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FILMING WITH THE PRESIDENT
Friday, August 6, 1976
9:30 a.m.
Oval Office

SOCIAL SECURITY

Q. Mr. President, there appears to be little chance that the Congress will act on your Social Security proposals this year.

A. (Talking Points)

1. That is unconscionable. We must act to preserve the integrity of the Social Security System.
2. I understand that Congress does not like to raise taxes in an election year, but we can't have a sound Social Security System without paying for it.
3. What I proposed last January was a full cost of living increase in Social Security benefits and a tax increase that would cost a working person less than \$1 a week.
4. That's a small price to pay to protect the 32 million men and women on Social Security today -- and so that future recipients can be sure they will receive the benefits they are now earning.
5. Let's go back to the Congressmen responsible for Social Security. I won't give up in this fight to get Congress to act to preserve the integrity of the Social Security System.



CRIME

Q. Mr. President, the latest FBI crime reports indicate there have been reductions in violent crimes and crime against property.

A. (Talking Points)

1. It is better, and these reductions reflect the vigorous effort at all levels of government -- local, state and Federal -- to reduce crime.
2. But more must be done, and that's why I sent anti-crime legislation to Congress in June 1975, and additional legislation to curb drug abuse last April.
3. If Congress would act on this legislation, we could do more to make people safe on the streets and safe in their homes.
4. Congress should pass the mandatory minimum sentence law which would make imprisonment certain for persons convicted of Federal offense with a dangerous weapon and those convicted of kidnapping, highjacking, and trafficking in heroin and other hard drugs.
5. ~~More than~~ ^{ALMOST} half of all crime today is related to drugs.



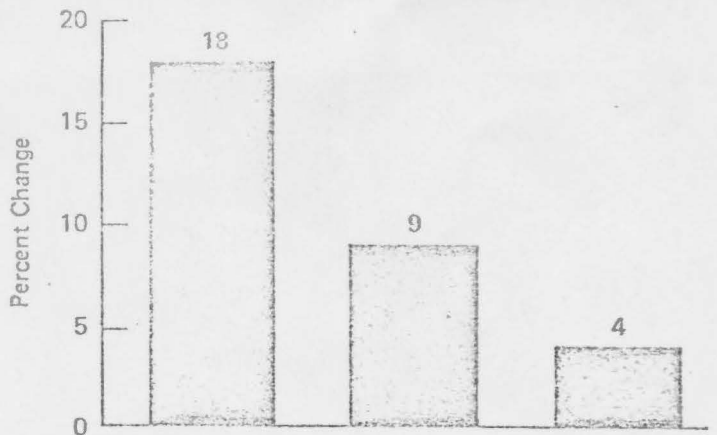
6. The habitual drug felon should be denied bail if he is arrested for selling heroin or other hard drugs. If he is convicted, he should receive a mandatory prison sentence that will keep him out of the hard drug business.



CRIME INDEX TRENDS

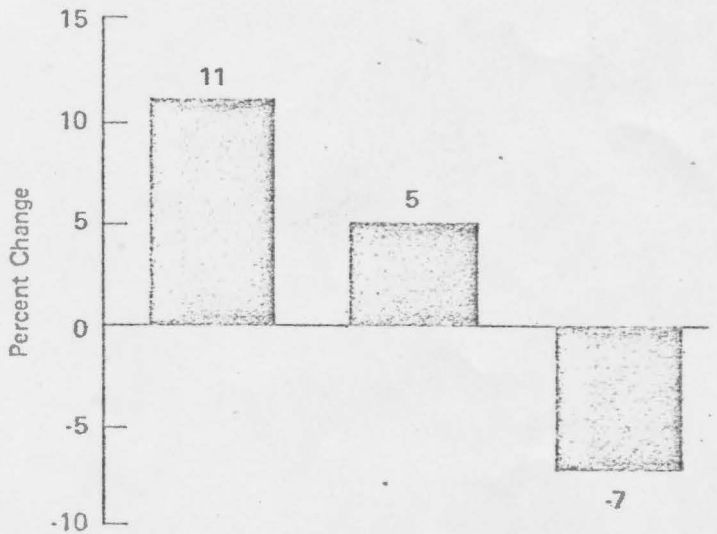
Crime Index, Total

A Marked Decline
in the Growth of
Crime



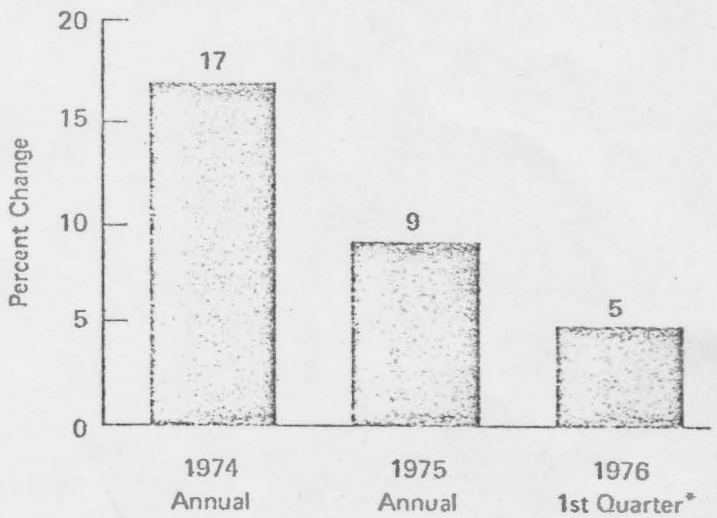
Violent Crime

A Notable Decrease
in Violent Crime



Property Crime

A Marked Decline
in Crimes Against
Property



FBI Uniform Crime Reports

*Compared to 1st quarter of 1975.



OLYMPICS

Q. Mr. President, how do you want to proceed on your proposal on the Olympics?

A. (Talking Points)

1. The American Olympic athletes who came to the White House yesterday were fine examples of young Americans who demonstrated the ability and determination to succeed.
2. Our objective has to be to make it possible for all young Americans who have the desire and capability to develop their athletic skills.
3. A healthy America is a better America.
4. We don't want the "muscle factories" some countries have set up.
5. But we can find a better way -- a way to make sure that American athletes have the coaching, the sports facilities, and the opportunity for training that they need to develop fully their capabilities.
6. We can give more American athletes the chance to be number one. Let's do it.

Curbing Drug Abuse

"For nearly a year," the President said this April, "I have been devoting increasing attention to a problem which strikes at the very heart of our national well-being, drug abuse. I have initiated and then endorsed a major study of this issue. I have met with foreign heads of state, Members of Congress and members of my Cabinet to express my deep concern and the need for action, and I have publicly spoken about this as one of the most serious and tragic problems our country faces.

" Today I am sending to the Congress a special Message on Drug Abuse which outlines, in very frank terms, the severity of this problem and which proposes definitive steps which must be taken to meet the challenge posed by the worsening drug situation.

" I am requesting the Congress to enact specific legislation to improve our ability to put the traffickers who sell drugs into prison. I am also calling for a renewed commitment to a program that balances the law enforcement effort with the provisions of humane and effective treatment for drug abusers.

" Finally, since our ability to control the supply of illegal drugs in this country depends to a very large degree on the interest and the capability of foreign governments in controlling drugs which originate in or



move through their territory, I renew this government's commitment to providing support for foreign allies in this fight."

The comprehensive drug program announced by the President calls for action on many different fronts. It would:

-- Require minimum mandatory prison sentences for persons convicted of high-level trafficking in heroin and similar narcotic drugs.

-- Enable judges to deny bail in the absence of compelling circumstances if a defendant arrested for trafficking heroin or dangerous drugs is found (1) to have previously been convicted of a drug felony; (2) to be presently free on parole; (3) to be a non-resident alien; (4) to have been arrested in possession of a false passport; or (5) to be a fugitive or previously convicted of being a fugitive.

-- Require masters of ships -- including pleasure vessels -- arriving in the United States to report immediate to Customs upon arrival, rather than within 24 hours as is now required.

-- Expand Customs' authority to search for cash and other monetary instruments being smuggled out of the country.



The President during the first two years also acted to improve the management of drug programs and to enhance international cooperation by:

-- Establishing two new Cabinet committees to provide direction for, and coordination of, Federal drug programs and activities.

-- Directing the Secretary of HEW and the Attorney General to develop plans to improve coordination between the treatment and criminal justice system, so drug users in the criminal justice system are identified and provided with treatment and rehabilitation services.

-- Directing one of the new Cabinet Committees to give high priority to identifying specific ways to improve job opportunities for former addicts.

-- Directing the Secretary of the Treasury and the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, to develop a tax enforcement program aimed at major drug traffickers.

-- Intensifying diplomatic efforts at all levels in order to encourage the greatest possible commitment from other governments and continuing to provide technical and equipment assistance, formal training of foreign enforcement officials, and assistance through cooperative enforcement efforts of U.S. agents stationed abroad.



-- Urging the Congress to expedite approval of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, an international treaty which would provide a system for the control of synthetic drugs similar to that which exists for narcotic drugs.

-- Has called for the expansion of Federal treatment capacity to ensure that those who are addicted have an alternative to crime.



DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY

When President Ford came into office in 1974, crime was increasing at the rate of 18% a year. By the end of 1975, the rate had dropped to 9% and the latest figures -- covering the first quarter of 1976 -- show only a 4% increase.

No one claims that those improvements are a direct result of actions undertaken by the President, but they do reflect the vigorous effort taken at all levels of government -- local, State, and Federal -- to combat the most recent crime wave.

The President's most notable statements on crime were contained in a speech he gave at Yale University in 1975 in which he urged a nationwide effort to "restore domestic tranquility" and in a special crime message that he sent to Congress on June 19, 1975.

In that message, Mr. Ford identified three important areas of responsibility for the Federal Government:

-- To provide leadership through improvements in Federal laws and the Federal justice system;

-- To enact and vigorously enforce laws covering criminal conduct that cannot be adequately regulated at the State and local level; and

-- To provide financial and technical assistance to State and local law enforcement authorities.

The President's crime message specifically called for:

-- Enactment of a comprehensive criminal code to replace the highly complex and confusing set of laws now on the books;

-- Enactment of a mandatory minimum sentence law which would make imprisonment a certainty for persons convicted of a Federal offense involving the use of a dangerous weapon and those convicted of extraordinarily serious offenses such as hijacking, kidnapping and trafficking in hard drugs. The mandatory minimum sentence would also apply to repeat offenders who are convicted of crimes that could cause personal injury to others.



In that same crime message, the President also set forth a number of proposals to improve the criminal justice system at the Federal level. Among his proposals:

-- Establishment of "career criminal" programs designed to assure quick identification and prosecution of persons who repeatedly commit serious offenses.

-- Continuation and expansion of programs designed to divert certain first offenders into rehabilitation prior to trial.

-- Creation by the Congress of additional Federal District Court judgeships and expansion of the criminal jurisdiction of United States Magistrates.

-- Upgrading of prison facilities, including the replacement of large, outdated prisons with smaller, more modern ones.

-- Directing that the Attorney General, as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation, ensure that the Federal Government is making the best possible use of its resources in the area of offender rehabilitation.

-- Enactment by the Congress of legislation to provide limited compensation to victims of Federal crimes who suffer personal injury.

As for Federal financial aid for State and local law enforcement, the President in 1976 proposed that the Congress continue the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration through 1981 at a higher authorized funding level. The President's bill, now making its way through Congress will authorize \$6.8 billion for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration through the next five years. The bill places additional emphasis on improving State and local court systems and on funding "High Impact" crime-prevention projects in crime-ridden urban areas.



BUSING

I fully recognize that it is incumbent on the courts and the Executive Branch to insure that the constitutional rights of all Americans are protected, including the right to equal educational opportunity. But I believe that some courts have gone too far in ordering massive busing of school children. Some courts have literally taken over the responsibility of the local school board to run the school system. I think this is wrong.

This is why I have recommended to Congress legislation to limit the power of Federal courts to require busing. The courts must be allowed to protect the rights of individuals, but I think they ought to leave the responsibility for running the school in the hands of people whose children attend them.

Returning Power To State and Local Governments

It is my view that during the 1960's we suffered from the tremendous growth of too many new Federal programs -- each with its own bureaucracy and set of complex rules. Literally hundreds of new programs were created during that period. Virtually all of these tended to centralize power at the Federal level at the expense of state and local governments. On them, we placed an impossible burden of administering conflicting and complicated rules.

I thought this was wrong then and I believe it is wrong today. I have sought to reverse this trend and return decision-making power to state and local elected officials where it belongs.

My effort has taken several forms --

- (1) Strong support for the General Revenue Sharing program against some very strong Congressional opposition. We finally won that one and have a 5 year 9 month program which will give nearly \$40 billion to hard-pressed state and local governments.
- (2) I have sent four major pieces of legislation to the Congress which would consolidate 59 categorical programs in health, education, child nutrition, and social services into four block grants. We haven't done too well with them but we will continue the fight.
- (3) I have pushed the Community Development Block Grant program which consolidated seven programs requiring 1400 pages of applications into a single program with a 25 page application.

There have been a variety of related initiatives that all support the theme of returning decision-making power closer to the people. I am committed to it because it is right, and we will keep pushing until we get results.

1. To preserve the family farm and small business, the President proposed to defer Federal estate taxes for 5 years and to allow the heirs 20 years to pay the taxes at 4 percent interest.
2. This reform would insure survival of family farms and small business for future generations.
3. This would apply up to the first \$300,000 of liability.

FOOD STAMPS

Q. Mr. President, your Food Stamp reforms have been blocked by the Federal court, and Congress seems unable to put through any legislative reforms on Food Stamps.

A. (Talking Points)

1. The Food Stamp Program is a mess.
2. It provides assistance to many who don't deserve it and denies enough assistance to those who need it most.
3. It is also cumbersome, bureaucratic and expensive to administer.
4. Everyone knows of abuses of the Food Stamp Program.
5. The Administrative changes I proposed make sense. They would provide higher benefits to those Americans who are poor, and no benefits to those who are able to help themselves.
6. I want this case appealed.
7. If Congress won't act, we have got to act ourselves.

Food Stamps

Our Food Stamp program is a mess. It provides assistance to people who don't deserve it, and denies adequate assistance to those with greatest need. It is also an extremely complex and expensive system to administer.

Earlier this year I proposed changes in the Food Stamp program that would better focus scarce resources on those with greatest need. Higher benefits would go to the poorest Americans, and no benefits would go to those able to help themselves. Administrative reforms would make the program more comprehensible, more efficient, and cheaper to operate.

These changes are currently hung up in the courts -- but I am sure that we will ultimately prevail because this is the right course of action.