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Wash. Star 3/12

Rhodes Denies Plan Will Rival Ford's

House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes asserted today that his development of a legislative program for House Republicans implies no criticism of the policies of President Ford but is intended as an alternative to proposals of congressional Democrats.

"Our problem," Rhodes said, "is not with the President. Our problem is with the lackluster and ineffective brand of Democratic leadership that we have seen for 38 out of the last 42 years. We want to call attention to the difference between Republicans and Democrats in Congress, and the development of our own program is, in my opinion, the best way to accomplish this."

The conservative Arizona Republican said the program would be a "constructive complement" to — not a rival of — policies of the Ford administration.

Emphasizing that the "days of presidential coat-tails are gone forever," Rhodes said that House

Republicans "ought to try to establish their own image with the people." He added:

"House Republicans feel that they can make some contribution in the effort to solve some of the nation's serious problems and should be encouraged to try."

Responding to a Washington Star story discussing his plan to develop a legislative program separate from the President's, he said:

"Just because The Star chose to write about something that I have been talking about for many months publicly at a time when some conservatives have expressed displeasure with administration policies does not mean that either I share their displeasure or that this effort to develop a program is in any way related to their displeasure..."

"Mistaken also is the notion that this is going to be a conservative program," Rhodes said.

— Walter Taylor

Missing Americans: Hanoi Drops a Hint

By LESLIE H. GELF

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 13 —

In an exchange of letters between North Vietnam's Foreign Minister and Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Hanoi has indicated publicly for the first time that it has information about Americans listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia.

Even though almost all of the estimated 1,300 men are presumed by most Administration officials and Congressional experts to have died, their fates remain a highly volatile and emotional issue in Washington.

The letter, from Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, also made clear that Hanoi would not release any of this information until the United

HANOI HINTS IT HAS DATA ON M.I.A.'S

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

States forced President Nguyen Van Thieu out of office in South Vietnam and stopped providing military aid to Saigon.

Hanoi's negotiating tactic in the past had been to make the release of American prisoners of war contingent upon the complete withdrawal of United States forces from South Vietnam.

Mr. Kennedy had written to Mr. Trinh on Dec. 18, 1974, asking for information about the missing Americans as part of the dialogue with Hanoi begun by his staff more than a year before. Mr. Trinh's response was dated Jan. 21, 1975.

Asked why Mr. Kennedy delayed the release of the Trinh letter until now, Dale DeHaan, head of Mr. Kennedy's staff in the Senate Judiciary Committee subcommittee on refugees, said that the letter had not been received "until about mid-February," and that "official copies and translations" were not received and completed until the last few days. Mr. DeHaan said that Mr. Kennedy was shown the letter only yesterday.

In a statement, Mr. Kennedy welcomed what he called the "good news," but added:

"I deeply regret that no progress is being made on the simple humanitarian issue of making this information available to the families of those still considered missing in action."

The language in the letter from Foreign Minister Trinh was vague. But Mr. DeHaan said that the North Vietnamese had told him privately in March, 1973, that they had information about the missing Americans.

Mr. DeHaan also said that the information he had received in March, 1973, had been passed on to the appropriate Administration officials and to officials of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, a focal group for pressure on Congress and the Administration.

Mr. Trinh's letter said: "In this humane spirit, the DRVN services responsible for getting information about those considered missing in action continue their efforts in the hope that their work will help ease the anguish of the families of those still considered missing."

Administration officials have said they believe that Hanoi is withholding information about Americans missing in action.

Two weeks ago, when a Congressional fact-finding mission met with North Vietnamese representatives in Saigon, all that Hanoi would say publicly on this subject was that an accounting of missing Americans would have to wait until the 1973 Paris accords had been fully carried out.

When taken with the statements made to the Kennedy staff in March 1973, Mr. Trinh's references to "DRVN services" and "continue their efforts" are interpreted by Mr. De Haan as public confirmation of Hanoi's knowledge of the missing men.

Administration officials said today that North Vietnamese and Vietcong representatives had told United States representatives "some time ago" in talks on the subject going on in Saigon that they had additional information about missing Americans.

The Trinh letter added: "The Vietnamese people appreciate the growing trend in the press, political circles and even in the U.S. Congress to urge the U.S. Administration to end its military involvement in South Vietnam and cease its military aid to the Nguyen Van Thieu group."

Such a trend, he continued, "creates favorable conditions for the normalization of relations between our two countries and for a good solution to the question of those still considered missing."

Mr. Kennedy's statement called on Hanoi to reconsider this position and provide the information "in a gesture of goodwill and humanitarian concern."

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 3, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: PAUL THEIS

FROM: MARGITA WHITE

SUBJECT: Questions from Boston Herald
American

Attached are questions published in the Boston Herald American (circulation 346,000) on the day of the President's recent visit. The paper had previously requested a personal interview.

I believe that we should provide answers from the President which the Herald American states will be shared with "the people in Boston and throughout New England."

The questions themselves are long and negative and some will require rather extensive answers. However, in view of the wide circulation of this paper in this region, I think this invitation provides an important opportunity for the President to project his views on these key issues. (Peter Kaye at the PFC shares this view).

Please let me know your thoughts. I would like to be able to acknowledge the letter by telephone as soon as possible to indicate when answers will be forthcoming.

Attachment

cc: Ron Nessen ✓

Dear Mr. Ford

Welcome to Boston. We're pleased and honored that you have chosen to visit our city and we hope your stay here will be both pleasant and productive.

While you are here, we know you will be meeting with many political figures, civic leaders and local news persons to answer their questions and to explain the programs and policies of your administration.

We hope you will also have a chance to meet a good many average citizens—to listen to what they have to say and to take back to Washington a better understanding of their concerns.

With the next presidential election just a year away, surely one purpose of your trip to Boston and to other parts of the country is to reap some political hay, to win friends and supporters wherever you go.

If you succeed, that's okay with us. Certainly we expect you to state your case, defend your administration's policies and actions, repeat the philosophical and political themes which you will be stressing throughout the 1976 campaign.

But we hope you've come to Boston not only to speak, but to listen. And while you are here, Mr. President, there are a few questions which we, the editors of the Herald American, would respectfully submit for your answers.

If you can, and will reply to these questions, we will promise that the people in Boston, and throughout New England, will have an opportunity to read your answers.

Unemployment

The jobless rate today has become a serious problem almost everywhere. But here in New England, the percentage of persons out of work has reached intolerable levels nearly double the national levels.

What can your administration do to ease this crisis and put individuals back to work? Are steps being taken or considered to provide employment for the thousands who were laid off when the Defense Department closed the Navy Yard at Charlestown, Otis Air Force Base and other installations?

A few months ago, you indicated that the federal government should embark on a major public works program if unemployment nationally hit the 10 percent level; it is well above that already in Boston and other New England cities—shouldn't such a program begin right now in these places?

Crime

Despite many new programs and a very large increase in government spending to combat crime, the problem continues to grow faster and faster every year. Are you willing to try new and different laws or strategies to curtail it?

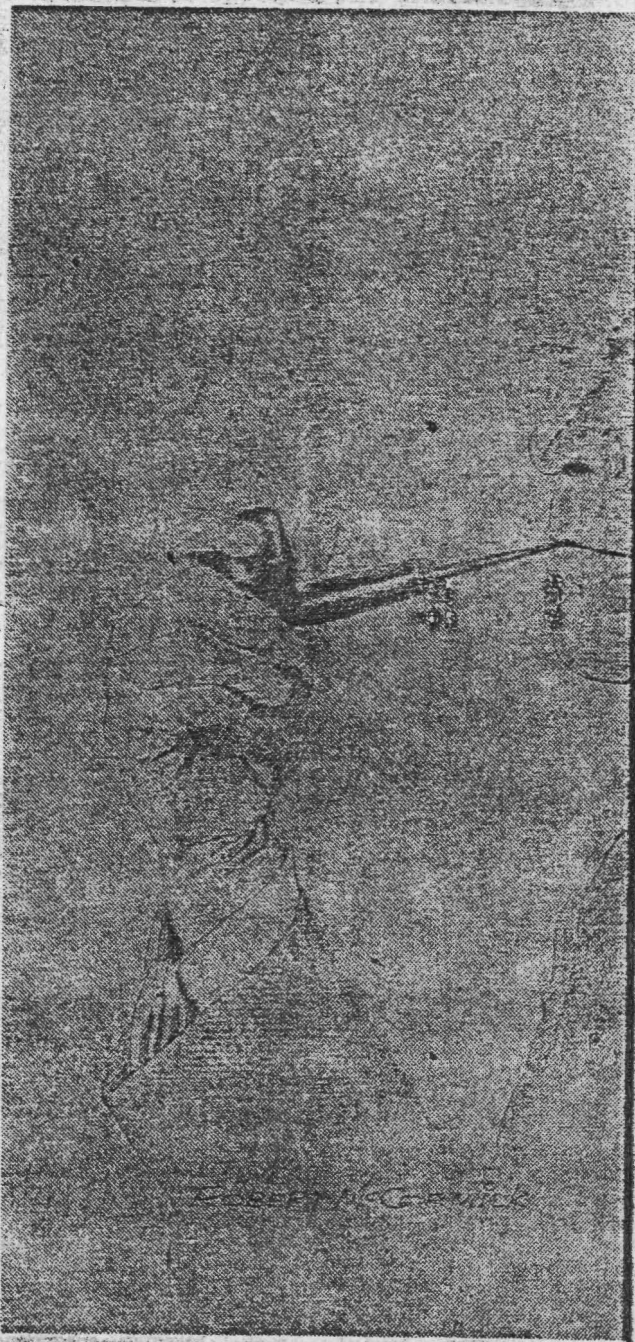
Will you, for example, support the legislation which Sen. Edward Kennedy recently proposed to mete out mandatory sentences for serious offenses, especially those involving "recidivists" or repeaters?

Would you support federal legislation, modeled after a statute enacted earlier this year in Massachusetts, requiring mandatory jail terms for persons convicted of carrying guns outside their homes without a license or for using weapons in the commission of a crime?

Energy

Periodic shortages and chronic high costs for heating oil, gasoline and electricity have hit the average consumer harder in New England than anywhere else. How much longer must we wait for the administration and Congress to agree on a comprehensive—and equitable—energy policy that will begin to meet the long and short-term needs of all Americans?

Is there anything you can do to speed up the development of off-shore oil or the building of refineries in the Northeast? Can federal and state environmental regulations be relaxed to permit coal to be used more extensively for



the generation of power? Do you favor New England as the logical place to build the new Solar Research Institute?

Busing

Boston, more than any other city in the nation, has seen its people divided, its racial tensions increased, its classrooms become centers of conflict, and its streets become battlegrounds because of the forced busing of thousands of its schoolchildren. There is growing agreement among parents, politicians, sociologists and educators that though desegregation of the schools is a desirable end, forced busing is an imperfect and ineffective means to achieve it. You have added your voice to the critics of busing by saying that you oppose it and that there are better alternatives to it. But you have never really spelled out, in specific detail, what these alternatives are and what you propose to do as President to bring them about.

Exactly what do you advocate to bring about integration in the schools and reduce the racial tension in our city—and what actions will you take to achieve those goals?

Vice presidential possibilities

Since you announced your shakeup in the cabinet and the CIA to bring your "team" into the administration, and Vice President Rockefeller bowed out of the 1976 picture, political questions have been raised. In bringing Ambassador Elliot Richardson back to the U. S. to assume the



President



post of Secretary of Commerce, are you readying him for possible consideration as your running-mate?

Sen. Edward W. Brooke has also been mentioned as an attractive addition to whatever ticket the convention might endorse. Have you considered Brooke as a possible vice presidential candidate next year?

Tax reform

For the past few years the Congress—particularly the House Ways and Means Committee—has been struggling with the problem of how to reform the tax laws and close the loopholes which enable some citizens and corporations to pay less than their fair share.

One of the proposals now before the committee, submitted by Rep. James A. Burke of Massachusetts, would change the Social Security Tax Law to lessen the payments now made by employers and employees and would raise the income limits so that wage earners with an income of \$25,000 would pay an SS tax on that full amount.

Do you support that tax reform? What else would you suggest to make the federal tax laws more equitable than they now are.

Would you support more federal aid to education as a means of reducing the heavy dependency which our local communities now place on the property tax for meeting the costs of the schools?

Welfare

When Casper Weinberger resigned a few months ago as your secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, his parting shot was a call to end the present welfare mess before it bankrupts the country. In place of the present chaotic and costly system, he urged adoption of a new program of cash grants which would be tied to a work requirement for everyone in need. His proposal was essentially the same as the Family Assistance Plan advocated by former President Nixon and Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Do you support that kind of welfare reform? Do you think Congress will go along with a total overhaul of the present system? Wouldn't this be one way to ease the fiscal pressure and avert the danger of bankruptcy in New York and other cities and states where welfare costs have gone out of control?

Health insurance

Even advocates of legislation to set up a national health insurance system concede that, in view of the recession, there is no likelihood it will be adopted soon if ever. But a year ago you proposed a program to insure all Americans against the high costs of catastrophic illnesses. Is the administration still pushing for enactment of such a program by Congress?

Foreign aid and trade

You recently approved another major purchase of wheat by the Soviet Union, which many consumers fear will add to the price of bread and other commodities sold in America's supermarkets. Wouldn't it have been a better deal if we had swapped our wheat for Russian oil on a quid pro quo basis, which could have lowered the price of petroleum products and made us less dependent on—and subject to blackmail by—the Arabs?

Last week you proposed nearly doubling the cost of the U. S. foreign aid program next year. Can we really afford to be so generous abroad when there are so many domestic needs going unmet today and crying out for funds?

Strikes by public workers

In recent months there has been a rash of strikes by teachers, firemen, policemen and other government-employees. Do you think the time has come for federal legislation to prohibit such work stoppages? If so, would such a law require compulsory arbitration, or are there other alternatives?

Fishing rights

If the Senate passes a bill already adopted by the House to establish a 200-mile limit to protect American fishermen from foreign competition, will you sign the measure into law?

Selective service

The draft has been suspended for several years now, and our armed forces apparently have been able to meet their quotas with volunteers. Why do the American taxpayers still need to spend millions of dollars to operate a Selective Service System which no longer has anything to do? Do you support and will you urge Congress to abolish the Selective Service?

Supreme court

Although he has been seriously ill for nearly a year, and has already served on the Supreme Court longer than anyone in history, Justice William O. Douglas still refuses to resign from the bench. One reason may be that he doesn't want to give you the satisfaction of appointing his successor because he holds a grudge against you as a result of your effort to impeach him several years ago when you were a member of Congress.

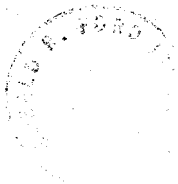
Have you or anyone else tried to patch up the feud or attempted to work out a reasonable arrangement which would assure Justice Douglas that if he does resign he would be succeeded by a man (or woman) whose views and qualifications he would find acceptable?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO: *Ron Nissen*

FROM: Margita E. White
Assistant Press Secretary
to the President

FYI



Eugene S. Cowen, Vice President

Dear Margita:

Sometimes "Good Morning America" has nice things to say, in contrast to some of the other transcripts we have seen. I am pleased to enclose a copy of what Jack Anderson said on January 7.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,



Eugene S. Cowen
Vice President

Honorable Margita E. White
Director of Communications and
Assistant Press Secretary
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Enclosure

January 16, 1976

JACK ANDERSON
Excerpt from **GOODMORNING AMERICA**

January 7, 1976

Johnson's remark about Gerald Ford's inability to walk and chew gum at the same time has stuck to the President -- like gum. From coast to coast, President Ford is being ridiculed as a stumblebum who trips over his own feet.

There's the story that Ford was on an escalator that broke down, and he was stuck for two hours. Or this one: "Why did Jerry Ford stop playing water polo? Answer: Because his horse kept bronking."

Another crack making the rounds here in Washington is that Ford is the only man in America whose lips move when he reads a stop sign.

Unhappily for the President, he keeps reinforcing his image as a klutz. He trips over airplane steps. He gets tangled in his dog's leashes. He falls on the ski slopes.

Is this the real Jerry Ford? The answer is no. He is not a stumblebum. He still has the moves of the All-American football player he once was at the University of Michigan.

Neither is the President a dumbbell. He has never claimed to be a great intellect. But no one without brains could make it through the Yale Law School, as Gerald Ford did.

The real Gerald Ford is a good-natured guy who has the capacity to laugh at himself. I have been in the inner sanctums of the White

House. On the walls are some of the cartoons poking fun at Ford.

The President thought they were funny, too.

Nor is Ford a drunk, which some critics have whispered. He is a locker-room President, who likes to belt a couple with the boys after the action is over.

He doesn't often get ruffled. Let me tell you an incident that never got in the newspapers. When Sara Jane Moore took a shot at him in San Francisco last September, the President was rudely shoved into his limousine, and three secret Service agents plopped down on top of him. They literally were shielding him with their own bodies.

The heavily armored car slowly gained speed and headed for the Freeway. The radio and air-conditioner were turned off to reduce the strain on the motor.

Several minutes passed. Finally from the carpeted floor of the car, beneath the three burly agents, came the mild voice of President Ford. "Do you think we could turn on the air-conditioning?" He asked. "It's a little stuffy down here."