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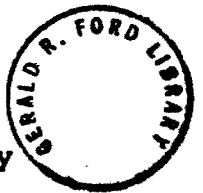
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DIARY OF WHITE HOUSE LEADERSHIP
MEETINGS -- 91st CONGRESS

April 15, 1969

The President entered at 8:35 a.m. and introduced Mr. Cecciliano, who was substituting for Secretary Stans. The Secretary is abroad studying the Trade Expansion Act and the problems of importation. Mr. C. explained why the Department opposes the Betts bill to repeal the criminal penalties in the census law. He said that the issue is whether the census is to be voluntary or mandatory. Since the first census in 1790, it has been mandatory. In every country of the world, it is mandatory. Planning and printing are already too far underway to make any major changes in the substance or procedure for the 1970 census. Some 70 million forms will be involved. Some minor changes have been made to accommodate some of the recommendations in the Betts bill; 4 out of 5 households will receive the basic questionnaire consisting of only 13 questions; 15% will receive the somewhat longer form; and the balance will receive the longest form. Some of the forms will be dispatched by mail. Others will be completed by some 200,000 census workers who will be appointed under patronage rules. Responding to broad criticism, the questions concerning kitchen and bathroom facilities have been revised. The Bureau will agree to a blue-ribbon commission proposed by Betts to study the possibility of voluntary or partially voluntary census for 1980, and in any event, the Department agrees to submit proposed questions to the appropriate committees of the Congress two years in advance. The present Director of the Census is about to retire and assume an advisory role. A new Director will be appointed by President Nixon.

Ford said that these changes would be helpful but even the modified form of the census would be a political



liability. He called attention to the fact that some 126 Republican Members of the House, including himself, have introduced the Betts bill or similar legislation.

Burns supported the Commerce Department. He said that if the census is not voluntary, the data will be inaccurate and misleading to both government and business.

Derwinski, ranking Republican Member of the Subcommittee, said that whatever the Administration decided, they could expect to have a bill passed by the House by the end of May. RMN said that he had instructed Stans to make whatever changes could properly be made to preserve the right of personal privacy. Dirksen said that Senator Ervin is about to hold hearings on his right of privacy bill and that this subject would doubtless become involved.

Moynihan said that national statistics concerning minority groups are already bad; that at least 1 million Negroes were not counted in the 1960 census. We also have inaccurate statistics on poor people. A voluntary program would hurt these people most, because they are the people who most resent personal questions. He said that many government programs would become inoperative if the Betts bill becomes law.

Dirksen inquired how much was budgeted for the census and was told that the cost next year would be approximately \$170 million as compared with \$41 million in the 1960 census. Arends asked if Congressmen would be privileged to make patronage appointments, and the answer was affirmative.

The President recognized Burns, who made a report concerning Presidential messages on domestic legislation. Within the next several weeks, a minimum of 25 such messages



will reach the Congress. These will include 3 from Labor, 3 from Treasury, 2 from HEW, 6 from Justice, 2 from the Post Office Department and 1 from the Department of Transportation. Later, there will be messages on Clean Elections, Extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Amendments to the Equal Employment Act and Reform in the Welfare Programs. There will also be a number of reorganization bills.

The timetable is not yet fixed, but within the next week or 10 days, messages can be expected from Justice on organized crime, narcotics and dangerous drugs, obscenity and rights of defendants.

Ford suggested that at least one day in advance of each message, the Department concerned should prepare back-up statements to be issued by Members of Congress as soon as the message is read. ✓

RMN asked Mayo to review the Budget message sent to Congress this week. At that point, approximately 9:30 a.m.,

Arends and I were obliged to leave to participate in a panel at the Republican Women's Conference at the Sheraton Park Hotel.

RICHARD H. POFF



APRIL 15, 1969

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD,
AND RON ZIEGLER, PRESS SECRETARY
TO THE PRESIDENT
THE ROOSEVELT ROOM

AT 10:25 A.M. EST

MR. ZIEGLER: Congressman Ford will give a brief rundown on the Leadership Meeting of this morning.

Senator Dirksen had to return to the Senate for important Senate business. Congressman Ford will give a briefing on the Leadership Meeting.

Following that, Robert Mayo, Director of the Bureau of the Budget, will be here to background you on the agency-by-agency breakdown of the budget.

Congressman Ford.

MR. FORD: Thank you very much, Ron.

I am not sure, with more people and half our ranks here for this press conference, how it will go. But I will try to handle both what Senator Dirksen might have said and myself.

The Leadership Meeting involved a discussion of the contemplated messages, of which there will be a number within a week.

The ones that will probably come first will be from the Treasury on tax reform, from the Department of Justice on organized crime, obscenity, narcotics and dangerous drugs, crime and the rights of the accused.

There will also be one shortly on postal rates and probably the reorganization of the Post Office Department. There will be others following, one rather soon involving the District of Columbia.

As Mr. Ziegler has said, there will be a briefing by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget with all of you on the President's substantial revisions in the budget which was submitted in January. The new Nixon budget will show savings in expenditures in fiscal year 1970 of approximately \$4 billion -- \$1.1 billion in Defense, and \$2.9 billion in the area of domestic programs.

I hasten to point out, however, that in a number of areas there will be some increases over what was expended in 1969, which is, I think, a very valid basis of comparison.

MOPE



Even though there are these reductions made below that proposed by Mr. Johnson, the Department of HEW, for example, will have an increase of \$.3 billion over the fiscal year 1969. HUD will have an increase of over \$800 million. The manpower programs will have increases of about \$300 million, even though the \$100 million cut comes in the Job Corps.

The increases in non-Defense spending, comparing 1970 with 1969, shows an increase of about \$6.5 billion.

On the plus side, I think this is very, very important, the Johnson budget of January anticipated an increase of 43,000 US civilian employees in the next fiscal year. The new Administration, actually, is recommending a decrease of approximately 5,000 Government employees.

To translate that into dollars -- this is what the American taxpayer is interested in -- this means a saving to the taxpayer of roughly a half-billion dollars in fiscal year 1970. This can be done with good management.

If we look at the savings in dollars and the reduction of Government employees, I think we are going to find the largest surplus in 18 years in the Federal Government and the fourth largest in the history of the United States.

We also had a briefing on what information was available on the incident off North Korea. But I understand the Defense Department has had two releases or two press conferences and the plan is that the Defense Department should keep the press apprised on developments in that area.

I will be glad to answer any questions.

Q Mr. Ford, how comprehensive a tax reform message do you expect?

MR. FORD: The details of that will have to be included in the message. That, as I understand it, will be significant.

Q Would you still anticipate that Congress will impose a spending ceiling this year as it did last year?

MR. FORD: I think it is difficult to be specific in that regard. The new Administration is not recommending it at the time it is submitting its revised budget. Mr. Johnson didn't recommend it when he submitted his budget for '69 and he actively opposed it during the consideration of the '69 budget. He accepted it most reluctantly.

The Congress, in working its will on the budget for '70, will have to take a look to see whether it does seem needed and necessary.

However, I should point this out: The new Administration, in taking a strong position in trying to reduce anticipated expenditures, in effect, has gone along with the views of the Congress in the last Session that there had to be some control over Federal expenditures.

MORE



Q Mr. Ford, since you said that fiscal '69 is a very valid basis for comparison, don't you think that Congress is going to object or criticize rather strongly as far as the very deep concern in natural resource development, agriculture and space. These are three areas, apparently, that has been used to get some of the money to transfer over into HUD and so on. Do you support these cuts in those areas?

MR. FORD: I support, overall, the new Nixon budget. I think it is appropriate to point out, however, that the Congress in the hearings on appropriations will have an opportunity to work its will. What is recommended by the Committee on Appropriations in the House and in the Senate and what the House and Senate do will be the final test of what the President has to work with when the fiscal '70 budget gets to his desk for actual expenditures.

But, overall, I think it is an excellent attempt to really do, from the Executive Branch point of view, an effective war against inflation.

Q Would you favor Congressional spending ceilings?

MR. FORD: I have in the past. I think I will reserve judgment on that until we see what the Committee on Appropriations does.

Q Do you have any reaction on the downing of the plane?

MR. FORD: I think my reaction should await further information from the Defense Department.

Q Mr. Ford, on the messages that you outlined, is there to be a separate message on the rights of the accused and do these first three groups that you mentioned, taxes, the various messages on the Justice Department, and the postal rates, are those intended for this week, as you understand it?

MR. FORD: I would say that these would be within a week.

Q Within a week from now?

MR. FORD: In what order, it is difficult to determine at this point.

Q Is it a separate accused message? Do I get that inference from what you said?

MR. FORD: I believe that instead of a crime or anti-crime package all lumped together, it is anticipated there will be specific messages in definitive areas.

Q Like crime, obscenity, narcotics, all separate messages?

MR. FORD: It is probably going to be that.

Q A factual question: Did I understand you -- and I may have misunderstood you -- do I understand you to say that the revised budget that will be proposed by the new Administration is an increase of \$6 billion over the '69 budget?



MR. FORD: It is an increase of 6.5 over the spending figures in non-military items.

Q Congressman, didn't the Republicans support the manpower ceiling bill which became law and is now law?

MR. FORD: Those of us who voted for the tax increase and the expenditure limitations also supported the provision in that legislation which provided that a department, with one or two exceptions, could only fill three out of four vacancies.

This was an arbitrary prescription which had to be imposed because of the tremendous increases which materialized in the last three or four years in the Government-civilian manpower.

As long as the new Administration is reducing 43,000 below what the Johnson Administration recommended in their fiscal '70 budget, and actually providing for a 5,000 decrease, I don't think you need the arbitrary type of provision that we had in the law that was passed.

Q You would go along with repeal of that provision?

MR. FORD: As long as we have the assurance that there will be this substantial reduction in Government employment, I believe it is far better, from the management point of view, to do away with the arbitrary provision.

Q Mr. Ford, would you want that written into the law that passes this year?

MR. FORD: That we should have this reduction? I would be delighted to.

Q Speaking of repeal of sections and that kind of thing, what do you think Congress' reaction will be to the Administration's proposal to postpone the freeze on AFDC payments?

MR. FORD: I think the Congress will probably go along this year, as they did last year, for the postponement of that freeze. It is my personal opinion.

Q Is there remaining a favorable considerable sentiment for freezing?

MR. FORD: I think there is considerable sentiment for the resolution of the problem that prompted the freeze. But I think that we found that that freeze may have created more difficulties than solutions. That is why we postponed the freeze a year ago. That is why I think the Congress will probably do the same in 1969.

Q How do you think Congress will react to the scaling down of the Social Security benefit increase?

MORE



MR. FORD: I think it is difficult to determine at this point. If we are successful in controlling the inflationary psychology and factual situation, I think that Congress will be more receptive to the lesser figure. It depends upon how successful we are in really attacking and solving the problem of inflation.

Q Mr. Ford, in view of the \$12,500 raise Congress voted for itself, is this going to put you in kind of a bad spot to try to sell the seven percent increase instead of ten percent for the Social Security?

MR. FORD: I think there will be some difficulty in that regard. But when you add up the increases in pay for Government employees and the pay of individuals in private enterprise over the last three or four years, the argument can be made as long as you whip the problem of inflation. It is a major domestic problem right at the moment.

Q Mr. Ford, what do you think the chances are of getting a significant tax reform package through this year?

MR. FORD: I think the chances are the best in, I would say, my 20-plus years in the Congress. The Administration is actually submitting a recommendation for tax reform. It is my recollection that there is no other administration that has actually come up with a tax reform package. The Administration backing a tax reform package, and the public demanding one, and the Congress receptive, I think we have a good chance of getting one.

Q What do you think the public sentiment is directed in that area?

MR. FORD: It covers the waterfront.

Q Will the House pass a reduction in the oil depletion allowance?

MR. FORD: I can't forecast one way or another on that. There is considerable testimony for it. The Congress has had this problem before it in the past. Previous Administrations have never recommended it.

So I think a lot depends on what the testimony produces.

Q Mr. Ford, aside from whether or not Congress will go along with the lower increase in Social Security, how about you, yourself? Is that what you want?

MR. FORD: I am going to reserve judgment until we see what the Committee on Ways and Means recommends.

Q What about the reaction to this Federal program for subsidies for public jobs that is going to be established? Did you talk about that this morning?

MR. FORD: We didn't talk about that detail. This will be discussed in the various briefings from the Departments.

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END.

AT 10:40 A.M. EST

