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President Nixon's historic special message to Congress on Indians is a brass-tacks, straight forward statement of what the Nation and its Indian people need in working together toward a better future for all.

It is a time we listen to what the Indians have been telling us.

Like all Americans, they want social justice, education, health care and a chance to choose their own kind of life.

But their problems are special—and so is our responsibility to them.

"To strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community" is one of our primary goals. We must also arrange matters so that Indians can become independent of Federal control without being cut off from Federal concern and support.

We all agree that the way to get the best results in working with people is to give them the opportunity—and the responsibility—to run their programs themselves.

That is what we are seeking to do with the First Americans. They need our help, but we must never forget that we need their help just as much. This new and balanced relationship of which the President speaks truly marks a new beginning.