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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

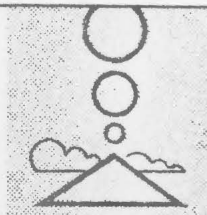
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Norm -
Assured by phone.
A vitally important
group to keep in
touch with.
Dead



15

AMERICAN INDIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
NEWS SERVICE



ROOM 206
1346 CONNECTICUT AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 293-9150

Executive Director: *Rose Robinson*
News Director: *Richard LaCourse*

AUG 16 1974

BP
President Gerald R. Ford, Jr.
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Ford:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to President Nixon dated August 14, 1975, with which we transmitted two recent news releases issued by the American Indian Press Association on the change of Administration. We forward this information to you for your possible interest.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the American Indian Press Association, I want to express our best wishes to you as you take over the reins of Government.

The task of the AIPA will be, as it was during the Nixon years, to report on the work of your Administration in Indian affairs to Native Americans through the medium of their own newspapers. In this task, we hope that we will again be able to work with those members of your staff involved in Indian affairs, as we did with the Nixon Administration, to continue factual and accurate reporting to our Native American readership.

We wish you every success.

Sincerely yours,

Rose Robinson
Executive Director

Enclosures



AUG 16 1974

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The White House
Washington, D. C.

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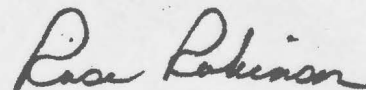
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Rose Robinson
Executive Director

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cc: B. Patterson



AUG 14 1974

President Richard M. Nixon

San Clemente, California

Dear President Nixon;

Enclosed for your possible interest are two recent news stories issued by the American Indian Press Association on Indian affairs during your Administration and an analysis of the future during the Ford Administration.

The staff of the AIPA felt that you might be interested in these comments written from a Native American point of view. Copies of the releases are being sent to all of the tribal chairmen of the various Federal and non-Federal Indian reservations in the United States.

Also enclosed is information about the American Indian Press Association. You might be interested to know that the Association, born and developed during your years in the White House, received initial assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There is no doubt that, without the support of your Administration for the concept of Indian self-determination, the AIPA would never have received this assistance from a Bureau which, until then, had traditionally been very conservative in seeking to encourage the development of new and innovative ideas and programs for Indian people.

The AIPA, though an advocate press for Native Americans, has always sought to present every aspect of a news situation and we are proud that our work has engendered the respect and cooperation of Federal Government officials and members of your Administration staff so that we had a good working relationship with them in our news coverage for our Native American readership.

We would like you to know that we are also aware that you were the first American President in our history to address a letter of commendation to a Native American editor. That honor, in July of 1973, went to Mr. Howard Rock, an Eskimo, who is editor of the TUNDRA TIMES in Fairbanks, Alaska. We carried a story about Mr. Rock's achievement in the July issue of our member publication, MEDIUM RARE, which received much comment and was widely noted.

Respectfully yours,

Rose Robinson

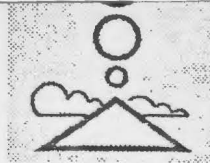
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cc: President Gerald R. Ford, Jr., The White House



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FORD - AU122

BY RICHARD LA COURSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.--(AIPA)--Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr., who on Aug. 9 was sworn in as President of the United States, "won't take any U-turns for any Indian policies" but will continue the Indian policies of his predecessor, Richard M. Nixon, according to a White House staffer who met recently with him.

Bradley Patterson Jr., who met with Ford in February of this year on Indian policy matters personally, gave this assessment to AIPA:

"He is forthright and interested and progressive in Indian affairs. Indian people can look forward under Mr. Ford to the same kind--and more of the same kind--of serious interest and concern. There's no question of any diversion. We'll continue on the same track. There won't be any U-turn for any Indian policies."

If President Ford's Indian policies do continue those of Nixon, there will nevertheless be new faces and new top level personnel in the White House itself. AIPA has learned that Leonard Garment, Nixon's special counsel on minority affairs and the arts, and thus the topmost Indian affairs official in the White House under Nixon, had made known his intention to Nixon that he would leave the White House as soon as impeachment matters had reached their conclusion so that his children could begin the fall school term in September in their home town of New York.

Expected to emerge in some high level capacity at the White House level in Indian affairs was William E. Casselman II, named legal counsel to then-Vice President Ford when Ford was designated Vice President last October. Casselman has handled, almost singlehandedly, all Indian affairs matters for Ford since that time, including a proposal to replace the mechanisms of the now-defunct National Council on Indian Opportunity (NCIO) with an Indian Affairs Committee on the White House Domestic Council in the White House, and with the creation of two national Indian advisory councils.

On the day Nixon resigned, Aug. 9, Ford asked Morton and other Cabinet officials to remain in their present posts. Morton, however, a long-time close personal friend of Ford, was named the following day to a four-member "transition team" to monitor what Ford labelled "an orderly transition of power." Top national columnists immediately speculated that Morton might leave the Interior Department for a White House assignment, either as White House chief of staff or in another top role in domestic affairs. Should Morton leave Interior, he would likely be succeeded by Interior Under Secretary John Whitaker.

Morton was scheduled to appear at the Crow Fair Aug. 16 and 17, where it was expected he would draw the major outlines of a continuation in Indian policy between Nixon and Ford.

At Interior itself, most top Indian affairs officials told AIPA they expected to continue their work. Indian Commissioner Morris Thompson, a presidential appointee, was also expected to continue, as well as BIA division chiefs recently appointed.

MORE



One uncertainty was whether Bradley Patterson Jr. would continue in the White House, where he had served as special assistant to Leonard Garment. Patterson had been scheduled to head the Indian Affairs Committee on the White House Domestic Council before the impeachment issue drowned all such plans in the making, and Patterson told AIPA "I'm completely unclear where I'll be." Either Patterson or Casselman might eventually hold that post--or Casselman may replace Garment as Patterson's boss.

Besides personnel questions, the major question now is whether and how Ford will continue the Nixon Indian policies and legislative initiatives.

Ford remained almost totally uninvolved in the affairs and needs of Indians in his home state of Michigan during his 25-year tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives, according to Michigan Indian spokesmen who talked to AIPA last October when Ford was designated Vice President following the resignation of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew on Oct. 10. Those Indians in Michigan telegraphed Ford their congratulations and support on his new assignment.

Ford, according to Capitol Hill staffers, has voted the Nixon administration line on most major national Indian legislative proposals since 1969. As a consequence, it is expected that Ford will continue the Nixon legislative initiatives. Of the original eight Nixon bills originally proposed in 1970, one--the Indian Financing Act--has been enacted into law, another bill to elevate the Indian Commissioner to an Interior Department Assistant Secretary is hung up in the House, and a bill to create an Indian Trust Counsel Authority is expected to gain new momentum before Congress recesses in early winter.

Among the very first Indian bills arriving on President Ford's desk for signature may be bills now moving through Congress to resolve the historic and difficult Navajo-Hopi land dispute, a bill significantly increasing health services and contracting for Indians sponsored by Sen. Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., and the bill to create the Indian Trust Counsel Authority introduced by the Nixon administration.

And Ford has styled himself a "conservative in fiscal affairs." His approach to government may soon be an approach in spending cuts, which will not bode well for any major increases in federal expenditures for Indians during the new Ford administration.

During his brief eight months as Vice President, Ford met only once with Indian leaders--this past Mar. 7. Mel Tonasket (Colville), president of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and Gov. Robert Lewis (Zuni), president of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association (NTCA) met with Ford personally at Ford's initiative for about 40 minutes to review Ford's proposal to liquidate NCIO, then under the office of the Vice President. NCIO formally died this June 30.

Ford proposed the creation of the White House Domestic Council Indian Affairs Committee and the creation of the two national Indian advisory councils to replace NCIO. His proposal became embroiled in controversies among national Indian political groups, and was left unresolved at the hour of impeachment itself. He may, upon the stimulus of his new advisors, revive the proposal.



During the Mar. 7 meeting with Lewis and Tonasket, Ford told the two: "I will always be your advocate. Come in any time and I'll be your link."

NCAI President Tonasket commented on Ford to AIPA following that meeting:

"The Vice President is very much a businessman--he never took time to joke. I've met quite a few politicians, and my personal impression is that he's kind of a point-blank man. He doesn't mess around. He comes right to the point with a straightforward attitude. And he made no pretense of knowing a great deal about Indians. I appreciate that--and it makes it easier to work. There was no waste of time. It was all business, and that is refreshing."

On Aug. 9, the day Ford took the presidential oath of office, William Youpee, executive director of the National Tribal Chairmen's Association sent the following letter to Ford:

"We wish to congratulate you in assuming the responsibility of the 38th presidency of the United States.

"We in the National Tribal Chairmen's Association feel these are exciting but critical times for Indians in the United States. Treaties are being tested, Indian lives are being exerted and new expectations are being voiced. To be responsive to this mood, the NTCA has dedicated itself to the promise of a better future for the reservation Indian.

"It is to the point, the one of communication and working toward common objectives, that the NTCA pledges its support and cooperation to the Office of the Presidency in matters related to Indians."



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NIXON - AU091

WASHINGTON, D.C.--(AIPA)--In the days immediately following the unprecedented and historic resignation of President Richard M. Nixon under a dark cloud of scandal and certain impeachment in the House of Representatives and conviction of charges in the Senate, a review of the Nixon years in Indian affairs is in order.

The Nixon administration, beginning January 20, 1969, has been in the eyes of even the most critical observers one of the most active in Indian affairs since that of the so-called "Indian New Deal" under Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Nixon Indian policy itself, defined as "Indian self-determination without termination," meant essentially giving federally recognized tribes greater control over their existence without ending the federal trust responsibility. On July 8, 1970, Nixon sent his Indian Message to Congress, and accompanying it was a package of eight bills set for enactment there. The famed Nixon Indian Message, perhaps one of the presidential messages most-quoted by Indians in recent history, made the phrase self-determination a major phrase of the time, and stated:

"It is long past time that the Indian policies of the federal government begin to recognize and build upon the capacities and insights of the Indian people. Both as a matter of justice and as a matter of enlightened social policy, we must begin to act on the basis of what the Indians themselves have long been telling us. The time has come to break decisively with the past and create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions...

"Self-determination among the Indian people can and must be encouraged without the threat of eventual termination. In my view, in fact, that is the only way that self-determination can effectively be fostered.

"This, then, must be the goal of any new national policy toward the Indian people: to strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community. We must assure the Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being separated involuntarily from the tribal group. And we must make it clear that Indians can become independent of federal control without being cut off from federal concern and federal support..."

Among Nixon administration achievements from 1969 to 1974 were:

BUDGET

The federal Indian budget increased dramatically since 1969 under the Nixon administration to an overall \$1.6 billion dollar figure in the current fiscal year budget requests. From 1969 to the current fiscal year in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), funding for that agency rose from \$249 million to \$635 million.

MORE



APPOINTMENTS

Building on precedents set in previous administrations, the Nixon administration increased the number of Indians holding high-level positions across the federal bureaucracy. BIA Area Directors themselves are now predominantly American Indians, and Indian superintendents have become a hallmark of the Nixon years.

LAND RETURNS

Sometimes with the initiative of the Nixon administration, sometimes with its support and sometimes despite its opposition, major land restorations have occurred for Indian groups: Taos Pueblo received its historic Blue Lake back in 1970, Mt. Adams was returned to the Yakimas in 1972, the Alaska Natives received 40 million acres of land under the Alaska Native Land Claims Act of 1971, the Warm Springs Tribe obtained the 60,000-acre McQuinn Strip in 1972, the Tonto Apaches were granted land in Arizona, the Fort Mojave Tribe in the last few months was restored lands involved in a long-standing controversy, Menominee country in Wisconsin was restored to federal trust status, and the Colvilles and Spokanes in Washington were restored jurisdiction over the lake surface area along the Columbia River. (The Office of Management and Budget in the White House, however, opposed other portions of the Nixon administration over return of certain so-called submarginal lands to a number of tribes.)

NEW OFFICES

In the eyes of some, the creation of new offices in the bureaucracy is one measure of responsiveness of human needs. Following widespread Indian discontent in the Dakotas and the Southwest in 1972, the Office of Indian Rights was created in the Justice Department in April of 1972 to protect the civil rights of Indian people. An Indian Desk was created in the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) in the Commerce Department, a new Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) was created in HEW to continue most functions and services for Indians which had been exercised by the now-defunct Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and a new Office of Indian Manpower Programs (OIMP) was created this past summer in the Labor Department. And for a brief period in the BIA, an Indian Water Rights Office was formed from September 1971 until December 1972, when it was permitted to fade with the rubble of the ravaged BIA following the Trail of Broken Treaties takeover. Special Indian operations were also created in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Labor, and the Smithsonian Institution, a federal fortress which inaugurated its "Indian Awareness Program" despite a long history of exclusion of Indian people.

APPEARANCES

During the Nixon years, Vice President Spiro Agnew was the first Vice President in history to address any national Indian assemblies. In 1969, in Albuquerque, N.M., Agnew addressed the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and in 1972 he again addressed the National Tribal Chairmen's Association (NTCA), this time in Roswell, N.M.

*

Among highly controversial matters touching on areas where the Nixon administration was loudly criticized and damned by Indian individuals and groups were these:

MORE



MILITANCY

Beginning with the Indian occupation of Alcatraz Island in November 1969, Indian militancy--which by the time of the Nixon ~~resignation~~ had triggered over 45 occupations across the nation--had become a thorn in the side of the Nixon administration, intent on quieting any appearance of domestic unrest in America following the disorders of the black and civil rights movements in the 1960s.

Largely dismissing Indian militants as "urban Indians" and "urban guerrillas," the Nixon administration unleashed FBI and undercover agents who began the first widespread surveillance of both militant and moderate Indians in the twentieth century. To its credit and despite policy splits within topiders in the Nixon administration during massive confrontations at the BIA during 1972 and at Wounded Knee in 1973, a policy of restraint of physical force and negotiation prevailed, involving the decisions of Nixon himself, thereby avoiding massive bloodshed.

URBAN INDIANS

At first utilizing OEO as the "lead agency" for the needs of about 500,000 Indians living off the Indian reservations, the Nixon administration spent less than \$10 million on total urban Indian needs in more than five years, killed OEO itself in the summer of 1973, and has left the urban Indians' unresolved issues and unmet needs to the new administration of President Gerald R. Ford.

REGIONALIZATION

Nixon's "New Federalism" program, aimed at dismantling the federal bureaucracy and bringing the government home to people across the country through a program of regionalizing federal operations, met uniform Indian opposition because Indians expressed their belief that regionalization of federal programs would dismantle the direct federal-tribal trust responsibility and relationship itself, and leave Indian tribes and communities victim to competitive minority politics dominated largely by the black community across the nation.

BIA TURBULENCE

At the Interior Department, Nixon fired his first Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel on Oct. 4, 1971, replacing him with Rogers C.B. Morton the following spring. And five Indian Commissioners or their equivalents have held tenure during the Nixon years: Robert L. Bennett (Oneida) till 1969, Louis R. Bruce (Mohawk) till he was fired on Dec. 6, 1973, Richard S. Bodman until he left for Wall Street, Marvin L. Franklin (Iowa) who refused the job on grounds he would be forced to do what he refused to do, and currently Morris Thompson (Athabaskan).

Five major reorganizations of the BIA itself, and numberless minor reorganizations, occurred during the Nixon years, reflecting the uncertainty of the BIA's mission in its own eyes. Moderates among Indians pressed during the Nixon years for the removal of the BIA from Interior and the creation of a separate and autonomous Indian agency, utilizing many potent and important voices in the Congress itself for their ends. Indian militants in September 1971 attempted to place a citizens' arrest on the BIA Deputy Commissioner on charges he was reversing an enlightened Nixon policy, and in November 1972 the BIA headquarters itself was ransacked and seized, becoming the focus of the most intense rage among a small but potent sector of Indians.

MORE

Did the Watergate scandals themselves, the so-called "White House horrors" which prompted the first resignation of an incumbent American President in history, in any way touch the administration of Indian affairs? Neither insiders or outsiders involved in Indian affairs in the nation's capital could say.

In December of 1972, however, just one month after the Trail of Broken Treaties takeover of the BIA building here in Washington, John Wesley Dean III, then the President's lawyer, invoked the principle of "executive privilege" for members of the President's White House staff in refusing to appear during a probe into that Indian takeover by the House of Representatives Indian Affairs Subcommittee.

And in June of 1974, learning of the scope of taped presidential conversations during a certain period in the White House, lawyers for top defendants in the trial arising from the Wounded Knee takeover in 1973 subpoenaed any relevant presidential tape-recorded conversations and had promises of the appearance of Dean himself in the trial as a witness for the defense.

Among Indians working in the federal bureaucracy, the federal courts and the Congress, feelings were mixed following Nixon's resignation. Above all there was a prevailing mood of stunned silence.

White House Indian Affairs Special Assistant Bradley Patterson Jr., assessing the Nixon years, Indians and federal policy to AIPA said:

"It was nice enough (of former President Nixon) to enunciate the (Indian) message, but when the chips were down we've gotten his support on Wounded Knee, probably Alcatraz, and on Alaska Native claims when we had to take Interior and OMB to the mat in order to win."

Patterson said Nixon's direct involvement in top level discussions on Indian matters occurred certainly on those three issues (when the White House taping system was functioning). Patterson also said the former President was also, in his last direct conversations on Indian matters, involved in a decision to provide to the Havasupai Tribe of Arizona a recommended total of 251,000 acres of land in trust this past May 3 while on an airline flight to Phoenix, Ariz., where Nixon formally announced his support for the tribe.

And thus does a President fall into the embrace of history.

