

Parris Island, S.C.
August 13, 1970

Dear Mr. President,

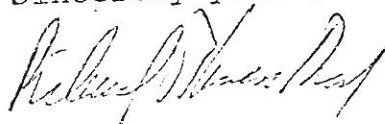
I have been deeply troubled by the outcome of my discussions with Donald Rumsfeld about the possibility of my nomination to the position of Director of VISTA. Since my departure from the White House staff to enlist in the Marine Corps in early April, I have been isolated from the outside world during a rigorous training program at Parris Island. As a result of this and a combination of other circumstances, there were several press reports of the discussions concerning VISTA during early July.

I am sincerely sorry for any embarrassment these reports may have caused to you or to the Administration, or harm which may have been done to the VISTA program. I would have preferred never to have been considered as VISTA director than to have been involved in a situation embarrassing to you or others in the Administration whose trust and confidence I value so highly. The events of these weeks have caused me more sadness and anxiety than any others that I can remember in my life.

During my sixteen months on the White House staff, I learned the importance of discrete and loyal staff work-- in an Administration which has encouraged critical self-judgement and new ideas-- and the immense damage that may be done by hasty or self-serving recourse to the press. I was treated fairly and generously by all members of the White House staff with whom I served, especially by Donald Rumsfeld and Daniel P. Moynihan.

My work was exciting and rewarding beyond all expectation, and I am especially grateful for your personal kindness throughout this period, and your very encouraging words during our last meeting.

Sincerely yours,



Richard Blumenthal