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# MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE<sup>©</sup>

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## IN THIS ISSUE

WE RETRACE SOME OF OUR STEPS FROM THE NEW WORLD'S FIRST INDEPENDENT COLONY TO OUR PRESENT SOLE SUPERPOWER STATUS AND IDENTIFY SOME OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE FORCES THAT WERE BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON OUR NATION IN ITS BRIEF, AND SOMEWHAT MIRACULOUS, JOURNEY.

THESE FORCES DERIVED FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE FULL CONSEQUENCES OF WHICH WE FAILED TO ANTICIPATE UNTIL THEY HAD ASSUMED THE POWER TO OVERWHELM. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS LACK OF IMMEDIATE PERSPECTIVE IS AS MUCH A RESULT OF DEMOCRACY AS IT IS OF HUMAN NATURE.

BECAUSE OF ITS EDITORIAL CONTENT AND TIME DEMANDS WE HAVE COMBINED OUR APRIL AND JULY ISSUES INTO ONE AND WILL RESUME OUR HOPEFULLY REGULAR SCHEDULE IN OCTOBER

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

WE WILL ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE OUR NATIONAL HEALTH CARE PROBLEM IN A WAY THAT AT LEAST SEEMS TO MAKE SENSE FOR US NOW AND MAY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO DO THE SAME FOR OTHERS IN THE FUTURE.

# EMINENT DISDAIN<sup>©</sup>

## THE ABUSE OF GOVERNMENT POWER, ETHICAL FAILURES AND THE TRIUMPH OF CYNICISM OVER INTEGRITY IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA

THEN . . .

BEFORE THE EUROPEANS CAME, THERE WAS THE VAST AND VARIED NORTH AMERICAN LANDMASS AND THE NATIVE TRIBES WHICH INHABITED IT. THEIR LAW AND ORDER WAS THAT OF NATURE FOR WHICH THEY HAD A DEEP REVERENCE THAT WAS REFLECTED THROUGHOUT THEIR CULTURES.

NO VIEW OF OUR COUNTRY, OUR CHARACTER OR OUR CULTURE WHICH FAILS TO COMPREHEND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ENORMOUS, FREE, OPEN AND BOUNTIFUL GIFT TO ITS SETTLERS CAN BE VALID — NOT THEN, NOT NOW, NOT EVER.

EUROPE IN THE FIFTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES, MUCH LIKE IRAQ TODAY, WAS RIVEN BY RELIGIOUS

CONTROVERSY AND VIOLENCE. IN ENGLAND THE IDEA OF A BIBLE PRINTED IN ENGLISH WAS DECLARED HERESY AND THREE NOTED SCHOLARS — JOHN WYCLIFFE, WILLIAM TYNDALE AND BISHOP THOMAS CRANMER — WERE BURNT AT THE STAKE FOR SUPPORTING SUCH AN EFFORT IN OPPOSITION TO PAPAL INSISTENCE ON A LATIN TEXT. IN MATTERS INVOLVING THE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY, WHETHER RELIGIOUS OR ROYAL, TORTURE WAS ROUTINE AND EXTREME.

THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THAT THE EARLY COLONISTS SOUGHT IN THE NEW WORLD WAS NOT JUST THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE A TEXT, A FORM OF SERVICE OR A DOGMA. IT

WAS ALSO THE FREEDOM FROM THREE CENTURIES OF FEAR, VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED IMPOSED IN THE NAME OF GOD.

TO THIS EXTENT THE EARLY COLONISTS WERE, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS, STARTING THEIR LIFE HERE WITH A NEW SENSE OF BEING AND PURPOSE, BUT IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO PROVIDE A LASTING, HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIVES AND EUROPEANS.

ALTHOUGH BOTH CULTURES WERE DEEPLY RELIGIOUS, THE NATURAL REVERENCE OF THE NATIVES AND THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH WORSHIP OF THE COLONISTS DREW LINES OF SEPARATION THAT STILL EXIST TODAY. THE PROBLEM OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NATIVES AND THE BURGEONING EUROPEAN POPULATION WOULD CONTINUE TO GROW AND DETERIORATE AS THE NEW ARRIVALS INCREASED IN NUMBER AND MOVED WESTWARD.

HOWEVER, RELEASED FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL RESTRICTIONS OF EUROPE'S SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND RECOGNIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THEIR NEW HOMELAND, THEY BEGAN TO SEE THEMSELVES AS AGENTS OF GOD CREATING A "NEW EDEN". THIS FEELING OF COMMUNITY WOULD NURTURE POLITICAL AND INDIVIDUAL INDEPENDENCE.

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THESE TWO SEEDS COULD HAVE GERMINATED AS THEY DID FOR NEARLY A CENTURY AND A HALF HAD NOT THE EARLY COLONISTS HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF BOTH INTELLECTUAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL FREEDOM. THEY BURST INTO FULL FLOWER IN THE FORM OF THE SINCERE AND ORIGINAL EXPRESSION OF IDEALISTIC GOVERNMENT IN OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONSTITUTION.

GOVERNMENT, ITSELF, POSED A REAL CHALLENGE IN THE YEARS LEADING UP TO AND FOLLOWING OUR ESTABLISHMENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, AS TRANSPORTATION DEPENDED UPON HORSES, AND WHAT MAPS, OR SIGNS OR CONVENIENCES WERE AVAILABLE WERE FEW AND PRIMITIVE.

AS A RESULT, CONTACT BETWEEN CITIZENS AND THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES WAS INFREQUENT. FOR INSTANCE, A SENATOR FROM NY WHO SPENT THREE OR FOUR MONTHS IN WASHINGTON AND HAD A BUSINESS OR PROPERTY TO MANAGE AT HOME WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED FOR TIME TO VISIT CONSTITUENTS HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM HIS HOME.

ACCORDINGLY, SENATORS' TERMS WERE SET AT SIX YEARS AND REPRESENTATIVES SERVING MUCH SMALLER DISTRICTS WERE ASSIGNED TWO-YEAR TERMS.

THE WHOLE IDEA OF REPRESENTATION IN OUR EARLY YEARS WAS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE HAVE COME TO KNOW. AS THERE WERE NO BROADCAST MEDIA, WIRELESS OR OTHER MEANS OF RAPID COMMUNICATION, THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER WAS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF NEWS AND COMMENT, AND ITS PUBLICATION WAS NOT ALWAYS ASSURED TO BE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. AND IN MATTERS OF OTHER THAN LOCAL NEWS, THE HORSE BRINGING NEWS WAS NOT MEASURABLY FASTER THAN ANY OTHER.

ANOTHER DIFFERENCE WAS IN THE VERY NATURE OF OPINION, ITSELF. EDUCATION WAS BASIC, OR LESS, AND A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE POPULATION HAD NEITHER FAMILIARITY WITH ISSUES OF GOVERNMENT NOR THE MEANS TO UNDERSTAND THEM. THEIR REPRESENTATIVES WERE

GENERALLY BETTER-EDUCATED AND MORE AFFLUENT MEN WHO COULD SPEAK FOR THEM, THEREBY PROVIDING A BASIS IN FACT FOR THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT PREFERRED BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

IN THE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES CONGRESS CONVENEDED IN EARLY DECEMBER AND REMAINED IN SESSION UNTIL ITS BUSINESS WAS DONE, WHICH USUALLY REQUIRED ABOUT THREE MONTHS. MEMBERS THEN RETURNED TO THEIR DISTRICTS AND REPORTED TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS ON THE ISSUES, DISCUSSIONS AND LEGISLATION PASSED. THEY WOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS, CLARIFY REPORTS THAT MIGHT HAVE APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PAPER WHILE CONGRESS WAS IN SESSION AND TAKE NOTE OF REACTIONS AND OPINIONS.

LOCAL DEBATES IN TAVERNS OR MEETING HALLS DID NOT ALWAYS PROVIDE THE INTENDED DELIBERATIVE RESULTS WHEN EMOTIONS RAN HIGH AND ORDER BECAME HARD TO KEEP. THIS ELEMENT OF CHAOS AND CONTENTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL MEANT THAT THE REPRESENTATIVE'S PERSONAL OPINION WAS OFTEN THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT IN FRAMING THE ISSUES FOR HIS DISTRICT AND VOTING ON THEM WHEN HE RETURNED TO WASHINGTON.

THIS PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE ROLE OF THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE WAS KEY TO FORMING AND MAINTAINING AN IDEALISTIC GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF MEN WITH SIMILAR EDUCATIONS AND INTERESTS SERVING ALL THE ATLANTIC SEABOARD STATES FROM NH TO GA PLUS PA.

WHILE THEIR DIFFERENCES WERE MANY AND SPIRITED ON MATTERS SUCH AS TAXATION, AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE, DIPLOMACY, FINANCE, CURRENCY AND SURVIVAL, IT WAS THEIR SHARED IDEALISM THAT SWUNG OUR COMPASS AND ENABLED OUR YOUNG NATION TO PASS SAFELY AND SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH UNCHARTED POLITICAL WATERS.

ALTHOUGH IDEALISM CAN BE SHARED AND APPLIED TO INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSES IT IS BORN IN INDIVIDUAL HUMAN HEARTS AND MINDS AND, IN ORDER TO ENDURE, MUST BE RENEWED AND PRACTICED THERE.

THIS WAS A CRITICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR EARLY GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE POLITICAL PROCESS FLOWED FROM CITIZEN TO CONGRESS. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS SMALL, DEDICATED TO DEBATING AND DEFINING LEGISLATION AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SPECIFIED FUNCTIONS SUCH AS MAIL, CUSTOMS AND TARIFFS, DID NOT EXTEND TO A WIDE LOCAL PRESENCE.

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## IDEALISM

IN THE PERIOD OF OUR MODERN ERA THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS CONFLICTS BY WHICH POWER HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED. MOST OF THESE HAVE RESULTED IN EITHER TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OR THE REMOVAL OF MONARCHS AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY OTHERS FOR RELIGIOUS OR DYNASTIC REASONS.

OF CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR MOTIVATION

AND IMPACT WERE THE THREE POLITICAL/SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY, FRANCE AND RUSSIA AND SUCCEEDED IN OVERTURNING ESTABLISHED ORDERS WITH CALLS FOR NEW IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, LIBERTY/EGALITY/FRATERNITY, OR COMMUNISM.

THESE WERE NOT JUST NEW WAYS TO SETTLE OLD SCORES, AS THEY INCLUDED FORMS AND SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT DESIGNED TO CHANGE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN “MASS” AND “CLASS”. NOTABLY, OURS WAS THE ONLY ONE CAPABLE OF PEACEFULLY EXERCISING THE POWER IT LIBERATED. THE OTHERS DEVoured THEIR OWN IN THE QUEST FOR ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY THAT CANNIBALIZED THE FRENCH DIRECTORATE AND SPAWNED STALIN’S WIDESPREAD PURGES OF THE RUSSIAN MILITARY AND INTELLIGENTSIA, AND EVEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY ITSELF.

WE WERE DIFFERENT, HAVING THE BENEFIT OF BEING A SMALL COLONY THREE THOUSAND MILES REMOVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT FROM WHICH WE HAD SEPARATED, AND WITH A NEW CONTINENT AT OUR DISPOSAL FOR OUR POLITICAL EXPERIMENT.

“ . . . A DIFFERENT IDEALISM CAPABLE OF MANAGING THE TRANSITION FROM REBELLION TO REPUBLIC. . . . ”

AND YET, UNLIKE FRANCE AND RUSSIA, OUR TURN OF HISTORY WAS NOT ALL POLITICAL. THERE WAS THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT, THIS “NEW EDEN” ON EARTH WHICH IN THE END PROVIDED US WITH A DIFFERENT IDEALISM CAPABLE OF MANAGING THE TRANSITION FROM REBELLION TO REPUBLIC.

IN THE 1776 OF OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE THE MAJORITY OF THE US POPULATION HAD ARRIVED IN THIS COUNTRY IN THEIR OWN OR THEIR PARENTS’ LIFETIMES. THIS SPAN OF TIME UNDER BRITISH CROWN RULE PROVIDED THE POLITICAL SOIL IN WHICH THE IDEALS OF INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRACY WOULD BE PLANTED AND NURTURED.

WHILE THERE WERE STRONG DIFFERENCES OF DETAIL, PHILOSOPHY AND PERSONALITY BETWEEN THE VARIOUS COLONIES, THEY ALL BECAME INCREASINGLY COMMITTED TO THE FAR GREATER CAUSE OF CREATING A NEW COUNTRY AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

IT WAS THEIR IDEALISM THAT OVERRODE THE MANY PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES THAT THEY FACED IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT’S FORMATION AND, THEN, ITS SURVIVAL WELL INTO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE, NOT JUST POLITICIANS, WERE CAUGHT UP IN THIS GRAND CAUSE OF CREATING A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ENTITY UNLIKE ANY OTHER ON EARTH. IT GUIDED THEIR THOUGHTS, THEIR PRAYERS AND THEIR EFFORTS, AND WE CAN LOOK BACK AT IT FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCE IN AWE AND WITH THE LONGING FOR SOMETHING CHERISHED THAT WAS ONCE PART OF US BUT WAS LOST — LIKE YOUTH, LOVE OR INNOCENCE.

## THE GROWTH OF WEALTH AND THE WEALTH OF GROWTH

TIME PASSED AND WE BEGAN OUR WESTWARD EXPANSION, FIRST ACROSS THE APPALACHIANS AND THEN THE MISSISSIPPI, THE GREAT PLAINS AND THE ROCKIES, TO THE WEST COAST.

THEN, IN JUST A FEW DECADES, MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA WAS TRANSFORMED BY A HANDFUL OF EVENTS — THE GOLD RUSH, THE HOMESTEAD ACT, THE CIVIL WAR, THE TELEGRAPH AND THE RAILROADS — ALL OF WHICH MOVED THE CENTER AND BALANCE OF OUR SOCIETY AWAY FROM ITS EAST COAST ORIGINS.

BUT WE ARE NOT DEALING ONLY IN THE MOVEMENT OF POPULATION. IN THE DECADE OF THE GOLD RUSH’S GREATEST PRODUCTION, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF MINERALS WERE EXTRACTED FROM OUR WESTERN STATES, AND MANY MORE WERE INVESTED IN THEM BY THE PEOPLE, THE SERVICES AND THE PRODUCTS THAT THE NEW WEALTH DEMANDED. AS A RESULT, FOR THE FIRST TIME THE EMERGING AMERICA HAD A FINANCIAL CENTER AND ASSET BASE THAT COULD COMPETE ON AGREED TERMS WITH ITS OLDER, EASTERN COUNTERPARTS.

THE ROLE OUR GOVERNMENT PLAYED IN THE INDIAN WARS, OUR SETTLEMENT OF WESTERN LANDS AND THE GROWTH OF THE RAILROADS GAVE IT A NEW DIMENSION. IT BECAME A SPONSOR. AND IT BECAME A GRANTOR OF POLITICAL POWER WHICH COULD YIELD FINANCIAL BENEFITS.

IN THE LAST THREE DECADES OF THE 19TH CENTURY A STEADY STREAM OF APPLICATIONS FROM WESTERN TERRITORIES TO BE ADMITTED TO THE UNION WAS DIRECTED TO WASHINGTON. ALL OF THEM INVOLVED LARGE INVESTMENTS OF TIME, MONEY, EFFORT AND COOPERATION.

WITH THIS PROCESS OF TRANSITION FROM TERRITORY TO STATEHOOD, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT BOTH ECONOMIC AND REPRESENTATIVE BENEFITS WERE TO BE GAINED, AND THAT THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF OUR GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE NEW GROUND.

THE HALF-CENTURY FROM THE END OF OUR CIVIL WAR TO WWI CREATED ENORMOUS NEW ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CAPITAL AND PUT THE USA AT THE CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AS AN EQUAL PARTICIPANT.

WHILE THESE WERE HEADY AND PROSPEROUS TIMES FOR OUR COUNTRY, THEY DEALT A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE IDEALISM OF EARLY AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. FOR HERE WE SEE IN EARLY CLARITY THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW POLITICAL DNA IN A DOUBLE HELIX OF ENTWINED MONEY AND POWER.

THE IDEALISM THAT HAD HOPED TO GUIDE GOVERNMENT, PEOPLE AND POLITICS TO HIGHER LEVELS OF THOUGHT, JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS HAD BEEN SET ASIDE IN FAVOR OF MONEY AND POWER IN WHAT THEN SEEMED ONLY THE COURSE OF NATURAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS, BUT WHICH WOULD LATER HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR FREEDOMS, OUR CONSTITUTION AND THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL FLOW.

THE EXCEPTIONAL PROSPERITY OF THE LATE 19TH CENTURY THAT RESULTED FROM TERRITORIAL, POPULATION

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AND TECHNOLOGICAL EXPANSION BROUGHT WITH IT THE BEGINNING OF A LARGER ROLE FOR GOVERNMENT IN MAINTAINING A MEASURE OF BALANCE IN OUR CHANGING SOCIETY.

TOWARDS THIS END HISTORIC LEGISLATION SUCH AS THE SHERMAN ANTI-TRUST ACT AND THE INTERSTATE COMMERCE ACT CAME TO PASS. BUT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, WHILE A HELPFUL REMEDY FOR MANY OF THE MOST FLAGRANT EXCESSES, COULD NEITHER DEFLECT NOR DIMINISH THE VOLCANIC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FORCES MOVING AMERICA INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

THIS AGE HAS BEEN CALLED THE GILDED AGE AND THE AGE OF INNOCENCE. GILDED? YES; THE COUNTRY WAS CREATING ENORMOUS WEALTH, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE. INNOCENCE? NO MORE OR LESS THAN OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE TIME, BUT IN RETROSPECT, MOST ASSUREDLY SO.

“ . . . CITIZENS BEGAN TO EXPECT A MORE POPULIST FORM AND FUNCTION FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT . . . ”

HOWEVER, DURING THIS PERIOD OF MOSTLY PLACID PROSPERITY WE CAN DETECT THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF TWO VERY BASIC CHANGES IN OUR SOCIETY. THE FIRST RESULTED FROM THE RAPIDLY INCREASING WEALTH OF GOVERNMENT WHICH APPEARED TO COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL INTERESTS AS WELCOME BOUNTY TO BE SHARED. THIS MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL FLOW WHEREBY CITIZENS BEGAN TO EXPECT A MORE POPULIST FORM AND FUNCTION FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT.

THE SECOND CHANGE WAS THE EMBRYONIC STAGE, NOT YET VISIBLE OR EVEN IMAGINABLE, OF A TRULY MASS CONSUMER ECONOMY.

A HANDFUL OF MEN – FORD, EDISON, ROCKEFELLER, BELL – CREATED PRODUCTS THAT LITERALLY PUT A GROWING SEGMENT OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY IN THE HANDS, BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER WHO COULD REGULATE THEIR USE BY SOMETHING AS QUICK AND EASY AS THROWING A SWITCH.

IN 1900 THE OLD IDEALISM OF THE “NEW EDEN” WAS VERY MUCH A THING OF THE PAST. THE NEW WORLD NOW MEANT “MANIFEST DESTINY” AND AMERICA EXTENDING ITS MESSAGE OF WEALTH, DIPLOMACY AND STRENGTH THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, AT FIRST IN EUROPE AND THE U.S. AND THEN LATER THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, CREATED NEW TECHNOLOGIES, NEW PRODUCTS, NEW MACHINERY WITH WHICH TO MAKE THEM AND NEW MARKETS. THE ENORMOUS WEALTH PRODUCED FROM THIS REVOLUTION ENABLED AND ENRICHED INDIVIDUALS AND GOVERNMENTS ALIKE. WHAT IT COULD NOT DO WAS BE APPLIED EVENLY TO ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY.

IN THE CLASS CULTURE OF THE “OLD WORLD” THIS WAS JUST MORE OF THE SAME, BUT IN THIS COUNTRY THIS ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE WEALTH (AT ONE TIME CORNELIUS VANDERBILT HAD MORE MONEY THAN THE US TREASURY),

GAVE RISE TO A NEW STRATIFICATION IN AMERICAN LIFE WHICH REVEALED THE HIGH AND LOW POINTS ON OUR ECONOMIC LADDER AND THE SEPARATION BETWEEN THEM. THIS, OF COURSE, DEALT ANOTHER HEAVY BLOW TO OUR IDEALISM.

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## ENTERING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

AS THE NINETEENTH CENTURY DREW TO ITS CLOSE, THE GREAT EUROPEAN POWERS ENGAGED IN EXTENSIVE COLONIAL EXPANSION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WHERE UNDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH POOR POPULATIONS COULD BE THEIRS ALMOST FOR THE ASKING.

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS PROCESS WAS MINIMAL, AS WE STILL HAD NOT FULLY ACCOMPLISHED THE SETTLEMENT OF OUR OWN TERRITORY, BUT WE DID ACQUIRE THE PHILIPPINES AND PUERTO RICO AS THE RESULT OF VICTORY IN OUR SPANISH – AMERICAN WAR.

RATHER FORTUNATELY, AS IT HAS TURNED OUT, WE WERE NOT A GRAND SCALE PARTICIPANT IN THE COLONIAL GAME AS IT PLAYED OUT IN REMOTE, BUT RESOURCE RICH, AREAS LIKE AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA, THE NEAR-EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

THE CLEAR TRUTH IS THAT THERE WAS SO MUCH MONEY AND POWER BEING CREATED HERE AT HOME, AS WE EMBARKED UPON OUR TRANSITION FROM AN AGRICULTURAL TO AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, THAT WE HAD NO NEED TO SEEK THEM ELSEWHERE AT GREATER COST AND RISK.

AS OUR WEALTH CONTINUED TO GROW EXPONENTIALLY AND DOMINATE OUR LIFE AND GOVERNMENT, VOICES WITHIN OUR SOCIETY BEGIN TO CALL FOR RESTRICTIONS, BUT GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE LAGGED OUR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. IN THE SPAN OF A MERE CENTURY THE SKILLED YANKEE CRAFTSMAN HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO CHARLIE CHAPLIN’S INDUSTRIAL WORKER OVERWHELMED BY THE MACHINERY HE OPERATES IN MODERN TIMES .

THE BIRTH OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND ITS CALLS FOR REFORM AND FAIRNESS PROVIDED ECHOES OF OUR DISTANT IDEALISM WHICH WERE LARGELY DROWNED OUT BY THE NOISE AND FORCE OF ECONOMIC AMERICA. WE SAW OURSELVES AS BOTH THE PRODUCT AND PROPHET OF THE NEW INDUSTRIAL AGE BRINGING NEW STRENGTH AND VITALITY TO THE WORLD ORDER, BUT NOT REALIZING THAT OUR STRENGTH WAS CONSIDERABLY UNBALANCED IN FAVOR OF ECONOMICS OVER MORALITY.

WWI OFFERED US A CHANCE TO RETURN TO AN IDEALISTIC SOCIETY WHICH, TO SOME DEGREE, WE DID. BUT IT WASN’T THE OLD IDEALISM BY WHICH WE QUESTIONED OURSELVES AND CREATED STANDARDS FROM OUR ANSWERS.

WWI’S IDEALISM WAS A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR US. IT WAS INTERNATIONAL AND IT INVOLVED OUR JOINING FOREIGN ALLIES IN A MILITARY RESPONSE TO A EUROPEAN AGGRESSION. FORTUNATELY WE WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND TO BRING AN END

TO THE INSANITY OF FOUR YEARS OF TRENCH WARFARE AS PRACTICED BY THE ALLIED AND GERMAN GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR GENERAL STAFFS.

HOWEVER, EVEN WITH AS PRONOUNCED AN IDEALIST AS WOODROW WILSON IN THE WHITE HOUSE, WE WERE UNABLE TO “WIN THE PEACE”. IN VERY SHORT ORDER IDEALISM WAS TRAMPLED BY THE RUSH TO “RETURN TO NORMALCY”.

THIS WE DID WITH THE SAME EXUBERANCE, ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM THAT WE HAD APPLIED TO SETTLING OUR CONTINENT AND FIGHTING IN FRANCE. WE EMERGED FROM WWI, AS HEROES AND SAVIORS, KNOWN AND APPLAUDED AROUND THE WORLD, AND WE MADE THE MISTAKE OF “READING OUR OWN PRESS CLIPPINGS”.

FOR A DECADE AFTER “THE GREAT WAR” WE, ALONG WITH THE OTHER GREAT POWERS, PLAYED AT A NEW, WAR-BORN ESCAPISM WITHOUT REALIZING THAT BOTH THE NAME AND THE GAME HAD CHANGED. WITH THE COMBINATION OF OUR POST-WAR POWER AND THE BULL MARKET OF THE 1920s, WE FELL PREY TO SELF-SATISFACTION TO COLOR OUR VIEW OF OURSELVES.

THIS FORM OF NATIONAL INDULGENCE WAS BROUGHT TO A SUDDEN AND PAINFUL HALT BY THE STOCK MARKET IN 1929. AS PAINFUL AS IT WAS, HOWEVER, WHAT WOULD FOLLOW IN THE ‘30s WOULD BE UNIMAGINABLY WORSE.

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## THE 1930s

THE DECADE OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION WAS AS IMPORTANT AS ANY IN OUR HISTORY — NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME ECONOMIC AND HUMAN SUFFERING THAT IT PRODUCED, BUT BECAUSE IT INTRODUCED TO OUR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONSCIOUSNESS NEW WAYS OF THINKING THAT WOULD PERMANENTLY ALTER BOTH THE FORM AND POLICIES OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN FDR WAS ELECTED IN 1932. MUCH OF THE WEALTH HELD BY THE NATION’S UPPER MIDDLE AND MIDDLE CLASSES, AND EVEN A SURPRISING AMOUNT HELD BY THE SUPER RICH, HAD BEEN WIPED OUT BY THE STOCK MARKET’S CRASH.

IN WHAT TODAY SEEMS LIKE AN ALMOST UNEXPLAINABLE RESPONSE PRESIDENT HOOVER CHOSE TO TIGHTEN THE AVAILABILITY OF CREDIT WHICH, REGARDLESS OF ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT, WAS CERTAIN TO INCREASE HUMAN HARDSHIP, PAIN AND DISLOCATION. THIS LOSS OF CREDIT WAS A DEATHBLOW TO MANY BUSINESSES WHOSE CUSTOMER BASES WERE BEING DECIMATED BY RAPIDLY RISING UNEMPLOYMENT AND FALLING LIQUIDITY.

A DOUBLE WHAMMY SUCH AS THIS WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT FURTHER DISASTER LAY AHEAD. THE SMOOT HAWLEY ACT OF 1930 INCREASED TARIFFS AT A TIME WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SYSTEM LACKED THE RESILIENCY TO ABSORB THEM. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECALL THAT OUR INCOME TAX AT A FLAT RATE OF 2% HAD ONLY COME INTO

BEING IN 1913 AND THAT FOR SOME YEARS THEREAFTER MUCH OF OUR NATIONAL INCOME WAS STILL DERIVED FROM TARIFFS.

THE FINAL WHAMMY WAS DEALT BY NATURE IN THE FORM OF A SEVERE DROUGHT WHICH TURNED OUR MID-WESTERN STATES INTO A “DUST BOWL” AND DELIVERED A BLOW TO THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY AS DESTRUCTIVE AS THOSE DEALT TO OUR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. MUCH, IF NOT MOST, OF OUR POPULATION AT THIS TIME WAS RURAL AND TIED TO THE LAND FOR THEIR OWN AND OTHERS’ SUSTENANCE.

THE PROLONGED DROUGHT OF THE “DUST BOWL” DESTROYED FARMS, HOUSES, CROPS, CREDIT AND THE LOCAL BUSINESSES THAT DEPENDED UPON THEM. THE HOLLOW, HAGGARD FACES AND THE BLANK LOOK IN THE EYES OF THE “OKIES” LEAVING THEIR FARMS WERE IDENTICAL TO THOSE OF WORKERS WHO MOVED FROM PRODUCTION LINES TO BREAD LINES AS OUR ECONOMY SHUT ITSELF DOWN.

THEY SHOWED NO SIGN OF HOPE, ONLY DESPAIR AND DEFEAT BROUGHT ABOUT BY AN UNEXPLAINABLE TRAUMA.

FDR’S OCCUPANCY OF THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1933 OFFERS A GLIMPSE OF A CURIOUS MOMENT IN AMERICAN POLITICS. HE IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT CREATING THE LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE FOR THE “NEW DEAL”, AND AMAZED BOTH CRITICS AND SUPPORTERS, BUT ESPECIALLY THE FORMER, WITH THE SPEED AND SCOPE OF HIS ACTIONS.

THIS PROGRAM ESTABLISHED A NEW IMAGE OF GOVERNMENT AS HAVING AN ACTIVE AND SYMPATHETIC ROLE IN PROVIDING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO ITS CITIZENS. AS GOVERNMENT MOVED INTO AREAS SUCH AS SOCIAL SECURITY, THE GRADUATED INCOME TAX, RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AND FARM SUPPORT PAYMENTS, FDR DREW HEAVY CRITICISM FOR LIBERAL AND SOCIALIST BELIEFS.

THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO WHY HE EMBARKED UPON SUCH AN INNOVATIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL COURSE. AS A FORTUNATE DESCENDENT OF HUDSON RIVER VALLEY DUTCH ANCESTORS OF CONSIDERABLE WEALTH, HIS EARLY YEARS IN WASHINGTON AT THE NAVY DEPARTMENT, AND THEN LATER AS GOVERNOR OF NY, REVEALED HIM AS A MODERATE DEMOCRAT WITH BROAD CONNECTIONS TO THE POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY.

WE BELIEVE THE ANSWER TO FDR’S COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO “NEW DEAL” POLICIES RESULTED FROM THE FAILURE OF HERBERT HOOVER’S FISCAL POLICIES AND THE GREAT PAIN THEY CAUSED.

“ . . . VERY NEAR AN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAKING POINT.”

WITH THE COUNTRY MOVING INTO DEPRESSION IN THE LATTER YEARS OF THE HOOVER ADMINISTRATION, BY THE TIME FDR TOOK OFFICE IN 1933 IT WAS VERY NEAR AN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAKING POINT.

BECAUSE THE PUBLIC’S PAIN AND HELPLESSNESS WERE SO EVIDENT AND BECAUSE HOOVER’S EFFORTS HAD NOT PRODUCED ANY MEANINGFUL RELIEF, ROOSEVELT ASSUMED,

AND PROBABLY RIGHTLY SO, THAT ONLY EXTREMELY BOLD AND UNUSUAL MOVES COULD HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SURVIVING THE DISASTERS THAT HAD BEFALLEN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND ITS PEOPLE.

THE NEW DEAL WAS A "BIG DEAL". PERHAPS HAD FDR SERVED ONLY ONE OR TWO TERMS, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MODERATED OR PARTIALLY REPEALED, BUT HIS ELECTION FOR FOUR TERMS, DURING TWO OF WHICH HE WAS A WARTIME PRESIDENT, ESTABLISHED A GROWING SENSE OF ACCEPTANCE, AND EVEN AFFECTION, FOR HIS POLICIES AND GOVERNMENT'S NEW ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY.

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OUR NATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDEAL OF THE '30S WAS FINALLY ENDED AND REPLACED BY THE GLOBAL ORDEAL OF WWII. AS IN WWI OUR NATIVE IDEALISM RESURFACED, BUT AGAIN IT WAS EXPERIENCED AS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EFFORT. IT WAS NOT OURS ALONE, BUT RATHER, PART OF A COMMON EFFORT.

AND SO WE EMBARKED UPON A HEROIC, FOUR-YEAR STRUGGLE "TO MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY". IN THE PROCESS WE TRANSFORMED SOME HISTORIC PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, CREATING UNITY OUT OF COMPETITION, RESPECT OUT OF RIVALRY AND EVEN TRUST OUT OF SUSPICION.

THIS WAS A MAGNIFICENT EFFORT MADE BY MANY MAGNIFICENT MEN AND WOMEN IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD. WITH OTHERS WE ATTEMPTED TO EXTEND THE IDEALISM OF THE VICTORS TO WORLD PEACETIME GOVERNMENT THRU THE UN, BUT WITH THE COMING OF PEACE REALITY BEGAN TO SET IN.

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## WAR'S END AND THE '50S

AT THE MOMENT FOLLOWING OUR USE OF THE ATOM BOMB AGAINST JAPAN AND ITS CAPITULATION, THE US FOUND ITSELF IN A UNIQUE POSITION. IT WAS THE ONLY MAJOR ECONOMIC POWER THAT EMERGED FROM THE WAR WITHOUT DAMAGE OF ANY KIND TO ITS HOMELAND TERRITORY AND PRODUCTION CAPABILITY.

THIS HAD A TREMENDOUS EFFECT UPON THE MONEY/POWER EQUATION IN OUR COUNTRY, AS IT MADE POSSIBLE THE INSTANT COMMERCIALIZATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF WARTIME TECHNOLOGIES. WITH NEW METHODS, NEW TOOLS AND NEW WAYS OF FINANCING OUR GROWTH WE TOOK THE FIRST STEPS ON THE PATH TO BECOMING THE WORLD'S SOLE SUPERPOWER.

THE '50S HAD SOME OF THE OLD IDEALISTIC GLEAM ABOUT THEM. WE FELT WE HAD THE POWER, THE JUDGMENT AND THE RIGHT TO FASHION A DEMOCRATIC WORLD BASED ON OUR OWN EVOLVING MODEL. EVEN UNDER IDEAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A DAUNTING TASK,

AND CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN THOUGH OPTIMISTIC, WERE FAR FROM IDEAL.

THE DRAFTING OF THE UN CHARTER HAD COMMENCED BEFORE THE REALITY OF RUSSIA'S AND CHINA'S COMMUNIST INTENTIONS WERE MADE CLEAR. FLUSHED WITH VICTORY IN WAR AND A SOMEWHAT OVERLY TOLERANT DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WE, ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS, FAILED TO FORESEE TWO MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD ALTER THE WORLD AND OUR PLACE IN IT — THE RISE OF WORLD COMMUNISM AND THE DEMISE OF ECONOMIC COLONIALISM.

LISTENING TO THE LOFTY RHETORIC OF THE UN FRAMERS, THE COMMUNISTS SAW A THREAT AND THE THIRD WORLD COLONIES SAW A PROMISE. NOT RECOGNIZING THIS WAS THE FIRST, GREAT MISTAKE OF THE UN'S DRAFTERS.

THE SECOND WAS THE ADOPTION OF A STRUCTURE THAT WOULD PERMIT UNLIMITED MEMBERSHIP CONSISTENT WITH ITS DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, BUT WOULD SET THE STAGE FOR CONTINUING OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE EFFECTS OF THESE FAULTS HAVE BEEN NOTABLE AND ARE STILL VERY MUCH WITH US TODAY.

THE '50S IN AMERICA SEEMED LIKE AN ALMOST IDYLIC TIME. WE WERE AT PEACE, PROSPEROUS, CONVINCED OF THE SUPERIORITY OF OUR OWN VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS. WE HAD IN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER A WARTIME LEADER OF UNQUESTIONED STRENGTH, DETERMINATION AND RESPECT. IT WAS JUST ALL TOO GOOD TO LAST FOREVER AND, OF COURSE, IT DIDN'T. IN RETROSPECT THESE YEARS HAD SOME OF THAT LULL-BEFORE-THE-STORM, BLACK TIE DINNER-IN-THE-JUNGLE FEELING — THE SOCIAL EQUIVALENT OF EUROPEAN POLITICS IN 1939. VAST CHANGE LAY AHEAD.

THE CENTRALIZATION OF WARTIME GOVERNMENT AND POWER IS NOT EASILY UNDONE. PEOPLE BECAME USED TO GOVERNMENT EXERCISING WIDER AUTHORITY AND PLAYING A LARGER ROLE IN THEIR LIVES.

WITH THE END OF HOSTILITIES SOME ELEMENTS OF THE ENLARGED BUREAUCRACY CAN BE SHUT DOWN, BUT OTHERS FIND WAYS TO SURVIVE OR TO BE ABSORBED INTO OTHER AGENCIES. THIS WAS VERY MUCH THE CASE AFTER WWII WHEN GOVERNMENT'S PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION WAS CLAIMED TO BE NECESSARY TO ENABLE US TO FACE THE MANY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES HERE AND ABROAD POSED BY OUR MILITARY SUCCESS, AND OUR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DOMINANCE THAT DERIVED FROM IT.

BUT THERE WERE OTHER ENORMOUSLY POWERFUL CHANGES TAKING PLACE FAR REMOVED FROM OUR POLITICAL CENTER. IN THE CORPORATE WORLD NEW WEALTH WAS CREATED BY PENT-UP CONSUMER DEMAND, AS WELL AS THE NEEDS OF RAVAGED FOREIGN NATIONS TO REBUILD THEMSELVES, AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE MANY NEW PRODUCTS BEING CREATED FROM NEW TECHNOLOGIES. BUSINESS WAS VERY GOOD.

OUR LABOR FORCE, AS IT ABSORBED RETURNING VETERANS AND OBSERVED THE GROWING PROSPERITY OF WHICH IT WAS A VITAL ELEMENT, SET ABOUT TO MAKE UP FOR THE WARTIME RESTRICTIONS THAT HAD BEEN PLACED ON WAGES.

## CYNICISM

THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC AND HUMAN LOGIC IN LABOR'S CLAIMS WHICH WERE PRESSED VEHEMENTLY AND PERSISTENTLY. STRIKES OFTEN RESULTED AND THE LABOR/MANAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS OF THE POST-WAR PERIOD PROVIDED A NEW FORM OF PUBLIC THEATRE.

EVENTUALLY, THESE STRUGGLES WOULD BECOME A WIN/WIN SITUATION FOR LABOR AND MANAGEMENT, AS THE HIGHER WAGES SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THE WEALTH AND BUYING POWER OF AMERICA'S MANUFACTURING MIDDLE CLASS.

OUR FACE CHANGED TOO. WE ACQUIRED A NEW SUBURBAN LOOK TO OUR LANDSCAPE AND A NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM. AND WE EXPERIENCED AN EXPLOSION IN OUR PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA, MOST NOTABLY WITH THE ARRIVAL OF TELEVISION.

THE ONE COMMON DENOMINATOR TO ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS WAS THEIR ALTERATION AND EXPANSION OF THE MONEY/POWER EQUATION. THE NEW SCALE — FOR REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND DEBT, GOVERNMENTAL OR CORPORATE — BORE NO RELATION TO THE OLD. WE WERE ENTERING A NEW ECONOMIC, ETHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN WHICH MANY OF OUR OLD VIEWS AND WAYS WOULD BE FOUND WANTING OR, PERHAPS, NO LONGER OF INTEREST OR IMPORTANCE.

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### . . . AND NOW

THROUGHOUT THE LAST HALF-CENTURY, AS A NATION AND SOCIETY WE HAVE HAD TO STRUGGLE WITH THE EFFECTS OF THE CONSTANTLY ACCRETING FINANCIAL/POLITICAL POWER THAT IS OURS TO WIELD.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER WWII WE WERE THE SOLE SUPERPOWER; THEN WE FACED THIRTY YEARS OF COMPETITION DURING THE COLD WAR AT THE END OF WHICH WE RECLAIMED THE SOLE SUPERPOWER LABEL.

BUT HAVE WE ASKED OURSELVES THE RIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING A SOLE SUPERPOWER? WHILE OUR DOLLAR AMOUNTS, ESPECIALLY DEBT, HAVE GROWN FROM MILLIONS TO BILLIONS TO TRILLIONS, THE QUALITY OF OUR ELECTED GOVERNMENT HAS STEADILY DECLINED TO THE POINT TODAY WHERE SELF-DEALING, CORRUPTION AND INCOMPETENCE ARE EXPECTED AND ACCEPTED.

IN THE TIME THAT INCLUDES THE '06 AND '08 ELECTIONS WELL OVER A BILLION, AND PERHAPS AS MUCH AS TWO BILLION, DOLLARS WILL BE SPENT TO NOMINATE AND ELECT CANDIDATES. STRAIGHT ANSWERS WILL BE SCARCE, REVERSED POSITIONS WILL BE FREQUENT AND THE CLICHÉ COUNT WILL GO OFF THE CHART.

BUT WHOMEVER IS ELECTED, DO NOT DISAPPOINT YOURSELVES BY EXPECTING A REAL REVERSAL. THE DOUBLE HELIX OF OUR POLITICAL DNA, MONEY AND POWER, WILL NOT CHANGE. IT IS ONE THING THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN PRETTY MUCH COUNT ON.

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THE DECLINE OF OUR NATIONAL IDEALISM WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A CORRESPONDING RISE IN CYNICISM. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM IS THAT OF A ZERO SUM GAME IN WHICH AS ONE INCREASES, THE OTHER IS DIMINISHED.

OUR RUSH TO GREAT WEALTH AND POWER, COMMENCING IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, PROVIDED THE IDEAL BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH THESE FORCES COULD OPPOSE EACH OTHER.

WHAT RESULTED WAS A BROAD AND DRAMATIC FLIGHT FROM IDEALISM THAT EXPRESSED ITSELF AT THE MANY POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LEVELS OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

TODAY CYNICISM IS DOMINANT AND HAS LARGELY ELIMINATED OUR CAPACITY FOR CRITICAL CHALLENGE FROM EITHER THE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SECTORS — A STAGGERING LOSS FOR ANY FORM OF GOVERNMENT, BUT ESPECIALLY FOR DEMOCRACY.

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### THE REAL IMMIGRATION THREAT

CYNICISM COMES IN MANY FORMS AND INTENSITIES. NONE IS MORE PERNICIOUS THAN THE SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT, OR NON-ENFORCEMENT, OF OUR LAWS. AND AT THE HEART OF OUR VERY DIFFICULT AND TROUBLING IMMIGRATION PROBLEM LIES THE HYPOCRISY AND CYNICISM OF OUR FAILING TO ENFORCE EXISTING LAW.

BEGINNING WITH THE IMMIGRATION REFORM OF 1965 AND THEN INCREASING WITH THE 1986 AMNESTY, MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, BUT MOSTLY FROM OUR SOUTHWESTERN BORDER STATES, BEGAN TO FEEL STRONG PRESSURE FROM A MIXTURE OF INTEREST GROUPS TO CHANGE OUR IMMIGRATION POLICY — NOT BY LEGISLATION, BUT BY IGNORING IT.

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE 1965 REWRITE OF OUR IMMIGRATION LAW EVEN ITS GREATLY RELAXED CONTROLS WERE ATTACKED BY OPEN BORDER PROPONENTS FOR WHOM THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE INCLUDED NOT ONLY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES, BUT ALSO THE GOAL OF TRANSFORMING THE LIFE, LANGUAGE AND LAW OF OUR NATION.

BECAUSE THEY LACKED THE POLITICAL STRENGTH TO CHANGE THE EXISTING LAW, PRO-IMMIGRATION FORCES UNDERTOOK TO STERILIZE IT BY NON-OBSERVANCE, AND IT IS HERE THAT THE ENORMOUS CYNICISM AND HYPOCRISY OF OUR GOVERNMENT REVEALS ITSELF — FIRST IN ACCEPTING SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT AS A MEANS OF PLEASING ALL AND OFFENDING NONE.

AND SECONDLY, THIS SELECTIVE ENFORCEMENT WAS NOT LIMITED TO THE CONGRESS, AS, IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE, IT ALSO WAS NECESSARY THAT IT BE IMPOSED UPON OTHER AREAS OF GOVERNMENT. THESE INCLUDED OUR DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, JUSTICE, TREASURY AND COMMERCE AS WELL AS LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT, JUDICIAL OFFICES AND THE BORDER PATROL.

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE SUBVERSION OF THESE INSTITUTIONS WAS A MINOR STEP TAKEN FOR A LARGER PURPOSE, BUT THAT IS THE OLD JUSTIFICATION OF MEANS BY THE END. SADLY, THE FAILURE OF CONGRESS TO UPHOLD ITS OWN LAW WAS PASSED DOWN TO ALL LOWER ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL LEVELS WHERE NON-OBSERVANCE BECAME POLICY.

WHILE THE IMMIGRATION CRISIS' NUMBERS OF PEOPLE AND DOLLARS CARRY WITH THEM SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES AND COSTS, THE REAL ROT AT THE ROOT OF THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE IS THE CYNICISM AND CORRUPTION IT HAS CREATED, AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY HAVE WORKED THEIR WAY THROUGH MUCH OF OUR GOVERNMENT APPARATUS.

IN AMERICA THE TRUTH OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY IMMIGRATION IS THAT WE HAVE ACCEPTED THIS FOR OVER FORTY YEARS. ITS THREAT IS THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

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## THE DEBT THREAT

THE IMMIGRATION AND DEBT THREATS DIFFER IN ONE RESPECT AND ARE SIMILAR IN ANOTHER. WITH THE FORMER WE FACE AN UNCONTROLLABLE INFLUX OF POPULATION; WITH THE LATTER, AN APPARENTLY EQUALLY UNCONTROLLABLE OUTFLOW OF OUR NATIONAL WEALTH.

EACH HAS DIRE FINANCIAL RESULTS WHICH, IN COMBINATION, PROBABLY WITHIN A GENERATION, AND CERTAINLY IN TWO, COULD REDUCE AMERICA TO A HIGH TECHNOLOGY, BUT ECONOMICALLY DESTITUTE, NATION IN ACCELERATING DECLINE.

THESE FORCES COULD SO WEAKEN OUR INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES THAT OUR REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM WOULD BE REPLACED BY GOVERNMENT BY DECREE WHICH, WHILE APPEARING TO PROVIDE COSMETIC RELIEF, ACTUALLY HASTENS THE DECLINE. RECALL THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS DIRECTORATE.

MANY OF OUR POLITICIANS HABITUALLY REFER TO AMERICA AS THE RICHEST NATION IN THE WORLD, A CLAIM THAT DRAWS LESS THAN FULL AGREEMENT IN FOREIGN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES.

THE REASON IS THAT, WHILE WE DISPLAY A FAÇADE OF CONTINUING GREAT WEALTH, BEHIND THE SCENES WE HAVE BEEN STEADILY CONSTRUCTING A STRUCTURE OF ECONOMIC DEFICITS THAT OVER TIME HAVE REACHED AMOUNTS THAT CAN NOW IMPERIL OUR DOMESTIC STABILITY AND WAY OF LIFE AND OUR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

WE HAVE A FEDERAL UNIFIED BUDGET DEFICIT THAT WAS ANNOUNCED AT \$248 BILLION IN FISCAL YEAR 2006, BUT THIS FIGURE PALES IN COMPARISON AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE LIABILITIES AND UNFUNDED COMMITMENTS THAT HAVE GROWN AND ACCUMULATED FOR MOST OF THE LAST HALF CENTURY.

UNDERFUNDING OF MAJOR PROGRAMS SUCH AS

SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE AND OTHERS CREATE THESE DEBTS. THE END RESULT IS THAT, WHILE OUR PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED NATIONAL DEBT IS AROUND \$8 TRILLION, THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF OUR GOVERNMENT OBLIGATIONS IS ABOUT \$50 TRILLION, UP SMARTLY FROM \$20 TRILLION IN 2000.<sup>1</sup>

WE ALSO HAVE A BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT WHICH MEASURES THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR TRADE ACCOUNTS BETWEEN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS AND WHICH REACHED A RECORD HIGH OF \$717 BILLION IN 2005.<sup>2</sup>

AND CONTRIBUTING FURTHER TO THIS NEGATIVE ECONOMIC TREND IS THE FACT THAT OUR PERSONAL SAVINGS RATE HAS CONTINUALLY DECLINED TO A LEVEL LAST REACHED DURING THE DEPRESSION IN 1933 AND WHICH IS NOW THE LOWEST OF ANY MAJOR INDUSTRIALIZED NATION.<sup>3</sup>

THE IMMIGRATION AND DEBT THREATS ARE LIKE PARALLEL RAILS RUNNING TOWARDS THE SAME DISASTROUS DESTINATION. BILINGUAL EDUCATION, WHICH HAS PROVED TO BE A LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL METHOD OF LEARNING, COSTS \$28 BILLION ANNUALLY,<sup>4</sup> AND OTHER COSTS TO TAXPAYERS INCURRED BY IMMIGRANTS, BOTH LEGAL AND ILLEGAL, AMOUNT TO OVER \$85 BILLION YEARLY.<sup>5</sup>

ADD TO THESE THE RECENT SOCIAL SECURITY TOTALIZATION TREATY WITH MEXICO THAT COULD ALLOW APPROXIMATELY FIVE MILLION ILLEGALS TO RECEIVE SS BENEFITS, WITH A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATED COST OF \$345 BILLION OVER THE NEXT DECADE,<sup>6</sup> AND IT IS CLEAR HOW CLOSELY THESE TWO ISSUES ARE BOUND TOGETHER, WITH THE COSTS OF IMMIGRATION BEING REFLECTED IN OUR STEADILY INCREASING DEBT STRUCTURE.

AS DIFFERENT AS THESE TWO THREATS ARE IN SOME WAYS, THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN THAT THEY ARE THE RESULT OF FAILURE BY THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF OUR GOVERNMENT OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD TO USE THEIR POWER TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, THEIR ACTIONS ALMOST ASSURE THAT THIS AND SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS, AS THE RESULT OF PAST AND PRESENT POLICIES, WILL FIND THEMSELVES BURDENED WITH AN UNFUNDED DEBT THAT AT \$50 TRILLION NOW AMOUNTS TO ABOUT \$435,000 FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD IN THE COUNTRY<sup>7</sup> AND THAT CAN ONLY INCREASE FROM YEAR TO YEAR UNLESS WE CAN MANAGE THE HEAVY POLITICAL LIFTING OF DEEP STRUCTURAL CHANGE.

SUCH CHANGE CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE PAIN AT MOST LEVELS OF OUR SOCIETY, ALTHOUGH, IF PAST IS PROLOGUE, THE CONGRESS WILL FIND A WAY TO EXEMPT ITSELF FROM ANY SIGNIFICANT DISCOMFORT.

THE AWFUL AND OVERRIDING TRUTH IS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT, LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE, HAS FAILED TO PROTECT OUR BORDERS AND OUR TREASURY, AND PUT THE COUNTRY AT RAPIDLY INCREASING PERIL, FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THEIR OWN POLITICAL CONVENIENCE AND ADVANTAGE.

IN THE HALLS OF CONGRESS AND IN THE WHITE HOUSE SOME VOTES, EVEN THOUGH THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS THEM, ARE JUST TOO TOUGH TO MAKE.

IT IS A REAL TRAGEDY THAT THE IDEALISM THAT WAS SO WIDELY FELT AND EXPRESSED WHEN WE FORMED OUR NATION HAS GIVEN WAY TO OUR PRESENT SHAME, CORRUPTION AND DEEP CYNICISM.

TO EVENTS, SCHOOLS, TEAMS, COMMUNITIES, ETC. IT WAS INESCAPABLY DEROGATORY WHENEVER USED.

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## THE BUSH LEAGUES

IN THE AMERICA OF OUR YOUTH, BETWEEN THE TWO GREAT WARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, BASEBALL WAS THE NATIONAL GAME. PRO FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL WERE IN THEIR INFANCY ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY AUDIENCES THAT COULD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT REVENUES FOR THEM TO SURVIVE AND GROW. THIS WAS NOT EASY IN THE DEPRESSION ERA. COLLEGE TEAMS DOMINATED THESE SPORTS BY OFFERING GOOD PLAY, EASY ACCESS AND CONTESTS HEIGHTENED BY THE EMOTIONS OF HISTORICAL LOCAL AND REGIONAL RIVALRIES.

THERE WERE TWO MAJOR BASEBALL LEAGUES EACH CONSISTING OF EIGHT TEAMS, ALL LOCATED EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AS TRAVEL WAS BY RAIL OR BUS. ALL GAMES WERE PLAYED IN THE AFTERNOON AND DOUBLE HEADERS WERE OFTEN SCHEDULED FOR WEEKENDS OR HOLIDAYS.. EACH TEAM PLAYED THE OTHER SEVEN TEAMS IN ITS LEAGUE TWENTY-TWO GAMES FOR A TOTAL OF 154 GAMES IN A SEASON THAT RAN FROM APRIL THRU SEPTEMBER.

NO OTHER SPORT HAD A SEASON THIS LONG AND THIS ADVANTAGE OF EXPOSURE HAD BEEN IMPORTANT IN THE PUBLIC'S EMBRACING BASEBALL AS "THE NATIONAL GAME".

BELOW THE MAJOR LEAGUES, THERE WERE SEVERAL MINOR LEAGUES OF GRADUATED SKILL LEVELS WITH TEAMS LOCATED IN SMALL OR MEDIUM SIZED CITIES. THESE MINOR LEAGUES WERE KNOWN COLLOQUIALLY AS THE "BUSH" LEAGUES, AND THEIR TEAMS WERE USUALLY OWNED BY OR AFFILIATED WITH MAJOR LEAGUE TEAMS, THEREBY PROVIDING A "FARM" SYSTEM TO LOCATE, TRAIN AND FEED TALENTED PLAYERS TO THE MAJOR LEAGUES. IT WAS A SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM FOR ITS TIME AND ENGENDERED STRONG, AND SOMETIMES FIERCE, LOYALTIES FOR TEAMS FROM SMALL TOWNS TO MAJOR CITIES.

THE DERIVATION OF THE WORD "BUSH" TO SIGNIFY MINOR LEAGUE STATUS IS NOT CERTAIN, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT IT COMES FROM THE MAJOR LEAGUES' DRAWING UPON THE MINORS FOR THEIR TALENT AS BEING LIKE "BEATING THE BUSHES".

TO A GENERATION OF YOUNG BASEBALL FANS WHO CHEWED GUM (INSTEAD OF TOBACCO), TALKED TOUGH, WORE BASEBALL CAPS (VISOR FORWARD), OILED THEIR "MITTS" TO MAKE THEM MORE FLEXIBLE AND SPENT HOURS TALKING AND ARGUING OVER GAMES, PLAYERS AND STATISTICS, BASEBALL WAS OFTEN A FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THEY COMPARED AND JUDGED OTHER PARTS OF THEIR LIVES.

THE TERM "BUSH" AS A MEANS OF INDICATING LESSER OR INFERIOR STATUS OR VALUE WAS EASILY EXTENDED BEYOND THE WORLD OF BASEBALL AND APPLIED TO OTHER AREAS OF LIFE SUCH AS CHARACTER, BEHAVIOR AND ABILITY IN PEOPLE AND, LESS PERSONALLY BUT STILL WITH MEANING,

THE LAST TWO DECADES HAVE BEEN DARK DAYS FOR OUR PRESIDENCY. IN THE MIDDLE WERE THE TWO CLINTON TERMS MARKED BY A WIDE VARIETY OF CORRUPTION AND LOSS OF DIGNITY. THEY WERE BOOKENDED BY THE MEDIOCRE TERM OF BUSH I AND THE DISASTROUS CURRENT YEARS OF BUSH II.

BUSH I'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENT WAS FORMING THE COALITION TO OPPOSE SADDAM HUSSEIN IN THE GULF WAR. AFTER THAT HE WAS PLAGUED BY THE IRAN/CONTRA REVELATIONS, HIS USE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PARDON TO AVOID ANY LEGAL CONSEQUENCES FOR MISDEEDS BY CONVICTED CABINET-LEVEL REPUBLICANS AND OUR FAILURE TO SUPPORT AN UPRISING, THAT WE HAD ENCOURAGED, BY THE SOUTHERN SHIA AGAINST THE IRAQI DICTATOR.

TOWARDS THE END OF HIS TERM, HE SEEMED LISTLESS AND, WHEN THE TIME CAME TO CAMPAIGN FOR ANOTHER TERM, HE APPEARED AS DISORIENTED AS A BOXER TRYING TO RELOCATE HIMSELF IN THE RING AFTER TAKING A NINE-COUNT.

THE "MEDIOCRE" LABEL SEEMS JUSTIFIED BY HIS CONFUSED AND UNSUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN FOR REELECTION. IN TODAY'S WORLD AN INCUMBENT PRESIDENT HOLDS A TREMENDOUS ADVANTAGE IN OCCUPYING THE "BULLY PULPIT" AND HAVING THE POWER IT PROVIDES TO MOVE AND MANAGE THE MEDIA. ADD TO THIS THE INHERENT POWER OF THE OFFICE THAT IS CONSTANTLY AVAILABLE TO THE PRESIDENT, AND A SECOND TERM DEFEAT FOR A SITTING PRESIDENT BECOMES MORE AND MORE UNLIKELY.

WE SUSPECT THAT BUSH I MAY HAVE FOUND HIMSELF FACED WITH PERSONAL AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE AT ANY TIME, BUT ESPECIALLY SO DURING AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

IN THE TWO TERMS OF BUSH II WE ARE WITNESS TO ONE OF THE TRULY GREAT DISASTERS IN AMERICAN POLITICS. THERE IS INCOMPETENCE, ABUSE OF POWER, CORRUPTION, CRONYISM, AND FAILED JUDGMENTS THROUGHOUT THE TERM AND REACH OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.

THE EVENTS THAT REVEAL THESE RESPONSES MAY VARY; THEIR RESULTS DO NOT. AND, OF COURSE, THROUGHOUT THEIR CYCLE OF APPEARANCE AND REAPPEARANCE THERE IS THE PAIN AND POISON OF CYNICISM PLAYING OUT HERE AND ABROAD TO FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

THE OVERRIDING, MONUMENTAL ERROR OF BUSH II'S PRESIDENCY HAS BEEN THE IRAQ WAR. ITS ORIGINS GO BACK BEFORE HIS ELECTION TO THE POLICY OBJECTIVES OF A SMALL, BUT POWERFUL, GROUP OF CONSERVATIVES THAT HELD POSITIONS AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IN THE CONGRESS AND/OR OUR DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, DEFENSE AND TREASURY WHO CAME TO BE KNOWN AS NEOCONS.

KEY MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP WERE RICHARD

CHENEY, DONALD RUMSFELD, CONDOLEEZA RICE, RICHARD PERLE, AND PAUL WOLFOWITZ. THEY ENJOYED CONTINUING SUPPORT FROM A SEGMENT OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT THAT CHOSE TO DISTINGUISH ITSELF FROM THE VERY VOCAL ELEMENT IDENTIFIED WITH CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM.

WHILE THESE NEOCONS WERE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A STEADY AND NOTABLE POLICY PRESENCE IN THE WASHINGTON POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC SCENE, THEY LACKED THE FINAL LEVER OF POWER THAT COULD CONVERT POLICY INTO ACTION. ENTER GEORGE W. BUSH.

WE SEE BUSH AS THE DANGEROUS COMBINATION OF A MAN OF LIMITED JUDGEMENT WHO HAS BEEN GIVEN CONTROL OF IMMENSE POWER. MOST OF THE NEOCONS WERE INTELLIGENT AND ARTICULATE FIGURES WHO HAD SERVED IN PRIOR REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATIONS. AS SUCH, THEY HAD THE MEANS TO IMPRESS AND PERSUADE GEORGE W. BUSH WITH THEIR ARGUMENTS.

HE ACCEPTED THEIR TUTELAGE ON VARIOUS MATTERS WHILE HE SERVED AS GOVERNOR OF TX AND WAS VERY MUCH IN SYNCH BY THE TIME HE CAMPAIGNED FOR THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION AND ELECTION.

WHILE GENERALLY INCLINED TOWARDS THEIR ARGUMENTS AND POSITIONS, THE CRITICAL MOMENT CAME WHEN THE NEONONS PRESENTED THEIR VISION OF A DEMOCRATIC, FREE MARKET NEAR EAST IN WHICH JUDAISM, ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY COULD PEACEFULLY CO-EXIST AND FOR WHICH THE LIBERATION OF IRAQ WOULD BE THE STARTING POINT.

“ . . . CENTURIES OF HISTORY, ETHNICITY, CULTURE AND GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED.”

THIS GRAND PLAN OF REORDERING THE POLITICS AND CULTURE OF THIS HISTORICALLY VOLATILE REGION LACKED ONLY THE BOLD LEADERSHIP ITS SCOPE REQUIRED. BUSH WAS THE MAN, AND AMERICAN MILITARY AND FINANCIAL POWER WERE THE MEANS, BY WHICH CENTURIES OF HISTORY, ETHNICITY, CULTURE AND GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED.

HUMAN EFFORT, NO MATTER HOW WELL INTENTIONED, CAN RESULT IN HUMAN ERROR; AND IN MATTERS OF GOVERNMENT ALL JUDGMENTS ARE HUMAN AND CAN FAIL. WHO KNOWS BUT THAT WITH A LITTLE MORE HERE, OR A LITTLE LESS THERE, THE GRAND NEOCON “CON” MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED?

WE DOUBT IT, BUT FOR OUR COUNTRY, THE GREAT TRAGEDY OF THE IRAQ WAR LIES NOT IN THE RESULTS THE NEOCONS HOPED TO ACHIEVE, BUT IN THE METHODS THAT WERE VIEWED AS ACCEPTABLE FOR THEIR PURSUIT.

BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, AS WE MOVED FROM THE RHETORIC TO THE REALITY OF WAR, WE ALSO MOVED FROM OUR OWN IDEALISM TOWARDS IDEOLOGY.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF DECEPTION IN PROVIDING AND WITHHOLDING INFORMATION, AND OF USING ILLEGAL METHODS TO OBTAIN IT. BUT THE

TRUE MEASURE OF OUR FAILURE HAS BEEN WITH US SINCE THE BEGINNING AND WILL NEVER GO AWAY.

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## FALSE CLAIMS AND TRUE COSTS

ARROGANCE AND CYNICISM WALK HAND IN HAND AND THE SHADOW OF ONE IS CAST BY THE OTHER. OUR MISADVENTURE IN IRAQ HAS PUT BOTH ON PROMINENT DISPLAY FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE. IT IS NOT A PRETTY SIGHT.

OF THE MANY EXAMPLES TWO STAND OUT AS FAILURES OF BOTH OUR INTENT AND CONSCIENCE. THE FIRST IS OUR LACK OF ANY EVEN BASIC ANALYSIS AND INQUIRY INTO THE POSSIBLE RESULTS OF OUR EFFORT TO MAKE OVER THE NEAR EAST INTO SOMETHING CLOSER TO OUR OWN POLITICAL AND CULTURAL IMAGE, EVEN THOUGH A SUBSTANTIAL RECORD OF PRIOR EFFORTS AND OPINIONS WAS AVAILABLE.

IN IRAQ, OUR STARTING POINT WAS THE IDEOLOGY OF SIX NEOCONS, AND THEIR POLITICAL FORCE WAS SUFFICIENT TO DISMISS OTHER VITAL CONSIDERATIONS OF RISK AND RESULTS THAT NORMALLY PLAY A NECESSARY ROLE IN FORMING POLICY AND TAKING MILITARY ACTION.

OUR SECOND FAILURE WAS OUR ABANDONMENT OF OUR DEMOCRATIC IDEAL IN FAVOR OF IMPOSING, BY FORCE AND WITHOUT INVITATION, OUR POLITICAL/ECONOMIC/CULTURAL TEMPLATE UPON ANOTHER COUNTRY. THIS WAS AN ACT OF SUCH SUPREME CYNICISM THAT ITS ENORMITY, RATHER THAN RECEDING AS TIME PASSES, IS ALMOST SURE TO GROW.

IN BOTH OF THESE CATASTROPHIC FAILURES OUR FULL INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL FORCE WAS APPLIED BY THE CONGRESS AND OUR EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE NEOCON IDEOLOGY.

OUR PLAN SEEMED TO BE ONE OF VISION AND VICTORY WITH NO REALIZATION OF WHAT LAY BETWEEN THEM AND WHAT WE WOULD HAVE TO CONFRONT IN ORDER TO IMPLANT THE FORMER AND SECURE THE LATTER.

WHAT IS EXTRAORDINARY IS HOW LITTLE WE KNEW, AND EVEN MORE EXTRAORDINARY, HOW LITTLE WE ATTEMPTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEOCON IDEOLOGY TRANSFORMED INTO FOREIGN POLICY.

THOSE CONSEQUENCES ARE REAL AND PERSISTENT. THEY INCLUDE ALMOST THIRTY THOUSAND AMERICAN CASUALTIES AND MANY TIMES THAT NUMBER OF IRAQIS. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL PAIN OF LIVING OR DYING THAT WE HAVE CAUSED THE IRAQI PEOPLE IS UNIMAGINABLE, CONTINUAL AND SEEMINGLY ENDLESS AS THEIR LIVES, BUSINESSES AND INSTITUTIONS ARE BEING REDUCED TO RUBBLE.

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THE COSTS OF OUR INCURSION IN IRAQ HAVE BEEN HIGH. THEY WILL ONLY GROW, EVEN IF ALL FACTIONS

FIGHTING NOW WERE TO PUT DOWN THEIR WEAPONS AND “DECLARE PEACE”. THAT IS BECAUSE UNTOLD BILLIONS OF DOLLARS WILL BE NEEDED TO REBUILD THE IRAQI NATION AND ECONOMY.

AND THE SAME U.S. CONGRESS THAT VOTED TO COMMIT THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER TO WAGE WAR IN IRAQ WILL, MOST LIKELY, ALSO COMMIT HIM/HER TO PAY FOR ITS RECONSTRUCTION.

BEFORE THIS CYCLE IS COMPLETE DECADES FROM NOW, THE KNOWN COSTS FOR OUR HEEDLESS EMBRACE OF NEOCON IDEOLOGY WILL MEASURE IN TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

BUT THERE ARE OTHER COSTS THAT WE CANNOT MEASURE, BUT THAT HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY APPARENT AS WE HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH THE POSTWAR MEDICAL PROBLEMS OF THOSE WHO SERVED AND FOUGHT.

THE NATURE OF INSURGENCY AND CIVIL STRIFE IN IRAQ HAS CAUSED MUCH OF OUR ENGAGEMENT TO BE WITH THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, AND THE HORRORS OF KILLING AND MAIMING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, NO MATTER BY WHICH SIDE, WILL NOT EASILY BE DISLODGED FROM OUR MILITARY’S MEMORIES.

MANY COMBATANTS, WITH THE HELP OF PROLONGED VA MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT, WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO SOME DEGREE OF PREWAR STABILITY.

MANY OTHERS WILL FIND THIS IMPOSSIBLE, AS MEMORIES AND IMAGES OF THEIR COMBAT SERVICE CONTINUE TO PLAY UPON THE SCREEN IN THEIR BRAIN. THEY WILL MAKE, BUT NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP, APPOINTMENTS FOR VA TREATMENT OR JOB INTERVIEWS. THEY WILL USE ALCOHOL AND DRUGS, BUT FIND NO RELIEF FOR THEIR PAIN OR THE BANALITY THAT SURROUNDS THEM. AND THEY WILL WALK THE STREETS AT ALL HOURS KNOWING THAT PEACE HAS COME ONLY FOR SOME, NOT ALL; AND ALWAYS FOR OTHERS.

IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT THERE IS NO SHADOW. THE PSYCHOLOGICALLY WOUNDED PATROL THE STREETS, SOMETIMES WITH CYNICISM, BUT RARELY WITH ARROGANCE. THEIRS IS A PAINFUL AND LONELY PATH MARKED FOR THOSE WHO ARE TO BE FOREVER SEPARATE.

“ IN A WORLD OF WEAPONRY GONE WILD  
THE ULTIMATE WEAPON MUST BE WISDOM . . . ”

\* \* \*

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ FOLLOWS A LINE OF SUCCESSIVE ERROR COMMENCING WITH OUR CONCEPTION OF OUR SUPERPOWER ROLE. IN A WORLD OF WEAPONRY GONE WILD THE ULTIMATE WEAPON MUST BE WISDOM AND MOVING OUR PERCEPTION FROM MIGHT TOWARDS RIGHT.

WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF SHIFTING ALLIANCES AND FLUID POWER WHEN RIGHT, AND RIGHTS, CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE. IN THE PAST TWO GENERATIONS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HARNESS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, BUT NOT POPULATION GROWTH. THE NUMBERS FOR THE LATTER ARE SCARY, AND AT SOME POINT WILL LAY CLAIM TO RIGHTS.

TOO MUCH OF OUR SUPERPOWER ROLE HAS BEEN GIVEN OVER TO “WE’RE NUMBER 1” MACHO RHETORIC AND SELF-CELEBRATING COMMENTARY WITHOUT REALIZING THAT TO OTHERS OUR FREQUENT ASSERTIONS OF SUPERIORITY PROCLAIM INSECURITY RATHER THAN STRENGTH. AND ONE CANNOT HELP BUT QUESTION THE EXTENSION OF HOME-GROWN POLITICS TO AREAS AND ISSUES WHERE THEY DON’T BELONG.

GIVEN THEIR ACCESS TO POWER, IT WAS EASY FOR THE BUSH-CHENEY-RUMSFELD-RICE-WOLFOWITZ-PERLE GROUP TO HIJACK OUR SUPERPOWER ROLE AND TRANSFORM IT INTO A NEW AMERICAN IMPERIALISM THAT WOULD PLANT OUR FLAG AND FAITH IN FOREIGN SOIL WHENEVER AND HOWEVER WE MIGHT CHOOSE.

THE LINE OF ERROR INCLUDES A COMPLIANT CONGRESS THAT, DOMINATED BY POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, COULD NEITHER EXERCISE ITS OVERSIGHT FUNCTION NOR EVEN INQUIRE INTO CONSEQUENCES, TIME LINES, EXIT STRATEGY, ETC.

WITH INSUFFICIENT MILITARY PLANNING AND FORCE LEVELS AND INCOMPETENT CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION, OUR LINE OF ERROR BECAME AN ACCELERATING DOWNWARD SPIRAL.

MUCH OF OUR CURRENT ARGUMENT IS ALREADY OUT OF DATE AND FAILS TO ADDRESS THE FUTURE IN IRAQ IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY. NO MATTER WHEN OR HOW WE DEPART, IT WILL NOT BE A CLEAN BREAK — WAR ONE DAY AND PEACE THE NEXT.

WE MAY BE FORCED TO MAINTAIN THE BURDEN OF A MILITARY AND FINANCIAL PRESENCE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD. AND THE IRAQI PEOPLE ARE CERTAIN TO FEEL SEVERE RESIDUAL PAIN THROUGHOUT THEIR CONFLICTED SOCIETY.

“THE WAR ON TERROR”, LIKE “THE WAR TO END ALL WARS” AND “THE WAR TO MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY”, IS ONE OF THOSE LOFTY PHRASES POLITICAL LEADERS USE TO TRY TO SANITIZE WAR, BUT THAT’S NOT POSSIBLE. WAR DOESN’T CLEAN EASILY, ESPECIALLY THIS ONE.

THE FULL TIME AND TRUTH AND TRAUMA OF IRAQ ARE AS YET UNKNOWN, BUT WE WILL BEAR THEIR MARK FOR YEARS TO COME IN OUR DEALINGS WITH OTHERS AND WITH OURSELVES.

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## A THREAT FOR ALL

IN MATTERS ENVIRONMENTAL TODAY WE SEE WITH CLARITY, PERHAPS OF THE DOOMED, HOW OUR GOVERNMENT POLICY ESCHEWS IDEALISM, EVEN THE PRACTICAL KIND, AND HAS CHOSEN THE WAY OF CYNICISM AND ARROGANCE.

THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, NOT KNOWN FOR UNITY OF THOUGHT OR ACTION, HAS FOUND CAUSE IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE CHANGE/GLOBAL WARMING CRISIS TO COME TOGETHER TO A SURPRISING DEGREE. IT HAS LOOKED AT THE CHANGING NUMBERS, SYMPTOMS AND DIRECTIONS

OF NATURAL FORCES AND CONCLUDED THAT THEIR PRESENT TRENDS POINT TO A GATHERING DISASTER.

AND THEY ARE NOW MOSTLY WILLING TO RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT OUR LIFE ON OUR PLANET MAY BE AT THE ROOT OF ITS INCREASINGLY POSSIBLE DESTRUCTION.

HERE, IN ONE OF THE GREAT GLOBAL ISSUES OF OUR OR ANY TIME, WHEN WE MIGHT HAVE EXERCISED OUR SUPERPOWER STATUS TO THE BENEFIT OF MANY, WE DISPLAYED A PAROCHIALISM THAT LEFT NO ROOM FOR CLAIM TO LEADERSHIP. WE DISMISSED THE KYOTO CONFERENCE AND MADE NO POLICY SUGGESTIONS OTHER THAN CITING OUR DOMESTIC ECONOMIC CONCERNS.

IN A MATTER THAT BEARS THE MESSAGE OF “WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER” AND CRIES OUT FOR LEADERSHIP, AND EVEN IDEALISM, WE OPTED FOR CYNICISM/ARROGANCE IN THE NATURE OF “BEGGAR — THY — NEIGHBOR”.

WHILE THE KYOTO DECISION WAS A PRESIDENTIAL ONE, STILL THERE WAS NO OUTCRY OF OPPOSITION IN CONGRESS WHERE A BROADER CONSCIENCE MIGHT HAVE PREVAILED, BUT DIDN’T BECAUSE REPUBLICANS WERE IN CONTROL AND, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, DID NOT WISH TO OPPOSE THE PRESIDENT.

ONE MIGHT THINK THIS APPROACH TO THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT AT HOME WE WERE TO PUT CYNICISM AND ARROGANCE TO EVEN MORE DANGEROUS USE BY THE SUPPRESSION AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, THE REWRITING OF SCIENTIFIC TEXTS AND OPINIONS TO LESSEN OR BLUR THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION’S POSITIONS AND PURPOSES.

AND HERE, AGAIN, THE CONGRESS MUST BEAR SOME DEGREE OF FAULT. EVEN THOUGH IT MAY LACK DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATIONS IN AGENCIES SUCH AS THE EPA, DEPTS. OF INTERIOR, COMMERCE, ETC., IT CAN BE HEARD WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES REACH A LEVEL OF NATIONAL CONCERN OR OUTRAGE.

CONSIDER THE EFFECT OF A SMALL GROUP OF, SAY, A DOZEN MEMBERS OF BOTH PARTIES AND CHAMBERS CONVENING A PRESS CONFERENCE AND CALLING ATTENTION TO THE PERSONAL, POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ABUSES OF WITHHOLDING THE EXPRESSION OF OPINION.

BUT THERE WAS NO SUCH ACTION — NO PHOTO OPS; NO PRESS CONFERENCE; NO VOICES RAISED; AND NO CONSCIENCE EXPRESSED. WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GOOD MOMENT FOR IDEALISM SEEMS TO HAVE PASSED SLOWLY, SADLY AND SURELY BEYOND OUR REACH.

## DESTROYING OUR SEEDSTOCK

THE THREATS TO OUR SOCIETY POSED BY OUR GOVERNMENT’S INABILITY TO TAKE RESPONSIBLE ACTION IN MANY AREAS IS MATCHED BY OUR OWN DETERMINATION TO COMMIT A KIND OF CULTURAL SUICIDE. AGAIN, “WE HAVE MET THE ENEMY, AND HE IS US.”

AND, AGAIN, THIS COURSE IS NOT THE RESULT OF PAINFUL CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS POVERTY, WAR, FAMINE, PLAGUE OR OCCUPATION BY ANOTHER POWER. QUITE TO

THE CONTRARY, IT HAS TAKEN PLACE DURING THE TIME OF OUR GREATEST WEALTH AND POWER. IT IS TRUE THAT GOVERNMENT HAS PLAYED ITS PART IN THIS DEBACLE, BUT THE REAL RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH US.

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THERE IS A STRIKING SIMILARITY IN OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES. IN THE FORMER WE WITNESSED THE EMERGENCE OF THREE LIFE-CHANGING INDUSTRIES (OIL, STEEL AND RAILROADS) WHILE WE PURSUED OUR WESTERN FRONTIER.

IN THE FOLLOWING CENTURY THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTRONICS, PUBLIC MEDIA AND AUTO/AIR TRAVEL SHAPED OUR SOCIETY AND WE EXTENDED OUR FRONTIER TO OUTER SPACE. THE EFFECT OF ANY ONE OF THESE WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO TRANSFORM MOST COUNTRIES. BY BEING HOST TO THREE, ALL OF WHICH HAD DIRECT CONSUMER IMPACT, WE EXPANDED OUR NATIONAL WEALTH AND POWER TO EVER HIGHER LEVELS.

IT IS ARGUABLE THAT OUR MEDIA CHANGED THE MOST AND WITH THE WORST CONSEQUENCES. FROM THE TIME OF OUR FIRST PRESENCE IN NORTH AMERICA TO THE TURN OF THE LAST CENTURY THERE WAS ONLY ONE MASS MEDIUM — PRINT, CONSISTING MOSTLY OF MANY NEWSPAPERS AND FAR FEWER MAGAZINES, ALL IN BLACK AND WHITE.

THE NEWSPAPER OCCUPIED A SPECIAL PLACE IN OUR EXPANDING AMERICAN LIFE. MOST SMALL TOWNS HAD WEEKLY PAPERS AND THE LARGE CITIES HAD ONE OR MORE DAILIES, BUT IN THE MEDIUM SIZED CITIES WHERE THERE TENDED TO BE ONLY ONE, OR ONE DOMINANT, PAPER IT WAS A UNIQUE ENTITY.

THINK OF SACRAMENTO, HARTFORD, DES MOINES, LOUISVILLE, ETC. WHERE PAPERS WERE FAMILY-OWNED AND OPERATED BY SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS, AND THEIR OWNERS WERE IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES. THEIR PRIDE AND STATUS CREATED A SENSE OF JOURNALISTIC RESPONSIBILITY AND EXCELLENCE THAT FORGED A STRONG BOND WITH THEIR READERS.

BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE EQUALLY IMPORTANT IN OUR PRE-BROADCAST MEDIA. NEWSPAPERS WERE THE LINE AT WHICH THE PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT COULD MEET. THIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP LASTED UNTIL RADIO BROADCASTING WAS ABLE TO BUILD MASS AUDIENCES IN THE 1930S.

“ . . . JOURNALISM THAT INFORMED THEIR READERS, SERVED THEIR COMMUNITIES AND STRENGTHENED OUR DEMOCRACY. ”

THE HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT, FAMILY-OWNED, LOCAL NEWSPAPERS IS AS IMPORTANT AS ANY OTHER CULTURAL FACTOR IN THE GROWTH OF OUR DEMOCRACY. GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY BY OUR CONSTITUTION, THEY ENGAGED IN A MOSTLY RESPONSIBLE FORM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM THAT INFORMED THEIR READERS, SERVED THEIR COMMUNITIES AND STRENGTHENED OUR DEMOCRACY.

BUT ENORMOUS CHANGE IN THE FORM OF CONSOLIDATION WOULD STRIKE THE PRINT MEDIA INDUSTRY FOLLOWING WWII. CURIOUSLY, WHILE THE 1930S AND '40S HAD BEEN PEAK YEARS OF POPULARITY AND GROWTH FOR PRINT MEDIA, CHANGES IN POPULATION, LABOR AND REVENUES PERSUADED FAMILIES WITH AGING OR NO NEXT GENERATION MANAGEMENT TO CASH OUT.

READY AND MORE THAN WILLING TO PROVIDE THE CASH WERE THEIR MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL COUNTERPARTS WHO KNEW THE BUSINESS, RECOGNIZED ECONOMIES OF SCALE AND OPERATION AND THE VALUE OF HARD ASSETS SUCH AS BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT AND REAL ESTATE.

IN POSTWAR AMERICA, NEW TECHNOLOGY, POPULATION, METHODS AND SOURCES OF FINANCING SPURRED THE PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION IN MANY INDUSTRIES, BUT PERHAPS NONE AS DRAMATICALLY AS THE MEDIA—BOTH PRINT AND BROADCAST. AS THIS PROCESS PLAYED OUT, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY DECISIONS CAME TO BE MADE BY AN EVER SHRINKING NUMBER OF OWNERS, AND THE NEWS REPORTED OR THE EDITORIAL OPINIONS EXPRESSED REPRESENTED A FAR SMALLER AND MORE PERSONAL BASE.

AS IN GOVERNMENT AND OTHER INDUSTRIES, THE MONEY AND POWER AT STAKE AND IN PLAY FAR SURPASSED THE AMOUNTS IN EXISTENCE WHEN WAR ENDED IN 1945.

BIG MONEY FINDS WAYS TO APPLY ITS PRESSURE TO OBTAIN RESULTS (I.E., MORE MONEY), AND USUALLY DOES SO BY IDENTIFYING ITS TARGET'S WEAKEST POINT.

OUR BROADCAST MEDIA ARE CONNECTED TO OUR GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT THE PUBLIC'S OWNERSHIP OF OUR BROADCAST SPECTRUM BY LICENSING ITS USE TO COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS AND THE REGULATION OF THEIR PROGRAMS' CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION.

AND ALL OUR MEDIA ARE IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT THROUGH THEIR CONSTANT COVERAGE OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS INVOLVING SENSITIVE MATTERS SUCH AS NATIONAL SECURITY, DIPLOMACY, ELECTIONS, AND FINANCE.

IN THE AURA OF VAST WEALTH, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, OF OUR PRESENT AND RECENTLY PAST AMERICA, THE PRESSURE POINT FOR DOLLARS WITH A PURPOSE WAS ALL TOO CLEAR — THE 535 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ELECTED TO REPRESENT CLOSE TO 300 MILLION CITIZENS.

IT JUST WASN'T A VERY FAIR MATCH. FOR ONE THING, WHEREAS A "CONSIDERATION", OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, IN RETURN FOR POLITICAL FAVOR MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED SOME MODEST BENEFIT A HALF CENTURY AGO, THE AMOUNT TODAY WOULD BE FAR LARGER AND MORE PERSUASIVE.

BUT ALSO THE VERY PROCESS OF REPRESENTATION HAS CHANGED. ITS POLITICAL FLOW HAS BEEN REVERSED. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FORM WHEREBY THE REPRESENTATIVE SHAPED AN OPINION ON BEHALF OF HIS DISTRICT AND DELIVERED IT TO WASHINGTON IS NO LONGER THE DOMINANT ELEMENT. RATHER THE REPRESENTATIVE SEEKS TO OBTAIN PREFERENTIAL RESULTS IN THE AWARDED OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, SERVICES, FACILITIES AND JOBS TO HIS DISTRICT

FOR THE DELIVERY OF WHICH HE CAN CLAIM CREDIT AND THE RIGHT TO REELECTION. AND MOST OF THE INPUT HE DOES BRING TO WASHINGTON FROM HIS DISTRICT HAS TO DO WITH THESE MATTERS OR, LESS DIRECTLY, THE ISSUES THAT DETERMINE OR DEFINE THEM.

IN BETWEEN THE ISSUES AND THE REPRESENTATIVE ARE THE PUBLIC OPINION POLLS. FROM HUMBLE COMMERCIAL BEGINNINGS IN THE 1930S, DESIGNED TO DETECT CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR PRODUCTS SUCH AS SOAP OR BAKING POWDER, THEY HAVE GROWN TO BE AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF OUR PUBLIC MEDIA VOICING OPINIONS OF ALL KINDS, ABOUT ALL MATTERS BY SMALL SAMPLES OF THE POPULATION.

FOR THE ELECTED MEMBER OF CONGRESS, POLLS ARE MORE THAN A RESEARCH TOOL. THEY ARE A WEATHER VANE, PROVIDING THE DIRECTION OF THE MOMENT AND THE MEANS FOR RELEVANCE BY REELECTION.

NO MORE LENGTHY AND ARDUOUS EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TRAVEL BY HORSE OR CANAL ARE REQUIRED TO REACH CONSTITUENTS. POLLS ARE CONDUCTED BY THIRD PARTIES AND DELIVERED TO ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COMFORT OF THEIR LOCAL OR WASHINGTON OFFICES. THERE THEY CAN BE REVIEWED AND THEN, WITHOUT MUCH DEVIATION, BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR TALKING POINTS TO EITHER FUNDING SOURCES OR CONSTITUENTS.

THIS CASTS DOUBT ON FREQUENT STATEMENTS BY POLITICIANS THAT, WHILE THEY HAVE HEARD OF POLLS BEING USED BY OTHERS, IT IS A PROCESS THAT THEY DO NOT PRACTICE. WE'LL STAND BY OUR VERSION.

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## 1950-2000

THIS HALF CENTURY, A MERE BLINK OF HISTORY'S EYE, HAD FAR REACHING EFFECTS AROUND THE WORLD, BUT NO MORE SO THAN IN OUR COUNTRY WHERE OUR CONCENTRATION OF MONEY AND POWER PROVIDED A SELF-RENEWING FORM OF AMPLIFICATION.

IN MANY WAYS THESE FIFTY YEARS WERE SIMILAR TO THE SECOND HALF OF THE PRIOR CENTURY. THE MAIN DIFFERENCE WAS THE MUCH BROADER AND MORE RAPID ADVANCE OF TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS UNLEASHED BY THE URGENT, GOVERNMENT FUNDED R&D OF WWII.

AN INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF NEW PRODUCTS ENTERED AND EXPANDED OUR ECONOMY. THESE WERE DESIGNED TO BE SMALLER, LIGHTER AND CHEAPER THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS AND WERE ASSEMBLED BY NEW PROCESSES WHICH OFTEN REQUIRED LESS OR NO HUMAN LABOR. AND PART OF THIS GRAND, NEW DESIGN PROGRAM WAS THE REDESIGN OF MACHINE TOOLS SO THAT THEY COULD OPERATE AT CLOSER TOLERANCES, MORE QUICKLY AND UNIFORMLY AND WITHOUT THE RISK OF HUMAN ERROR OR INJURY.

THE SUCCESS OF OUR TECHNOLOGY INVARIABLY ATTRACTED MORE CAPITAL TO EXPAND IT OR TO CREATE COMPETITION. MONEY FLOWED LIKE SPRING MELT FROM THE MOUNTAINS AND, OF COURSE, POWER WITH IT, BUT THE TWO, WHILE JOINED, ARE ALSO DISTINCT, AND IN THE AMERICAN

ECONOMY OF 1950-2000 TWO VERY POWERFUL FORCES AND ASPECTS OF OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER, IF NOT HUMAN NATURE, CAME INTO PLAY.

THE FIRST WAS FINANCIAL EXPANSION — NEW AND MORE TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCTS PROVIDING MORE REVENUES AND PROFITS AND JOBS, MONEY, HOUSES, CARS, ETC. LET IT OUT AND SPREAD IT AROUND; THE “NEW” CAPITALISM IS HERE AND “IT’S MORNING IN AMERICA”.

BUT THAT GROWTH CAST A SHADOW AND THE SHAPE OF THAT SHADOW WAS CONSOLIDATION. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS MORE WEALTH AVAILABLE, IT COULD BE MANAGED MORE SUCCESSFULLY BY FEWER HANDS. CONSOLIDATION IS NOT EXPANSIONIST. IN COMMERCE IT GENERALLY ENTAILS THE MOVEMENT OF ASSETS/WEALTH FROM MULTIPLE OWNERS TO FEWER ONES.

IN THIS PROCESS TOWARDS MORE CONCENTRATED OWNERSHIP IT IS EXPLAINED THAT THE GREATER GOOD CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT SOME DISLOCATION. COMPETITIVE PRODUCT LINES ARE ELIMINATED AS REDUNDANT AND THEIR PLANTS AND LABOR DISCONTINUED. DOWNSIZING BECOMES A STATED MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE, AND UNION MEMBERSHIP DECREASES. OUTSOURCING OF JOBS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND ITS DOMESTIC COUNTERPART OF REDEFINING EMPLOYEES AS INDEPENDENT, PART-TIME CONTRACTORS ALSO ASSURE THAT MORE DOLLARS WILL REWARD THE NEW, FEWER OWNER/MANAGERS.

THE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH OF BROADCAST MEDIA, FUELED BY NEW POPULATION AND PURCHASING HABITS, PLACED RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS IN EVERY MAJOR AND MEDIUM SIZED MARKET IN THE COUNTRY.

AS WITH THE PRINT MEDIA, THE MORE SUCCESSFUL AND LARGER BROADCAST COMPANIES COULD NOT RESIST THE LURE OF SMALLER STATIONS IN GOOD MARKETS WHICH, BY ADDING CAPITAL AND REDUCING COSTS, COULD BE MADE TO PRODUCE SEQUENTIALLY GREATER PROFITS.

IT WAS A “LOCK”; AND MANY OF THE SMALL, FIRST GENERATION TV, RADIO AND FM STATIONS PASSED TO THE NEW MANAGEMENT OF THE MAJOR NETWORKS AND/OR OTHER NEWLY DEVELOPING MEDIA CONGLOMERATES.

THERE WAS ALSO AN INTERESTING CROSSOVER IN PRINT MEDIA MANAGEMENT WHEREBY THE BETTER FINANCED NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE CHAINS, RECOGNIZING A REVOLUTION IN THE MAKING AND WANTING TO ESTABLISH AN EARLY PRESENCE IN IT, BOUGHT OR ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN BROADCAST PROPERTIES.

THEIRS WAS TO BE THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS, AS THEY COULD BE ASSURED OF MAINTAINING A COMPETITIVE POSITION WITHIN THE NEW TECHNOLOGY. IN MANY AREAS THIS NEW STRENGTH ENABLED ITS OWNERS TO EFFECTIVELY MONOPOLIZE NOT ONLY THE MARKETING OF THE NEWS, BUT ALSO ITS REPORTING AND CONTENT.

THE CONSOLIDATION WITHIN THE BROADCAST MEDIA INDUSTRY POSED ANTI-TRUST ISSUES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ADDRESS LOCALLY WITH SOME SUCCESS. WHAT IT COULD NOT FORESEE AND WHAT IT WOULD BE FAR LESS SUCCESSFUL IN CONTROLLING WAS THE RISE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEGAMEDIA CONGLOMERATE.

“NOTHING’S BETTER THAN MORE!”

THESE IMMENSE COMPANIES DISTRIBUTE THEIR PRODUCTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THEY INFLUENCE OUR YOUNGEST, PRETEEN CHILDREN AND CREATE CELEBRITIES OF WHOM MADONNA IS ONE OF THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS AND SUCCESSFUL. HER CONCERTS AND RECORDINGS HAVE BROUGHT HER HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND CLEARLY SHOW HOW SUCCESSFUL THE COMBINATION OF THE MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES CAN BE. TO BLESS THEIR UNION A LINE FROM ONE OF HER SONGS, DICK TRACY, SAYS IT ALL: “NOTHING’S BETTER THAN MORE!”

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## A FATAL MIX

UNTIL THE 1920s, WHEN RADIO BROADCASTING BEGAN TO ATTRACT AUDIENCES, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OBTAINED ALMOST ALL OF ITS COMMERCIAL, POLITICAL AND ENTERTAINMENT NEWS FROM PRINT MEDIA, TODAY TELEVISION PROVIDES SUCH POWERFUL COMPETITION THAT IT DOMINATES COVERAGE OF AMERICAN LIFE, WITH SOME INDIVIDUALS REPORTING AVERAGE DAILY VIEWING TIMES OF MORE THAN FIVE AND SIX HOURS.

THE EMERGENCE OF MEDIA CONGLOMERATES BROUGHT, IN ADDITION TO SHARED OWNERSHIP, SHARED PRODUCTION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING AND THE GRADUAL ERASURE OF THE LINE OF SEPARATION BETWEEN NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT.

THE FIRST LINES IN THE BATTLE TO FILL TV TIME SLOTS AND TO CAPTURE AUDIENCE SHARE FOR THESE MEGA-COMPANIES ARE SPORTS, ROCK CONCERTS, SOAP OPERAS, FILMS, SIT-COMS AND ANY AND ALL CELEBRITY APPEARANCES. AND, AS THESE FRONT LINES DETERMINE THE BOTTOM LINE, THEY ARE ABLE TO REDUCE THE CORPORATE EMPHASIS AND BUDGET SHARE ACCORDED TO NEWS AND OTHER MORE PROSAIC ACTIVITIES.

THIS PROCESS OF ABSORPTION WHEREBY MOST OF OUR PRINT MEDIA HAVE BECOME PARTS OF FAR LARGER ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATIONS HAS HAD SOME EXTREMELY UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR SOCIETY AND CULTURE.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE ENTERTAINMENT MEGA-CORPORATIONS HAVE IMMENSE POWER THROUGH THEIR MANY CONNECTIONS IN GOVERNMENT AND THE CORPORATE WORLD. BEING A PART OF THAT WEB CANNOT HELP BUT LESSEN THE MOTIVATION AND CONDUCT OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM. AS THAT PROCESS WORKS ITS WAY TOWARDS THE EXECUTIVE SUITE, IT GENERALLY MANAGES TO LOSE SUPPORT. MOST COMPANIES FIND A WAY NOT TO INVESTIGATE THEMSELVES.

BUT THE GREATEST FAILURE FOR OUR COUNTRY AND OUR CULTURE HAS BEEN THE PERSISTENT DECLINE IN QUALITY OF PROGRAMMING OFFERED BY THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AT EVERY LEVEL — FILMS, TV, MUSIC, GAMES,

LYRICS, COMEDY.

THE PREVALENT STANDARD IS WHAT SELLS, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE FINISHED PRODUCT APPEALS TO THAT SEGMENT OF THE PUBLIC AT ITS LOWEST ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS.

IN THIS “RACE TO THE BOTTOM” OUR MEGAMEDIA CORPORATIONS HAVE DISCOVERED SEX, ALTHOUGH IT’S NOT EXACTLY NEW. WHAT IS NEW, HOWEVER, IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT PERVADES THE INDUSTRY’S EDITORIAL CONTENT AND IS PRESENTED IN WAYS SO GRAPHIC THAT THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN UNIMAGINABLE ONE OR TWO GENERATIONS AGO.

SEX, ITSELF, DIDN’T QUITE SEEM ENOUGH AND, IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAMMING PACKAGE, THE TV INDUSTRY MARKETERS AND WRITERS ADDED EXTREME VIOLENCE TO THE MIX. THE NATURE OF THIS VIOLENCE WAS/ IS VISUAL, BLOODY AND SO HIGHLY REPETITIVE THAT IT HAS HAD THE EFFECT OF DESENSITIZING PAIN AND SUFFERING AND CREATING A CULTURE OF ACCEPTANCE AMONG ITS VIEWERS.

WE SHOULD NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF THINKING “IT’S NOT REAL”; “IT’S JUST TV”, BECAUSE IF WE DO, WE HAVE THEN ALREADY LOST CENTURIES OF EFFORT TO BRING MANKIND TO A HIGHER LEVEL AND REALIZATION OF ITSELF.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE ON THE “SMALL SCREEN” IN OUR HOMES IS THE VERY SPECIFIC PORTRAYAL OF SEX AND VIOLENCE BETWEEN MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ANIMALS IN ANY COMBINATION POSSIBLE WITH LANGUAGE TO MATCH. THIS IS REALITY, NOT EXAGGERATION.

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## CULTURAL SUICIDE

THE HIGH PRIESTS OF OUR PRESENT MASS MEDIA CULTURE ARE THE WRITERS, PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, CRITICS AND PERFORMERS OF THE SONGS, VIDEO DISKS/ GAMES, CONCERTS, RECORDS, PLAYS, BOOKS AND ART THAT NOW DOMINATE EVERY LEVEL OF OUR SOCIETY.

THE TREMENDOUS VOLUME OF THIS OUTPUT IS BAD ENOUGH, BUT ITS CONTENT IS EVEN WORSE, AND CENTERS AROUND THE VICIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF RACIAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE THAT MARK THE WORLD OF RAP AND ROCK.

GIVEN THE HATEFUL, LAWLESS AND EXPLOSIVE MIX OF WORDS AND EMOTION THAT SERVES AS OUR CULTURAL MESSENGER, OUR NEXT GREAT FAILURE HAS BEEN NOT ONLY TO PERMIT, BUT TO ENCOURAGE, ITS DELIVERY WITHOUT ANY RESTRICTION TO OUR YOUNGEST, MOST IMPRESSIONABLE AND LEAST PROTECTED CITIZENS.

THE MEDIA PRIESTS AND MARKETERS EXTEND THEIR REACH THROUGH SCHOOLS AND SPORTS EVENTS AND OTHER YOUTH ACTIVITIES, AND THEY WILL BE PAID BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR THEIR EFFORTS

THE LOSS TO OUR COUNTRY OF A WHOLE GENERATION, OR MORE, OF ITS YOUTH WILL BE IMMEASURABLE. TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS MAY BE NEEDED IN THE FUTURE TO TRY TO COUNTER THE EFFECTS OF THE STEADY ONSLAUGHT OF MISOGYNISTIC AND RACIAL HATRED THAT WE HAVE ALLOWED TO DEFINE AMERICAN CULTURE TO OURSELVES AND TO

OTHERS. OR, PERHAPS, NO AMOUNT OF MONEY CAN REPAIR THIS DAMAGE TO OUR SOCIETY.

BUT THE GREATEST DAMAGE IS THAT WE HAVE DONE TO OUR SOULS, TO OUR CONSCIENCES, TO OUR EVOLVING HUMANITY. FOR THESE THERE CAN BE NO REPAIR — ONLY SHAME, LOSS AND THE FEAR OF WHAT MAY COME NEXT.

FOR A PREVIEW, WE NEED ONLY PAY ATTENTION TO THE REPORTS OF INCREASINGLY FREQUENT, VIOLENT AND SADISTIC YOUTH CRIMES. LIFE, AND DEATH, ARE BECOMING NOTICEABLY CHEAPER IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA.

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SOCIOLOGISTS SOMETIMES SEE SOCIETIES’ BEHAVIOR AS BEING A PENDULUM PROCESS WHEREBY WHEN A POINT TOO FAR IS REACHED, A COMPENSATING FORCE KICKS IN AND MOVES THE PENDULUM BACK TOWARDS A CENTRAL POSITION.

FOR INSTANCE, IN THE BRIEF SPAN OF TWO CENTURIES ENGLAND WENT FROM THE VERY LIBERAL WAYS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT TO THE CONSERVATIVE VICTORIAN ERA AND THEN BACK AGAIN TO A MORE WORLDLY EDWARDIAN AGE.

HOWEVER, AT THIS POINT IN OUR OWN AGE AND CULTURE WE SEEM TO HAVE ARRIVED AT AN ULTIMATE CYNICISM. THE VALUES THAT WE PROJECT BY OUR MASS ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA TO OUR OWN CITIZENS AND TO OTHERS ABROAD ARE SO EXTREME THAT PRIOR MODELS MAY NOT BE APPLICABLE.

THERE IS A POINT WHERE THE ARC OF THE BEHAVIORAL PENDULUM BREAKS DOWN, THE MACHINE DESTRUCTS AND ORDERED MOVEMENT CEASES. IT IS POSSIBLE, AND EVEN PROBABLE, THAT WE ARE AT THAT POINT.

\* \* \*

## LOOSE ENDS

WE HAVE BY NO MEANS EXHAUSTED OUR SUPPLY OF EXAMPLES OF OUR NATIONAL CYNICISM. ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT CAN BE FOUND IN THE MARKETING PRACTICES OF OUR PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY WHICH WE WILL EXPLORE AS PART OF OUR OCTOBER ISSUE ON HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA. BETWEEN NOW AND THEN COUNT THE NUMBER OF TIMES YOU HEAR REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES DESCRIBE OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, AS “THE BEST IN THE WORLD”. BUT DON’T BELIEVE THEM!

CYNICISM AND ARROGANCE TAKE MANY FORMS IN TODAY’S AMERICA. THE FREQUENCY AND SCALE OF CORPORATE CRIMINALITY UNDERTAKEN IN THE EXECUTIVE SUITES OF ENRON AND OTHER HIGHLY VISIBLE, PUBLICLY TRADED CORPORATIONS IN JUST THE LAST DECADE PROVIDE CLEAR EVIDENCE OF THE DAMAGE DONE WHEN IDEOLOGY, RATHER THAN INTEGRITY AND ENFORCEMENT, GUIDES OUR GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY.

ONE ASPECT OF OUR RECENT CORPORATE CRIME

## EPILOGUE

SPREE STANDS OUT. IT IS THE PROCESS WHEREBY A CEO ARRANGES TO HAVE NOMINATED AND ELECTED TO HIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ITS COMPENSATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO THEN CREATE A CEO COMPENSATION PACKAGE THAT AMOUNTS TO MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ANNUALLY. IN TODAY'S WORLD TWENTY TO FIFTY MILLION ARE NOT UNUSUAL, AND A SURPRISING NUMBER OF CASES IN THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS CAN BE FOUND.

AS A MEANS OF PERSONAL ENRICHMENT THIS IS A VERY EFFICIENT MECHANISM, ON A PAR, SAY, WITH THE WAY NINETEENTH CENTURY RAILROAD ORGANIZERS "WATERED THEIR STOCK". IN BOTH INSTANCES PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND TRADING OFFERED NO BARRIER, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE TRIED THROUGH LEGISLATION TO SET CONTROLS THAT CAN DETER OR PREVENT SUCH EXCESSES. LEGISLATION, HOWEVER, IS OFTEN NO MATCH FOR THOSE DETERMINED TO CIRCUMVENT IT.

THERE ARE SOME PRONOUNCED SIMILARITIES IN THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE OF THE SECOND HALVES OF OUR NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES. THERE WAS ENORMOUS WEALTH ACCUMULATION, THE POLITICAL PREDOMINANCE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND A WIDE GAP BETWEEN OUR HIGHEST AND LOWEST ECONOMIC BRACKETS.

THERE ARE ALSO STARTLING DIFFERENCES. IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY WE WERE A YOUNG, SPARSELY POPULATED COUNTRY STILL ENGAGED IN CLOSING OUR FRONTIER. TODAY, WE ARE A NATION OF 300 MILLION PEOPLE WITH SERIOUS POPULATION/ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND AN OPEN BORDER OVER WHICH WE HAVE HAD NO EFFECTIVE CONTROL FOR ALMOST HALF A CENTURY.

NEITHER THE INCOME TAX NOR A BURDENSOME FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY EXISTED IN THE 1900S; TODAY WE HAVE BOTH. THE LIST GOES ON.

BUT THERE ARE ATTITUDINAL DIFFERENCES, TOO, AND DIFFERENCES IN TIME. IN THE EARLIER CENTURY WE WERE PRETTY MUCH AT THE TOP OF OUR FORM AND OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS WERE MOSTLY WITH RELATIVELY STABLE EUROPEAN MONARCHIES. WE HAD THE FEELING THAT GOD WAS WITH US AND THAT, AS HISTORY PLAYED OUT, IT WOULD PLAY OUR WAY.

TODAY, PARTLY BECAUSE OF OUR OWN ACTIONS AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF OTHERS', WE HAVE NO SUCH CONFIDENCE OR ASSURANCE AND MUST REALIZE THAT HISTORY, OR TIME, OR FAITH CAN PLACE US IN MOMENTS OF GREAT AND INSTANT DANGER. INCREASINGLY — IN ENERGY, GOVERNMENT, LEADERSHIP, THE ENVIRONMENT, FOREIGN POLICY, AND OTHERS — IT APPEARS THAT THE OLD WAYS DO NOT WORK AND NEW ONES ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

"THE FAULT . . . IS NOT IN OUR STARS,  
BUT IN OURSELVES . . ."

JULIUS CAESAR, ACT I, SCENE 2  
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,

\* \* \*

IN OUR COMMENTS WE TRY TO DEAL WITH ISSUES FACING OUR GOVERNMENT THAT OUR GOVERNMENT CANNOT, OR WILL NOT, FACE.

THE EXPLOSION OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE EXPANSION OF MONEY AND POWER THAT RESULTED FROM IT IN LATE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICA HOLD IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LESSONS FOR US. BUT DO WE HAVE THE TIME OR INTEREST TO LEARN FROM THEM?

THERE ARE VAST DIFFERENCES. OUR FINGER LIES ON A NUCLEAR TRIGGER, NOT THE COLT REVOLVER "THAT WON THE WEST". BUT DOES THE WORD "WIN" HAVE ANY REALITY IN CONTEMPLATING NUCLEAR WAR?

SIMILARLY, THE CONDUCT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON POLITE AND PATIENT CONTACTS WITH THE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN ERA EUROPEAN MONARCHIES HAS NO RELATION TO WHAT WE FACE IN THE MULTI-ETHNIC UN MEMBERSHIP OF OVER TWO HUNDRED NATIONS, WHERE EVERY PROBLEM IS VIEWED IN DIFFERING RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SHADES.

THESE ARE THE KINDS OF DIFFERENCES THAT WE MUST FACE AND RESOLVE, AND HOW WE DO THIS WILL DETERMINE OUR SURVIVAL. THESE ARE NOT REPUBLICAN VS. DEMOCRAT DIFFERENCES, AND THE FACT THAT SO MUCH OF OUR GOVERNMENT'S STRUCTURE AND OPERATION IS BUILT ON OUR TWO PARTY FOUNDATION CAN PREVENT US FROM FORMING CLEAR POLICY IN A TIMELY AND UNIFIED MANNER.

THIS TWO PARTY DIVISION OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN A MODEL FOR US AND FOR OTHERS FOR CENTURIES. BUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NOW AND THEN IS THAT TECHNOLOGY HAS SO COMPRESSED THE TIME AND REFLECTION NEEDED TO DEAL WITH POLICY ISSUES THAT OUR REPRESENTATIVES FALL BACK ON THE CLICHÉS OF PARTY IDEOLOGY AND RHETORIC.

THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE INTERNET MIGHT BE USED TO PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND A SITE FOR VOTERS TO REGISTER THEIR OPINIONS IN BOTH ELECTION AND NON-ELECTION YEARS. WERE THIS EFFORT TO SUCCEED THE BENEFITS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT.

FIRST, IT WOULD PROVIDE A PLACE PARALLEL TO OUR ELECTED GOVERNMENT TO REGISTER PUBLIC OPINION. THIS FALLS FAR SHORT OF PROVIDING THE TYPE OF REFERENDUM OFFERED BY A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, BUT WOULD OPEN AND MODERNIZE THE PROCESS BY WHICH PUBLIC OPINION IS EXPRESSED TO GOVERNMENT. COULD IT BECOME AN ELECTRONIC FORM OF STREET PROTEST?

SECONDLY, THERE IS THE DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT INTERNET DEVELOPMENT OF THIS TYPE COULD FACILITATE THE EXPRESSION OF THIRD PARTY CANDIDACIES WHICH, AT THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY, COULD SERVE US WELL.

THE ODDS ARE HEAVILY AGAINST A THIRD PARTY AS THE RESULT OF OUR FEDERAL ELECTORAL LAWS AND THE CONTROL OF BALLOT ACCESS BEING IN THE HANDS OF STATE AND LOCAL BODIES.

EVEN THOUGH A THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE MIGHT

NOT THREATEN THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES IN A NATIONAL ELECTION, HIS/HER CANDIDACY WOULD BENEFIT FROM A LESSER NEED TO RAISE MONEY AND AN EFFICIENT WAY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION.

AND LASTLY, THE PROPER KIND OF INTERNET ACTIVITY COULD CAPTURE THE ATTENTION OF OUR ELECTED MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AND ALLOW THEM TO OBSERVE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS FREED OF TWO PARTY PERSPECTIVES. IN THIS EVENT, WE MIGHT EVEN ARRIVE AT SOME SENSIBLE AND MUCH NEEDED ELECTORAL REFORM THAT WOULD IMPROVE AND, HOPEFULLY, UNIFY OUR PROCEDURES AND SAVE CONSIDERABLE MONEY AT ALL LEVELS — LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL.

\* \* \*

WE LIVE IN AN AGE RULED BY THE POLITICS OF MORE — MORE JOBS, MORE VOTES, MORE MONEY, MORE POWER, MORE WEAPONRY, MORE ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHERS AND MORE “INTERESTS” IN THEIR COUNTRIES, MORE CRIME, MORE POVERTY, MORE IMMIGRATION, MORE GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE, MORE TECHNOLOGY, MORE PEOPLE, MORE HATREDS, MORE RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES, MORE DISEASE, MORE DEATH, MORE WAR, MORE VIOLENCE AND SEX, ETC.

TO SOME DEGREE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY. BUT THERE IS NOW A MAJOR DIFFERENCE. WE ARE FACED WITH THE LAW OF LIMITS, WITH THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE PHYSICAL RESOURCES UPON WHICH WE HAVE BASED OUR TECHNOLOGY AND OUR FUTURE ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE IN UNLIMITED AMOUNTS AND MAY ALREADY HAVE REACHED THE POINT AT WHICH THEY ARE NOT ADEQUATE TO MEET OUR ESCALATING DEMAND.

WISDOM WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT WE WILL PASS THROUGH THREE STAGES OF CHANGE — DIMINISHING AVAILABILITY, SCARCITY AND EXHAUSTION OF OUR SUPPLIES OF A VARIETY OF RESOURCES.

WATER IS THE MOST VITAL, AND OUR OVERUSE OF IT HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE FOR THE LAST HALF CENTURY. BUT DO NOT IGNORE THE RECENT DISAPPEARANCE OF HONEY BEES FROM THEIR HIVES. WITHOUT THIS ONE SPECIES TO PROVIDE FERTILIZATION FOR A WIDE RANGE OF PLANTS AND FLOWERS, SIXTY PERCENT OF THE FOOD ITEMS ON THE AMERICAN MENU COULD DISAPPEAR FROM OUR KITCHENS AND DINING ROOMS.<sup>8</sup>

\* \* \*

WE APPROACH WHAT COULD BE A TRULY FATEFUL ELECTION YEAR IN 2008. ALREADY, THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES OF BOTH PARTIES ARE ALIGNED IN DEBATES DESIGNED TO SHED THE WEAK AND DETERMINE THE STRONG WHILE TIME AND MONEY ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE.

EVEN AT THIS LEVEL, WHERE CANDIDATES CLAIM, AND ARE PRESUMED TO HAVE, THE JUDGMENT NECESSARY TO CONFRONT AND RESOLVE MAJOR ISSUES, THE CALL FOR GROWTH IS ENDLESSLY REPEATED.

“THE POLITICS OF “MORE” PERSIST,  
ONLY MORE SO.”

ITS ECHOES CARRY DOWN TO STATE, LOCAL AND COMMUNITY LEVELS WHERE IMPLEMENTATION IS INVARIABLY, AND INCREASINGLY, ACCOMPANIED BY PAINFUL “HIDDEN COSTS”. THE POLITICS OF “MORE” PERSIST, ONLY MORE SO.

THERE IS AN ALMOST OVERWHELMING CYNICISM IN OUR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, PROPOSING A COURSE OF NATIONAL ACTION AT THE END OF WHICH AWAITS DISASTER. OUR CONGRESS AND OUR PRESIDENTS KNOW THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PERPETUAL GROWTH WITHIN A CONFINED SPACE. AND YET, SINCE THE END OF WWII OUR GROWTH HAS REGULARLY, AND WITHOUT RELIEF, EXCEEDED OUR CARRYING CAPACITY.

THIS IS A COURSE FOR WHICH THERE ARE VERY EVIDENT PENALTIES FOR ALL OF US — DESTRUCTION OF AQUIFERS, LOSS OF ARABLE LAND, SPECIES AND WETLANDS, ATMOSPHERIC AND MARINE POLLUTION AND THE REDUCTION OF OXYGEN GIVEN OFF BY PLANT LIFE. REGARDLESS, OUR POLICY OF CONTINUOUSLY GREATER GROWTH MUST SURELY ACCELERATE OUR REACHING THAT NOW NOT SO DISTANT POINT WHEN BOTH OUR FUNDING AND OUR NATURAL RESOURCE CAPABILITIES WILL FAIL.

THEN, CYNICISM AND ARROGANCE WILL HAVE LED US TO THEIR ULTIMATE DESTINATION WHERE, IF WE ARE LUCKY, WE MAY HAVE A MORE REALISTIC ATTITUDE FORCED UPON US; AND, IF WE ARE NOT, WE MAY UNDERGO INVOLUNTARY SPECIES CHANGE.

\* \* \*

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

OUR GOVERNMENT IS BROKEN — FRACTURED ALONG LINES OF IDEOLOGY, PARTY DOMINANCE, POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, ETHNICITY, CORRUPTION AND CULTURE.

IT USED TO ENABLE THE AMERICA DREAM; IT NOW DIMINISHES IT. THIS IS ONE OF MANY UNPLEASANT FACTS FACING OUR GOVERNMENT THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FACE.

WASHINGTON IS A MESS. OUR ELECTED GOVERNMENT EXISTS IN A STATE OF PARALYSIS IN WHICH EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION IS FITFUL AT BEST. ITS MEMBERS ARE LARGELY SELF-SEEKING AND SELF-SERVING IN THEIR ABSORPTION WITH PARTY AND PERSONAL ELECTORAL POLITICS.

BUT EVEN THE REST, WHO CAN LAY CLAIM TO INTELLIGENCE AND INDEPENDENCE, COME UP AGAINST A VERY CONTROLLING OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT HAS BEEN BUILT OVER MANY YEARS. IT IS, HOWEVER, MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLE TRADITION, AS IT ACTS AS A MOLD THAT SHAPES ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR AND THEREBY LIMITS EFFECTIVE ACTION.

IT IS TRUE THAT LEGISLATION CAN BE A COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT PROCESS, BUT IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE. EVEN

THE MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUES CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO THEIR INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS AND THEN, WHEN JUDGED BY STANDARDS OF FAIRNESS AND THE COMMON GOOD, CAN OFFER AN ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION.

WHAT MAKES DEMOCRACY SO DIFFICULT IS THAT THE DEFINITION OF WHAT'S FAIR AND IN THE COMMON GOOD CAN CHANGE, AS CAN ALSO THE REPRESENTATIVES WHO ARE ELECTED TO MAKE THESE DEFINITIONS.

THIS IS AT THE CRUX OF OUR PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS. IT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN TARIFFS, TAX BREAKS, CONTRACTS, PUBLIC WORKS OR OTHER MONEY MESSAGES THAT CIRCULATE THROUGH OUR CONGRESS AT ANY GIVEN TIME; AND WHICH HAVE TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE ENDLESS SPEECHES, PHOTO-OPS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, TRAVEL, PRESS RELEASES, MEDIA EVENTS, ETC. THAT PROVIDE THE CONTINUOUS AND SIMULTANEOUS ENTERTAINMENT OF OUR POLITICAL CIRCUS.

IT IS TEMPTING, AND ENTIRELY TOO EASY, TO SAY OUR GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED US, WHICH IT HAS. BUT THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT IT HAS DONE SO WITH OUR SILENT PERMISSION.

THE MOST PROBABLE REACTION TO READING COMMENTARY SUCH AS THIS IS "IT'S EASY TO FIND FAULT, BUT WHAT CAN I/WE DO? THIS IS A VALID QUESTION WITH NO EASY ANSWER.

THE FIRST STEP, IT SEEMS TO US, AND ONE FROM WHICH OTHERS MAY FOLLOW IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT OUR REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS DEGRADED IN THE LAST HALF CENTURY TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS NOW PRETTY MUCH DYSFUNCTIONAL IN PROVIDING POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP THAT WILL BENEFIT ITS CITIZENS.

A THIRD PARTY WITH SUPPORT NECESSARY TO OPEN THE SYSTEM AND WILLING TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS WOULD BE A HELP BY PRESENTING ISSUES THAT THE OTHER TWO PARTIES WOULD THEN HAVE TO ADDRESS.

BUT A THIRD PARTY EFFORT, BY ITSELF, IS NOT ENOUGH. IT IS THE VOX POPULI THAT MUST BE HEARD IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE POLITICS OF "MORE" (I.E., MONEY AND POWER). THIS IS NOT EASY TO IMAGINE OR TO UNDERTAKE, AND THE QUESTION "WHAT CAN I/WE DO?" MAKES SENSE.

THE JOURNEY WE HAVE TO MAKE IS ONE OF REALIZATION — REALIZING HOW SERIOUS A PROBLEM WE FACE AND REALIZING WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TO CHANGE IT.

IT'S QUITE NATURAL THAT THE PROSPECT OF REPAIRING AND RENEWING AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY WOULD DISCOURAGE ANY INDIVIDUAL, BUT AN INDIVIDUAL JOINED WITH OTHER INDIVIDUALS IS NO LONGER AN INDIVIDUAL. AT THE LOCAL POLITICAL LEVEL EVEN A HANDFUL OF INTELLIGENT, DEDICATED CITIZENS, NOT BURDENED BY IDEOLOGICAL PRIORITY, AND WILLING TO TAKE OBJECTIVE POSITIONS ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL ISSUES AND TO ADDRESS THEIR POSITIONS PUBLICLY, TO THE MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTIES, COULD BEGIN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING TRACTION.

MAGNIFY THIS EFFORT AROUND THE COUNTRY BY ASKING OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. EVENTUALLY SOME OF THESE GROUPS WOULD COALESCE AROUND COMMON GROUND OR THOUGHT, AND THEIR VOICE WOULD GROW IN REACH AND EFFECT.

IN THE NATURAL COURSE OF BOTTOM-UP POLITICS A SINGLE VOICE, ONE INDIVIDUAL, MAY EMERGE AS LEADER. THIS IS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT NECESSARY, AS THE GOAL FOR ANY SUCH MOVEMENT IN TODAY'S AMERICA WOULD BE RENEWAL, NOT REVOLUTION.

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THIS IS WHY WE STARTED PUBLICATION OF MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE FOUR YEARS AGO. WE HOPED THAT WE MIGHT CREATE A MEETING PLACE FOR SOME PEOPLE AS CONCERNED AS WE ARE ABOUT THE STATE OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND, PERHAPS, WILLING TO ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO IT A SENSE OF ITS FORMER IDEALISM AND INTEGRITY.

IT STILL SEEMS WORTH TRYING. IT'S THE WAY WE STARTED, AND PERHAPS BY GOING BACK TO BASICS WE CAN MAKE PROGRESS.

### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>HON. DAVID M. WALKER, COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE U.S.; GOVERNMENT WASTE WATCH, WINTER 2006

<sup>2</sup>IBID

<sup>3</sup>IBID

<sup>4</sup>AMERICANS FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL. POLL, MAY 2007

<sup>5</sup>IBID

<sup>6</sup>IBID

<sup>7</sup>C.F. NOTE 1 ABOVE

<sup>8</sup>WXEL FM RADIO – WEST PALM BEACH, FL NEWSCAST 6/6/07

### EDITOR'S BIO

MR. AULT IS RETIRED FROM BUSINESS, A GRADUATE OF YALE UNIVERSITY, AND THE AUTHOR OF A RETAIL FOOD STUDY (LA ROCHE & Co. NYC, NY 1957) WHICH DESCRIBED THE EMERGENCE AND GROWING DOMINANCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IN AMERICAN FOOD RETAILING.

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