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December 9, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE VICE PRESIDENT

The following are some thoughts on the "Nixon ethos," which might be of some help to you. I have also attached a copy of some thoughts of Pat's from earlier this year.

The Nixon Administration has taken advantage of its opportunity to re-examine many of the assumptions and the programs which are the product of times and problems we had long outgrown.

In the structure of government, the President has made important changes to make government more responsive to the needs of people. He has created Urban Affairs, Environmental, and Rural Affairs Councils, which he chairs and which seek to give a sense of community and common purpose to the government departments with concern in these areas.

He has begun a systematic decentralization of decision-making, asking that state and local officials and citizens take the initiative in defining and solving the problems which immediately affect them; but, he has pledged to help give them the resources

to do this. He has proposed to share Federal revenues with hard-pressed local and state governments. He has proposed to make more flexibly available the Federal funds for such programs as manpower training so that Federal money can be used as the needs of individuals who want jobs and training and local employment needs dictate.

He has proposed the Family Assistance program, giving cash assistance to needy families, both those who are dependent and cannot work and these many millions who are working hard but are unable to lift themselves from poverty. This program would put more than \$3 billion worth of new Federal money into the hands of poor families. No President has proposed such a direct and meaningful poverty program. And it is an approach, as with his proposal for greatly-increased food stamp assistance to the poor, which puts resources in the hands of people, who can then make their own decisions.

These policies have an important common thread. Part of the malaise which we see in this country stems from the conviction of many that they have no control over their lives, that the government too often acts by fiat with programs which miss the mark or at least are not sufficiently responsive to local and individual human needs.

The Nixon reforms seek to bring control over their lives back into the hands of individuals and communities, always requiring standards of fair dealing with one another, but always in the conviction, as Professor Henry Hart of the Harvard Law School used to say, that the pluralism of the Federal Government, the states, and localities is "the genius of the Federal system." We seek to release the constructive and creative energies of individuals and communities, reinforcing them with the resources of government.

John R. Price

Attachment: THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL REFORM OF GOVERNMENT
IN THE PRESENT AGE--Moynihan, July 10, 1969

JRP:sij
Copy to Dr. Moynihan
Central Files