

Nixon's Presidency: A Nation Is Changed

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This is the fourth and last of a series of articles on Richard M. Nixon's use of the powers of the Presidency and its effects on the Government and the national life.

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WASHINGTON, March 6—For four years, Nixon Administration officials traveled the nation telling audiences that the Federal Government, over which they were presiding, was flawed in many ways as a means of delivering services to the public.

The standard argument, used by everyone from the President to deputy assistant secretaries, was that the Federal Government was "muscle-bound" under a "patronizing bureaucratic elite" and that local governments should be trusted and strengthened.

Now they are fulfilling their prophecy. Money and authority are flowing back to the states and the President and his men are dismantling programs built by four decades of Democratic

government. Although it has just begun, this reversal of a long-term trend is one of the many ways in which the Nixon Presidency has had enormous impact on the national life.

In what he accomplished in his first term and what he has undertaken in his second, Mr. Nixon is strongly influencing what kind of schools people attend, what kind of cities and communities they live in, what kind of news they watch on television and read in the press, what taxes they pay and to whom, what system of justice they live under, what their employment and income opportunities will be, and a host of other matters affecting their

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daily lives.

Like all Presidents, Mr. Nixon is seeking to have an important impact on the nation. But he has undertaken to make fundamental changes in what kind of schools people attend, what kind of cities and communities they live in, what kind of news they watch on television and read in the papers, what taxes they pay and to whom, what system of justice they live under, what their employment and income opportunities will be and a host of other matters affecting their daily lives.

Mr. Nixon is making an extraordinary mark on American society, according to political leaders and students of the Presidency, by making bold use of Presidential powers and expanding in a number of ways the enormous influence that the White House brings to bear on public opinion.

With almost four years remaining in office and with a landslide victory behind him, Mr. Nixon is seeking to consolidate his gains, make new initiatives in shaping the national life and leave a legacy for his successor that would be difficult to reverse.

Some Nixon supporters expect Mr. Nixon to be so successful that the age will be named for him.

The Nixon Era

"This is going to be known as the Nixon era," said one of his aides. "I know it is."

The President's own words give an indication of his intent to be a highly active President for the rest of his Administration.

"I believe in the battle," Mr. Nixon told Saul Pett of The Associated Press in a recent interview, "whether it's the battle of a campaign or the battle of this office, which is a continuing battle. It's always there wherever you go. I perhaps, carry it more than others because that's my way."

Mr. Nixon's opponents are saying that the President, in his use of his powers and in his unilateral assault on social programs, has overplayed his hand and will be rebuked, as have other recent Presidents after landslide victories—Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his attempt to enlarge the Supreme Court, and Lyndon B. Johnson, with his escalation of the Vietnam war, for example.

Rejection Foreseen

"I do not read America's mood as this President does," said Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, who sought the Presidency in 1972, in predicting that Mr. Nixon's leadership will eventually be rejected as too "negative and narrow."

But at the White House there is not much sign of concern. There, with Richard Nixon firmly in control of the nation's most powerful institution of government, which he has expanded in several respects, the skies all look blue.

To take only one aspect of the Nixon Presidency, the endeavor to dismantle assistance programs and turn more authority back to the state and local governments—New Federalism, the President calls it—is having a wide impact on education, science, agriculture, antipoverty efforts, race relations and the cities.

An example of the depth of the impact comes from William J. McGill, president of Columbia University, who said in a recent statement that there was a "major ideological component" in the action that added up to shifting public funds away from private higher educational institutions to public ones that stress vocational education.

"I believe that Columbia and other leading institutions will begin to lose substantial amounts of Federal support," he said. "Students will go into the public sector in large numbers, because all their costs will be paid there."

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Plea to Albany

"Next year, instead of going to Washington looking for support, we will be going to Albany," he said, and that will mean that Federal money sent to the New York state government for education will go to state-supported colleges. "I believe it forecasts very hard days ahead for major institutions."

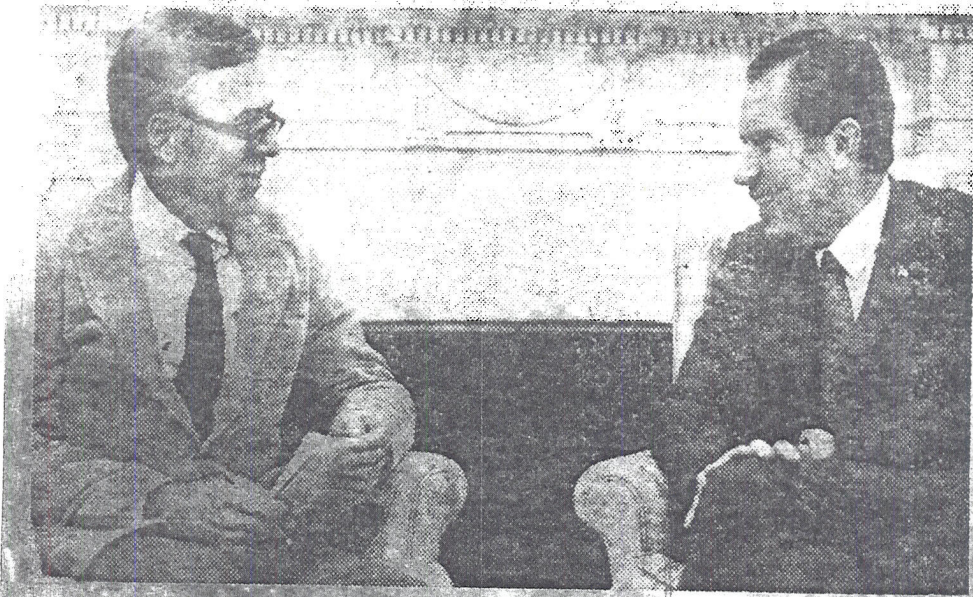
Some authorities, however, believe that Mr. Nixon's influence on the Supreme Court may ultimately have greater effect on the country than what he does with Federal money.

In making appointments to the Court, Mr. Nixon has taken greater precautions to see that his nominees follow his ideology than any other recent President, according to some authorities on the Court.

Presidents have frequently been surprised at how the Justices they appointed turned out. The late Felix Frankfurter, for example, was more conservative on the Court than he appeared when Franklin Roosevelt appointed him.

One way to be more certain is to elevate Justices from the lower courts. Of Mr. Nixon's six nominees to the Court—two were rejected by the Senate—four were picked from the Federal appeals courts, where they had demonstrated the kind of "strict constructionist" rulings favored by Mr. Nixon. These included Chief Justice Warren E. Burger.

The two others were Justice William H. Rehnquist, an Assistant Attorney General with proved conservative views, and Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., a



Associated Press

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lawyer who had written widely on support of Administration proposals, such as making local particularly cautious and timid in some respects. For example, the number of television and

With almost four years remaining in his term, it is considered almost certain that Mr. Nixon will have an ideological majority on the nine-member Court before his term is out.

Beyond appointments, Mr. Nixon has gone further than other modern Presidents in publicly attacking court rulings.

His stance against school busing—he accused the courts of "busing for the sake of busing"—seems to have brought a virtual halt to court-initiated efforts to integrate schools where new transportation is involved.

He has publicly advocated legislation to find ways to get around Supreme Court rulings against Federal aid to parochial schools.

Another institution on which Mr. Nixon is applying more than coverage pressure is the news media. He has, through Vice President Agnew and other White House officials, publicly accused the national media of bias.

His Justice Department stopped publication of the Pentagon papers for 12 days on the ground that they violated national security and has sought to force reporters to disclose confidential information in criminal cases.

His Office of Telecommunica-

stations responsible for news balance on network broadcasts.

The precise effect of this and other actions on the content of news is in dispute. On the one hand, Herbert G. Klein, the President's director of communications, gave the White House point of view in a "Meet the Press" television Jan. 7:

"I think the key thing is that while there has been a lot of rhetoric and there has been talk about intimidation, I have not met any intimidated reporters and I never want to. Secondly, the fact is that if you look at the actions, the actions of the Administration, the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act has opened more [official documents]. The actions which we are supporting in Congress, including taking a new look at [reporters'] shield laws, are ones which I think are favorable toward the media."

Critical Look at News

One belief current among both critics and supporters of the Administration is that the White House actions have forced the media to take a healthy, critical look at content of news.

There is a strong belief in the media that the actions have made television and radio par-

radio entries in the competition for the Robert F. Kennedy Awards, which honor reporting critical of how institutions of all kinds treat the poor and minorities, dropped sharply between 1970 and 1971.

"The only thing we could attribute it to," said a network reporter, who was one of the judges, "was Vice President Agnew's broadside attacks on the media in 1970."

The Nixon Presidency is having an impact, too, on non-Federal Government institutions.

When Mr. Nixon came to office in 1969, the nation's mayors were not only fearful of what he would do to the cities, but they were also hostile because they envisioned losing categorical grants, those made for specific purposes. And most were Democrats without Mr. Nixon's suburban constituency.

After four years, Mr. Nixon has made peace, even though Federal aid to large cities has dropped, if the effects of inflation are taken into account. With some exceptions, he appeased them with revenue sharing and armies of lobbyists that would descend on every national urban convention preaching the Administration policy.

of returning power to local officials.

"Although they are still lambasting the Administration for a shortage of funds," said a spokesman for the United States Conference of Mayors-National League of Cities, "you can bet they are all for the way Nixon is doing it, even with a little less money. Nixon has changed the whole context of the argument on national priorities. You don't hear many Mayors any more talking about helping poor minorities."

Under the categorical urban grants enacted by the Democrats, much of the aid was specifically directed to the poor and to get the money to the poor. Mayors emphasized the need for the Nixon formula. Mayors have wide latitude in use of the funds, and the money is being largely for general purposes such as salaries, the police and street cleaning.

Gains With Labor

In other areas, Mr. Nixon has made important gains with organized labor, once the preserve of Democrats, by making concessions and agreements with labor leaders.

He has neutralized the liberal wing of the Republican party by working for the defeat of those Republicans who publicly attacked his policies.

He is diluting the influence of Democratic lobbyist-lawyers in Washington, who have been barons of policy making, by releasing Administration officials to set up law practices as competing Republicans with better access to the executive branch. Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President, is an example.

The list goes on.

Students of government say that much of what has happened bears on the kind of institution the Presidency has become in recent years.

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George E. Reedy, former press secretary to President

Johnson, wrote in "The Twilight of the Presidency" that the office had become the American monarchy, with all the regalia "except ermine robes, a scepter and a crown."

All recent Presidents have capitalized on the sanctity of the office to consolidate their power and put their political programs into effect. This involves conducting the outward signs of the office in the expected manner so that America's support the style, not the substance.

In the process, political scientists say, the public does not hear the President's words and actions to the same critical test that it has placed for other Government officials.

Thomas Cronin, a former White House aide under President Lyndon B. Johnson, like Mr. Johnson, has many aspects of the Nixon Administration abysmal, but writes for a forthcoming book a script for a Cosmetic Presidency. All recent Presidents have allowed it to some extent, some of the elements

"Travel widely, be a statesman and run for the Nobel Peace Prize; claim to be a consensus leader when the polls are favorable and a 'Profile in Courage' leader when you drop in the polls; proclaim the open Presidency but practice White House government, decision-making centralization and Presidency by secrecy; hold numerous news conferences during your honeymoon, but afterwards appeal directly to the people by direct address; protect and strengthen the powers of the Presidency for the rewards of history; if all else fails, wage war on the press."

Most White House observers agree that Mr. Nixon has followed the script quite well.

"The most sensible resolution," Mr. Cronin concluded, "is to depersonalize and demythologize the Presidency, to understand how it works, to appreciate what it can and cannot do, and to hold Presidents critically to account."