

THE 95TH CONGRESS -- A LOOK AHEAD

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It has been a year and a half, now, since American troops were called back from Southeast Asia. I think we have been a little numb, since then. Certainly there has been a period of indecision, a period of not being sure what our values are, and what we can do as a nation to have effect at home and overseas. Our troops came home, and there was a series of Communist take-overs immediately, in an area we had sworn to protect. All across the Asian world, our allies began to question our intentions, and some to realign themselves, to deal with the new facts of life.

In the interim since this defeat, we have had a divided government in Washington, one which was unable to come to grips with some of our most aggravated problems. We have had initiatives in energy policy from the Congress, and initiatives in housing -- two critical areas of need. But initiatives they remained, not coherent policy aggressively implemented by the Executive Branch. In a third area, health care, we were fully aware of the crisis facing more and more Americans, but the time was not ripe for new legislation.

But the American people have now changed the government. They went to the polls without hysteria or anger, and did a very sober, businesslike job. The people, in their wisdom,

produced a moderate, but workable government. In the Senate, we will have seventeen new members. I am happy to say they are a mixed bag -- liberals, conservatives, and middle-of-the-roaders. And I think that shows exactly what sort of mood the people were in -- they were willing to give enough of a mandate to get the government organized, but not so much of a mandate that Washington could charge off in a radical direction.

I believe the people of America want their government to have effect on the real problems -- but they are sick of government itself being the problem. So I believe we really have our work cut out for us in the 95th Congress. We must be effective, and competent, for the

people are in no mood to have either a do-nothing government, or one which does too much, and badly.

Looking ahead, I would say we have some important work to do.

In the area of foreign policy, we have to come to some conclusions about ourselves as a nation. If the mail I get is any indication, and if the resolutions and colloquies coming out of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee are any indication, we still have a sense of what we stand for.

But we don't seem to know how to act on our beliefs.

We are going through a period of isolationism -- pulling back from our commitments to allies we have had since the days of the Cold War.

But underneath that, there is still a bedrock moral sense in the American people which rebels at idea we are helpless in the face of worldwide injustice and cruelty. I get letters every day from people in North Carolina, proving this is true. The letters cry out against repression, torture, and violations of human dignity overseas. And they say, "Senator, please do something about this." They say: make America stand up for what she has always represented.

I know what America stands for.

Somewhere in this world, right now, there is a man
scratching out a meager living in some scortched corner
of the earth, with no tradition of economic freedom,
and no resources to make that freedom even possible.

And when that man stands up from his plow, and mops his
brow, and allows himself to dream for just a moment --
to dream of a place in which he, too, could prosper by
his effort -- it is America he dreams of.

And somewhere in the world at this moment -- perhaps
in one of the nations of Eastern Europe -- there is a man
who stops what he is doing, and suddenly grows sick of
the repressiveness of his government. And when he dreams

of the one place on earth where he could say what he wants, and go where he wants, without fear of an ever-present secret police -- it is America he dreams of.

And in too many corners of the world, there are men who have felt the lash of civil barbarism, of government by terror. Such men dream, I am sure, of an unbelievable country in which the arm of authority does not forever hold a club above the people's head. And when they dream so, it is a dream of America. Ours is that unbelievable nation.

But for some reason, it seems to me that when we set out to bring pressure to bear on another government, in an attempt to get them to behave, it is our friends we attack.

Those who deplore the lack of freedom overseas too often call upon us to give up our trading partners, or stop supplying an anti-communist government with arms, or cut off our humanitarian aid.

Mark my word, the 95th Congress will see the biggest push ever to get us out of South Korea. Reports of repression there will be used, and reports of largess in Washington will be used, to try to get us to bring our troops home.

But let me make these points:

The reason we know about the supposed wrong-doing of our allies is because their societies are more open. We rarely hear of atrocities in the camps of our enemies. But our own media cover the capitals of our allies, and they get the criticism.

Second, let me ask this question: when we had our own scandals, during my own committee's investigation into the FBI and the CIA, did any of our allies break off with us? They did not. Then why should we act so self-righteous and judgemental with them?

Third, as far as Korea is concerned, I must point out that our friendship is with the South Korean people.

There are those in the Senate who say we are supporting a disreputable dictator in South Korea. But we are not.

We are helping the people of South Korea defend themselves against Communism. I have been to Korea, and those in the Senate who are calling for withdrawal have not been. I have heard from the opposition to President Park, personally, and they all make the same point. They are against Park, but they are for us. None of them has said anything but "please stay."

To show you how absurd some of the arguments have gotten, Senator McGovern stood up in the Senate and said that if we were not going to pull out of Korea totally, we ought to at least move our troops to the south end of the country.

Our division over there is stationed 40 miles .

north of Seoul. Now I ask you, if Park is a dictator, will moving our troops 40 miles south of Seoul make him less of one?

This will be one of the big issues in the 95 Congress, I am certain. I admire and share our sense of moral outrage at repression, but it seems to me we are going to get nowhere if we get in the habit of picking on our friends instead of our implacable enemies.

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Another big issue the 95th Congress will probably confront is that of National Health Insurance. I can tell you that this is an issue about which the people have a great deal of concern. Last year, when we took a poll in North Carolina, the issue worrying people most was health care.

There is a very quiet crisis in the country, and people are feeling it. The cost of care, and the cost of insurance have gotten so high, that more and more people are beginning to have a nagging fear of being sick. It has always been expensive to be sick, but now it could very easily be ruinous as well. Judging from our poll results, the people are very tolerant of the idea of having the

government step in.

This concerns me very much. For one thing, this is an area of very intense emotional feeling, and it would be easy for a demagogue to play on the people's fears to push through an irresponsible program. It could very well get to be the case that voting against National Health Insurance would be like voting against motherhood.

I believe in limited government, as close to the people as possible. If there is a problem in health insurance, and the cost of care, then perhaps the government can do something to help.

But if government does act, it had better strive to follow the pattern I mentioned earlier -- organization

for change without radicalism. I believe government should do only what people cannot do for themselves, and if we are going to have effect, that is where we should strive to have it.

Let me draw a distinction between the two types of health care programs presented to us in the last Congress. On the one side, we had the sweeping, totalistic approach, which would provide cradle-to-grave coverage on all personal health care services. There were five such proposals from the Senate and House, Senator Kennedy's being conspicuous. None of them passed.

On the other hand, we had from Senator Long's Finance Committee a much more limited approach, covering only

"catastrophic" illness -- those which could ruin people financially even if they managed to recover their health. This did not pass, either, but it seemed to me to have more merit.

If government is going to have effect, and yet be fiscally responsible, it had better follow the formula of doing only what the people cannot do for themselves. We can cover the real problem areas. There was Medicare for the real problems of the old. Although it has been abused, Medicaid attacked the real problems of the poor. Catastrophic health insurance could help in another area of real need, without being catastrophic for the taxpayer. I might point out that the projected costs of the comprehensive kind of

National Health Insurance would have been in the category of the defense budget, as to yearly cost.

There are several reasons to go slow on National Health Insurance.

In the first place, people still can afford the cost of routine health care, and routine health insurance.

The government should let them do what they can for themselves.

Furthermore, our Medicaid experience should warn us off. The program started out as a \$1.5 billion item. That figure has grown ten times, to \$15 billion. Fraud and abuse have been national scandals. Medicaid mills, kickbacks, and even the charging off of mink coats and stereo systems as "business expenses" have blighted a well-intentioned effort

to help the poor. Clearly, tighter controls must be imposed, and this in itself is another argument for the least effective government interference in health care delivery.

Health care is an extremely personal matter, and the systems for providing it should be as non-bureaucratic as possible. Obviously, policing the Medicaid system will require more bureaucracy, and so would a National Health Insurance system, even if it were in part kept in the hands of private carriers. The government is getting very close to people's private lives, and it should be careful.

Besides, we should not ignore the fact that there

have been creative new ideas from the private sector in health care financing. The HMO's -- or Health Maintenance Organizations -- have in many cases reduced the overall costs and bureaucracy of care.

Additionally, much may be done at the state level to solve the problems. Here in north Carolina, we are developing a statewide clinic system which depend in large measure on the skills of so-called paramedicals. These professionals can and do take over many of the tasks usually though to be the sole province of the M.D.

This raises a point close to my heart. I have long felt that health care should be provided by the first qualified professional, as you go up the ladder of training

I am sure you will agree with me that it would be foolish for any health insurance system, national or not, to require a person to go to an M.D. for glasses when a skilled optometrist can meet the need as well or better.