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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
AT THE 55TH ANNUAL MENSWEAR RETAILERS OF AMERICA CONVENTION
AT DALLAS, TEXAS
8:30 A.M. TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1970

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But for all the good that the Sixties produced, the ten years just passed brought us an overabundance of misery and grief.

Many of us look back upon the decade of the Sixties with a tremendous sense of relief at having put it behind us.

What do we remember most vividly about the decade of the Sixties?

It was, of course, the decade that put Americans on the moon--but it was also an Age of Assassination and an Age of Anarchy.

We watched horrified as an American President and his senator brother were killed and we were shocked by the murders of two Negro leaders, one of them a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

We saw major American cities being put to the torch and witnessed the outbreak of convulsive violence in the Nation's ghettos and on its college campuses.

The Sixties also brought the agony of Vietnam, when an America victimized by violence at home crept uncomprehendingly into the quicksand of a jungle war halfway 'round the world.

And as we lived through the decade of the Sixties, it became apparent that the era of the New Deal had come to an end--as clearly and as finally as though someone had drawn the curtain on it.

With the demise of the New Deal came the realization that America must move in New Directions in the Seventies, must cut new paths through the jungle of problems that clogged the way to a quality life for our people.

This was the condition of America when its people elected a new President in November 1968.

This was the America that cried out for new leadership when Richard Nixon entered the White House in January 1969.

I foresaw the advent of an age of reform in America when Richard Nixon took office.

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Reform was the path to be followed. Reform was indeed thrusting itself upon the new President and upon the Nation. And thus it was that reform became the watchword of the new Administration.

The new Administration took stock and charted a new course. This new course, as yet largely 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--and draft reform has been partially achieved--I believe historians will give the Nixon Administration a high achievement score. And if this Congress responds with aciton during its second session, 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 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.

A majority of the American people want a sound, not a phony, 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.

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To invite a Communist takeover of South Vietnam through a precipitous withdrawal of U.S. troops might lead to a reopening of the Korean War and create additional problems for us and our allies in Europe. One could honestly speculate as to the volcanic impact in the Middle East of an American defeat in Vietnam.

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 New Jersey indictments are only a beginning. 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. 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 more of our Negro leaders throughout America would recognize that. It is an unfortunate fact that it is primarily the poor blacks who are the victims of violent crime in our country. All of our Negro leaders might well emulate Sterling Tucker, vice-chairman of the Washington, D.C., City Council, who has spoken out in support of vigorous law enforcement and has 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.

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 postal service authority with broad modernization powers in place of the present impossible system; poverty program reform which keeps the Office of Economic

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Opportunity as an innovative agency but spins off successful experimental programs to old-line Government departments; manpower training reform which consolidates Federal manpower training programs; a New Federalism which provides an increasing slice of Federal income tax revenue for the cities and states and gives them new vigor as solvers of the problems to which they are closest; a decentralization of government authority which places greater reliance on local officials and greater power in the hands of the people.

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, 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.

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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 the Administration proposes reversing the flow of power--turning it back to the states and cities. That is why President Nixon wants to share Federal income tax revenue with the cities and states. He wants to implement the basic change the people so desperately desire.

President Nixon has made his 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."

It does not help for some members of Congress to declare President Nixon's anti-crime package unconstitutional without even holding hearings on it. The Administration can vigorously prosecute crime and corruption in New Jersey and elsewhere, but the Department of Justice needs all the tools we can assemble to cut up organized crime in America. Those of us who have studied the problem know that organized crime is like an octopus with tentacles stretching into every corner of our land.

Neither does it help for some members of Congress to reject revenue-sharing without even examining this plan to make the cities and states strong partners in our attack on crime and other horrendous problems plaguing our people.

But I do not despair. I believe the American people are demanding answers to their problems and they will get those answers.

That is why I see America moving in New Directions, moving along paths that will make the Seventies a decade of unparalleled growth in America and a decade that will bring new quality to American life.

I see the Seventies as a decade devoted to human betterment.

I see the American people adopting goals more difficult to reach than the moon: Rebuilding our cities. Cleaning up the Nation's water and air. Building schools and hospitals adequate to serve a greatly expanding population. Retraining

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the unskilled so that every American willing and able to master a skill is permitted to do so. Building vast mass transit systems. Making our airways safe and equipping our airports to handle the jumbo jets now taking to the skies. Eliminating poverty by 1980--literally erasing it instead of just talking about it. Ending hunger in America--and soon.

We will be fighting not only the problems of the cities but the problems of all Americans. It won't be easy. But we will win more battles than we will lose.

We will see the forward march of positive programs aimed at providing jobs, housing, quality education and first-rate medical care.

The Nation will marshal a concerted attack upon crime--particularly the drug and narcotics traffic, organized crime and juvenile delinquency.

I see the fight for clean water swelling into a crusade--a crusade joined in by young and older Americans alike. The assault weapon they employ may be Interior Secretary Walter Hickel's \$10 to \$15 billion do-it-now, pay-later bonding program or it may be some other. This is a crusade that will gather great force.

We are generating the commitment and the climate for action now.

Peace is part of that climate. Peace will come. It will come as a product of the President's do-it-yourself foreign policy. It will come because our course is unselfishly right.

The Seventies will see breathtaking progress in America and, hopefully, the steps needed to cleanse our Nation both in body and in soul.

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