

Nixon: 'The Problems of

Following are excerpts of the President's message to Congress yesterday outlining the programs and priorities of the Nixon administration:

As the Congress reconvenes for the closing months of the 1973 legislative session, it returns to a critical challenge.

Our country faces many pressing problems which must be solved with dispatch.

Americans want and deserve decisive action to fight rising prices. And they want every possible step taken now not a year from now or in the next session of the Congress.

Americans want and deserve decisive action this year to ensure that we will have enough heat for our homes, enough power for our factories, and enough fuel for our transportation.

They want and deserve decisive action this year to combat crime and drug abuse. The national rate of serious crime is now heading down for the first time in 17 years, and they want that downward spiral to continue.

There is also an immediate need to improve the

quality of our schools, reform federal programs for our cities and towns, provide better job training, revamp our housing programs, institute lasting reforms in campaign practices, and strengthen our position in world markets.

Defense Posture

Of transcending importance is America's continuing commitment to building a lasting structure of world peace. Our people are now at peace for the first time in more than a decade, and they expect their leaders to do all that is necessary to maintain the peace, including those actions which preserve the nation's strong defense posture.

At the same time, it is apparent as the fall legislative season begins that many members of the Congress wish to play a larger role in governing the nation. They want to increase the respect and authority which the American people feel for that great institution.

Personally, I welcome a congressional renaissance. Although I believe in a strong presidency—and I will continue to oppose all efforts to strip the presi-

dency of the powers it must have to be effective—I also believe in a strong Congress.

In campaigning for the presidency in 1968, I called for "national leadership that recognizes the need in this country for a balance of power. We must maintain," I said, "a balance of power between the legislative and the judicial and the executive branches of government."

I still believe in that division of responsibility. There can be no monopoly of wisdom on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue—and there should be no monopoly of power.

Clear Challenge

The challenge is thus clear. The problems of the nation are pressing, and our elected leaders must rise to the occasion. These next four months will be a time of great testing. If the Congress is to play its proper role in guiding the affairs of the nation, now is the time for it to take swift and decisive action.

In sending this message to the Congress today, I want to refocus attention on more

than 50 legislative measures which I proposed earlier this year. These proposals, along with my regular authorization requests, are now of the highest priority if we are to meet our responsibilities.

Frankly, the action taken by the Congress on my proposals so far this year has been far less than I had expected. Commendable progress has been made on some fronts, and I have signed into law several bills which were the result of constructive compromise between the Congress and the administration. Among them have been a new approach to farm legislation, a federal highway bill which will also spur the development of mass transit systems, an increase in social security benefits, airport development legislation, amendments to the Rural Electrification Act, the Economic Development Administration and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration authorizations, an Older Americans bill, an emergency farm loan bill, a national cemeteries bill and a medical care bill for veterans.

Yet the work that lies

'the Nation Are Pressing...'

ahead in the final quarter of the year is far heavier and even more critical than that which has been accomplished so far. Nearly all of the significant proposals that I have submitted to the Congress still await final action. In addition, with more than two months of the new fiscal year already behind us, the Congress has passed only three of thirteen regular appropriations bills, all of which ideally should have been passed before the fiscal year began. I regret that it has also been necessary for me to veto six bills this year. Four of those vetoes have been sustained, and the final disposition on two of them has not yet been determined. I am hopeful that in some of these areas where I have exercised the veto, such as minimum wage legislation, the Congress will pass new legislation this fall which will meet my objections. The congressional agenda for the next four months is thus long and urgent.

Special Attention

I realize that it will not be possible for the Congress to act this year on all of the legislation which I have sub-

mitted. But some of these measures respond directly to the most immediate problems before the country. I will give special attention to them in this message, just as I trust the Congress to give special attention to them before the last gavel falls later this year.

In the spirit of responsible cooperation which must prevail between the Executive and the Congress if we are to make genuine progress this fall, I am fully prepared to work closely with members of the Congress in hammering out modifications to these bills. Already this year I have met more often with the bipartisan leaders of the Congress than in any other year of my presidency, and I hope to meet even more frequently with Members of the Congress during the coming weeks. In addition, Cabinet members and all other appropriate members of the administration will be fully accessible and available. There are, of course, certain principles of vital national concern which cannot be compromised—the need for budgetary discipline, for a strong national security posture, and for the preserva-

tion of the requisite powers of the executive branch. But within these limits I stand ready to find workable compromises wherever possible on solutions to our national problems.

Pressing Needs

The overriding question, however, is not the degree of compromise which is reached between the executive branch and the Congress, nor is it a matter of who receives the credit. The most important question concerns the results we achieve for the American people. We must work hard and we must work constructively over the next four months to meet the country's pressing needs. It is on that basis that we shall be judged.

(The message then details proposals in the following areas: A Balanced Budget, Strengthening the Economy, Meeting the Energy Challenge, Restoring and Renewing Our Environment, Human Resource Needs, Building Better Communities, Fighting Crime and Drug Abuse, Reform of Campaign Practices, Preparing for the Bicentennial, Metric Conversion, Reorganization Authority, Keeping the Peace.)

The message then concludes:

With the Congress, the Administration and the people working together during the coming weeks, we can achieve many of the goals described in this message. And we will work together most effectively if we remember that our ultimate responsibility is not to one political party, nor to one philosophical position, nor even to one branch of the government. Our ultimate responsibility is to the people—and our deliberations must always be guided by their best interests.

Inevitably, we will have different opinions about what those interests demand. But if we proceed in a spirit of constructive partnership, our varying perspectives can be a source of greater creativity rather than a cause of deadlock.

We already know that the year 1973 will be recalled in history books as the year in which we ended the longest war in American history. Let us conduct ourselves in the next four months so that 1973 will also be remembered as the time in which we began to turn the blessings of peace into a better life for all.