

MEMORANDUM

Moynihan

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 23, 1970

FOR H. R. HALDEMAN

Maybe just once read Reston!

Truly -- the theme of reform is getting through.

The speech was magnificent. Even my wife says so, and she is hard to please where R-----s go.



Daniel P. Moynihan

Attachment

I always read Reston -
and there are rare moments when
I even agree with him. In fact - I
read him closely enough that several
years ago I caught him in a total
misrepresentation regarding me & the Univ
of Calif - and received a retraction and
an apology - I'm trying to find it to
have it framed. +/

Washington: President Nixon and the New Age of Reform

By JAMES RESTON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22—President Nixon is bringing the ship of state back home for repairs. It will be a long, slow voyage, but he seemed to be saying in his State of the Union Message that the old girl had been battered in stormy foreign waters too long, and needed to be tidied up, scraped, painted and remodeled for her 200th anniversary in 1970.

It was a magnificent speech; we will find out later whether it is a policy and who will pick up the tab. But not since Teddy Roosevelt have we heard a Republican President talk so much about reform. Welfare, industry, the police, and the Federal, state and local governments are all to be transformed into a more peaceful, secure, fair, and prosperous society.

Zigzag to the Left

There was always a question about whether Mr. Nixon would go to the right or the left once he was well-established in office. But he has now at least charted his course and defined his destination. He will zigzag to avoid the torpedoes and take advantage of the wind, but his destination is to preside over the great festival of freedom in

1976, and to get there from here he must eventually go to the left.

The surge of reform in America, as Richard Hofstadter has reminded us, was not always directed by the Democrats. Though turned back temporarily in the twenties, it included the Administrations of Teddy Roosevelt and even Dwight Eisenhower and has "set the tone of American politics for the greater part of the twentieth century." What Richard Nixon did in his address to the Congress was to stake out a place for himself alongside his two Republican heroes, and try to take over most of the Democratic issues in the process.

The Democratic Plight

On the political point, he has clearly made progress in his first year. He has retained control of the crime issue. He has blunted the peace issue. He has taken the lead in reforming the welfare program, and he is clearly trying to pin the inflation tail on the donkey.

Moreover, he shored up his position with the young and the cities in this speech by trying to take over the pollution issue, while reassuring the Republicans by promising to redirect

more power to the state and local governments.

Hubert Humphrey says Mr. Nixon is not "an artist in politics" but this is a fairly artful if not artistic performance. The Democrats have been talking for years about "reordering the nation's priorities" and "reallocating its resources," and now the President has challenged them and his own party to do just that.

This, of course, is only the rhetorical part of the voyage, and Mr. Nixon's utopian aims occasionally sounded a little like a tour-director's dream, but there is clearly nothing wrong with his objectives that couldn't be cured by another \$10-billion cut in the Pentagon budget plus a good hefty tax rise.

His remarks on the plight of the Negroes were not exactly an exhaustive account of the problem; but perhaps the weakest part of his address was on foreign affairs, which he will deal with later. He did talk about the nations of the non-Communist world having acquired a new "determination to assume responsibility for their own defense," but with one or two notable exceptions, this phenomenon has escaped almost everybody else's notice.

Also, he claimed that the

result of his new foreign policy has not been to weaken our alliances but to give them new life, new strength, and a new sense of common purpose. Again, if this has been the general reaction to the President's decision to cut his involvement in foreign nations, it has certainly not received the attention it deserves.

Conservationist Nixon

The main thing about the State of the Union speech, however, is probably what it tells us about the state of the President. He is clearly broadening and deepening his philosophy. All the old emphasis is there on crime, inflation and a balanced budget—and these got a bigger hand in the House than anything else—but he is now thinking in longer terms about the condition of life in America.

In fact, he denied industry's right to pollute the air and waters of the Republic and threatened them with new regulations and penalties if they did. More surprising, he even dared to suggest that wealth was not the same thing as happiness, and in the Republican liturgy of the past, this is heresy.