

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 28, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

~~ROY L. ASH~~

SUBJECT:


An Idea

In your press conference of November 17 you stated that upon completion of your term in office you might write on the subject of "bettering the political process". I suggest the following "grand plan":

1. You announce soon, as one main theme for the Bicentennial, that of Renewing and Strengthening America's Governmental Institutions for the country's third century and beyond. The scope of the concept should be the broadest, as was the thinking and work on the Constitution itself. Many important subthemes are possible.
2. As a part of the Bicentennial effort, between now and 1976, you form a number of citizen groups to develop the subthemes, not the answers but the issues, considerations, and options. (Better to form and annoint the citizen groups of your choosing than to broadly invite "scholars" to volunteer their thoughts.)
3. The year 1976 would be spent in public discussion of the issues - again in well structured Administration sponsored forums, possibly 3 or 4 during the year. This could also have the advantage of preempting the political value of being strongly identified with governmental renewal in the election year, yet one step short of final commitment to any particular idea.
4. Then, after your term, you would lead a comprehensive task of synthesizing the ideas developed, applying the proper philosophy, publishing a multi-volume classical work, disseminating and "selling" the results, and hopefully affecting the changes recommended.

The latter project would involve a number of people under your leadership. Depending on the political situation at the time, it could be financed either by the government as, say, the Hoover Commission work was done, or by private contribution for the specific purpose. The latter should be no problem, if needed.

There are, of course, variations on this idea such as having a Policy Board of retired Senators working with you, but if you believe the basic thought has merit, I'll work further on it.

Develop idea  / Not interested _____ See me _____