

SPEECH BY:

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"LEADERSHIP IN A DEMOCRACY"
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I HAVE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE: I AM NOT A CANDIDATE FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE - - - - - AT THIS TIME. BUT PLEASE TURN YOUR RADIO OR T.V. ON NEXT WEEK FOR ANOTHER "IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT."

I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU TODAY SOME THOUGHTS ON THE DECLINE IN PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THIS COUNTRY, AND THE ROLE OF THE ELECTED LEADER IN RESTORING CREDIBILITY TO THE ACTS OF GOVERNMENT.

AS ALL OF YOU ARE AWARE, THE DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS IS AT AN ALL TIME LOW. PUBLIC CYNICISM TOWARD GOVERNMENT HAS RISEN SO SHARPLY IN THE PAST YEAR THAT 2/3 OF THE PEOPLE NOW FEEL THEY CAN TRUST IT ONLY "SOME OF THE TIME" AND 1/2 BELIEVE THAT "QUITE A FEW" PEOPLE RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT ARE CROOKED (ACCORDING TO A NEW PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH). OVER 70 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT IS RUN IN BEHALF OF A "FEW BIG INTERESTS" INSTEAD OF FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.

A RECENT SURVEY BY LOUIS HARRIS, AUTHORIZED BY A SENATE COMMITTEE, SHOWED THAT THE HIGHEST COURT IN THE LAND, THE SUPREME COURT, HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF ONLY 33% OF OUR CITIZENS. THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES RECEIVES THE CONFIDENCE OF 30% OF AMERICANS, AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONLY 29%. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT RECEIVED THE LOWEST RATING AT 19%.

MOST PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS DON'T SHOW UP ANY BETTER. ORGANIZED RELIGION RECEIVED A 36% RATING, THE PRESS 30%, AND MAJOR CORPORATIONS 29%. CURRENT DOCUMENTATION FOR THE FIGURE ON CORPORATIONS CAN BE SEEN IN THE GROWING CONVICTION AMONG THE PEOPLE (AND EXPERTS ALIKE) THAT THE MAJOR OIL COMPANIES DELIBERATELY PROVOKED THE ENERGY SHORTAGE. PRIVATE GREED IS SEEN AS THREATENING THE PUBLIC WELFARE.

OF COURSE, AT THE ROOT OF THIS LACK OF POPULAR CONFIDENCE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS IS THE LOSS OF CREDIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUALS -- THE MEN AND WOMEN -- WHO RUN THEM. WALTER LIPPMANN, ONE OF THE WISEST COMMENTATORS ON OUR SYSTEM, HARSHLY DESCRIBES PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN THE FOLLOWING WAY: "WITH EXCEPTIONS SO RARE THEY ARE REGARDED AS MIRACLES OF NATURE..." SAYS LIPPMANN, "POLITICIANS ARE INSECURE AND INTIMIDATED MEN. THEY ADVANCE POLITICALLY ONLY AS THEY PLACATE, APPEASE, BRIBE, SEDUCE, BAM-BOOZLE, OR OTHERWISE MANAGE TO MANIPULATE

THE DEMANDING ELEMENTS IN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES."

THE PEOPLE GROW TIRED OF THIS GAME OF POLITICS AS USUAL. THEY MAY NOT CARE WHAT THE AVERAGE POLITICAL LEADER SAYS--- BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT OFTEN WHAT THEY HEAR IN CONGRESS AND ELSEWHERE, IS LARGELY FABRICATION AND DEMAGOGUERY. MOTHERS ARE NOW HEARD TO SAY, "I DON'T WANT MY SON TO GROW UP TO BE PRESIDENT." (A RECENT POLL BY THE ROPER ORGANIZATION DESCLOSED THAT 79% OF THE PUBLIC BELIEVED THEIR PRESIDENT TO BE GUILTY OF ONE ORE MORE SERIOUS CHARGES AGAINST HIM, WHILE 44% FAVORED IMPEACHMENT.)

SO THERE IS A SERIOUS CREDIBILITY GAP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS. IF THIS LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICIANS RESULTED IN FREER MEN -- OR A HEALTHY SKEPTICISM ABOUT BIG GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS -- THERE MIGHT BE CAUSE FOR REJOICING. BUT I FEAR THAT THEY MEAN CYNICISM AND ALIENATION ON THE PART OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE (AND THE REST OF US),

I FEAR THAT THEY MEAN A DECLINE IN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SERVICE. I FEAR THAT THE RESULT IS AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE IDEA THAT POLITICAL LEADERS LIE AS A MATTER OF COURSE; THAT THEY HAVE NO SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO LEVEL WITH THE PEOPLE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY; THAT POLITICS FOR THEM IS HALF CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE AND HALF GETTING THE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IT.

BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OUR COUNTRY IF THIS IS THE VIEW THAT PREVAILS? WHAT KIND OF FUTURE LEADERS WILL WE RAISE UP?

ANOTHER EXAMPLE MUST BE SET. FOR DEMOCRACY IS NOT SELF-EXECUTING. IF WE DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICE, HIGHER STANDARDS OF LEADERSHIP -- THEN WE MAY SUFFER DICTATORS WHO RIDE ON THE BACKS OF PUBLIC DISORDER.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY IDEAS ON WHAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED IN OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. IT IS MY HOPE, AND BELIEF THAT MY RECORD AS HEAD OF NORTH CAROLINA'S JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN CONSISTENT WITH THIS CONCEPT.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE MOVIES -- UNDERSTANDABLY -- IS "MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON". SOME MAY FIND IT CORNY TODAY. IT IS, YOU WILL RECALL, THE STORY OF AN IDEALISTIC YOUNG MAN (PLAYED BY JIMMY STEWART) WHO GOES TO THE SENATE. HE QUICKLY GETS INTO A BATTLE WITH THE OTHER SENATOR FROM HIS STATE AND A POWERFUL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER OVER A DAM TO BE BUILT BACK HOME FOR QUESTIONABLE PURPOSES. AT THE CLIMAX, THE HERO TRIES TO EXPLAIN TO HIS SENATE COLLEAGUES THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE COUNTRY THEY REPRESENT.

"AND YOU WON'T SEE JUST SCENERY," MR. SMITH SAYS. "YOU'LL SEE THE WHOLE PARADE OF WHAT MAN'S CARVED OUT FOR HIMSELF AFTER CENTURIES OF FIGHTING, FIGHTING FOR SOMETHING BETTER THAN JUNGLE LAW, FIGHTING

SO HE CAN STAND ON HIS OWN TWO FEET, FREE AND DECENT, LIKE HE WAS CREATED, NO MATTER WHAT HIS RACE, COLOR OR CREED. THAT'S WHAT YOU WOULD SEE AND NO PLACE OUT THERE FOR GRAFT, OR LIES, OR COMPROMISE WITH HUMAN LIBERTIES... BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY IS BIGGER THAN YOU OR ME... GREAT PRINCIPLES DON'T GET LOST ONCE THEY COME TO LIGHT. THEY'RE RIGHT HERE. YOU JUST HAVE TO SEE THEM. "

"MR. SMITH WOULD NOT AGREE WITH THE CONCLUSION OF A RECENT COLUMN (BY TOM WICKER) THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE A STERN VENEER AND A CORRUPT CORE.

WE WILL LOSE OUR ORIGINAL VISION (GRASPED BY THE FOUNDING FATHERS) IF WE UNDERESTIMATE THE MORAL RESERVOIRS OF THE PEOPLE. I BELIEVE, ALONG WITH THAT GREAT STUDENT OF SOUTHERN POLITICS, V. O. KEY, THAT DEMOCRACIES DECAY BECAUSE OF THE SELF-SEEKING AND LACK OF VISION ON THE PART OF THOSE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS. THAT IS, THE PEOPLE DO NOT CORRUPT THEMSELVES. POLITICIANS OFTEN, OF COURSE, MAKE THE PUBLIC A SCAPE GOAT FOR THEIR OWN SHORTCOMINGS. IGNORING THE GREAT FLEXIBILITY AND ROOM FOR LEADERSHIP THE PUBLIC AFFORDS THEM, OFFICEHOLDERS COMPLAIN THAT THEIR UNWORTHY ACTIONS ARE A NECESSITY FOR SURVIVAL BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT STATE OF PUBLIC OPINION.

THEY IGNORE THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE VOTED THEM IN, IN PART, BECAUSE THEY HAD CONFIDENCE IN THEIR JUDGMENT AND THEIR ABILITY TO EXERCISE THAT JUDGMENT. (SIX-YEAR TERMS FOR UNITED STATES SENATOR

HELPS TO INSURE INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT.) THE PEOPLE EXPECT ON OCCASION LEADERS TO LEAD, TO INFORM, AND TO GENERALLY EXERCISE THEIR CONSCIENCES. WE MUST HAVE FAITH, IN JOHN KENNEDY'S WORDS (PROFILES IN COURAGE), IN THE PEOPLE'S "ULTIMATE SENSE OF JUSTICE, FAITH IN THEIR ABILITY TO HONOR COURAGE AND RESPECT JUDGMENT, AND FAITH THAT IN THE LONG RUN THEY WILL ACT UNSELFISHLY FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION."

BUT THE HEALTH OF AMERICA DEPENDS NOT ONLY ON THE INNER STRENGTH OF OUR PEOPLE; IT ALSO CONSISTS IN THE CONVICTIONS, STANDARDS, AND COMPETENCE OF THOSE WHO ARE IN POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE, WHO LEAD OPINION, AND WHO ARE ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY AND IN POLITICS.

DEMOCRATIC LEADERS - IN CONTRAST TO THE LEADERS OF RUSSIA AND CHINA - MUST STRIVE TO REGARD THE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY AS ENDS IN THEMSELVES. THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH PROPOSALS PUT BEFORE THEM SHOULD COME, NOT THROUGH FEAR OR THROUGH BLIND FAITH, BUT THROUGH FREE AND RATIONAL CHOICE. WOODROW WILSON SAID: "THE DYNAMICS OF (DEMOCRATIC) LEADERSHIP LIE IN PERSUASION." NOT IN ISOLATION FROM THE PEOPLE AND USURPATION OF POWER, BUT IN PERSUASION.

THE PEOPLE ARE BIG ENOUGH. ARE WE?

THE POLLS ALSO SHOW THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE LESS FAITH THAN BEFORE IN ELECTIONS AS A WAY TO MAKE THE GOVERNMENT PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY THINK. THEY STILL BELIEVE IN THEM, BUT LESS SO. THIS IS THE ONE UNIVERSAL MEANS BY WHICH AMERICANS CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIVES. IT IS

TERRIBLY IMPORTANT THAT THOSE OF US IN PUBLIC LIFE INSTITUTE THE REFORMS REQUIRED TO INSURE OPEN AND HONEST ELECTIONS, THE ONLY GOOD POLITICS IS CLEAN POLITICS.

I BELIEVE THE BASIS FOR THIS EROSION IN CONFIDENCE IS NOT SO MUCH PEOPLE'S DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT TO TAKE A PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION, AS IT IS IN THE FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO PERFORM AND TO DEMONSTRATE, CONCRETELY, THAT THEY ARE MOVING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS. THEY WANT LEADERS WHO KEEP THEIR PROMISES, YES, AND THEY WANT LEADERS WHO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY CARE.

IN A SENSE, THERE IS A CONTRADICTION (OR INCONSISTENCY) IN OUR SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT, STATE LEGISLATORS AND STATE EXECUTIVES, ARE EXPECTED TO BOTH REPRESENT AND GOVERN. WE EXPECT THEM TO RESPOND TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND WE EXPECT THEM TO DECIDE MATTERS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE AND JUDGMENT. THE SIGNIFICANCE LIES IN WHERE THE BALANCE IS STRUCK.

A HEALTHY FEAR AND HATRED OF AUTOCRATIC RULE IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE 18TH CENTURY LED TO A STRONG PREFERENCE FOR GOVERNMENT BY REPRESENTATION, GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD BE BOTH LIMITED AND POPULARLY BASED. THE VERY WORD "REPRESENTATIVE" SUGGESTS THAT A SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA SHOULD SPEAK FOR THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA, AND SHOULD EXPRESS THEIR CONVICTIONS AND DESIRES. EXPRESSING THE SPECIAL VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK OR MISSISSIPPI (OR ILLINOIS) IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER MEN.

BUT GOVERNMENT CAN BE MADE 100 REPRESENTATIVE. A PERFECTLY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY INCAPABLE OF MAKING A DECISION; TOWN HALL DEMOCRACY SIMPLY WOULD NOT WORK AT THE NATIONAL AND STATE LEVELS. HOW COULD MEMBERS OF A LEGISLATURE REACH AGREEMENT IF A MAJORITY IS REQUIRED (AND A 2/3 MAJORITY IS REQUIRED ON SOME IMPORTANT MATTERS IN THE SENATE)? PERFECT REPRESENTATION OF ALL INTERESTS COULD RESULT IN A COMPLETE STALEMATE. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE SURROUNDED WITH RESTRAINTS, BUT NOT TO THE EXTENT OF TAKING AWAY ITS CAPACITY TO ACT.

PROPOSALS TO CHANGE OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE FOR SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OR NO-CONFIDENCE VOTES - AS IN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEMS - WOULD ENDANGER GOVERNMENTAL STABILITY AND ITS CAPACITY TO ACT, IN MY VIEW.

WHERE THE BALANCE IS STRUCK BETWEEN REPRESENTATION AND GOVERNMENT SHIFTS FROM ONE PERIOD TO THE NEXT IN THE UNITED STATES . BUT IT IS CERTAIN THAT CONGRESS CONTINUES TO SHARE IN THE REAL POWERS OF GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING DECISIONS. THE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE NEED FOR MAKING DECISIONS CONVERT A DEBATING SOCIETY INTO AN ARENA OF POWER.

ANY LACK OF "POWER" IN CONGRESS TODAY IS NOT DUE TO ANY DEFICIENCY IN THE CONSTITUTION, AND IS DUE MORE TO LEGISLATIVE ABROGATION THAN TO PRESIDENTIAL USURPATION. (CONGRESS APPEARS

TO BE LIKE HICKLEBERRY FINN AT TIMES; IT IS ATTENDING ITS OWN FUNERAL. BUT FINN, AT LEAST, SAW WHAT WAS GOING ON.) UNFORTUNATELY, SO MANY LEGISLATORS ARE INTERESTED IN THE SHADOW OF POWER RATHER THAN THE SUBSTANCE.

ONE BRIGHT NOTE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN POLL IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO GREAT CHANGE IN THE PROPORTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO CHANGE OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT. INDEED, THERE IS SLIGHTLY GREATER SUPPORT FOR OUR SYSTEM AMONG CITIZENS TODAY. CLEARLY, THE PEOPLE WILL SUPPORT A RENEWAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

FOR OUR GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO BE RESPONSIBLE UNDER LAW, A RESTORATION OF BALANCES AND RESTRAINTS IN OUR SYSTEM IS REQUIRED, ESPECIALLY IN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY AND THE STATES AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WITHOUT A BALANCE IN INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, WE WILL NOT HAVE A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT. FOR WHAT GIVES FORCE TO CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRAINTS, AS JAMES MADISON UNDERSTOOD, IS COMPETING CENTERS OF POWER REPRESENTING DIVERSE ELEMENTS IN A VAST COUNTRY.

ULTIMATELY, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO WARRANTY FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SUPREMACY OF THE LAW, THE INTEGRITY OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE SUCCESSFUL FUNCTIONING OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS EXCEPT THE VIRTUE AND INTELLIGENCE OF THOSE WE CHOOSE FOR HIGH OFFICE. IF THEY FAIL US, NOTHING WILL SUCCEED.