President Gerald R. Ford's handwritten reflections, 1977 or 1978

Scanned from the collection **Gerald R. Ford: Materials from the writing of A** *Time* **To Heal** at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

While writing his autobiography, <u>A Time to Heal</u> (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), President Gerald R. Ford composed a series of personal reflections on twenty-seven topics. What makes these documents so unusual is not only their introspection but also their form. President Ford recorded these observations by hand, writing in blue ball point on his favored yellow writing tablets. He did not expend time and energy to polish and edit his writing, apparently planning to do so when incorporating them into the book. Therefore occasional spelling or grammatical errors or incomplete thoughts appear.

For each reflection the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library has scanned President Ford's handwritten document and added a Library-produced transcription below to aid in reading the reflection.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald R. Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Ruchard Pyris place in Hestory

Contemporary bestoreans write in one atmosphere which eventably knowled personal observations of people of wents, uncluding their own preferences of prejudices. Historians after the era can be more analytical of algetime and traditionally give a more behaved pecture of the players of the scane in. Will peters historians winter allipsently of RN: The opportunity to stand back, booking at the whole rather than at one or more went, I booking at the whole rather than a press conference comment may give future bustorians the freedom to make some pages of the RN era book better, and other pages more unlevoted of others more desippositing.

To write for the fature about a found of 30 years of wents one lived is most difficult. My own political laver consider mighty with RNS. His began two years inches in 1946 when he answered an advertisement of those seeking a longuesmoul appoint for a liberal Democrat. He voluntuived at urn as an idealistic believer in the American removie to political system. My own commenced in 1948 with a remiter dedication to our American Way and 4.5 healership aboved. Our friendship began in January 1949 on the floor of the House of Representatives when I was sworm in so a member of the languess, For most of the mept three decades our political paths crossed many times of our friendship open. He caveer was always most writte a dramatic Than mine both the ups or downs, with the possible of dramatic Than mine both

In The case I a friend one likes to think & winter about the achievements and The grown qualities on which a friendship is predicated. One I the strongest Ties of and relationship was the fact that we can from mildle america, from families that suffered advanting huring The degression in contrast with Those who were born with a silver you in their month. We respected one unother because we how each had come up the hard way Genomerally & politically. We enjoyed each other because we had similar interests in what most average Comercions like, fortfall, baseball & other athletic contest. Our families were semiler, a wonderful wife and fine Children . We understood of vergetel each others ambition in politices, his for the Presidency, mene to be Squaler of the House . Our personel friendships was strengthered by the strong dedication to justin domestic policies at home of "4. S. Madership about.

This friendship I hope does not blue my plospective as to what thestony will record JRN. as a person on whit will be noted as accomplishments on factures. R.N political moral and a unique ability to analy precipe policies some - Big decisions on trusters at home talrost evere his cup of tea. On such matters he did extremely well his latting average was spellent. He abhored details. Delit like to be lother of nother enjoyed pushing them of on his subortenates. The log platiene was his role 4 he played it well. as a knowleggable realer of history of the

With all his experience before the public, both in speaking & in grees conferences, where he did very well one would assume he was a self confedent extravert. In truth he was shey, in some neglects a loner. His platform capabilities were the nesult of his recognition that to succeed in the political woman he had to train hand to do a good job before the public. His frence determination, his able mind nesulted in a first ice political capability to achieve national office.

Most of us have personally quicks or flows that seldom surper. They are controlled or are never upplotted by athers. R. N. was a terribly proud men of he detested weakness in himself & in others, In growth, seldom if wet in public, It would speak desperagnify of those he felt were soft on uppdient. He neboth thought of humself as one in this enterging. Her altelude of actions vis- at vis Watergate reflect this provided, His pride & public toughners plus his detest for Those who were weak in moments in peril overcame his family taught traits of right & wrong . Within all I less the have a pulling of parts of me character & perometity. In RN's each the flow in & brillent mind temphravily - Jane 1972 - overcome his uploringing of his prodyment; Once the course un set his price & desgrat with winhness compounded The problem.

Historians meading the first 20 years of RN'S political career will find scarcely a hint I dramatic foreign policy moves he would instrate upon becoming President. Antil 1970 RN-lay word & action was an tough hardliner against the Peoples Regullie of thema & The M. S. S. R. - From 1946 to The second year in his administration the RN. clip file will show among the famous sketchen delate with Khousoher and many pro-Tarron and unto - Mon guches Those encefents in his career will be first notes in the pages I noting. The headlines and intotance will involve his oftend strategy to move from the cold war with the Soviet Unrow to detente best exemplified by SALT I, the just space effort, and the numerous authord and technical wahringts. Historium will forever yearste how this "cold-war warner of the 50's +60's could move that so smoothly of dramatically to a policy of many agreements of accords with The MISTRE. The Ansensus will be that he saw The by pecture in a world strategy, The new tres with the somet Union were possible because the leaders in the \$65R. where deeply concerned with developments in the PRC, especully with Mon of Chois growing antagonism toward a former friend or ally. oull necewie high marks for his untiture with the the PRC. He spotted a meaningful distrust & fear, on

the part of mas + chow - the long standing border

3

despute wors near the mustreatment of Mas in the 60's the was not forgotten and the danger of Soviet beginning in the Pacific Basin was Constantly on their minds. Whe a shilled surgeon RN. moved to take advantage of this new development in PFC & Soviet nelations.

The west was a recognition in the Capitals of the world that the 4.5. was the deplomatic master in the international scene. The printing of the U.S. catapathed to the peak despite the tragic settlach in Vietnam.

U.S. had achiloved in U.S. - USSR & U.S. - PF C viletions 21 st century historious will descen the dramatic Wift in attitudes on the pant of Western European alleis a third world nations. american involvement in Viltum had underent our prestige & leadership vole worldwide. Criticism was frequent and hard to take. Many old friends & metals week drifting to the Spirits of the some speak to the Spirits of the some speak to the Spirits of the some speak to the Spirits of the soul of the sealed a new foundation for U.S. action on loved informational fronts.

6

Domestically RN's pages of history will not have the glitter of his foreign policy initiatives although a number of the reforms he snight at least laid the ground work for subsequent action by his successors on the White House of fater Congresses.

Willfare seform had been a growing political 1930's well intentioned politicians had added one welfare layer on top of another so and to the poor, the disabled of the agest were overwhelmed south social workers and bureaucratic nel-tope and the tappayer was swamped by soarry ests - In 19 IR N met This complet and highly emotional issue head on by proposing to scrap virtually all yesting welfare programs I substituting in their place his taminly assistance I rogum. With the help of then Compressmen walker miles, Chewman of the House Committee on Ways & means, it passed the House of Representatives twice, once in 1970 of again in 1971. In each instance the 4.5 Ainste represed to not because of a costetion of Ainste liberals who believed the lenefits you too vestrative of Senete constrontives who continued the payments as to generous.

It is interesting to note that the whiteric mel by President laster to promote his welfare reform feetage is nearly identical with the words, phreses a lenter proposal have not yet been spelled out but the same distacles are raising their eighty head in the Courses & elsewhere a Cost to the U.S. Treasury is a major factor. The work requirement is untiles. The contributions, by state of local inits I government, if army, will be an issue. The vested interests such last the social worker bolby will be a problem. Whatever the fate of the Easter proposal, PN. deserves well for his local initiative toward meaningful of constructive welfare reform.

Hence The mid-1950s there has been a multiplication of categorical aid programs from the federal government to states, local units of government It to industrial estagers. The anotives have been good, a need eposted in most cases but method of delivery work costly in the dollars, inefficient because ? bureaucratic layering and inflightfulty; and dangerous in that it put too much control in the hands of Washington & undermined local control. RN. sucagnegal the weaknesses of categorial grants of the strength the los grant approach. He grabbed the Wall with a program to substitute a bloz grant program in aid to alies in place I the 7 traditional programs I unban renewal, model extres & 5 others. With the outstanding support of them see 2 HUD, James Type Congress enseted a blue grant groupen intitled the

Community Development hat which consolidated The I calopreal grant programs into one with a hold humbers feature for 3 years. The results have been a phenomenal successo bec. of HUD Carola Wills in 1976 showed that the time for from I months to ___ the pages on a city application were reduced from to ___ This illustration should be the best wiferer that the bloc grant approach is sound mi concept - it saves time, top dollars a gives greater control of descrition at the losal level. This stimulated me to askrommend to the Engues in 1975 Jour additional blos grant prospoures o Congress dedn't respond fororolly despite the "men charts" and other sound arguments but the bla grant be here, + if so RN deserves The credit. School Resegration, because of 4.5. Ingrent Court decesions, was an emotional assul by 1969 not so much in the south but growing whose so in mothern industrial ates. The RNI administration produced the post comprehensive regort with speake recommendations for a more ever- handed approach of with Julian all to help loved selved district. The Hose of administration was castiguted by extrements

a both siles The issue but a sober analysis of this study of its necommendations will show it laid the ground work for a better approach to this contrariosial extent by the courts, The federal executive departments of local school districts of the public generally.

Richard Nixon's place in History

Contemporary historians write in one atmosphere which inevitably involves personal observations of people & events, including their own preferences & prejudices. Historians after an era can be more analytical & objective and traditionally give a more balanced picture of the players & the scenario. Will future historians write differently of RN? The opportunity to stand back, looking at the whole rather than at one or more event, looking at major decisions & speeches rather than a press conference comment may give future historians the freedom to make some pages of the RN era look better, other pages more understood & others more disappointing.

To write for the future about a friend of 30 years & events one lived is most difficult. My own political career coincided roughly with RN's. His began two years earlier in 1946 when he answered an advertisement of those seeking a Congressional opponent for a liberal Democrat. He volunteered & won as an idealistic believer in the American economic & political system. My own commenced in 1948 with a similar dedication to our American Way and U.S. leadership abroad. Our friendship began in January 1949 on the floor of the House of Representatives when I was sworn in as a member of the Congress. For most of the next three decades our political paths crossed many times & our friendship grew. His career was always more visible & dramatic than mine, both the ups & downs, with the possible nomination as V.P. & ascension as Pres.

In the case of a friend one likes to think & write about the achievements and the good qualities on which a friendship is predicated. One of the strongest ties of our relationship was the fact that we came from middle America, from families that suffered adversity during the depression in contrast with those who were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. We respected one another because we knew each had come up the hard way economically & politically. We enjoyed each other because we had similar interests in what most average Americans like, football, baseball & other athletic contests. Our families were similar, a wonderful wife and fine children. We understood & respected each others ambition in politics, his for the Presidency, mine to be Speaker of the House. Our personal friendship was strengthened by the strong dedication to certain domestic policies at home & U.S. leadership abroad.

This friendship I hope does not blur my perspective as to what history will record of RN as a person or what will be noted as his accomplishments or failures. R.N. has a brilliant mind, a great sensitivity to the public's political mood and a unique ability to analyze & act decisively on foreign policy issues. Big decisions on matters at home & abroad were his cup of tea. On such matters he did extremely well – his batting average was excellent. He abhorred details. Didn't like to be bother & rather enjoyed pushing them off on his subordinates. The big picture was his role & he played it well. As a knowledgeable reader of history & the great characters on the scene he desperately wanted to achieve both for his country & himself.

With all his political experience before the public, both in speaking & in press conferences, where he did very well one would assume he was a self confident extrovert. In truth he was shy, in some respects a loner. His platform capabilities were the result of his recognition that to succeed in the political arena he had to train himself to do a good job before the public. His

fierce determination, his ambition, his able mind resulted in a public political capability to achieve national office.

Most of us have personality quirks or flaws that seldom surface. They are controlled or are never exploited by others. R.N. was terribly proud man & he detested weakness in himself & in others. In private, seldom if ever in public, he would speak disparagingly of those he felt were soft or expedient. He never thought of himself as one in this category. His attitude & actions vis-à-vis Watergate reflect this paradox. His pride & public toughness plus his detest for those who were weak in moments in peril overcame his family taught traits of right & wrong. Within all of us we have a pulling & [unrecognized word] of parts of our character & personality. In RN's case the flaw in a brilliant mind temporarily – June 1972 – overcame his upbringing & his judgment. Once the course was set his pride & disgust with weakness compounded the problem.

Historians reading of the first 20 years of RNs political career will find scarcely a hint of dramatic foreign policy moves he would initiate upon becoming President. Until 1970 RN by word & action was a tough hardliner against the People's Republic of China & the U.S.S.R. From 1946 to the second year in his Administration the RN clip file will show among the famous kitchen debate with Khrushchev and many pro-Taiwan and anti-Mao speeches. Those incidents in his career will be footnotes in the pages of history. The headlines and substance will involve his grand strategy to move from the cold war with the Soviet Union to détente best exemplified by SALT I, the joint space effort, and the numerous cultural and technical exchanges. Historians will forever speculate how this "cold-war warrior of the 50's & 60's could move so smoothly & dramatically to a policy of many agreements & accords with the USSR. The consensus will be that he saw the big picture in a world strategy. The new ties with the Soviet Union were possible because the leaders in the USSR were deeply concerned with developments in the PRC, especially with Mao & Chou's growing antagonism toward a former friend & ally.

On the other side of the coin RN, as President, will receive high marks for his initiative with the PRC. He spotted a meaningful distrust & fear of the Soviet Union on the part of Mao & Chou – the long standing border dispute was real, the mistreatment of Mao in the 60's was not forgotten and the danger of Soviet hegemony in the Pacific Basin was constantly on their minds. Like a skilled surgeon RN moved to take advantage of this new development in PFC [PRC] & Soviet relations.

The result was a recognition in the Capitals of the world that the U.S. was the diplomatic master in the international scene. The prestige of the U.S. catapulted to the peak despite the tragic setback in Vietnam.

Aside from the tremendous new leverage U.S. had achieved in U.S.-USSR & U.S.-PFC [PRC] relations 21st century historians will discern the dramatic shift in attitudes on the part of Western European allies & third world nations. American involvement in Vietnam had undercut our prestige & leadership role worldwide. Criticism was frequent and hard to take. Many old friends & neutrals were drifting to the Soviets & to some extent to the PFC. RN's initiatives at the highest levels with Brezhnev & Mao diffused this trend & created a new foundation for U.S. action on broad international fronts.

Domestically, RN's pages of history will not have the glitter of his foreign policy initiatives, although a number of the reforms he sought at least laid the ground work for subsequent action by his successors in the White House & later Congresses.

Welfare reform had been a growing political issue & for good reason. Since the depression of the 1930's well intentioned politicians had added one welfare layer on top of another so aid to the poor, the disabled & the aged were overwhelmed with social workers and bureaucratic redtape and the taxpayer was swamped soaring costs. In19__ RN met this complex and highly emotional issue head-on by proposing to scrap virtually all existing welfare programs & substituting in their place his Family Assistance Program. With the help of then Congressman Wilbur Mills, Chairman of the House Committee on Ways & Means, it passed the House of Representatives twice, once in 1970 & again in 1971. In each instance the U.S. Senate refused to act because of a coalition of Senate liberals who believed the benefits were too restrictive & Senate conservatives who condemned the payments as too generous.

It is interesting to note that the rhetoric used by President Carter to promote his welfare reform package is nearly identical with the words, phrases & arguments of RN. At this writing the details of the Carter proposal have not yet been spelled out but the same obstacles are raising their ugly head in the Congress & elsewhere. Cost to the U.S. Treasury is a major factor. The work requirement is another. The contributions & control by state & local units of government, if any, will be an issue. The vested interests such as the social worker lobby will be a problem. Whatever the fate of the Carter proposal, RN deserves credit for his broad initiative toward meaningful & constructive welfare reform.

Since the mid-1950s there has been a multiplication of categorical aid programs from the federal government to states, local units of government & to individual citizens. The motives have been good, a need existed in most cases but method of delivery was costly in tax dollars, inefficient because of bureaucratic layering and inflexibility, and dangerous in that it put too much control in the hands of Washington & undermined local control. RN recognized the weaknesses of categorical grants & the strength of the bloc grant approach. He grabbed the ball with a proposal to substitute a bloc grant program in aid to cities in place of the 7 traditional programs of urban renewal, model cities & 5 others. With the outstanding support of then Sec of HUD, James Lynn Congress enacted a bloc grant program entitled the Community Development Act which consolidated the 7 categorical grant programs into one with a hold harmless feature for 3 years. The results have been a phenomenal success. Sec. of HUD, Carla Hills in 1976 showed that the time for processing a city's application for funds was reduced from _____ months to _____. The pages in a city application were reduced from _____ to ____.

This illustration should be the best evidence that the bloc grant approach is sound in concept – it saves time, tax dollars & gives greater control & discretion at the local level. This stimulated me to recommend to the Congress in 1975 four additional bloc grant programs. Congress didn't respond favorably despite the "mess charts" and other sound arguments but the bloc grant program, a Nixon initiative is right, it's time maybe be here, & if so RN deserves the credit.

School desegregation, because of US Supreme Court decisions, was an emotional issue by 1969, not as much in the south but growing more so in northern industrial cities. The RN

administration produced the first comprehensive report with specific recommendations for a more even-handed approach & with federal aid to help local school districts. The Nixon Administration was castigated by extremists on both sides of the issue but a sober analysis of this study & its recommendations will show it laid the ground work for a better approach to this controversial issue by the courts, the federal executive departments, local school districts & the public generally.