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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
LOS ANGELES PRESS CLUB BREAKFAST

HYATT HOUSE INTERNATIONAL

9:02 A.M. PDT

John, Ev Younger, Mayor Bradley, Bishop Ward, members of the Los Angeles Press Club, and guests:

First, let me thank you from the bottom of my heart for the honorary membership in this very prestigious club. Let me say that 30 years ago I had no premonition that I would be here, either, on such an occasion. (Laughter)

But I also would like to thank your good Mayor Tom Bradley. The Ford family are deeply indebted to Tom and his wife. My wife Betty has been out here on a number of occasions and I visited the City on quite a few occasions, and in each and every instance Tom and his wife have been very cordial and warm in their reception, and I thank you very much, Tom.

I might add that it is Ron Nessen's 42nd birthday. You know Ron started his job as a young, healthy, alert and vital newsman. (Laughter) Look at him now. (Laughter) But I might add as a postscript, I think Ron does a first class job for me. Any of the problems that arise are mine, not his.

But, John, and members of the Press Club, I am deeply grateful for the invitation to be here this morning. I am told that the Greater Los Angeles Press Club was founded on Friday, June 13, 1947, and one year later, for the celebration of your first birthday in 1948, you took over the Coconut Grove and invited the President of the United States to be your guest. Although it isn't quite your 30th birthday, I congratulate you and wish you many, many happy returns, and I hope that you will invite me back to help you celebrate your 31st anniversary or dedicate your new West Coast communication center. If you do, I will accept.

The most memorable quote from Harry Truman's appearance before the Press Club here 20 years ago was his observation "The President of the United States is behind the eight ball a good deal of the time." I don't see where things have changed a great deal. (Laughter) But, exciting as President Truman's comeback trail in California was during the campaign, I wasn't paying too much attention to it.

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I had a campaign of my own to worry about, my first, in 1948. The main issue in my campaign was foreign policy, whether the United States should exercise its role of leadership in the post-war period or whether we should retreat into old-fashioned isolationism, whether we should demobilize further and reduce our defenses for domestic programs or whether we, with our allies, should brace ourselves to bear a long-range cost of preserving peace and freedom throughout the world.

Although I disagreed with President Truman about most other issues in that campaign and denounced the Washington establishment at every opportunity, I supported him on such important international issues as the rebuilding of the Western Europe, the establishment of NATO, and the resistance to the Soviet threat.

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Let me tell you how I reached that conviction, and I still hold this situation as America's role in building a safer and saner world. In 1934, as Hitler began his rapid rise to power, I finished the University of Michigan torn between my longstanding ambition to study law and making some money playing professional football. The first time I ever saw the Pacific Ocean was when I came to California to play in the Shrine East-West Game on New Year's Day, 1935. I got my first look at the Atlantic Ocean a few months later when I got a job as an assistant football coach at Yale University. I figured I could go to Yale Law School in my spare time.

But, they said that was unheard of, and it took me two years to convince the authorities that I could do both. Between the law library and the locker room, we talked about the wars, the rumors of wars that were going on in Europe as well as in Asia, and some of us believed Wendell Willkie's warning that America was a part of one world and should stand with the forces of freedom and decency if they were to survive.

I had just hung up my shingle and my Yale Law School diploma back in Michigan when the staggering news of Pearl Harbor turned all of our news into action. As it did for so many other Americans, California provided my last liberty on the way to the Pacific, and California was the first welcome sight at home at the end of World War II.

Many in my generation did not come back, but we who did were determined to build a peace in a world that would endure for our children as well as our grandchildren. We knew it was up to the United States because only through our sustained strength -- military, economic and moral strength -- could there be a chance of lasting peace, and I run for President of the United States in 1976 on that same policy, and I intend to win.

I know that you want to hear specifics instead of generalities and facts instead of frustrations. The foreign policies of this country, in my judgment, ought not to be characterized as Truman policy, Eisenhower policy or Ford policies; certainly not Acheson or Dulles policies or Kissinger policies, but as the policies of the United States that reflect the real purposes of the American people when they follow their finest instincts.

Since Washington, who told us truly that the best way to preserve peace is to be prepared for war, there have been continued elements in our foreign policy as well as unforeseen events and discouraging setbacks. We have, by and large, remained faithful to the principles on which this nation was founded some 200 years ago: Self-determination and love of liberty, the obligation of the strong toward the weak and of the prosperous toward the poor.

We have learned the hard way that we cannot force freedom on the unwilling, that we cannot fill every outstretched hand or involve ourselves in every faraway fight. But, we can be an immense influence for good, for justice, for reason and for peace throughout the world.

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Let me cite just a few examples of what I mean specifically. Take SALT II --the negotiations with the Soviet Union to limit strategic nuclear weapons and launching systems. As everybody knows, both the United States and the Soviets have more than enough of these terrible weapons to deter any attack by the other. But until there is a mutually satisfactory agreement fully verifiable, neither side can permit the other to gain strategic superiority, and so both sides continue to build more and more systems at a very tremendous cost.

What is our United States objective in SALT II? To further reduce the dangers of a runaway thermonuclear arms race and the risk of an unthinkable holocaust. What are we trying to agree upon with the Soviet Union? A cap or ceiling on the total number of launchers and bombers either side can have ready for use at any given time. If new ones are added, the same number of existing strategic systems have to be scrapped.

At Vladivostok, for the first time we agreed to equal numbers of missile launchers and bombers for us as well as for them. For years the Soviets had held out on the grounds that their defense needs demanded that they have more than we. Furthermore, the equal numbers we agreed upon would excel the Soviets to destroy some of their existing strategic systems and allow the United States to complete our present programs.

What remains for both sides is to find a way to deal with certain new missile and other systems capable of either strategic or tactical use. We call them more or less gray area weapons systems. And, of course, whatever is agreed to would have to be mutually acceptable to both sides.

If this is resolved to our satisfaction, I will send the negotiated treaty to the United States Senate for full scrutiny and public debate. This is true of all of our treaty negotiations with super powers or with smaller neighbors. We are doing nothing behind the backs of the American people or contrary to the constitutional checks and balances on the Presidential power to conduct foreign relations with other countries.

And there is one more thing that I can tell you: Whenever I get a good agreement that protects the interests of the United States and advances the prospects of permanent peace, I am going to sign it and send it to the United States Senate whether it helps me or hurts me in this election.

In Portland the other night, I talked about Africa. I will only repeat that this huge continent commands the sea lanes of the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, as well, as well as a wealth of raw materials which we increasingly rely upon.

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The Soviet Union recently demonstrated an intense interest in the southern part of Africa and our Congress deliberately let strategic Angola fall under their influence. I have used and shall continue to use diplomatic counter-measures and whatever means may be essential to our national security to keep open all of our strategic sea lanes and to check Soviet involvement and Cuban adventurism, whether in Africa or the Americas.

But I will take the path of peaceful persuasion and negotiation as long as it is open. I will not let the United States' foreign policy become a political football if I can in any way possibly help it.

But let's turn to the Middle East, under another strategic area of the world, where our perseverance for peace is at least paying some dividends. I am very proud of last year's Sinai agreement as a milestone on the road to peace with Israel and her Arab neighbors who have been inconceivable a few years ago. The leaders of both Egypt and Israel trusted the United States, trusted us sufficiently to make this historic first step after decades of distrust and four costly wars, not only bringing death and destruction to them, but also threatening a confrontation between us and the Soviet Union.

Because of the foreign policy, we have pursued a friendship and fairness toward the moderate Arab nations and a continuing commitment to the security and survival of Israel. The United States -- and the United States alone -- can exercise such influence for peace and stability in the Middle East.

Ours is not a policy of threats or bluster, but of firmness, patient mediation and growing trust. A strong Israel is essential to a stable peace in that area, the disruptions of which in 1973 brought on the oil embargo that not only weakened our economy but crippled Western Europe's as well.

Our commitment to Israel is demonstrated by almost \$4 billion in the two budgets that I have submitted to the Congress, which is not only in Israel's interest but in our own, and the free world's. But our strengths and our goals of peace and freedom will be to no avail if we lack the will, the unity and the steadfastness required to use our power to support our friends. If there is a doubt, if there is uncertainty about our cohesiveness and the clarity of policy, our friends cannot be protected nor our opponents dissuaded from aggressive adventures.

President Truman, recalling the whistle stop campaign that brought him behind your eight ball in 1948, wrote in his memoirs that there could hardly have been a worse time for a political election than in that summer. He was trying to persuade the Russians to negotiate and to prevent a war in the Middle East.

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While he was battling the do-nothing Congress, as he called it, he was also being assailed by the right wing of his own party for being an appeaser and by its left wing for being a warmonger. Well, as Mr. Truman often said, "If you can't stand the heat you should stay out of the kitchen."

So, now being in the same kitchen behind the same eight ball, I would be glad to respond to as many of your questions as we have time for.

QUESTION: Good morning, Mr. President.

There has been some criticism that your campaign lacks a theme; they say it lacks vision, a rallying cry. Would you please respond to that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe we have a theme. I have been preaching it almost from the inception of this Administration but, more directly, since the campaign started in January in New Hampshire: peace, which we have achieved and which we intend to maintain; prosperity, which we have accomplished despite the problems of the last 12 months, we are well on the way to a surging economy; and the restoration of trust and confidence in the White House itself.

And my vision, as far as the next four years and the next century, can be very simply put -- and let me go back just a bit. Our first century of America resulted in the United States accomplishing the unbelievable, of having a good, free Government where freedom was a vitally important ingredient and where the procedures for Government were well established.

Our second century of this great country developed our industrial capacity so that we now have the greatest capacity in that regard of any nation in the history of mankind.

Of the vision that I have for the next four years and for the next century, is just this: Our third century ought to be the century for the individual. I think we have become dominated by mass Government, mass education, mass labor, mass business, mass industry. I think it is about time that we ought to put the emphasis in the next hundred years on the individual, and that is my vision for this country.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: Mr. President, the news media are increasingly concerned with the tendency of the courts throughout the United States to conduct trials in secret and to issue gag orders which we consider to be in violation of the Constitution. Does your Administration plan any action with regard to that?

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THE PRESIDENT: We, in my Administration, have some differences with the courts ourselves -- (Laughter) -- so I have been admonished by my Attorney General and other legal advisers that I should not, under any circumstances, tell the courts what they should or shouldn't do. I have been tempted, but I have bitten my tongue on a good many occasions.

I can only say that I sympathize with the views that the news media has. I think it would be unfortunate if the courts of this country should close the doors to the public and to the press in the conduct of either criminal or civil trials. Our society has always been, and I hope always will be, predicated on openness.

I might add parenthetically, that is one of the things we have tried to do in the White House in the past 22 months. So, I am sympathetic, but I am not sure we can do anything in a legislative way to remedy the situations. Maybe a few new judges might help, however. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you talked about the successful Sinai agreement, and Mr. Kissinger has played a large and important role in the Middle East. He has suddenly resigned and, of course, you are having pressures from Mr. Reagan, and I just would question Mr. Kissinger's resignation, and is that politically motivated?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I am not familiar with any words or actions by Secretary Kissinger that would indicate that he is going to resign. I strongly support our foreign policy, which is a result of decisions that I make and which is the result of the execution of it by him as Secretary of State.

How do you judge whether a Secretary of State has done a good or bad job? I think the way you do it is to see whether this country has achieved, maintained and has a capability of maintaining peace in the future, and when you look at the policy of this country at the present time, we have achieved it, we are maintaining it and we have, I think, the opportunity to continue the maintenance of peace.

So, when you have a good policy and the person responsible for its execution, I don't think you ought to break up a good team, and I don't intend to let Secretary Kissinger go because I think he has been a darned good Secretary of State.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I was going to ask a question about Secretary Kissinger, but I think I will change it in view of your answer, because you have already answered it.

Why should people, especially the Republicans of California, vote for President Ford instead of Governor Reagan? (Laughter)

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THE PRESIDENT: Well, I appreciate the change of question that you -- (Laughter) -- well, my answer is very straightforward and very simple. In the 22 months that I have been President, I have turned the economy around, and the situation was very serious when I became President -- inflation, 12 percent; we were on the precipice of a serious economic recession.

The record shows that we have turned the recession around so we are moving in the right direction, both from the point of view of employment and unemployment. And certainly we have made great strides and progress in combatting inflation. We have ended a drastic and serious and frustrating war in Vietnam.

And the prospects for peace in the future, I think, have never been better. We have the alliance of our friends in Europe and the Pacific and we have the respect of our adversaries. And certainly, the open door and candid and forthright policies we have had in the White House since I have been President, in my judgment, justify another four years for Jerry Ford.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: Mr. President, it is nice to see you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Nice to see you again, Dan.

QUESTION: Thank you.

Mr. President, you said Congress deliberately let Soviet influence spread into Angola. What do you believe Congress should have done to stop that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, prior to the Soviet massive intervention and prior to the Cuban intervention, with some 12,000 to 15,000 military personnel, there were three forces -- the MPLA, which was being supported to a minimum degree by the Soviet Union; the FNLA; and the UNITA forces which we, to a degree, were supporting.

It looked, as I recall, in October, that if we were able to add a few million dollars with no U.S. military personnel, that the UNITA and the FNLA forces could have prevailed. And I went through the proper procedure with the various committees of the House and the Senate, told them what we wanted to do with the money that they had made available for our intelligence covert operations.

The Senate, particularly, said no; in other words, cut our ground from underneath us. And the net result is we couldn't spend the money to help the two what we thought were the legitimate forces in Angola.

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The minute the Senate of the United States and eventually the House joined them in removing our capability to spend this money in conjunction with some other allies throughout the world who were ready to help us--the minute that happened, the Soviet Union accelerated its military involvement with some \$200 million worth of arms, sophisticated weapons, and the Cuban troops moved in en masse, and when that happened the Soviet weapons and the Cuban personnel, the UNITA and the FNLA were wiped out and the MPLA took over, and the net result today is you have a festering situation in Angola where you still have 12,000 to 15,000 Cuban mercenaries, supported by the Soviet Union, and the danger of that situation developing in other Southern African countries. I think it was the worst mistake that the Congress has done in a long, long time, because it has accelerated the radicalism in Southern Africa.

When I sent Secretary Kissinger over there two or three weeks ago, it was aimed at trying to get the moderates to come back from radicalism and to keep the radicals from going into a violent race war, and I think we made a lot of headway.

But this all could have been avoided if we hadn't made a serious mistake -- when I say we, I say the Congress -- it all could have been avoided if they had given us a relatively small amount of money to help what I think were the legitimate parties in Angola.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

QUESTION: Mr. President, this will be the last question.

THE PRESIDENT: We can have one more after this if somebody is ready, willing and able.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I wanted to know whether you believe that there are some situations in which busing could help toward the implementation of the 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation ruling?

THE PRESIDENT: Basically, I have opposed the kind of busing remedy that the courts have utilized for the achievement of quality education. I think the courts have gone much too far in most cases in trying to achieve quality education by the imposition of court-ordered forced busing to achieve racial balance.

I am strongly opposed to segregation. I fully oppose the constitutional rights of those who have been discriminated against in the past. But the Court really has a tool in court-ordered forced busing.

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I can cite one case that I am personally familiar with where they handled that remedy in a responsible way -- my own hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan. A judge used good judgment and the problem was solved. We took care of segregation in a proper way constitutionally and, at the same time, we were able to put the emphasis on quality education.

But I can cite some other judges -- and I won't do that because the Attorney General admonishes me not to do so -- where I think they have gone far too far, and the net result is we have torn up a number of communities and it is tragic and sad.

I hope that the Supreme Court in the proper case can give some better guidelines, more specific guidelines to some of these lower Federal courts so that they can use a better judgment in trying to achieve, first, quality education and, secondly, the ending of segregation, and the protection of constitutional rights.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if given four more years, what will be your Administration's top domestic priorities?

THE PRESIDENT: The top domestic priority would be to insure that this country has the kind of economic strength and equity that I think we can achieve. We have to get our rate of inflation down lower than it is even today. We have to provide jobs for the 1,800,000 young people who are coming into the labor market every year. We have to expand our capability to meet the thrust and the challenge of other economies around the world, both those behind the Iron Curtain and those in our free industrial society.

If we can provide the economic climate that I think this Nation has such a capability, in my judgment, most of our other problems can be solved in the process.

So, I intend to make sure that we keep for the next four years the kind of progress and headway in jobs, in licking inflation, and equity for those people who are seeking employment with the emphasis on the private sector.

Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 9:34 A.M. PDT)