

MEET THE PRESS, GEORGE BUSH FEBRUARY 22, 1976

TO BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL IN THE FUTURE. BUT TO THE DEGREE SOME SAY, SHOULD WE HAVE CO
VEPT AT ALL. OR NOT? I SAY, YES, THIS COUNTRY MUST RETAIN A FLEXIBLE AND A STRONG COVE
AT CAPABILITY. LEWIS: MR. BUSH, A FEW MOMENTS AGO YOU SAID THAT WE HAVE TO RELY FOR CO
NTROLLING ABUSES NOT ON LAW, IN EFFECT, BUT ON BETTER OVERSIGHT BY THE EXECUTIVE ITSEL
F OR CONGRESS. NOW, THE PRESIDENT HAS PROPOSED SOMETHING CALLED AN OVERSIGHT BOARD OF
THREE DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN, WITHOUT BEING UNKIND, I WANT TO SAY THAT THEY'RE PATHER
ELDERLY, THAT THEY'RE PART-TIME, AND I JUST WONDER WHETHER YOU SERIOUSLY THINK THAT S
UCH CIVILIANS CAN KEEP ABREAST OF ALL THE THINGS THAT MAY GO WRONG OR THAT, ... US
T TOLD US A LITTLE EARLIER, DID GO WRONG? BUSH: WELL, LET ME GO BACK AND SAY ... DO
NOT I HOPE I DIDN'T COME DOWN SAYING I DON'T THINK YOU NEED ANY LAW. I HOPE ... S
EXECUTIVE ORDER AND THEN THE REQUESTS FOR LEGISLATION THAT HAVE GONE FORWARD I ... E
PRESIDENT, SAY IN THE FIELD OF ASSASSINATION, I HOPE THAT WILL BE PASSED. SO ... H
EED LAW, BUT CERTAINLY YOU NEED, INSIDE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, SOME MACHINERY. I CAN'T
ACCEPT, IN THIS DAY OF DISCRIMINATION, THIS AGE DISCRIMINATION, CAUSE A FELLOW LIKE MR
MURPHY IS A VERY ABLE PERSON, AND I DON'T THINK YOU INTENDED THAT. BUT I WOULD SAY T
HAT THIS MACHINERY, WHERE THE INSPECTORS GENERAL AND THE GENERAL COUNSEL AND INDIVIDUA
LS ARE ENCOURAGED, WITHOUT GOING TO THE DIRECTOR, SAY -- SOMEONE IN THE CIA, INSPECTOR
GENERAL -- TO GO DIRECT TO THE OVERSIGHT BOARD, IS A GOOD KIND OF MACHINERY TO HAVE A
AVAILABLE. AND YOU COUPLE THAT WITH MORE OVERSIGHT FROM THE CONGRESS, AND WE'RE MOVING
TOWARDS RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART OF PEOPLE LIKE OURSELVES, THE CIA. LEWIS: MR. BUSH,
ON LAW, YOU MENTIONED THE ONE EXAMPLE WHERE THE PRESIDENT HAS PROPOSED A LAW TO LIMIT
COVERT ACTIONS; THAT'S ON ASSASSINATIONS. I WONDER WHETHER YOU WOULD FAVOR ANY OTHER L
IMIT. FOR EXAMPLE, ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1970, PRESIDENT NIXON INSTRUCTED ONE OF YOUR PREDE
CESSORS TO ENCOURAGE A MILITARY COUP AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF ANOTHER COUNTRY,
CHILE. IF SOMEONE SAID THAT TO YOU NOW, ORDERED YOU TO DO THAT, WOULD YOU DO IT? HOW
DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT? BUSH: I WOULDN'T DO IT. I'LL TELL YOU WHY I WOULDN'T SAY IT, I
S BECAUSE UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S OWN ORDER, THIS DOUBLE-TRACKING, THAT THA
T BECAME REFERRED TO, IS ELIMINATED BY A MUCH MORE FORMALIZED ACTION OF THE OLD 48 COM
MITTEE, THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE NOW. NOBODY CAN SAY, OH, I WASN'T THERE, OR,
I GOT APHONE CALL, EVERYBODY SITS AROUND AND MAKE A DECISION OF THIS -- OF THIS NATURE
BUT -- AND THE ASSASSINATION THING HAS BEEN RULED OUT BY LAW SO, I WOULD HOPE -- AN
D ALSO, MR. LEWIS, YOU COME BACK, IN THE FINE ANALYSIS, TO JUDGMENT, TO INTEGRITY, AN
D YOU CAN'T REALLY DEFINE IN A CODE OF LAW EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING TO GUARANTY PERFECT
ION. AND I RESPECT THE ATTEMPT THAT'S BEEN MADE TO TRY TO ELIMINATE ABUSE. AND YET IF
YOU SAY, ARE YOU GUARANTEEING THERE WILL BE NO ABUSE? I COULDN'T SAY IT IN THIS FIELD
OR ANY OTHER FIELD BY LAW. NOYES: MR. BUSH, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE CHANCES ARE THAT CON
GRESS WILL ENACT SOME KIND OF LEGISLATION THAT SUBJECTS ITSELF TO CRIMINAL SANCTIONS I
N THE CASE OF DIVULGING OFFICIAL SECRETS? BUSH: I THINK THERE ARE TWO CHANCES: SLIM AN
D NONE. NOYES: IN THAT CASE, HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU THINK THESE ... BUSH: I'M NOT SURE TH
EY SHOULD, INCIDENTALLY. I'M NOT SURE THEY SHOULD, UNDER THE SPEECH-AND-DEBATE CALUSE.
BUT THOSE ARE THE TWO CHANCES I SEE. NOYES: WELL, IN THE CASE THAT WE ARE UP AGAINST
NOW, THE SANCTIONS WILL BE LIMITED TO A VERY FEW PEOPLE IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH O

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