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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~5:30pm~~
5:45 p.m.
DF

June 4, 1980

BRIEFING AND RECEPTION WITH MEMBERS OF THE 95th CAUCUS

Thursday, June 5, 1980
5:30 p.m. (60 minutes)
The East Room

From: Frank Moore *F.M. Moore*

I. PURPOSE

To discuss various relevant legislative issues

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

Background: The Democratic members of the 95th Caucus met with the President in 1978. They feel a particular affinity with the President since they were all elected to office in the same year and felt that their first meeting here was particularly successful. They are open to a discussion of any issues you select.

We plan to do the briefing first, with a question and answer period to follow. Afterwards wine and cheese will be served in the Great Hall.

Participants: List of members on attached page

Press Plan: White House Photographer only

III. TALKING POINTS

Attached

NO. 1000000000

1000000000

2524

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS EXPECTED TO ATTEND:

Daniel Akaka

Doug Applegate

Doug Barnard

Anthony Beilenson

Adam Benjamin

David Bonior

John Cavanaugh

Allen Ertel

Billy Lee Evans

Ronnie Flipppo

Bob Garcia

Richard Gephardt

Dan Glickman

Al Gore

Lamar Gudger

Cecil Heftel

Jerry Huckaby

Ed Jenkins

Dale Kildee

Peter Kostmayer

Ray Lederer

Thomas Luken

Ed Markey

Jim Mattox

Barbara Mikulski

Austin Murphy

Mary Rose Oaker

Leon Panetta

Don Pease

Nick Joe Rahall

Ike Skelton

Bob Stump

Harold Volkmer

Doug Walgren

Wes Watkins

Ted Weiss

Charles Whitley

Robert Young

TALKING POINTS

95TH CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS

Your opening remarks to the Congressional Leadership breakfast this week really cannot be improved on. Most of what you said can be repeated to this group tonight. Set forth below are some brief suggestions about areas you might cover in your opening remarks:

1. Introduction:

- o Always pleased to meet with the 95th Caucus -- we have much in common (elected same time, been learning a great deal over the past 3-1/2 years, face a difficult re-election); and have always valued your frank advice and counsel.
- o Also like to meet because nowhere else can I see such a large collection of supportive Members -- your caucus has supported me more than that of any other class, and I deeply appreciate it (more than you may realize -- on key votes I always know who has supported me and who has not).
- o Particularly glad to meet you now because of the very sensitive political and Congressional relations situations now facing us -- the overriding need to unify our Party and prepare for the election, and the importance of enacting key legislative matters before the session ends.
- o Your recommendations and suggestions about how these difficult problems can be addressed will be most welcome by me -- do not hold back -- let me know what is truly on your mind.

2. Political Situation:

- o I will be the nominee of the Party; the issue now is not who is nominated but how the nomination process proceeds in a way to ensure Party unity in November and how best to prepare for a race against the Republicans.
- o I have just met with Senator Kennedy (proceed to describe what you can say about the meeting without violating any confidences).

- o I believe the process toward the Convention and after can be very smooth, but your help will be essential in unifying the Party. You are the emerging leaders of the Party and will have an enormous influence on whether the healing and unification process works.
- o I am committed to do my own part. I recognize the concerns of a sizable part of our Party. I am eager to work in the platform and other areas to have those concerns expressed.
- o I am also eager to help you in your own campaigns, however that might best be done -- by my own appearance, by my family's appearance, by my Cabinet's appearance, or by fundraising. I am very concerned about this part of the election, because as much as I want to be re-elected, I realize that it will be much more difficult to govern without a strong Democratic majority.

3. Congressional Relations:

- o Over the past 3-1/2 years, I have enjoyed good relations with the Congress -- at times excellent, at other times fair (but at no point anywhere as strained as in the Nixon-Ford years).
- o This has been due to a cooperative spirit from both sides, and a gradual recognition that neither branch can always agree on major issues (and that respect is not dependent upon agreement on specific issues).
- o Currently, there is a strain in our relationship -- there is an increased desire to make personal attacks on me, there is an abandonment of commitments, and there is an increased attention to parochial electoral concerns at the expense of the Nation. I recognize that my own actions are viewed by some of you as contributing unduly to this strain; for instance, my view on the recent budget resolution (for which I have no apologies, though I do recognize the concerns).
- o We are at a critical juncture now; if we let some recent problems fuel passions and emotions our chances of governing effectively over the next several months are diminished and our prospects of returning a strong Democratic Party in the Fall are reduced.
- o Today can probably be regarded as one of the low points in our relationship -- I was overridden in my veto today* and that was the first override since I have been President.

*Override vote may not occur by the time these remarks are given.

I think the Congress has made a great mistake and will ultimately regret it, but I am willing to work from this day forward to improve our relationship and to make this a beginning of a strong relationship.

- o Finally, let there be no doubt that I do not intend to run against the Congress. There may be some political advantage to that for me, but I think it is counterproductive for the Nation and I will not do it.

4. Substantive Areas:

- o There are a few substantive points that you might make in your opening remarks. You probably do not need to go into any detail, for you are certain to be asked about these issues and can make these points in the question and answer session:
 1. Oil Import Fee -- State your reasons for supporting it and your concerns about our energy and international posture if it is repealed (if the override has already occurred, there probably is little point in dwelling on this matter).
 2. Budget Process -- Indicate why you oppose the budget resolution and feel it is appropriate for you to have been involved in the process; you might also begin to set the framework for a compromise resolution by indicating that the issue was priorities and not getting the resolution to reflect 100% your own budget.
 3. Defense -- You should explain why our defense budget positions are not inconsistent, dealing with specific Nunn-Warner. This is an area of great confusion among many Caucus Members.
 4. Recession -- You should indicate to the Members our general view of the economic situation and point out why we believe it would be inappropriate now to cut taxes, send a large stimulus package to Congress, or to begin to add money to every bill to come along. Emphasize the need for a strong anti-inflation position to be maintained, and the difficulty of reversing courses so quickly.
 5. Fair Housing -- This legislation is before the House and has serious problems; many of the 95th Caucus Members are uncommitted and a strong pitch from you would be helpful.

6. Legislative Priorities -- Finally, at the appropriate point, you might indicate your Congressional priorities for the remainder of the year:

- Budget and appropriations for FY '81; and supplementals for FY '80 (including cost/savings incentives)
- EMB
- ESC
- Utility Backout
- Trucking Deregulation
- Rail Deregulation
- General Revenue Sharing/Targeted Fiscal Assistance
- Youth Employment
- Welfare Reform
- CHAP
- Mental Health Systems
- Higher Education
- Alaskan D-2
- Superfund
- Defense Authorization
- Registration
- Intelligence Charter