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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
BEFORE THE METROPOLITAN CLUB OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 15, 1969
AT BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. SATURDAY, NOV. 15

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As a consequence, we are now standing as a Nation and a people on the threshold of an age of reform.

If the winds of change blow as vigorously as I hope, our Nation will travel in new directions as we enter the decade of the Seventies.

Reform. To reform something -- by dictionary definition -- is to change it into a new and improved form or condition; to improve by change of form and by removal of faults or abuses.

That, my friends, is exactly what the Nixon Administration has set out to do. Reform is the watchword of the Nixon Administration. But the story of the new Administration as a Reform Administration is one which is not being told.

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What I envisioned was that the Nixon Administration would of necessity become seized with a reforming spirit and crusading zeal.

I foresaw the advent of an age of reform in America because of President Nixon's legacy -- the situation "as it was" when he took office.

Richard Nixon assumed the leadership of a country massively entangled in a jungle war halfway around the world, a country which had suffered escalating inflation for nearly four years, a country in which the crime rate had climbed nearly 10 times as fast as the population, a country in which the problems of the cities threatened to turn urban crisis into violent revolution, a country in which major cities were being put to the torch, a country in which the Have-Nots continued to be the Have-Nots and the welfare system was like a constantly festering sore,

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a country in which local, state and Federal taxes had driven taxpayers to the rim of revolt although government spending had not solved the horrendous problems rushing in from all sides.

The new Administration took stock and charted a new course. This new course, as yet unimplemented by the Congress, is a comprehensive strategy for an attack on the most critical problems facing this country.

The major goals of this comprehensive strategy strike directly at the roots of the underlying crises in our Nation.

The strategy is aimed at five objectives: Ending the war; Making the streets safe again for the American people; Curbing inflation; Reforming and ultimately ending the draft; and Giving the government back to the people.

If the Nixon Administration succeeds in achieving these objectives, I believe historians will rank Richard Nixon among the greatest of our Presidents. And if this Congress responds with action, its mark on history will be one of the finest.

The reforms that President Nixon has proposed are manifold. He has sent more than 40 messages to the Congress. Those messages are related to the objectives I have just outlined and to others as well.

The top priority is, of course, to end the war in Vietnam.

President Nixon is moving vigorously to end the American role in Vietnam and, hopefully, to end the war. He is winding down the war and is doing everything he reasonably can to achieve a breakthrough at the peace table.

With the peace negotiations stuck on dead center because of enemy intransigence, "Vietnamization" has become the key to disengaging the United States from the Vietnam War. Gradually but surely we are turning the war over to the South Vietnamese, where it belongs.

We certainly cannot stay in South Vietnam forever. If the Saigon government is to stand, it must ultimately learn to stand alone.

For the first time since the United States became involved in the Vietnam War, we are taking troops out of Vietnam instead of adding to our numbers there. This is a major reversal of policy aimed at an honorable end to the Vietnam conflict.

I think a majority of the American people want a sound settlement of the Vietnam War. I want a settlement that will discourage further Communist aggression, whether it is in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific, or in Europe.

To invite a Communist takeover of South Vietnam through a precipitous withdrawal of U.S. troops might reopen the Korean War in 1970 and create additional

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The President's recent declaration of alternatives in Vietnam has been interpreted by some observers as a hard-line statement. They could not be more mistaken. To negotiate does not mean to capitulate. You do not become a horse trader by giving away the horse.

Despite the stubbornness of the Communists in Vietnam, I am fully convinced President Nixon will succeed in inaugurating an era of negotiation in place of an era of confrontation.

We have now entered upon strategic arms limitation talks with the Russians, and President Nixon has laid the foundation of a new foreign policy. That new foreign policy is innovative, flexible and adaptable. Basically, it is attuned to the nationalistic and regional interests of Free World and Communist countries.

President Nixon no longer sees the Communist world as a monolithic enemy alliance but as a group of nations whose common ideology is transcended by powerful nationalistic aspirations. In line with that view, the President is adapting United States policy to those nationalistic interests.

This new concept of U.S. foreign policy also is reflected in the new Nixon Doctrine for Asia -- the "do-it-yourself policy" which Mr. Nixon has laid down for the nations of Southeast Asia. This is a policy which declares to Americans and to all the world that there will be no more Vietnams.

Under President Nixon, we have seized the initiative in foreign affairs even in the face of Communist aggression. We have proclaimed and promoted doctrines of international law and justice which have given the United States a new and lofty standing in the court of world opinion.

Domestically, the President has succeeded in getting people to lower their voices...and their arms, too.

In quest of domestic tranquillity, the Nixon Administration has launched a strong crackdown against organized crime. The President also has sent Congress legislation which would deal heavier blows against organized crime and would improve the Nation's court system.

There has been special emphasis on law enforcement in each of the Administration's anticrime measures. The President wants criminals off the streets, and he knows there is no surer way to get them off the streets than to help build up law enforcement in this country.

The Nixon Administration has made the fight against crime one of its central concerns. While other departmental budgets have been cut in a hold-down

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on Federal spending, the Justice Department budget has been increased. The level of law enforcement activity and narcotics control has been stepped up.

The Nixon Administration recognizes, as do all of you, that the first civil right of every American -- black or white -- is the right to protection from crime and violence.

I wish our Negro leaders throughout America would recognize that. I wish they would accept the responsibility for informing their people that it is primarily the poor blacks who are the victims of violent crime in our country. I wish all of our Negro leaders would emulate Sterling Tucker, vice-chairman of the Washington, D.C., City Council, who recently spoke out in support of vigorous law enforcement and condemned those who tacitly condone violations of the law.

It is said there can be no progress without order. I subscribe to that.

I would add that there cannot long be order without progress. I believe the Nixon Administration is promoting the kind of order and the kind of progress which will operate together to move this country forward.

We need a responsible common-sense approach to our urban problems. We are getting it from President Nixon.

The primary Nixon answer to the urban crisis is jobs and job training. The accent is on the solid American ethic of working for a living. The President's approach is based on the idea that a man never stands so tall as when he stands on his own two feet.

This is why President Nixon has proposed the first major reform of this country's welfare system since it first was established. This is why the President urges Workfare instead of Welfare. This is the way of dignity and decency. This is the American way. A hand up instead of a handout. That's the only way to bridge the gap between the Haves and Have-Nots in America.

I think President Nixon has managed to bring order to this country. He has managed to do so because he has brought order to the Presidency. We now find that the days of government by crisis have given way to crisis prevention. The scatter-gun approach is yielding to an assembling of new priorities.

Welfare reform is just one of the great array of reforms proposed by President Nixon -- reforms which I believe the American people have long wanted. Draft reform which will make the selective service system as fair as possible until we can establish a truly all-volunteer Army; postal reform which will create a government-owned self-supporting postal corporation in place of the present impossible system; poverty program reform which keeps the Office of Economic

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Decentralization of government authority -- flow of power back to the cities and states, back to the people. This is a central theme of the Nixon Administration.

Power concentrated in Washington is not always effective power. It is sometimes self-defeating. The Federal bureaucracy is most complex, and it feeds upon itself. As it grows larger, the Federal Government's ability to help solve local problems often grows less.

I would like to quote to you from remarks made last May 29 at the 75th annual convention of the Pennsylvania Bankers Association in Atlantic City, N.J.

"Thirty odd years ago the federal establishment was small, as some of you will remember, and income taxes were around 2 or 3 per cent. Most people didn't pay any at all. And then Franklin Roosevelt was elected, and then for the first time the control of our government fell into the hands of modern liberals and their view was that the power of the federal government should be used to treat and to cure this country's social ills. Well, they did treat a few and they improved a few, but they didn't cure any. They started Social Security, guarantees of bank deposits and a few other things that were useful and helpful, but they also brought to Washington what might be called the illusion of bureaucratic omnipotence, the illusion that if a government collects enough money, creates enough agencies and enough bureaus, and worms its way far enough into the private aspects of American life it will make us all prosperous, healthy and happy.

"Well, Max Weber, the sociologist, proved a long time ago that a big bureaucracy, once it is established, ceases to work at the job it was given to do and begins working only for itself, trying ahead of all else to increase its budget, its staff, its size and its power."

I imagine every man in this room thinks those words were spoken by a deep-dyed conservative. Not so. The author of those words is David Brinkley,

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the radio and television commentator who on more than one occasion has described himself as a liberal -- and did so at the Pennsylvania Bankers convention.

Brinkley went on to say he had visited about 40 states in the last few months and had found Americans wanting a change, "a basic change." He added that "there is every sign of a deep distrust of the present size and style of the Washington establishment and of the kind of leadership we have had from it for about 20 years."

Richard Nixon is dedicated to producing the kind of change of which David Brinkley spoke.

That is why he is talking about reversing the flow of power from Washington to the states and cities. That is why he has reduced Federal employment by 48,000. That is why he is talking about sharing Federal income tax revenue with the cities and states. He wants to implement the basic change the people so desperately desire.

Not long ago President Nixon, in a nice way, asked the Congress to help him bring about the basic changes the American people are asking for. He conceded that some of the slowness in the legislative process could be attributed to the newness of his own administration.

Then he made the reform theme clear. He said: "The legislative program of this Administration differs fundamentally from previous administrations. We do not seek more and more of the same. We were not elected to pile new resources and manpower on top of old programs. We were elected to initiate an era of change."

In effect, the President said to the Congress: I am not going to argue about why so little has been done to date. But this is what I have proposed. Now what are you going to do about it?

That, I think, is a fair question. And it is a fair question not only to ask of the Congress but of the American people. What are we going to do about it?

Let us not look only to the National Administration for correction of our past mistakes. We all have a stake in our Nation. Let us all assume some of the responsibility for setting the affairs of our country in order.

There is too much of an attitude today that "all is fine so long as I get mine." We must rid ourselves of that approach. We must all become selfless if America is to survive as a Nation and a people. We must individually and collectively seek the greatest good for the greatest number.

The responsibility for guiding the future of America rests not only with the Congress, not only with governmental leaders, not only with the President. That

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responsibility devolves upon us all. Each of our lives impinges upon the lives of others. To the extent that we all live the good life, the unselfish life, the lives of all others are enriched.

We all believe in the American Dream. Let us live so that all may share in it.

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