Egypt.

So, going by what 76 Senators felt was a proposal of some magnitude in money, I believe the decision to work with Israel and Egypt to achieve peace -- and I think it is a good, solid program -- it is a better investment than more money being spent, as 76 Senators requested us to do, without any program for momentum of peace in the Middle East. I think it is a good gamble for peace.

The other would be a very difficult potential problem of a high likelihood of war. I think it is the right action and I hope the Congress promptly and overwhelmingly approves, number one, the 200 technicians to serve in the UN buffer zone, and also the necessary amount which, of course, the Congress can decide. But I think it is a good gamble for peace and I hope the Congress responds.

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QUESTION: My name is Robert Gomperts, and I am a member of the Trustees of the World Affairs Council of Northern California.

In a few months time you are scheduled to travel to Peking, and at the moment there is one overriding issue and I would say at least two major issues outstanding between ourselves and the PRC.

The overriding issue is the question of recognition. The major issues are the frozen assets and an end to discriminatory tariffs on goods coming from the PRC.

Do you feel that these issues will be solved during your trip to Peking and, if not, do you feel that your trip to Peking is in the national interest, sir?
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't go if I didn't think it was in the national interest. (Laughter) The precise agenda for the visit by myself to the People's Republic has not been laid out. Preliminary work has been done, and it will probably be finalized in a prospective earlier trip by Secretary Kissinger to Peking.

There has been no final determination as to the items that will be on the agenda. Of course, all that has taken place since the re-establishment of a relationship has followed the Shanghai announcement, and I believe that we are proceeding--the two countries--within the confines of the Shanghai communique.

I would expect that the progress we have made will continue within those constraints, but I am not in a position at this time to give you the details of what the agenda will be except I expect -- and I am sure that the People's Republic expects -- headway and progress and the furtherance of better relations.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Mr. President, I am Alexander Dallin. I teach at Stanford University.

Mr. President, you have been quoted as saying there may be circumstances under which it may be proper to intervene in the affairs of other countries.

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, I didn't hear that. Involve ourselves in what?

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QUESTION: In the affairs of other countries. Since the statement -- if in fact you are quoted correctly -- may provoke some controversy, I wonder whether you might care to specify some circumstances or principles involved that you have in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: It has been traditional in this country, certainly since prior to World War II, during World War II and subsequent to World War II, for the United States to, in one way or another, involve itself directly or indirectly in the affairs of other countries.

In each case, regardless of the individual who was President, it was determined by responsible people that such action involved our national interest. I know there has been controversy about what has been done in one or more countries, but it is my judgment that if properly handled, and with a correct and a very certain relationship to our national security, we should not rule out responsible action in this area.

But, for me to write a prescription here with the great variety of circumstances that prevail, that have prevailed and undoubtedly would prevail, I think it would be unwise.

This is a critical and crucial area where on some occasions what we have done we have been very successful, and it has been to the benefit of the United States and unfortunately in some instances we have had some disappointments.

But, to categorically rule it out or even to prescribe a specific limitation here I think would not be proper for the President of the United States. I am not ruling it out. I am not saying what we are going to do, except there have been some benefits and, if there are, related to our national security, I think we ought to do it.

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QUESTION: President Ford, my name is Neil Joeck. I have no formal affiliation.

I would like to ask a question following up what you just said, I think. Do you plan to take positive steps to discourage those American allies that use torture as a means of political oppression?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't help but ask myself this question. What precise authority do I have as President or we as a Nation to interfere directly with the internal and domestic actions of other nations? We have been criticized on many occasions for being too involved with the internal or domestic operations of one nation or another. I deplore it, I condemn it, but I hesitate to say that the United States should take an affirmative action every time torture, as we understand it, is inflicted upon a citizen or group of citizens of 140 other nations.

We don't like it. We hope it doesn't continue, but for us to be that precise a policeman in every one of 140 some nations of the world, I think would not be approved by a majority of the American people.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Donald Davis. I am President of the Santa Clara Valley World Trade Club.

You, in your opening remarks, have alluded to the problems concerning energy independence. Perhaps related to this issue of energy independence are the Sinai Accords and a much broader picture for the coming years is to attract the leadership role which the United States intends to assume, vis-a-vis the third world countries in connection with their aspirations for redistribution of the world's wealth.

I know that you have spoken at the United Nations and other places on this subject but I would appreciate your personal comments, assuming that you were to continue in office, that what you believe our leadership role would be in attempting to meet the needs for redistribution of the world's wealth, assuming that there is some need, and to meet the aspirations of these countries?

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THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe that we should, as a Nation, participate in the redistribution of world resources. I don't think that ought to be our objective. Our attitude as a Nation was submitted to the United Nations in their special get together about ten days ago by Secretary Kissinger. This was a practical answer to the third world request for economic understanding, political understanding.

There appeared, prior to Secretary Kissinger's presentation, the distinct possibility that there would be a head-to-head confrontation between the United States and the other industrial nations of the world in the third world, because the underdeveloped or third world nations were complaining very bitterly about the fact that their natural resources, whether it is bauxite, tin or coffee, or a multitude of other natural resources were getting a fair shake in the world, at least from the industrial nations. What they wanted, really, was the establishment of a new world economic order. I don't believe the United States should commit itself to a new world economic order.

We believe, as it was expressed in Secretary Kissinger's prepared text, that we should take the individual resources such as bauxite, or tin, or copper, et cetera, on a practical case by case example, try to find through negotiations a proper way for those nations to participate in the growing world opportunity for a better life for all their people. And the net result of the Secretary's presentation was that instead of a head-to-head irreconcilable confrontation, the attitude and the atmosphere at the United Nations was totally different, and it is my opinion that that good feeling and better understanding will be productive in the subsequent meetings of the United Nations and that we ought to carry on as we said we would, working with those nations in some way to make sure they don't have the peaks and valleys of high prices and over-abundance and that they can have a relatively stable return, not under the umbrella of a new world economic order, but under some practical negotiated agreements that will take care of the real problems in each instance.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Barney Rocca, Jr. I am a member of the World Affairs Council, the Commonwealth Club and a past President of the World Trade Association of The Greater San Francisco Bay area.

My question relates to the business in which I am personally engaged, which is foreign trade and agricultural commodities. There has been much discussion recently about the trade embargo on agricultural commodities.

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My question is, why should not our agricultural producers have free access to the world markets for their production, the same as other producers of non-strategic materials?

A second part to the question is how do you construe the Congressional attitude on this issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I made a fairly complete speech out in Oklahoma -- I guess it was Friday (Laughter) -- on this precise subject, and let me summarize it for you. I believe that we should sell our agricultural abundance, not only domestically but internationally, in the free marketplace at fair prices for the farmer. The best way to insure the utilization of full production for our farmers is to find assured markets.

We have a three-year agreement which was just renewed with Japan for an agricultural purchase program by Japan. We have other such relationships with other foreign countries. The big problem is that of the Soviet Union.

If you go back to 1972-1973, you will find that the Soviet Union bought corn, wheat, et cetera, at a relatively low level. And then they went up to the 1972-1973 figure of roughly 13 billion metric tons and then they went down in 1973-1974 to a figure -- if I recall accurately -- of around 3 million metric tons. Then the next year they went up to another figure. This year they have already bought 2.3 million metric tons of grain from the United States and they want to buy some more.

These wide fluctuations are not healthy for the American agriculture. They are not healthy for the farmer because he ought to have some assurance, practical assurance, that what he produces is going to be purchased. So we are in the process now with a "temporary suspension of sales to the Soviet Union"--temporary assuming we reach an agreement--to be based on the signing of a long-term agreement -- five years perhaps -- with an assured guaranteed mandatory purchase by them with potentially an option to buy more. If we work this agreement out, I think you will find a far healthier relationship between our farmers in their markets, a far better relationship between our country and the Soviet Union and an overall advancement of a better world.

This, I think, is the kind of utilization of our great abundance that we can say with pride is part of an affirmative, constructive relationship with not only one country but many others, to the benefit of the farmer and a healthier relationship the farmer has with the rest of us Americans.

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So I hope within the next week, perhaps, or more, hopefully the sooner the better, we will sign an agreement. It looks optimistic, it looks encouraging and, if we do, I think both the producer and the consumer at home and abroad will be better off.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Fudah Hayati. I am a member of the Northern California World Affairs Council, and I have a two-part question.

This country was instrumental in bringing about detente in the Middle East with the Sinai Accord between Egypt and Israel. Can you see this country playing a similar role in Southern Africa, specifically between Rhodesia and the liberation movement?

The second part of the question is in light of the reports of U.S. Marine maneuvers in the Mojave Desert carrying out desert warfare, is there a possibility that U.S. troops would become involved in the Middle East if detente did not hold?

THE PRESIDENT: I see no prospects of the United States military forces participating in the Middle East. I see no reason for that to take place. We are on a course of action which if successful -- and I believe it will be -- that will preclude that.

The United States has been trying to work, not only in the United Nations, but elsewhere, in the settlement of some of the very serious problems in Africa between Rhodesia and South Africa and the nations that are emerging in Africa.

Unfortunately, there are some very serious problems, but I can assure you that our best efforts will be utilized in that area as they have been in the Middle East.

QUESTION: I am Paul Zinner, and I teach at the University of California at Davis. I am also a member of the World Affairs Council.

Mr. President, I wonder if you would give us some insight into the policy considerations that led you to agree to a Helsinki summit in the middle of the summer pretty much on Mr. Brezhnev's timetable, and I wonder if you could also give us a brief reading on the state of detente since Helsinki?

THE PRESIDENT: The timing of Helsinki was not important. The substance of Helsinki, both in the language and the spirit, those are the important things.

The meeting in Helsinki between 35 nations came about because of two or three years of very detailed negotiations between East and West and the various amendments, the various compromises in my opinion, have led or have the potential of leading to a better relationship between East and West, whether it is the confidence building provisions, whether it is the relationship of one nation to another and the freedom of information, the greater freedom of access between nations, and a multitude of things that were involved.

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The language is all right and, as I said in Helsinki, the language we approve of, what has to be certain is that the spirit coincides with the words and there is to be a meeting in two years where there will be a review of all of the participants to see whether the language which was signed in Helsinki is carried out in the 24 months.

And the test is performance. I am optimistic and I believe that if we keep pressure on that we can say that Helsinki was a big plus. If the spirit doesn't exist the words mean very little. But I am optimistic that world pressure will force all nations that participated to have the spirit coincide with the language.

Now the status of detente, detente was not initiated as a solution to every problem in the world or every problem bilaterally between the United States and the Soviet Union, but it has been extremely helpful in a number of instances as a line of communication, as a means of relaxing tensions and as a vehicle for the solution of problems between the Soviet Union and the United States.

I believe that SALT I was a significant step forward, I believe very strongly that the agreement at Vladivostok where Mr. Brezhnev and myself agreed for a cap of 2400 on launchers in strategic vehicles and a 1320 limitation on MIRVing. SALT II is now moving along at the technical stage and there will have to be some very important decisions made between now and when the final agreement is achieved, if it is achieved, and I hope it will.

I think detente has been successful. It hasn't solved every problem but we are a lot better off, in my honest judgment, than to go back to the old days of the Cold War where we talked harshly to each other, we condemned each other, we threatened one another. I don't think the United States and the Soviet Union ought to go back to the Cold War circumstances that prevailed. But I reiterate, we can't expect every problem that comes up to be solved by it.

All we can do is work at it and I can pledge to you and to others we will do our utmost to make sure that detente is mutually beneficial to each country at no sacrifice of national security in either case and of tremendous, immense benefit to the world as a whole. We will do the very best we can.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Bill Wainwright. I am a member of the World Affairs Council and also a registered Republican in the John Baldwin mode from Martinez, California.

I have a question about the House select committee's investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency and their review having publicly demonstrated certain mistaken intelligence assessments on the likelihood of a break-out of war between the Arabs and Israel in 1967.

I am wondering if you intend to facilitate this committee's further investigation along these lines.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me make several comments, and then I will try to answer the precise question.

In the first instance, you must understand that all of the intelligence agencies -- the CIA and the others -- have responded to the Pike committee's request for classified information.

There has been no reluctance on our part to give to that committee all of the requested intelligence information, and I think they recognize that.

I can assure you of a second point -- that under no circumstances will there be any action by me or people working with me to use the classification process to prevent the exposure of alleged or actual criminal action by any Federal authority.

Secondly, there will be no action by myself or my associates to classify so that we protect errors, mistakes that were made over the last 28 years since the CIA was established by law.

The real problem is not their having this classified information. The problem is how they have to use it for the legislative purpose for which the committee was established.

Since they have all of the information, it is not automatically necessary that they make it public. They can examine it in committee, and they can determine from such an examination all of the information that is needed for the legislative purpose for which the committee was established.

I have no reluctance at all, if we could just put a circle around the United States, and give 214 million Americans all of the material as to sources of intelligence, techniques of intelligence, procedures of intelligence. I would have no reluctance whatsoever, if we could confine it to 214 million Americans. But I just don't think that is very practical. (Laughter)

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Some of this information is so sensitive that a few years ago the Congress passed a law saying that any communications intelligence -- that is a very technical term, but it is very significant -- if divulged by any individual except to Congress -- and it should, and I am not alleging they are violating the law but that kind of intelligence -- its source, its techniques, its procedures was made a serious criminal offense by Congress itself, and it is the judgment of a number of the technically qualified people in the intelligence area that there was an error made in the release of some information out of the stacks of classified information we gave them because it probably had the impact of making available some communications intelligence information.

What we have to do is to sit down, not with one committee of the Congress, not one subcommittee, because there are 300 subcommittees and full committees of the Congress. If every one of them established different rules on how we were going to handle with them this highly classified information, I think you would probably have 300 different rules of declassification.

So, what we have to do -- and I can assure you, as others -- we have to find a way of getting a uniformity in the handling of classified information by the Congress and the 300 committees and subcommittees and the Executive Branch so that what is essential can be made public and what is so sensitive that it should not, if we can't do that, after 200 years of cooperation between the Executive and the Legislative Branch, something is wrong.

I am an optimist, but it is a very serious matter. I am not going to be a participant in destroying the effectiveness of a good United States intelligence agency because that involves our national security, period.

One more, I guess.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Clark Maser. I am a member of the World Affairs Council and an elderly skier. (Laughter)

What steps should the United States take if the State of Israel is expelled from the United Nations, which has been threatened by the so-called tyranny of the majority? Should we withdraw in that case all financial support to the United Nations or should we withdraw from the United Nations?

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THE PRESIDENT: I, as well as Secretary Kissinger, have strongly spoken out against the threats that primarily came from the nonaligned nations. The attitude that we expressed toward the nonaligned underdeveloped nations has, to a substantial degree, softened some of the prospective actions that were anticipated in the United Nations.

You don't find that pushing quite as hard today as it was six months ago or a year ago.

Now, we believe in the universality of the United Nations, and I don't believe nations should be kicked out because the majority have a grudge or an adverse point of view. You can't make the United Nations do its job, perform its function, if a simple majority in the General Assembly can just arbitrarily decide that that nation ought to be kicked out.

I totally disapprove of that procedure, and this country, as long as I am President, will strongly, vigorously fight against any such action against any nation, and we have said this particularly in reference to Israel.

I believe our firm stand, the efforts of Secretary Kissinger at the second session has pretty well diluted the prospective action concerning Israel in 1975. If there is any reaffirmation of what appeared to be an action, we will vigorously fight any action by the General Assembly, and we will take a strong stand, the strongest possible stand in the Security Council.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 2:10 P.M. PDT)