

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 30, 1969

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
SENATOR HUGH SCOTT
AND
CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD
THE ROOSEVELT ROOM

AT 10:35 A.M. EDT.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Those of us who come from Michigan are accustomed to an announcement, usually in the Fall, of a new model announcement, and particularly if you have the name Ford, that is more or less traditional.

It is my pleasure to introduce a man to you that all of you know and have known for a good many years, my new partner in the Republican Leadership, Hugh Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you very much, Jerry. I wish it were a more streamlined model.

I would like to say at the beginning that I really do look forward to this inquisition period, having lived through somewhat similar periods.

On one point this morning, the President has made a statement indicating that since it is the will of the House of Representatives, and since he has had additional information, that he intends to support the Constitutional amendment providing for the direct election of the President and Vice President.

In the Senate Judiciary Committee, the subcommittee originally recommended the district plan, which I supported from the subcommittee to the full committee. It is probable I will still vote that way in the full committee. It is even more probable that the full committee will report out the direct election plan.

I have said that I am in favor of any plan on which the Congress can agree, and if they do so report it out, I will support the direct election plan.

I have never spoken against it other than to say that I thought the district plan had a somewhat better chance of approval by the States. We now find, especially from some surveys made by Senator Griffin, that only a couple of States seem to be disposed against the direct election plan.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: It was noted by the President this morning that he signed, I think yesterday, the first appropriations bill for fiscal year 1970, which is about two months later than the beginning of the fiscal year.

MORE



It is my best recollection that this is the latest date that the first appropriation bill has been put on the President's desk for his signature. I think this is an indication that the Congress is not moving as fast, not only in appropriation bills, but in all legislation, as the Congress should. We hope and trust that in the remaining weeks, or perhaps months, of this Congress that there will be more action on the various legislative programs that the President has sent to the Congress.

I trust they will, and if they do act more promptly and more effectively, then I think the President, in the area of crime, in the area of fighting inflation, will have a lot more tools to do the job.

We also discussed, as I suspect you might have thought, the situation involving Vietnam. It was the view of the President, it was the unanimous view of the Republican Leadership, and I think we reflect the overwhelming majority of the American people, that there must be action on the peace front, and there must not be capitulation or "bug-out" in our conflict in Vietnam.

It was the feeling that the President's program of working in Paris for meaningful negotiations and at the same time, in the long run, seeking the replacement of American troops by Vietnamese forces, that we were on the right track for peace, and that those who wanted to set a deadline five, 18 or 20 months from now for a withdrawal, were, in effect, undermining the peace negotiations in Paris and directly prolonging the war.

The Administration believes that the quickest way to end the fighting, to end the casualties, is to have flexibility and to convince the enemy that the American people are unified for action at the peace table and for action in ending the war.

The various resolutions that have been suggested, in effect, close the door to peace until December 1, 1970, or later. The Administration, those of us in the Congress on the Republican side, want quicker action, not delayed action.

SENATOR SCOTT: The Administration is on a peace course. The American people and the Congress clearly, in our judgment, oppose these cut and run or "bug-out" resolutions. We believe that that will, in time, become very clear as public sentiment expresses itself.

In regard to the October 15 demonstrations, I would suggest that those people who want to demonstrate ought to demonstrate against Hanoi. This Administration has brought about changes. Instead of gradualism upward, we have something better than gradualism downward, not only in the de-escalation through troop replacements, the de-escalation of draft calls, laying a solid May 14 peace proposal on the negotiating table, meeting the problem of a new government in Hanoi; but during all of this time, very few of these volunteer advice-givers, who will gather on the 15th of October, seem to have thought of the fact that it is Hanoi which is inflexible and not the U. S. It is Hanoi which has made no visible moves and not the U. S.



I would suggest that Americans demonstrate against the real adversary, which is the government of Hanoi, and not the Government at Washington.

Q Senator Scott, yesterday I believe you introduced or spoke out against these resolutions on the basis that you would like a 60-day moratorium, shall we say?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that in 60 days from now there will be a speed up in the pace of the peace efforts on the part of the Administration?

SENATOR SCOTT: Senator Griffin and I were discussing this before I made that statement and after. We are both of the opinion that we should select some rather arbitrary period, since people have been talking dates for withdrawal and since once you set a date, you might as well call the negotiators home if you believe that way, and rather than think in terms of a remote 15 months date for the withdrawal of troops, which meanwhile handcuffs our negotiators, we suggested a shorter period of time as a proposed "quiet period" for a united front, a demonstration to Hanoi on the part of Americans.

I think perhaps a withholding of so much volunteer expression might be a small contribution which each of us can make to peace.

Q What about at the end of that period, are we going to expect to see you support the resolution by Senator Goodell, for example, if no progress has been made?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, you will not see me supporting any resolutions which second guess the responsibility of the Government at Washington and of the President.

What I am saying is that at the end of 60 days, let's take another look at it, but at least let the President have an opportunity to find out from the new government at Hanoi whether there are some chances for reciprocal responses.

Q Senator, in your reference a moment ago, are you saying, in effect, that if a peace has not been achieved by, say, the end of 1970, we may as well bring the negotiators home from Paris?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, I am saying that if we were to take seriously the various troop withdrawal resolutions fixing a remote date like 15 months from now, that is equivalent to their saying that there is no point in having the negotiators in Paris, and why not bring them home now, because if you say we are definitely going to withdraw troops in December of 1970, Hanoi is immediately going to do nothing at the peace talks, continue their aggressiveness, and this undercuts the negotiators and no purpose is served in having them there should such a resolution pass.

Q Senator Scott, I noticed the advertisement calling for the October 15 demonstration was signed by two Republican Senators, among others. What do you propose to do about it?

SENATOR SCOTT: I propose to make my own views clear, which I am trying to do here. I am not quarreling with individual Senators. I am just expressing the same right to an opinion as they are expressing.

Q Senator, Congressman Ford -- both of you -- we have been told that the Administration has a ceiling beyond which they will not go as far as troop reductions if there is no response from the other side.

Does the President, as far as you know, have any time in mind beyond which he will not go as far as perpetuating the war or allowing this war to continue?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I know of no ceiling below which the Administration will not go, regardless of the negotiations in Paris. The amount and the timing of our troop withdrawals in Vietnam depend on other factors, such as the capability militarily, of the South Vietnamese forces to take over and do the job in a replacement way, and the continuing decline of infiltration which, I understand, is now somewhere between one-third and two-thirds lower than it was before.

Those are the factors that I think will determine whether we add to the withdrawal that has already been started. They can continue, and I trust will continue, regardless of the activity in Paris.

Q Was any assessment made of the lower level of fighting that has been going on in Vietnam for the past month or so?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: There was no specific discussion of it this morning, although by inference it was brought up because of the lower infiltration rate, the overall reduction in what the enemy was doing. This is encouraging.

On the other hand, the adamant, anti-peace efforts of the enemy in Paris was discouraging. The new government in Hanoi apparently is taking a hard, hard line.

What we have to do is to convince them, as the President has been trying to do for the last eight months, that we are willing to negotiate. They are the enemies of peace, those in Hanoi at the present time, and apparently at least for the time being, are more adamant than Ho Chi Minh was.

Q On another subject, were the President's social security proposals discussed, and the second point, do either of you think that Congress can be held to the ten percent increase which he proposed?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: First, the matter of social security was not discussed this morning. I would hesitate to say what the Congress will do on social security as to the amount until it had some hearings and we get a better reading on it.



Q Senator Scott, on the electoral reform, what do you think of the prospects of the Senate carrying the Administration's proposal?

SENATOR SCOTT: I think in the light of Presidential support, the prospects are pretty good for passage by the Senate. I have become more optimistic of its chances of passage by the necessary three-fourths of the States.

Q Do you think it would be done in time for the 1972 elections, when President Nixon might be expected to run again?

SENATOR SCOTT: I should think we could. There is no guarantee of that time element being met, but I suppose we could.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think it is feasible, but the odds are no better than 50-50. If the Senate should act before we adjourn this year, and then it is available to the respective States early in 1971, I think it might be done, but I would not be gambling any more than 50-50 that it would take place.

SENATOR SCOTT: The normal progression of the ratification of a Constitutional amendment is usually longer than one year, so the odds, I think, would be against it.

Q Both of you used the term "bug out", and I think Senator Scott said "cut and run," to describe these resolutions.

SENATOR SCOTT: I originated the cut-and-run phrase around Washington. (Laughter.)

Q Does the President share your characterization of those resolutions?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, sir.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I can say affirmatively, to second what Senator Scott said, that the President does feel very strongly that these resolutions which inevitably prolong the war and then lead to a bug-out ~~are~~ not in the best interest of the United States at this time.

Q Senator, are you saying then that everybody who backs the October 15 demonstrations would be in favor of the bug-out solution?

SENATOR SCOTT: In the first place, I don't know who they are; I don't know how many there will be. I don't think many will know why they are gathering in the first place, and those who do are bound to disagree and will develop into all sorts of factions from the extreme-like left to any other area not presently occupied.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I would say that there was no statement by Senator Scott or myself that those who signed that petition and those newspaper adds are saying what you allegedly said.



What Senator Scott has said and I reiterate, is that those who are demonstrating on October 15 could achieve much more, accomplish a great deal more, if they would direct their pleas to the new regime in Hanoi and also to the Soviet Union, the Kremlin in Russia.

Q Do you really think the regime in Hanoi would be affected by that?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Yes, I think it would, and this is quite interesting. In the last eight months, because of President Nixon's changing the atmosphere so that we have made a specific program in Paris for peace -- I think it was May 15 -- world opinion is on our side in this overall situation, and if Americans on October 15 would direct their attack at Hanoi and would plead to Hanoi for action at the peace table, I think it would, in addition, further world atmosphere on our side and against them.

Q Congressman Ford, do you think in this same eight months that American opinion as opposed to opinion in other countries, has shifted toward the Administration's views?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: My impression from various questionnaires that I have seen on the Hill and all over is that the American people, when they look at the results, which is a withdrawal of American forces instead of an escalation of the commitment of American forces, the drop in American casualties compared to any previous period in the last two years, as a consequence of the results, are favorable to the policies of President Nixon.

On the other hand, they would be very much opposed to a continuation of the policies of the previous Administration which was an escalation of commitment, an escalation of casualties.

Q Senator Scott, on this 60-day period, the answer you gave about an arbitrary date produced an image of the President's political friends asking for more time and trying to extend what is left of a possible honeymoon for the President; this buying time to save him the embarrassment of dissent -- I think the question I am aiming at is on picking this date of 60 days, is it based on something the President told you?

Does he expect to know something in 60 days?
Is 60 days a period of a test?

SENATOR SCOTT: Your question editorializes a little. I would say that my other answer is still mature, ten minutes later, and that is that the suggestion comes from Senator Griffin and myself. It is not a request of the President. It is a thought which we share and we believe many share, that perhaps people ought to show a little more discipline in recognizing that the President has the toughest job in the world, an inherited one, and that during that 60-day period we earnestly hope that conditions may change which would permit the kind of report at the end of that time which would justify this suggested quiet period.

We believe that at peace talks in Paris, Hanoi is attempting to and probably does cite divisiveness in America as the reason why the American negotiators are not to be respected or listened to in specific instances.

We would like to deprive Hanoi of the opportunity of citing American divisiveness as an argument as to why they should do nothing. This was the proposal.

I know the press are quite convinced that this came from the President, but actually it did not.

Q Well, are you suggesting, or is this sort of an oblique suggestion or plea or request that these October 15 demonstrations as now structured not be held?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, indeed. I believe in absolute free dissent. I believe in the right of people to express their own views, and that is why I am expressing mine. That is why I am saying to other Americans, it would be nice, it would be helpful, it could even be considered a recognition of the fact that the Americans are trying to end the war, and you might want to help them a little, if you watch what you say.

On the other hand, I would defend to the death the right of every man and woman in this country to be foolish if they wish, or to disagree in all events if they insist. I would express a hope that they would give us some breathing period.

Q Are you saying that after 60 days, it would be all right if things do not change?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, I am saying after 60 days, let's take another look at it. This war has been going on for about six years, and at the end of 60 days, let's look and see if other developments indicate that this Administration has made progress on the road to peace.

Q Are you calling for a counter-demonstration on October 15?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, I am simply saying that whatever demonstrations there are ought to be at least in the framework of not making the job of achieving peace more difficult.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 11:00 A.M. EDT.)



HOUSE ACTION, PERIOD SEPTEMBER 19 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 29, 1969

Friday, September 19, 1969

TREASURY - POST OFFICE APPROPRIATIONS

The House agreed by voice vote to the conference report on H.R.11582, making appropriations for the Treasury and Post Office Departments, the Executive Office of the President, and certain independent agencies for the FY ending June 30, 1970.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 177 yeas to 94 nays, the House passed H.R.13763, making appropriations for the legislative branch for the FY ending June 30, 1970.

Prior to passage, the House rejected the following amendments:

An amendment by Mr. Findley that sought to hike appropriations for compiling precedents of the House of Representatives from \$13,210 to \$50,000, which was rejected by a division vote of 17 yeas to 59 nays.

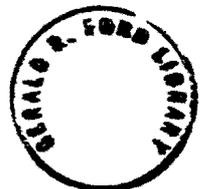
An amendment by Mr. Gibbons that sought to add \$325,000 in funds for the hire of student interns, which was rejected by a teller vote of 71 yeas to 77 nays.

An amendment by Mr. Stratton that sought to reduce by \$1.9 million, funds for extension of the Capitol, the remaining \$100,000 to be used for an independent engineering study on the possibility of repair of the west front of the Capitol building, which was rejected by a division vote of 59 yeas to 92 nays.

An amendment by Mr. Gross designed to remove the funding for the proposed James Madison Memorial Building, which was rejected by a division vote of 22 yeas to 103 nays.

RECOMMIT

By voice vote, the House rejected Mr. Talcott's motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations.



Tuesday, September 23, 1969

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

RULE (OPEN)

The House adopted H.Res.544 by voice vote, to provide for one hour of debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 372 yeas to 15 nays, the House passed H.R.12549, to amend the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act to provide for the establishment of a Council on Environmental Quality.

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

RULE (OPEN)

The House adopted H.Res.534 to provide one hour of debate, by a voice vote.

PASSAGE

By a voice vote, the House passed H.R.474, to establish a Commission on Government Procurement.

Wednesday, September 24, 1969

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

RULE (OPEN)

The House agreed to H.Res.528, to provide for one hour of debate, by a voice vote.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 364 yeas to 16 nays, the House passed S.574, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to engage in feasibility investigations of certain water resource development.

ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST

RULE (OPEN)

By voice vote the House adopted H.Res.543, providing one hour of debate.



ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST Continued

PASSAGE

By a voice vote, the House passed H.R.850, to designate the Desolation Wilderness, Eldorado National Forest, in the State of California.

Thursday, September 25, 1969

CENSUS

RULE (OPEN)

The House adopted H.Res.545, by a voice vote, to provide for two hours of debate.

PASSAGE

By a voice vote, the House passed H.R.12884, to amend title 13, United States Code, to assure confidentiality of information furnished in response to questionnaires, inquiries, and other requests of the Bureau of the Census.

Prior to passage, the House rejected by a teller vote of 107 yeas to 123 nays, the Betts amendment that would have public response to census questions, with the exception of the actual head count, on a voluntary basis.

Monday, September 29, 1969

MORTGAGES TO VETERANS

RULE (OPEN)

The House adopted by voice vote, H. Res.556, providing for one hour of debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 339 yeas to 21 nays, the House passed H.R.13369, to extend authority to set interest rates on mortgages to Veterans.

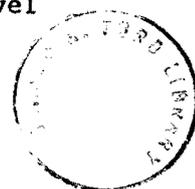
TRAVEL AUTHORITY

The House passed H.Res.538 by a voice vote, to grant additional travel authority to the Committee on Public Works.

JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT TRUST FUNDS

RULE (OPEN)

The House agreed to H.Res.555 by a voice vote, to provide for one hour of debate.



JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT TRUST FUNDS Continued

PASSAGE

By a roll call vote of 354 yeas to 1 nay, the House passed H.R.4314, joint labor-management trust funds for scholarships and child care centers.

Tuesday, September 30, 1969 and Balance of Week

- H.R.13300 Amendments to the Railroad Retirement Act and the Railroad Retirement Tax Act (Open Rule - One Hour of Debate)
- H.R.8449 Hours of Service Act Amendments (Open Rule - One Hour of Debate)
- H.R.14000 Military Procurement Authorization, FY 1970 (Subject to a Rule Being Granted)

