

**President Nixon and Chuck Colson  
Lincoln Sitting Room  
Telephone call, January 20, 1973  
White House Tape 036-018**

**Nixon:** Don't you think the idea of having three concerts was great? Sticking it to Washington, having [Eugene] Ormandy, the great symphony, rather than that goddamn Washington Symphony, even with [Antal] Dorati, who's a great composer.

**Colson:** That's right.

**Nixon:** You don't have them. And God, Ormandy was fantastic.

**Colson:** Well he's--

**Nixon:** You know about a dozen of his people said, asked to be relieved because of the [Christmas] bombing [of North Vietnam] and the rest. He said, hell no, we'll throw you out of the symphony.

**Colson:** That's right.

**Nixon:** And he said that if the President decides to come back -- I hope he does -- I want him to put his arm around me in front of these goddamn left-wingers.

**Colson:** Is that what Ormandy said? Oh...

**Nixon:** That's right. He told his wife.

**Colson:** That's marvelous. That is marvelous.

**Nixon:** Well, I'm going to have him at the White House.

[...]

**Nixon:** Do you want to hear a little bit of the acceptance speech?

**Colson:** Yeah, I'd love to, sir

[...]

**Nixon:** *"Abroad and at home, the time has come to turn away from the condescending policies of paternalism, of Washington knows best."*

**Colson:** Oh, great.

**Nixon:** "A person..." Listen to this. "A person can be expected to act responsibly only if he has responsibility. This is human nature. So let us encourage individuals at home and in nations abroad to do more for themselves and decide more for themselves. Let us locate more responsibility in more places." And this is the key line. "Let us measure what we will do for others by what they will do for themselves."

**Colson:** Uhmhm. Beautiful.

**Nixon:** "That's why I offer no promise of a purely governmental solution for every problem. We have lived too long with that false promise and trusted too much to government. We have asked of it more than it could deliver. This leads only to inflated expectations, to reduced individual effort, and to a disappointment and frustration that erode confidence both in what government can do and what people can do."

**Colson:** Ahhhh.

Nixon: Listen to this. "Government must learn to take less from people so people can do more for themselves."

**Colson:** Oh, magnificent.

**Nixon:** "Let each of us remember that America was built not by government but by people, not by welfare but by work, not by shirking responsibility but seeking responsibility."

**Colson:** Oh, Jesus.

**Nixon:** "In our own lives let each of us ask not just what will government do for me, but what can I do for myself? In the challenges we face together, let each of us ask not how can government help, but how can I help?"

**Colson:** Magnificent. Just magnificent, Mr. President. That is the Nixon legacy, in my humble judgment, because what you're really saying is you believe in self-reliance -- self-reliance of nations around the world, self-reliance of people

[...]

**Colson:** You see, the important thing to remember, though, Mr. President, is the country doesn't buy that. The country does not buy a lot of the crap that they're fed. Sixty-seven [per cent of people interviewed] to seventeen per cent do not believe that we deliberately bombed hospitals or civilian targets. Now you had the goddamn CBS News and Hart and Ramsey Clark and all these people on every night saying we were deliberately bombing Bach Mai. That's all we ever heard about was that damn hospital, but...

**Nixon:** Good God when you think of what, basically, Eisenhower did in World War Two, I mean, he decimated cities. Why?

**Colson:** So did Truman...

**Nixon:** Not because he wanted to kill people but because he wanted to the end the war.

**Colson:** Truman.

**Nixon:** Why did Truman drop the atomic bomb? Not because he wanted to demolish cities. Because he wanted to end the war. Why did Eisenhower bomb the shit out of the cities of North Korea?

**Colson:** That's right.

**Nixon:** And that's what ended the war, you know.

[...]

**Nixon:** And the economy's more important than the bombing, too.

**Colson:** Of course, that's just going great. Everybody's economic fortunes are up, except *The Washington Post*. Oddly enough, their stock has dropped three more points since I told you last. It's now 28.

**Nixon:** That's too damn bad.

**Colson:** What a shame. It was 38 in December and had record earnings and it's dropped 10 points but...

**Nixon:** Keep 'em busy.

**Colson:** All of the rest of the economy except for *The Washington Post* is great. Which is a good way to have it.

*Transcribed from Nixon Library White House Tape 036-018 by Michael Dobbs for King Richard, 2021*