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THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN



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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

May 19, 1997

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Enclosed is the Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review. This is a comprehensive examination of America's defense needs from now through 2015. I purposely designed it to be strategy based and to address the force structure and modernization requirements necessary to counter emerging threats. I believe it addresses the fundamental shifts attendant to the maturing, post-Cold War security environment.

The support you have given me since assuming my post has enabled this department to look critically at our defense requirements. I anticipate a close working relationship with your staff as we ensure a safe future for our Nation. This report is a vital step in this process.

76 NSC
~~76 NSC~~
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TK

Bill Clinton

To NSC for
reply?
Yes ☒
No ☐

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

May 20, 1997

5/21/97

MR. PRESIDENT:

The attached memo seeks your approval of a White House conference on Hate Crimes to be held this fall. Sylvia asked that we send it to you ASAP.

Background. Under federal law, hate crimes originally covered attacks based on race, religion or national origin, and now cover sexual orientation, ethnicity and disability and, most recently, women. According to the FBI, over 8,000 hate crimes occur each year and this likely understates the problem.

Proposed conference. The one-day conference would include 100 participants -- victims and families, advocates, law enforcement, state and local government officials, religious leaders, the AG and White House officials. It would demonstrate your commitment to preventing hate crimes, document best practices for combating such crimes, and provide a forum for considering ways to encourage state and local legislation as well as for developing strategy re proposed federal amendments. The format would include welcoming remarks by the AG, four panel groups focused on different elements of the problem, remarks by you, reports from panel chairs and a round table discussion led by you, and a reception.

White House staff would work closely with DOJ in planning of the conference. Cost would be \$20,000 excluding participants' travel and lodging. However, foundation funding may be available to cover those costs for needy participants.

☒ Approve

☐ Disapprove

☐ Discuss

Todd Stern *T.S.*
Helen Howell *Helen*

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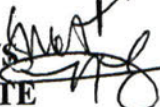
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

5/20/97
Sylvia Mathews
wants this to
go ASAP

May 19, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RICHARD SOCARIDES 

THROUGH: SYLVIA MATHEWS 
MARIA ECHAVESTE

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
5/21/97

RE: Proposed White House Conference on Hate Crimes

I. SUMMARY

This memorandum provides background information relating to hate crimes in America and proposes that you authorize the convening of a White House conference on hate crimes to be held in the fall of 1997. This memorandum also sets forth the goals, structure, timing, staffing and funding for such a conference.

This conference would be part of our overall unity plan, because it addresses hate crimes against *all* people. Also, it would fit into our race initiative, because it will include racially-motivated hate crimes.

II. BACKGROUND

Hate Crimes are a serious problem in America. Statistics collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation suggest that over 8,000 hate crimes occur each year, and it is clear that these statistics greatly understate the problem. Despite federal legislation designed to establish the incidence of hate crimes, uneven and under reporting by law enforcement agencies around the country make the actual situation very unclear. Recent media attention paid to some high profile incidents of hate related violence have helped to focus national attention on the problem.

In January, the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights ("LCCR") met with senior White House staff. At the meeting, LCCR presented its recent report on hate crimes in America. The report recommends, among other things, that the Administration take steps to help educate the public as to the magnitude of the problem and look for possible solutions.

Under current federal law there are three different definitions of hate crimes. The principal federal criminal statute dealing with hate crimes, 18 USC 245, provides a traditional definition: attacks based on race, religion or national origin. The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 expanded that definition, for the purposes of its provisions, to include crimes in which an individual becomes the victim due to their race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability. The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1994 expands that definition further to include women. There are several proposals which call for the principal federal criminal definition to be expanded to provide broader coverage. Many of these proposals present important policy and constitutional issues.

III. PROPOSED CONFERENCE

Goals: A White House conference on hate crimes would:

- promote unity by educating the public in a dramatic way about the threat these crimes pose to the fundamental principals of fairness and equal justice upon which our nation was founded, and by fostering a greater appreciation of the rich diversity of America;
- demonstrate the Administration's commitment to preventing hate crimes and highlight current and future actions we are taking to achieve this goal;
- serve as an opportunity to examine and document the best practices for combating hate crimes and devise strategies and prepare a report to aid law enforcement and local communities in improved enforcement of existing laws and other strategies to fight these crimes; and
- provide a focus for consideration of proposals to encourage state and local governments to initiate hate crimes legislation and to develop a legislative and policy strategy with respect to the proposed amendments to existing federal law.

The theme of the conference should be forward looking. While it will, by necessity, examine the tragic impact hate crimes have on the American society, we will work to emphasize positive actions individuals can take to help prevent hate crimes and promote unity. Further, while the main focus of the Reconciliation\Race Initiative is on race, the hate crimes conference would be inclusive of all victims of crimes motivated by hate, including those motivated by intolerance of the actual or perceived religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability of the victim.

Structure: The conference would last one day and be held at the White House. It would include approximately 100 participants from all walks of life and from every region of the country. They would be selected by a White House working group. The participants would include the victims and their families, advocates, law enforcement professionals, state and local

government officials, and religious leaders, etc. Senior Administration officials from the White House, the Attorney General and other officials from the Department of Justice and relevant agencies and departments would also participate. We would also identify and work closely with key Members of Congress in connection with the Conference.

The conference format would include the following:

- Welcoming remarks from the Attorney General and other administration officials in a morning plenary session to last about one hour.
- Four panel groups focused on different elements of the hate crimes problem (examples could include panels focused on some of the following: crimes motivated by race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation/identity, disability; the attackers and organized hate groups; law enforcement efforts and best practices; educational and private initiatives; help available for the victims, etc.) Panel participants would be pre-assigned based on their area of expertise. Each panel would include an Administration official and a pre-assigned chair.
- Remarks by you to an afternoon plenary session of all participants. We would work to have the afternoon session carried live on CNN and other networks, and/or by satellite feeds to venues in other locations. Your remarks would be introduced by a series of brief comments from victims, whose selection would illustrate the diversity and scope of the crisis. Your comments would outline the scope of the problem and suggest the Administration's response.
- Reports from the panel chairs and a round table discussion led by you. A short question and answer period involving the larger audience would also be included.
- A reception for participants.

A book of the conference proceedings would be produced and distributed to the participants and others. A letter from you outlining what can be done to fight hate crimes and including any specific proposals coming out of the conference could be more widely distributed.

Timing: The conference would take place in the fall of 1997.

Staffing: The Office of Public Liaison would take the lead in staffing. A working group to include Public Liaison staff and staff from other relevant White House Departments (Intergovernmental Affairs, Legislative Affairs, Cabinet Affairs, Communications, Domestic Policy Council, etc.) should be assembled to run the conference.

We would work closely with the Department of Justice in the planning and convening of the Conference. Senior staff in the offices of the Civil Rights Division, the Community Relations Service and the Deputy Attorney Generals Office at the Department of Justice have reviewed this memorandum and their comments have been incorporated herein.

Cost, Funding: The conference as outlined could be conducted at a cost of about \$20,000, exclusive of travel and lodging for participants. Outside funding, through a not-for-profit foundation or otherwise, may be available to provide transportation and lodging for some needy participants.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that a White House Conference on Hate Crimes be convened as outlined above.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____ Discuss further _____