

MOYNIHAN 1/15 WA

ADV FOR AMS TUES JAN 20 OR THEREAFTER

THE NIXON DOMESTIC RECORD: VIEWED FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

BY DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT

WRITTEN FOR UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

THE GREAT THING ABOUT 1969 IS THAT IT PUT AN END TO THE 1960'S. THAT DECADE, FOR THE MOMENT, MAY HAVE A WORSE REPUTATION THAN IT WILL BE ACCORDED IN HISTORY, BUT ALL THE GOOD THINGS HAD RUN OUT BY THE END, AND THE NATION DESPERATELY NEEDED A FRESH START. I THINK WE HAVE GOT THAT NOW. THE 1970'S ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT. THEY HOLD EVERY PROSPECT OF BEING BETTER.

PRESIDENT NIXON'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS WAS, IN A SENSE, THE FIRST EVENT OF THE YEAR. HE ASKED US TO LOWER OUR VOICES. WE DID SO, AND OUR TEMPERATURES LOWERED IN THE PROCESS. IT BECAME POSSIBLE TO HEAR ONE ANOTHER. COMMUNICATION RESUMED, AND WITH IT A SENSE OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY.

THE NATION HAD BEEN GOING THROUGH A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN OF SORTS. I BELIEVE THAT IS BEHIND US NOW. THERE HAS BEEN A RECOVERY OF NERVE, A RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE IN OURSELVES.

SOME YEARS AGO, IN A BOOK ABOUT THE UNITED STATES, A FRENCH DOMINICAN PRIEST PUT IT THAT "EITHER AMERICA IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD, OR IT IS NOTHING." IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 60'S WE ARE ALL OF US A BIT WARY OF SUCH LARGE ASSERTIONS. YET IT REMAINS THE TRUTH.

AND IT MAY EVEN BE THAT THE GREAT CHASTENING EVENTS OF THE 1960'S BY BRINGING US CLOSER TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REST OF MANKIND HAVE, IRONICALLY, BROUGHT THAT HOPE CLOSER TO REALITY THAN IT EVER WAS IN THE ALMOST MAKE-BELIEVE PERIODS OF THE RECENT PAST.

PART OF THE RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE DERIVES FROM THE RELATIVE EASE BY WHICH THE NATION ONCE AGAIN WENT THROUGH A TRANSITION OF GOVERNMENT, CHANGING PARTIES AND PRESIDENTS IN A RITUAL WHICH, HOWSOEVER FAMILIAR, WE ALL KNOW TO BE SOMETHING OF A MIRACLE. ONE OR TWO DOZEN NATIONS ON EARTH MANAGE IT. THAT IS ALL. AND THEY ARE RIGHTFULLY PROUD, FOR IT IS NOT SOMETHING MANKIND IS GOOD AT.

AN ESPECIAL MARK OF THIS TRANSITION WAS THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT EMPHASIZED THE ESSENTIAL CONTINUITIES IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. MEN CHANGED AND POLICIES CHANGED. CERTAINLY STYLES CHANGED. YET THE BASIC DIRECTIONS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY DID NOT CHANGE. IF YOU ACCEPT, AS I DO, THAT THOSE DIRECTIONS ARE WORTHY AND PROMISING -- I AM AWARE THAT MANY DO NOT -- THIS IS YET ANOTHER SOURCE OF RESTORED CONFIDENCE.

THE PRESIDENT HAS BEGUN AN ERA OF REFORM, STRESSING NOT SO MUCH NEW GOALS AS MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ATTAIN THEM.

A JOBS AND INCOME STRATEGY HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO DEAL WITH THE URGENT ISSUE OF URBAN AND RURAL POVERTY. THE THEORY IS SIMPLE. WHAT THE POOR NEED IS INCOME. THE WAY FOR THEM TO GET IT IS THROUGH JOBS, OR INCOME SUPPLEMENTATION.

A SIMPLE IDEA, BUT ONE OF GREAT POWER. EARLY IN THE SPRING, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED THAT IF WE ARE TO PURSUE A NATIONAL GOAL OF ELIMINATING POVERTY, PERHAPS WE SHOULD STOP COLLECTING INCOME TAX FROM PERSONS LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE. SOME \$600 MILLION PER YEAR -- ALMOST A THIRD OF THE BUDGET OF THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY -- WAS COLLECTED FROM POOR PERSONS IN THE FORM

OF INCOME TAX. THAT HAPPILY IS A THING OF THE PAST.

IN AUGUST, THE PRESIDENT IN A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS PROPOSED THE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, DESIGNED TO PLACE A FLOOR UNDER THE INCOME OF EVERY AMERICAN FAMILY, AND TO DO SO WITH WORK INCENTIVES AND JOB TRAINING INCENTIVES. IT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF DOMESTIC LEGISLATION PROPOSED TO THE CONGRESS IN A GENERATION, AND IT IS JUST THAT.

IN DECEMBER THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FOOD, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH MET IN WASHINGTON, CULMINATING A SERIES OF EVENTS BY WHICH THE ELIMINATION OF HUNGER BECAME AN AVOWED NATIONAL GOAL AND IS BEING TRANSLATED INTO A SPECIFIC NATIONAL PROGRAM. THIS WAS VERY MUCH A BI-PARTISAN EFFORT, AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN. IN THE END, SEN. GEORGE S. MCGOVERN OF SOUTH DAKOTA, THE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND HUMAN NEEDS, DECLARED "I BELIEVE THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS IN FOOD CONSTITUTE ITS MOST IMPORTANT DOMESTIC ACHIEVEMENT IN 1969." BUT THE LARGER TRUTH IS THAT IT WAS AN ACHIEVEMENT OF A SOCIETY RECOVERING ITS CAPACITY TO ACT IN THE FACE OF URGENT SOCIAL NEEDS.

FINALLY, IN THE VERY LAST DAYS OF DECEMBER AT THE PRESIDENT'S URGING, THE CONGRESS ENDORSED THE PRICIPLES OF THE PHILADELPHIA PLAN TO ENSURE MINORITY EMPLOYMENT IN FEDERALLY ASSISTED CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS. A DECADE OF TALK HAD SIMPLY NOT BROUGHT RESULTS. THE TIME FOR CONCRETE ACTION HAD COME. AND, ONCE AGAIN, THE NATION ACTED.

THERE WERE FAILURES, SETBACKS, DISAPPOINTMENTS IN 1969. BUT THE GREAT BALANCE OF EVENTS WAS ON THE SIDE OF PURPOSE IN GOVERNMENT AND CREATIVE FERMENT IN SOCIETY.

SOME THINGS WERE DONE THAT IT WAS THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE TO DO. IN JULY PRESIDENT NIXON SENT TO CONGRESS THE FIRST MESSAGE EVER FROM AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT ON THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION. WE ARE PAST THE 200 MILLION MARK AT HOME, AND WILL REACH 300 MILLION BY THE YEAR 2000. IT IS TIME, THE PRESIDENT SAID, TO BEGIN THINKING ABOUT HOW WE ARE GOING TO MANAGE ALL THIS. NOTHING COULD BE MORE CLEAR THAN THAT THE NATION AGREED.

IN JUST THIS WAY ISSUES OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND DEGRADATION THAT HAD BEEN AVOIDED OR SUPPRESSED FOR YEARS WERE BROUGHT OUT INTO THE OPEN AND THE PUBLIC REACTION WAS, "ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME?" AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS GATHERED IN THE CABINET ROOM TO DISCUSS EXHAUST POLLUTION; LABORATORY SCIENTISTS BEGAN SERIOUSLY RECONSIDERING THE USE OF PESTICIDES; EVEN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION BEGAN TO PONDER WHETHER THE NORTH ATLANTIC WAS NOT, AFTER ALL, RATHER A SMALL BODY OF WATER THAT COULD BE SPOILED JUST AS SURE AS THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA HAD SPOILED LAKE ERIE.

IN GREAT WAYS AND SMALL THE ENVIRONMENT EMERGED AS AN ISSUE THAT WILL DOMINATE THE 1970'S. THIS ITSELF WAS PART OF A CHANGING SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. THE NATION WAS RECOVERING ITS CAPACITY FOR A RESPONSIBLE CONCERN WITH A MANAGEABLE FUTURE. IT MAY ALL TURN OUT TO BE AN ILLUSION, BUT WHAT A RELIEF FROM THE NIGHTMARES OF THE DECADE WHICH 1969 BROUGHT FINALLY TO A NOT UNHOPEFUL END!

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