

# An Examination of President's Message

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Following is a detailed examination of President Nixon's State of the Union Message:

## Foreign Affairs

**Vietnam War**—President Nixon devoted most of the foreign affairs section of the message to Vietnam, affirming his hope that the war could be ended through negotiations, and repeating that if not, then it would be ended through Vietnamization. "But end it we shall," he said, without, however, giving a firm date for the conclusion of the American involvement—something sought by his critics.

Mr. Nixon also stressed that nothing would be done to harm Saigon's interests. He repeated that troop levels would drop beneath the 69,000 projected for May 1 as South Vietnam's armed forces improved.

**Summitry** — Mr. Nixon treated his forthcoming trip to Moscow and Peking in an unsensational way, again returning to the theme that one must view relations with the Communist powers realistically and must not expect differences to disappear as a result of the trips. "Countering conservatives who have been unhappy with the Chinese and Soviet journeys, he said that peace depended on big powers talking about differences rather than fighting about them. No details were given about the specific aims of trips, and he was silent on American policy toward China.

**Arms Talks** — The President was less than enthusiastic about the results so far, merely asserting that the negotiations had "advanced the prospects" for an accord.

**Defense**—An increase will be requested in military spending, with more than \$900-million to be asked to speed development of a longer-range submarine-based missile and a larger, quieter new missile submarine. The purpose stated by the President is to improve the nation's power to deter war.

Other reasons, unstated by the President, are reportedly to increase pressure on the Soviet Union to negotiate a mutual halt in missile submarine construction, to assure allies who felt that the United States was doing little in face of a mounting Soviet strategic build-up and to counter expected domestic criticism that the Administration was allowing a new missile gap to develop.

A \$2-billion increase in Navy appropriations, probably including funds for a new nuclear aircraft carrier, will also be asked. An additional \$838-million for defense research and development will also be in the new budget.

**Selective Service** — Draft calls will be "significantly lower" than last year. The President again expressed confidence that an all-volunteer armed force can be achieved by mid-1973. Some Pentagon planners, however, are less than confident privately, saying that unless big increases in pay and other benefits attract many more volunteers, or unless the Army is cut well below present planning levels, the goal could prove elusive.

## Domestic Affairs

**The Economy**—The President pledged that "when we achieve an end to the inflationary psychology which developed in the 1960's, we will return to our traditional policy of relying on free market forces to determine wages and prices." He said that the program of controls "is working" and that inflationary psychology "is on the ebb," and he cited various statistics indicating improvement in the economy.

He said his new budget would be "expansionary" and stressed that he was determined to reduce the present unemployment rate of 6 per cent of the labor force. He made no specific forecasts for the economy or the unemployment rate this year.

**Trade and Monetary Affairs**—The President gave no hint that he would propose a trade bill this year. He said the world, as a result of recent events such as the realignment of currency exchange rates, was moving into "a new period of negotiation on the international economic front," dealing with both an improved world monetary system and "a new system of international trade."

**Welfare Reform** — Mr. Nixon expressed impatience with Congress for making him repeat an appeal for his welfare reform plan in a third consecutive State of the Union Message. Since he first proposed his Family Assistance Plan, he observed, the "antiquated welfare system" has grown by four million people. He urged immediate action.

**Social Services**—Expressing impatience with present fragmented and rigid service programs, the President called for a solution that has

been one of the chief goals of Elliot L. Richardson, his Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. The solution is to be embodied in an Allied Service Act to be submitted, officials said, in late February. This would call on Governors to set up identical "service catchment areas" for welfare, Head Start and other programs funded by H.E.W.

These would serve families and individuals through "One-Stop" service centers, through the use of a single social

Environment — Mr. Nixon said that "the most striking fact about environmental legislation in the early 1970's is how much has been proposed and how little has been enacted." Eighteen of the proposals in his special message on the environment last winter, he said, "are still awaiting action" in Congress. Since "the need for action in these areas is urgent," the President said, he would soon send Congress another environmental message, but he offered no indication today of what legislation he would request.

The principal bill that has yet to be enacted is the Water Pollution Control Act amendments.

**Health** — The message stressed one new idea, a pilot program to bring emergency medical services more quickly to accident victims, and one old idea, increased support for research into heart and lung disease. No funds were specified.

In other health areas, the message noted that the Administration had introduced legislation to streamline the delivery of health services and create a national health insurance program. The message said Federal pressures to keep doctors' fees and hospital charges down would continue.

**Nutrition**—Mr. Nixon referred briefly to sharp increases since 1969 in Federal anti-hunger spending. He specified gains in the food stamp and school lunch programs. These resulted from Congressional pressures to which the Administration acceded.

**Aging**—The President repeated remarks, made to last month's White House Conference on Aging, that promised substantial increases in funds for programs to help the elderly, as well as a crack-down on substandard nursing homes.

**Civil Rights**—President offered no legal or programmatic initiatives in the civil rights field. He said nothing, for example, about efforts to promote movement of blacks into white suburbs. He addressed only one sentence directly to the issue of school busing and desegregation. This sentence, however, appeared to moderate his opposition to busing. On Aug. 2, he said he has consistently opposed busing "to achieve a racial balance" in schools. Today he said he objected to "unnecessary busing" that is undertaken for the "sole" purpose of achieving an "arbitrary racial balance."

The President's emphasis today was on substantial in-

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creases in spending for civil rights. Total spending is to go up 25 per cent next year. Mr. Nixon specified substantial increases for minority business enterprise, equal employment enforcement, black colleges, and the Cabinet Committee on the Spanish-Speaking.

**Equal Rights for Women—** Mr. Nixon committed his administration to continue to fight for job equality for women, in both private industry and government. He announced that he would make one new legislative proposal, long sought by the feminist movement. This was expansion of the jurisdiction of the Commission on Civil Rights to include sex-based discrimination.

The commission studies discrimination and makes reports and recommendations to the President, Congress and the public.

The President continued to refrain from endorsing a constitutional amendment prohibiting any form of sex-discrimination by the Federal or state or local governments.

**Veterans—**This section was largely devoted to a summary of continuing Federal efforts, with emphasis on the growing progress of programs to find jobs for Vietnam veterans. The one departure appeared to be a statement that he already rapidly growing budget for veterans' hospitals "will be stepped up further next year."

**Youth —** With rhetorical flourishes, Mr. Nixon offered a catalogue of recent Congressional or Administration actions that have some bearing on young people. He cited the 18-year-old vote, increased Federal hiring of youth, the controversial White House Conference on Youth, draft reforms and reorganization of the Peace Corps, VISTA and other agencies.

**American Farmer —** The message pledged continued efforts to gain for farmers "a fair share in the fruits of our prosperity." This would be done through expanded foreign and domestic markets, improved credit and added soil and water conservation. The President said that expanded Government purchases of farm commodities and other assistance "will provide a greater boost to farm income," which he said he expected to rise by \$2-billion this year. No specifics were mentioned.

**The Cities —** President Nixon appealed for passage of previous proposals for the cities. These included creation of a Department of Community Development; enactment of special revenue sharing for urban development (which essentially is consolidation of existing grants in urban renewal, water and sewer assistance and Model Cities into single grants that would give local governments more leeway in use of the funds, with \$300-million in new funds added to the present appropriation of about \$1.8-billion); and the President's land use policy

bill, which would provide for local government control over the use of land.

Mr. Nixon said many of the urban program had been decentralized and an experimental program was under way in some cities to give Mayors a larger voice in use of the funds. But he made no mention of Operation Tackle, a proposal to encourage metropolitan-wide approaches to urban ills. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, George Romney, has been trying to sell the proposal to the White House.

**Transportation—**The President's main emphasis was on the labor problems that have disrupted ocean shipping and the railroads. The only ad lib comment in his speech to Congress was an attack on what he called the "irresponsible" West Coast dock strike—a measure of his eagerness to revive a peace-keeping labor bill, anathema to the unions, that has languished in Congress for two years.

Mr. Nixon spoke of applying space know-how to transit, and noted that his \$1-billion request for transit aid this year is 65 per cent more than the \$600-million he requested a year ago. He did not mention that Congress raised the spending limit last year to \$900-million but the Administration has refused to parcel out transit aid at more than the \$600-million rate.

**Fighting Crime —**In addition to reporting stepped-up Federal assistance in the fight against crime, President Nixon said that while crime is still increasing, the rate of increase has slowed to a five-year low, that in the District of Columbia serious crime declined by 13 per cent in the last year, and that 52 major cities recorded a net reduction in crime for the first nine months of 1971. His statements are highly controversial. In Washington, for example, there is disagreement about the accuracy of the statistics.

**Consumer Protection—** While Mr. Nixon offered little in the way of new consumer proposals, he noted that a series of prior proposals still have not been acted on by Congress.

**School Financing—**Mr. Nixon said that later this year he would recommend a new way of financing public schools to supplant the traditional method of relying on local property taxes. Recent court decisions have found that the property tax discriminates against poor communities and is unconstitutional. The Administration has been studying the concept of a value-added tax, a form of national sales tax, as a means of raising revenue to pay for local schools.

In a letter to Robert Merriam, chairman of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, a letter that was released today, Mr. Nixon asked the commission to study various aspects of a value-added tax and did not mention any alternative method of raising funds for schools.