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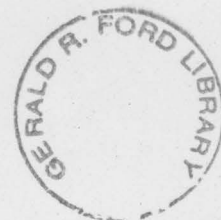
WILLIAM J. BAROODY, JR.

ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

CENTRAL ILLINOIS WHITE HOUSE

CONFERENCE ON DOMESTIC AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1975



ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT FORD AND THE GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANTS,
I AM PLEASED TO WELCOME YOU TO THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS WHITE HOUSE
CONFERENCE ON DOMESTIC AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. THIS IS ONE OF A
SERIES OF SUCH CONFERENCES WE ARE HOLDING AROUND THE COUNTRY,
AND IS ONE OF THE MANY WAYS TO ACHIEVE PRESIDENT FORD'S GOAL OF
OPENING UP HIS ADMINISTRATION TO ALL AMERICANS. THIS PRESIDENT
IS DETERMINED TO HAVE AN OPEN WHITE HOUSE. HE WANTS TO BRING
PEOPLE TO THE WHITE HOUSE, AND HE WANTS TO BRING THE WHITE HOUSE
TO THE PEOPLE--IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES, AS WE ARE DOING HERE IN
PEORIA TODAY.

IN FACT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ANY ADMINISTRATION, PRESIDENT
FORD HAS CREATED A WHITE HOUSE OFFICE TO INTERACT WITH PRIVATE
CITIZENS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS ON A BASIS EQUAL TO THE TWO
WHITE HOUSE OFFICES THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY DEALT WITH CONSTITUENCY
GROUPS--THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE AND THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF
CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON. THIS NEW OFFICE, WHICH IT IS MY PRIVILEGE
TO HEAD, IS THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON. I LIKE TO



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SAY THAT PRESIDENT FORD IS THE FIRST PRESIDENT TO GIVE THE PUBLIC EQUAL STATUS WITH THE PRESS AND THE CONGRESS. THE PRESIDENT UNDERSTANDS THE VITAL NEED TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS. HE WANTS US TO MAINTAIN A PROCESS THAT WILL KEEP HIM ABREAST NOT ONLY OF LOCAL AND STATE PROBLEMS BUT ALSO OF THE CONCERNS OF THE PRIVATE CITIZEN.

SECOND, HE FEELS STRONGLY THAT OPEN DIALOGUE WITH ALL AMERICANS IS THE BEST WAY TO SEARCH FOR MORE PRECISE DEFINITIONS OF OUR PROBLEMS AND GIVE REPRESENTATION TO THE PRIVATE CITIZEN AS PART OF AN ONGOING PROCESS TO SEARCH FOR WORKABLE SOLUTIONS TO THOSE PROBLEMS.

BUT THE PRESIDENT IS NOT ONLY CONCERNED WITH ENCOURAGING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. HE ALSO WANTS TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION AMONG THEMSELVES. ALL TOO OFTEN MANY OF US, BOTH IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT, END UP MERELY TALKING TO OURSELVES; ALL TOO OFTEN MEETINGS ARE MADE UP OF BUSINESSMEN



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TALKING TO BUSINESSMEN, UNION MEMBERS TO UNION MEMBERS, EDUCATORS TO EDUCATORS, AND SO ON. THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT A PROCESS OF INTERACTION AMONG DIVERSE GROUPS CAN LEAD TO A RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE IN ALL OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF OUR SOCIETY--AND HE VIEWS THIS PROBLEM, THE PROBLEM OF RESTORING CONFIDENCE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS, AS A TOP PRIORITY ON HIS AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE.

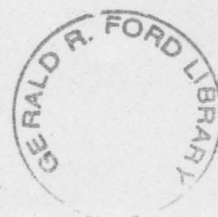
IN CONNECTION WITH THIS LATTER POINT, LET ME MAKE A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT AN INSTITUTION THAT IS UNIQUE TO AMERICAN SOCIETY AND ONE THAT IS AT BEST MISUNDERSTOOD. I REFER TO WHAT MOST AMERICANS CALL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS. WHAT IS A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP? QUITE SIMPLY, NOTHING MORE THAN A COLLECTION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO HAVE EXERCISED THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO ORGANIZE TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY HAVE PARTICULAR CONCERNS, VIEWS, AND INTERESTS. THEY FEEL THAT THESE CONCERNS WILL BEST BE ADVANCED THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION. IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, ALL OF YOU IN THIS AUDIENCE TODAY ARE MEMBERS OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS.



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THIS PRESIDENT RECOGNIZES THAT THROUGH ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS YOU REPRESENT, THE MOST VITAL CONCERNS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OFTEN ARE BEST EXPRESSED, THAT IS WHY OUR WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON IS ORGANIZED TO KEEP IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH YOU AND TO SEEK TO UNDERSTAND YOUR VIEWS.

IN A VERY REAL SENSE, WITHOUT "SPECIAL INTERESTS" THERE CAN BE NO VIABLE DEFINITION OF THE "PUBLIC INTEREST." NOW THE TERM PUBLIC INTEREST, UNLIKE SPECIAL INTERESTS, IN TODAY'S VERNACULAR IS A GOOD TERM AND PRODUCES GOOD VIBES. BUT YET THERE IS NO ONE SINGLE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE UNITED STATES. THE PUBLIC INTEREST, IF YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT IT, IS A COLLECTION OR--MORE PRECISELY-- A BLEND OF MANY SUBINTERESTS THAT EXIST IN EVERY SECTOR OF SOCIETY, AND IT'S BY CONSIDERING THOSE SUBINTERESTS THAT WE BLEND AND REFINE UNTIL WE ULTIMATELY DEVELOP A PUBLIC INTEREST. THIS PRESIDENT CLEARLY IS COMMITTED TO SERVING THE PUBLIC INTEREST, BUT HE UNDERSTANDS THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DEFINE THE PUBLIC INTEREST UNTIL WE FIRST FIND OUT THE INTERESTS THAT MIGHT COMPRISE



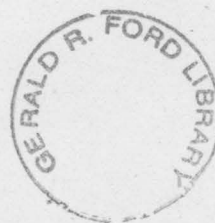
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IT, AND THAT'S REALLY WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE TODAY, IT'S WHY ALL OF YOU ARE HERE, IT'S WHY WE HAVE DESIGNED THE MANY PROGRAMS OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON.

LET ME TAKE A MINUTE TO DESCRIBE THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON'S ACTIVITIES.

AS PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S DESIRE FOR OPEN COMMUNICATION, OUR GOAL IS TO REACH AMERICANS IN EVERY SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY AT THE NATIONAL, STATE, AND GRASS ROOTS LEVEL TO DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS.

ONE OF THE WAYS WE DO THIS IS THROUGH A SERIES OF SMALL MEETINGS WHICH ARE HELD AT THE WHITE HOUSE EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY. THESE MEETINGS BRING TOGETHER TWENTY TO THIRTY LEADERS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR HALF-DAY DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. WE FAMILIARIZE THESE LEADERS WITH ADMINISTRATION POSITIONS AND AT THE SAME TIME THE FEDERAL OFFICIALS HEAR FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR SO THAT YOUR CONCERNS CAN BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AS GOVERNMENT POLICY IS MADE.



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