

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN... A/

January 20, 1971.

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT (via Ray Price)  
FROM: BILL SAFIRE  
RE: One-Liners and Paragraphs for State of the Union

1. Health: (a) America has long been the wealthiest nation in the world; the time is now for us to become the healthiest nation in the world. JAK

~~(b) Just as this nation is acting to remove the cancer of hate and fear from our society, we must take action to remove the disease of cancer itself from our lives.~~

2. Revenue Sharing: (a) ~~The system of checks and balances has become a system of Federal checks and local imbalances.~~

~~(b) The fundamental question of governing America in the Seventies is this: Do we trust the people? I do. In its Declaration of Independence, this nation showed "a decent respect to the opinions of Mankind" -- We should at least be ready to show a decent respect to the opinions of our own people today.~~

JP  
~~(c) Our government derives its powers from the consent of the governed, but it derives its spirit and character from the participation of the governed.~~

~~(d) We hear demands for "Federal money," as if this were some kind of largesse to be doled out by a rich parent. There is no "Federal money" -- there is only the people's money, and they should have far more of a say in who spends how much for what reason.~~

(e) I do not present this shift in power as a minor adjustment, or the temporary correction of an excess. I propose that more than one half the money that flows from the Federal government to the States and localities be largely freed from the domination of Washington. That is no small change. We stand at a fork in the road, which offers two entirely different directions. Let us debate this with the solemnity it deserves, and when we come to a decision, recognize its import for ourselves and for succeeding generations.

3. History: In its early days this nation acted with a sense of history. In more recent times, we appear to have made history by accident. I propose that we once again take the long view. There is no manifest destiny that draws us forward; our destiny as a nation is in our hands right here and now. This is the moment of truth; let us seize the moment and rekindle the American Revolution.

4. Grand Design: I am aware that there is a great paradox in what I have said tonight. On the one hand, I have called for a reformation of the Federal government itself -- not only in improving its organization, but in extending its mission to provide far more for the health and welfare of all our citizens. And on the other hand, I have called for a redirection of power away from Washington and to the States and cities and towns and individuals.

That is because I believe the Federal government should do more of what it does best -- and that it should do it more effectively. And I believe that States and localities should do more of what they do best -- and they should be given the capacity to do it better.

In this way, we meet the needs of the people without overlooking the needs of the person. We follow the dictates of our national conscience without dictation from our nation's capital.

5. Peroration Ideas:

(a) Though we move to solve our problems, we must be more than problem-solvers. Though we have a tradition of practicality, we must be more than pragmatists. We must adopt the American future as a living presence, and act now to make our future a better place to live.

(b) A nation is more than a collection of States or a cluster of 206 million individuals. A nation, like a person, has a soul. And that soul has needs that no material things can meet. The soul of America calls out for a new sense of fairness that must be the product of the whole nation, acting as one; and the soul of America calls out for a new sense of involvement, that must be the product of every single American, acting as individuals.

