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# MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE<sup>©</sup>

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**IN THIS ISSUE:** WE BEGIN OUR SECOND SERIES AND EXPLORE HOW THE WAYS WE HAVE FAILED OUR INSTITUTIONS HAVE PLAYED OUT IN OUR POLITICS AND POLICIES AND HAVE SEPARATED US FROM THE ORIGINAL INTENTIONS AND CHARACTER OF OUR DEMOCRACY. FUTURE ISSUES IN THIS SERIES WILL CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND ASPECTS OF THIS NEW AMERICA.

**IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:** WE WILL SHOW HOW OUR PROCESS OF SELF-DEFINITION EXTENDS TO AND INFLUENCES OUR NATIONAL POLICY DECISIONS.

## WHO LOST AMERICA?<sup>©</sup>

WHO LOST AMERICA? OR, MORE SPECIFICALLY, WHO REPLACED THE AMERICA WE WERE WITH WHAT WE HAVE BECOME? AND, WHY? AND, HOW? THESE QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS PROVIDE THE FRAMEWORK FOR COMING CHAPTERS AND, HOPEFULLY, WILL THROW LIGHT ON HOW, IN A DEVELOPED AND FUNCTIONAL DEMOCRACY, A CHANGE OF SUCH TRANSFORMING NATURE AS WE HAVE EXPERIENCED COULD OCCUR WITHOUT BEING FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND FRAMED AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE PUBLIC WILL.

THE “LOST” IN THE TITLE DOES NOT REFER TO DIPLOMACY, ECONOMICS, MILITARISM OR ANY OF THE OTHER MANY ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT WHICH FOR A SUPER POWER, OR EVEN AN ASPIRING SUPERPOWER, CAN AUTOMATICALLY CAPTURE HEADLINES AND CLAIM WORLD ATTENTION. RATHER, WE ARE FACED WITH AN HISTORICAL CHANGE THAT HAS OCCURRED OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD.

HISTORY IS AN EXCELLENT TEACHER. TO SOME DEGREE IT IS INFALLIBLE. IT IS BOTH MESSENGER AND MESSAGE AND WRITES OUR RECORDS. IN THE END, IT DETERMINES WHO SURVIVES AND WHO DOESN'T AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT IS AND WHAT ISN'T. IT LEAVES LITTLE ROOM FOR ARGUMENT WHEN IT IS BEING WRITTEN, AND NONE THEREAFTER. IT CONSISTS OF INNUMERABLE EVENTS, ACTIONS AND DECISIONS MANY OF WHICH, WHEN THEY OCCUR, DO NOT BEAR THE SIGN OF EITHER PRESENT OR FUTURE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE.

THE HISTORICAL PROCESS IS FAR FROM PERFECT.

THOSE WHOM IT RELEGATES TO ITS DUST BINS MAY WELL HAVE DESERVED BETTER ACCORDING TO THE MORAL OR ETHICAL VALUES OF THEIR TIME, BUT THE SURVIVORS OF HISTORY'S SELECTION PROCESS ARE ALSO KEEPERS OF THE RECORD WITH AN AUDIT AND EDIT FUNCTION THAT CAN DISMISS AS IRRELEVANT THE MULTITUDE OF CLAIMS FOR INCLUSION THAT FAIL.

FOR NATIONS, THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH HISTORY IS ONE OF SELF-DEFINITION WITH THE EVER PRESENT CAVEAT THAT FOR THE LOSER THERE AWAITS, NOT JUST DEFEAT, BUT, IN ALL PROBABILITY, ELIMINATION. THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THIS DEFINITION, AND THE WAYS BY WHICH TO ACHIEVE IT, ARE COMPLICATED BY NATIONS' NEEDS TO DEFEND OR ENLARGE THEIR BORDERS, POPULATIONS OR PROPERTIES. THE LATTER ARE OFTEN DESIGNATED AS “NATIONAL INTERESTS” AND CONSIST OF MINES, LAND, MILITARY BASES, INDUSTRIAL PLANTS AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES/SERVICES OWNED OR LEASED BY PRIVATE OR GOVERNMENT ENTITIES.

LOOKING ACROSS A TIME SPAN MEASURED IN CENTURIES, IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW THE WAY OUR NATION DEFINES ITSELF COULD BECOME SEPARATED FROM OUR INDIVIDUAL IDEALS, AS MUCH IS OFTEN LOST IN TRANSLATION FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE PUBLIC CONDITION. HUMANS, WHETHER CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT, ALSO UNDERTAKE THE TASK OF SELF-DEFINITION IN THEIR LIVES WHERE IT IS CONSIDERABLY LESS COMPLICATED, BUT FAR MORE FRAGILE, THAN ON A NATIONAL SCALE.

IN AMERICAN POLITICS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE OF UNIFYING FORCE. ALL THE MAJOR ISSUES — IMMIGRATION, HEALTH CARE, TAXES, SOCIAL SECURITY, THE ENVIRONMENT, NATIONAL SECURITY — REVEAL DEEP AND DIFFICULT DIVISIONS OVER WHICH AND WHOSE INTERESTS WILL BE SERVED. AND IN A NATION AS LARGE, RICH AND POWERFUL AS WE HAVE BECOME THERE ARE SIMPLY TOO MANY SELF-SERVING INTERESTS MANEUVERING FOR ADVANTAGE. THEY ACT LIKE A POLITICAL VIRUS, PENETRATING, ENTERING AND TAKING OVER THE POLITICAL DNA OF ITS HOST AND THEREBY ALTERING OUR PROCESS OF SELF-DEFINITION.

WHILE UNITY MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DISCERN IN OUR MAJOR ISSUES, THERE IS ONE CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS THAT HAS FOUND BROAD BACKING AND IS LEVELED, WITH THE ASSURANCE OF CERTAINTY, BY ONE AND ALL AGAINST ONE AND ALL. IT IS THE CHARGE OF POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND ITS RESULTING PARALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT.

AND IT IS TRUE. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF OUR GOVERNMENT, WITH THE POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY TO CREATE AND PASS OUR LAWS, IS RIVEN WITH SO MANY DIVISIONS (BOTH OF SUBSTANCE AND OF STYLE) THAT ITS 535 MEMBERS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE ARE MORE AND MORE TO BE FOUND AT THE FAR ENDS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WITHOUT A REFUGE OF REASON AT THE CENTER. IN ANY GOVERNMENT THIS POSES A SERIOUS THREAT TO POLITICAL SUCCESS. IN OUR TIME AND PLACE IT IS A CATASTROPHE. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN AND WHY DO WE PERMIT IT?

POLARIZATION HAS OCCURRED BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME ACCEPTABLE. THIS MEANS THAT ITS POLITICAL REWARDS ARE SURE TO OUTWEIGH THE GOVERNMENTAL RISKS THAT IT POSES. THE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AND POWER THAT FLOW THROUGH OUR GOVERNMENT ARE SO GREAT THAT THOSE WHO SEEK THEM HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY WILLING TO ADOPT EXTREME MEANS TO SECURE THEM. THIS INCLUDES ADOPTING EXAGGERATED POSITIONS AND RHETORIC WHICH CAN GAIN GREATER ATTENTION AND SUPPORT AS THEY MOVE TOWARDS THE ENDS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THIS FLIGHT FROM SAMENESS HAS HAD A REMARKABLE EFFECT ON THE RANGE OF OUR POLITICAL THOUGHT, FOR, WHEREAS THE PREPONDERANCE OF OPINION USED TO INHABIT THE POLITICAL CENTER, THE LATTER IS SEEN AS NOT OFFERING THE SUREST ACCESS TO THE BENEFITS NOW PROVIDED BY MORE EXTREME POSITIONS. AS A RESULT, THE POLITICAL CENTER, WHICH OFTEN FOUND CONSENSUS IN MODERATION, COMPROMISE AND, EVEN COLLABORATION, HAS BEEN VACATED BY THOSE INTENT UPON VICTORY AND ITS SPOILS.

THIS NEW CONCENTRATION OF POWER TOWARD THE EDGES HAS BEEN BUILDING FOR THE LAST HALF CENTURY. TODAY IT EXISTS IN A PARTICULARLY VIRULENT WINNER-TAKE-ALL POLITICAL EXERCISE IN WHICH DETERMINED OPPOSITION IS CONSTANT IN REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT, EXECUTIVE/LEGISLATIVE, HOUSE/SENATE AND EVEN FEDERAL/STATE RELATIONS. THE RESULTS OF THIS CONTINUING ABRASION BETWEEN ESSENTIAL MOVING PARTS OF OUR SYSTEM ENCOURAGE OUR PRESENT POLARIZATION AND PARALYSIS WHICH IN TURN PREVENT THE PASSAGE OF MEANINGFUL LEGISLATION TO TREAT MAJOR ISSUES

OF OUR TIME.

A LESS EVIDENT, BUT EQUALLY DAMAGING, CONSEQUENCE OF OUR SHRINKING CENTER IS THAT, AS MASS MOVES TO THE ENDS AWAY FROM THE CENTER AND BALANCE IS LOST, OUR POLITICAL MECHANISM SUFFERS A LOSS OF EQUILIBRIUM WHEREBY EVEN SMALL CHANGES WHICH HAD BEEN TOLERATED AT THE CENTER NOW PRODUCE WIDE OR VIOLENT SWINGS AT ITS ENDS.

STRANGELY, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS NOT BY WASHINGTON'S STANDARDS, WHILE THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT WITHIN CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE THAT POLARIZATION HAS REACHED AN HISTORICALLY HIGH AND DAMAGING LEVEL, THERE IS NO REAL CONSENSUS ON HOW TO REDUCE IT. AS CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS FOLLOW PRESIDENTIAL CONTESTS BY A BRIEF TWO YEARS AND AS CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN STRETCHED TO FILL THE GAP, AMERICA FINDS ITSELF IN A CONSTANT CAMPAIGN CYCLE IN WHICH ACCUSATIONS OF POLITICAL AND PERSONAL FAILURE ARE READILY AVAILABLE TO TARNISH THE IMAGE OF OUR DEMOCRACY.

BUT POLITICS ARE NOT THE SAME AS GOVERNMENT; AND THE WAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN DO NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO LEGISLATION. THE DIFFERENCE IS BOTH EXPANDED AND EXPLOITED BY OUR NEW, 24/7 INSTANT MEDIA COVERAGE WHICH EVERY POLITICIAN COURTS AND NONE REFUSES. WITHIN THE CONGRESS DENIAL RULES, AS EACH PARTY INCREASINGLY REFERS TO ITS OWN POLICIES AND PROPOSALS AS "BIPARTISAN" AND, THEREFORE, TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE OTHER.

THIS HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, A HIGHLY UNSUCCESSFUL TACTIC WITH THE RESULT THAT POLARIZATION WILL PLAY A VERY REAL AND LIMITING ROLE IN THE QUALITY OF OUR SELF-GOVERNANCE UNTIL ITS UNDERLYING CAUSES ARE RECOGNIZED.

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THE PROCESSES OF POLITICAL SELF-DEFINITION WHEREBY NATIONS, PARTIES AND EMPIRES FORM AND GROW ARE PUBLICLY RECORDED AND VISIBLE. BECAUSE OF THEIR VISIBILITY THEY ARE ACCEPTED AS HISTORY'S TRUTH. THEY ARE NOT; THEY ARE REAL, BUT ONLY CONTRIBUTORY. BENEATH THEM LIE THE MANY LAYERS OF HUMAN MOTIVATIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS WHOSE IMPACT, BUT GENERALLY NOT WHOSE PRESENCE AND POWER, ARE RECORDED IN HISTORY'S NARRATIVE. THE SPECIAL PRIVACY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ENGENDERS PERSONAL SELF-DEFINITION WITHOUT WHICH ITS POLITICAL/PUBLIC ACCOMPLICE COULD NOT EXIST. UNDERSTANDING THIS ROLE AND REFLECTION IS THE ONLY WAY BY WHICH WE CAN ARRIVE AT THE NEW POLITICAL ENLIGHTENMENT THAT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CHANGE BOTH THE COURSE AND METHODS OF OUR FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES.

ABOVE THE SURFACE VIOLENT STORMS MAKE WINDS AND WAVES THAT RAGE ON THE SEA AND BATTER THE SHORE. BENEATH THE SURFACE, SILENTLY AND GENTLY, UNSEEN CURRENTS IN CONTINUOUS MOTION MOVE ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF WATER AROUND THE WORLD.

IN THE REALM OF SELF-DEFINITION, AS IN ALL OTHERS, ITS COIN HAS TWO SIDES. THEY ARE SELF-VALIDATION AND DIFFERENTIATION, AND THEY OCCUR SO FREQUENTLY AND ARE SO ESSENTIAL AND DOMINANT A PART OF THE PROCESS THAT THEY TRANSCEND MERE PERSONAL DEFINITION AND ARE EXTENDED TO MANY OTHER AREAS OF OUR LIVES — RELIGIOUS, COMMERCIAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND OTHERS.

SELF-VALIDATION IS THE PROCESS OF OUTREACH WHEREBY WE CLAIM AND APPLY TO OURSELVES THE VALUES, SYMBOLS, ACTIONS, BELIEFS, MANNERS, HISTORY AND LANGUAGE WHICH WE THINK WILL ESTABLISH A GREATER WORTH FOR US IN OUR OWN SIGHT AND IN THE SIGHT OF OTHERS. THIS IS A VERY POWERFUL FORCE AND IT IS PUT TO SUCH CONSTANT USE IN OUR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CULTURE THAT, UNLIKE MOST MOTIVATING FORCES, IT IS LARGELY ACCEPTED WITHOUT QUESTION. THERE ARE FEW THINGS THAT HAVE THE POWER TO SWAY AS OUR NEED TO ESTABLISH OURSELVES AS OBJECTS OF WORTH; AND, SIMILARLY, FEW THINGS ARE AS ABLE TO SO EFFECTIVELY DESTROY OR DIMINISH OUR LIVES AS FAILING THIS TEST.

FEW. BUT THERE IS ONE CO-EQUAL, UNDENIABLE COMPANION THAT HAS BEEN WITH US SINCE OUR EARLIEST DAYS ON THE AFRICAN PLAINS IN THE MISTS BETWEEN MAN AND MONKEY. THIS IS THE NEED TO DIFFERENTIATE OURSELVES, TO SEPARATE US FROM THE OTHER. NOMADIC MAN FOUND IT USEFUL FOR HUNTING GAME TO DIVIDE INTO SMALLER UNITS OF TRIBES, FAMILIES, OR COUNCILS MAINTAINING A BALANCE BASED ON WHAT SIZE BEST SERVED HIS NEEDS FOR PROTECTION AND FOOD.

POST NOMADIC HUMANS DEVELOPED ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LIVES AND INSTITUTIONS BUILT AROUND AGRICULTURE, PROPERTY OWNERSHIP/INHERITANCE AND SETTLED COMMUNITIES. AS LIFE'S SCALE AND NUMBERS GREW, SMALL COMMUNITIES EXPANDED TO VILLAGES, TOWNS AND CITIES THAT COULD BETTER SERVE THE NEEDS FOR PROTECTION AND COMMERCE. HOWEVER, EVEN AS MAN PURSUED THIS NEW WAY OF COMMUNAL LIFE WITH SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS, HE INSISTED ON THE EXPRESSION OF DIFFERENTIATION IN NEIGHBORHOODS, CLOTHING, LANGUAGE, RELIGION AND OTHER MEANS.

MOST NOTABLE AMONG THESE MECHANISMS WAS ONE WHICH APPEARED EARLY, HAS SERVED EVERY POPULATION GROUP OR GOVERNMENT AROUND THE GLOBE AND ENDURES TODAY. IT IS THE CREATION OF BORDERS. WHETHER MADE BY MAN DRAWING LINES ON A MAP OR BY NATURE'S RIVERS, SEAS AND MOUNTAIN RANGES, BORDERS MADE THE SAME STATEMENT — THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT IS ON ONE SIDE AND WHAT IS ON THE OTHER. MANY WARS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT EITHER TO PROVE OR TO CONTEST THIS THOUGHT, BUT HISTORY SEEMS TO SUPPORT THE VIEW THAT BORDERS HAVE A PERMANENT PLACE IN OUR LIFE.

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THE BORDERS THAT DESCRIBE OUR CULTURAL, GEOGRAPHIC OR PHILOSOPHIC DIFFERENCES DO SO ON A LARGE

SCALE. ON A CONSIDERABLY SMALLER SCALE, AT THE HUMAN LEVEL, WE MAKE EQUALLY INTENSE DISTINCTIONS IN ORDER TO DEFINE OURSELVES, TO DRAW THE BORDERS OF THE SELF, AND TO SAY HOW AND WHY OUR SELF DIFFERS FROM WHAT LIES BEYOND IT.

TODAY THE MOST POPULAR METAPHOR IN OUR AMERICAN LANGUAGE IS THAT WHICH DERIVES FROM FOOTBALL WHICH DOMINATES AMERICAN SPORT TO A FAR GREATER DEGREE THAN BASEBALL, OUR "NATIONAL GAME". IT IS AVAILABLE IN BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR FORMS AND MORE PEOPLE WATCH IT AND BET MONEY ON IT THAN ANY OTHER SPORT. FROM TRAINING CAMP TO SUPER BOWL TAKES MORE THAN HALF OF THE YEAR AND ON FRIDAY NIGHT, WHICH IS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL NIGHT IN MOST OF THE COUNTRY, SMALL TOWNS CLOSE DOWN AND MOVE TO THE SCHOOL STADIUM.

BUT WATCHING AND CHEERING ARE NOT ENOUGH. THE COMMITMENT MUST BE TOTAL! AT ANY TIME DURING THE SEASON, AND EVEN OFF-SEASON, ADULTS AND CHILDREN WEAR SPORTS CLOTHING THAT RECOGNIZES THEIR PREFERRED TEAM AND EVEN INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS' NAMES AND NUMERALS. NOR IS IT UNUSUAL TO SEE CARS ADORNED WITH ONE OR MORE FLAGS BEARING A TEAM LOGO.

AND THERE IS MORE. IN COLLEGE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ALUMNI PURSUE THE ULTIMATE IN ATHLETIC BOOSTERISM BY ATTENDING ALL PRACTICE SESSIONS AND GAMES, HOME AND AWAY, FOR ONE OR MORE TEAMS. USUALLY IT IS FOOTBALL THAT COMMANDS THE AFFECTION OF THESE GRADUATE GROUPIES WHO OFTEN USE EXPENSIVE RECREATIONAL VEHICLES WITH KITCHEN, BATH AND BEDROOM FACILITIES TO ENABLE THEM TO INDULGE THEIR TEAM PASSION BOTH AT HOME IN STADIUM PARKING LOTS AND ON TRIPS THAT MAY REQUIRE A DAY OR TWO ON THE ROAD. THESE "LAND YACHTS" WHOSE COST RANGES FROM ABOUT ONE TO FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS ARE TRIUMPHS OF SPACE AND CONVENIENCE DESIGN/ENGINEERING AND HAVE ELEVATED THE BASIC "TAILGATE" PICNIC TO AN ELABORATE SERVICE OF SPECIAL MENUS. THEIR DESIGN CAN INCLUDE FURNITURE, FABRICS, GLASSWARE, CHINA, CARPETING, ETC. MARKED BY THE TEAM LOGO, MASCOT AND COLORS.

THIS IS THE WAY OF LIFE FOR THE FOUR MONTH FOOTBALL AND OTHER SEASONS THAT FULFILL THE GRADUATE GROUPIES' DREAMS. BUT IT IS NOT MERELY ATTENDANCE THAT MEASURES THIS PHENOMENON. GROUPIES FIND AND ASSOCIATE WITH THEIR FELLOWS WITH THE RESULT THAT THEIR LIVES — THEIR TIME, CONVERSATIONS, READING, FINANCES AND SOCIALIZING — ARE DOMINATED BY THIS FIXATION.

WHAT IS TAKING PLACE HERE? WELL, THE OVER-THE-TOP, OUT OF PROPORTION (AND DEGREE IS KEY IN THESE COMMENTS) SPORTS BOOSTER, BOTH COLLEGE AND PROFESSIONAL, IS CREATING AN IDENTITY. AND WHILE IT IS AN IDENTITY BASED ON FANTASY, IT IS NONETHELESS A REALITY FOR ITS CREATOR. WHAT IS ALSO VERY MUCH A NATIONAL REALITY IS THAT THESE FANTASY SELVES ARE BEING DEVELOPED, ENCOURAGED AND PROMOTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY FROM LITTLE LEAGUES TO THE PROFESSIONAL SPORTS LEAGUES. THIS HAS BECOME

POSSIBLE BY THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON ATHLETIC FACILITIES/PROGRAMS AND THEIR MARKETING/PROMOTION BY CORPORATE ADVERTISERS AND THE MEDIA.

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AND BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SELF, WHAT IS THE REAL PURPOSE OF OUR FANTASY IDENTITIES? FIRST, THEY PROVIDE VALIDATION BECAUSE BY CLAIMING ASSOCIATION WITH A TEAM'S HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, TRADITION, STYLE, COLORS, HEROES, ETC. WE ARE ADDING SOMETHING TO OURSELVES THAT, IN OUR VIEW AND OTHERS, ADDS VALUE OR REASON FOR NOTICE TO OUR LONELY PROCESS OF SELF-DEFINITION. VALIDATION IS INTERNAL AND IT IS CONSTANTLY AT WORK. WE BORROW HERE AND SHED THERE AND ARE SO ACCUSTOMED TO THESE RESPONSES THAT WE PAY THEM LITTLE HEED.

SECONDLY, THE IDENTIFICATION THAT UNDERLIES OUR SPORTS MANIA IS ALSO A MEANS OF DIFFERENTIATION, FOR TO CHOOSE ONE TEAM IS TO REJECT THE REST. IT IS AN ACT OF PREFERENCE WHICH ESTABLISHES DIFFERENCE AND DISTANCE BETWEEN THE ONE AND THE OTHERS. THIS IS EVIDENT IN SPORTS FANS' VOCABULARY IN WHICH WORDS SUCH AS "THE BEST" AND "THE GREATEST", AND THEIR OPPOSITES, ARE USED WITH SUCH FREQUENCY THAT THEY LOSE MEANING.

THE USE OF THE SPORTS METAPHOR TO DESCRIBE THE FUNCTION OF VALIDATION AND DIFFERENTIATION IN SELF-DEFINITION TAPS INTO ONE OF THE MAIN STREAMS OF OUR NATIONAL, AND EVEN OUR GLOBAL, CULTURE. AT FIRST, THIS MAY APPEAR AN EXAGGERATION, BUT CONSIDER THE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL RIOTS AND THE MULTIPLE OCCASIONS OF DRUG USE AND BOYCOTTS AND IT COMES INTO FOCUS. SO MUCH FOR SPORTS; THERE ARE OTHER MORE FATEFUL WAYS IN WHICH OUR SELF-DEFINITION PROCESS PLAYS OUT IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

EDUCATION IS CERTAINLY ONE, FOR IT IS A PROCESS CONTROLLED BY PERSONAL CHOICE AND ACTION IN WHICH VALIDATION AND DIFFERENTIATION ARE ACHIEVED BY THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE. ANOTHER WIDESPREAD EXAMPLE IS CLEARLY AND CONTINUALLY ON DISPLAY IN THE CORPORATE WORLD WHERE VALIDATION AND DISTINCTION ARE SERVED BY REWARDS OF SALARY, PERKS, TITLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS. IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT THE ULTIMATE CORPORATE GOAL IS A LIFE DESCRIBED AS BEING "LONELY AT THE TOP."

BUT IT IS IN OUR HUMAN EXPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS FAITH WHERE VALIDATION AND DISTINCTION WORK TOGETHER MOST SMOOTHLY. FOR WHAT BETTER OR MORE POWERFUL MEANS OF VALIDATION CAN THERE BE THAN TO ALIGN AND ASSIGN OURSELVES TO THE DEITY? VALIDATION BY RELIGION HAS APPEALED TO MANKIND FROM ITS EARLIEST ORIGINS, AND OFTEN HAS BEEN CARRIED TO THE EXTREME LEVELS PRESENTLY USED BY MILITANT MUSLIMS. AND, AS WITH VALIDATION, SO WITH DIFFERENTIATION HAVE WE PUT VIOLENCE, CRUELTY AND INTOLERANCE TO USE WHETHER WE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DIFFERENT FAITHS OR, EVEN MORE TRAGICALLY, BETWEEN DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SAME FAITH, AS IN

THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH BETWEEN PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS. THE HORRENDOUS TORTURES EMPLOYED BY THE TUDORS AND STUARTS IN THEIR ENGLISH RELIGIOUS WARS, AS WELL AS THE METHODS OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION TO ABOLISH HERESY, ARE JOINED IN A DIRECT LINE OF DESCENT TO THE RECENT BOMBINGS AND ASSASSINATIONS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN NORTHERN IRELAND. LINES OF DISTINCTION ARE SOMETIMES DRAWN BY A SHARP AND BLOODY BLADE.

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AND THEN, OF COURSE, THERE'S POLITICS. OUR PRESENT TWO-PARTY POLITICAL DIVISION CAN BE TRACED BACK TO OUR ORIGINS WHEN TWO VERY DIFFERENT VIEWS OF DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNMENT EMERGED AND FOUGHT FOR DOMINANCE. ONE WAS JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY WHICH FAVORED FULL CONTROL AND PARTICIPATION BY THE PEOPLE. ITS OPPOSITION WAS CHAMPIONED BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON WHO SAW JEFFERSON'S MODEL AS UNWIELDY, AND PERHAPS CHAOTIC, AND ARGUED FOR RESTRICTIONS THAT WOULD CONCENTRATE POWER IN FEWER HANDS.

JEFFERSON PREVAILED WITH MOMENTOUS CONSEQUENCES AS WE WORKED AND FOUGHT OUR WAY THROUGH THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES. POLITICAL LABELS CHANGED OVER THIS TIME TO REFLECT SHIFTS IN DEMOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES, BUT WE ARE NOW IN A PERIOD OF MORE THAN A CENTURY IN WHICH OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY HAS BEEN CHANNLED THROUGH OUR TWO-PARTY, REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM.

THE DIFFERENCE OF CONCEPT EXPRESSED BY HAMILTON AND JEFFERSON, HOWEVER, HAS PERSISTED IN REPUBLICANS BEING SEEN AS THE PARTY OF "THE FEW" AND DEMOCRATS AS THAT OF "THE MANY". THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE WHICH CAN SURFACE IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS AND ISSUES. IT IS NOT TO BE IGNORED. THROUGHOUT THE TURBULENCE OF OUR LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY EXPANSION OF COMMERCE, WEALTH, FRONTIER, POPULATION AND MILITARY POWER THE LINE BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS WAS BROADLY DRAWN IN THE POLICIES THEY FORGED TO ACCOMPANY AND CONTROL THE NATION'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT.

REPUBLICANS GENERALLY FAVORED LOW TAXES AND WAGES, NO LABOR UNIONS, PROPERTY RIGHTS AND A LAISSEZ-FAIRE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT THAT FAVORED THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH. IN THE PLANTS THAT CONSTITUTED OUR BURGEONING INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY, WHERE OWNERS/MANAGERS WERE USUALLY REPUBLICANS, THE WORKERS WERE MOSTLY DEMOCRATS. REPUBLICAN ISSUES AND POLICY GRAVITATED TOWARDS THE EXPANDING AND SHIFTING ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TIME, WHILE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY FOUND ITS PURPOSE AND MEMBERSHIP BETTER DEFINED BY SOCIAL ASPECTS OF LABOR AND LIFE IN AMERICA.

OVER TIME, AS OUR POLITICAL SELF-PORTRAIT WAS FILLED IN, REPUBLICANS CAME TO BE SEEN AS THE PARTY OF PRIVILEGE AND DEMOCRATS AS THAT OF COMPASSION. IN

POLITICS ONE TITLE VERY RARELY FITS ALL, AND THIS WAS CERTAINLY TRUE OF EMERGING AMERICA. ONE CRUCIAL FACTOR IN OUR DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN OUR FORMATION AS A CLASSLESS SOCIETY WHOSE OPENNESS PERMITTED THE ACCEPTANCE AND EMBRACE OF THE DIFFERENT, AND OFTEN DIVERGENT, REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT POLICIES.

THIS IS A GREAT QUANDARY OF OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY IN WHICH, ALTHOUGH WE ATTEMPT TO DISGUISE IT, RACE AND CLASS HAVE PLAYED THEIR PARTS. THE CLASSLESS SYSTEM PRONOUNCED BY OUR FOUNDERS WAS NOT EXACTLY SO. THE COUNTRY WAS SMALL, CONCENTRATED, UNIFIED BY ITS STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND FLUSHED WITH THE SOCIAL SUCCESS OF THE THREE DYNAMIC REVOLUTIONS OF THE TIME — THE FRENCH, THE RUSSIAN AND OUR OWN.

BUT A CLASSLESS SOCIETY IS NOT EASILY ACHIEVED, AND TIME, TECHNOLOGY AND GROWTH WORK AGAINST IT. MONEY AND POWER NOT ONLY CREATE DIFFERENCES, THEY MAGNIFY THEM; AND OFTEN IN GOVERNMENT WITH SUCH SPEED AND SECRECY THAT THE MOMENT FOR OUR EVALUATION COMES AND PASSES WITHOUT OUR RECOGNIZING IT. WITHOUT MEANING TO, PERHAPS, WE HAVE MANAGED TO REINTRODUCE CLASS TO OUR CLASSLESS SOCIETY.

SMALL WONDER, THEN, THAT, GIVEN THE PRONOUNCED DIFFERENCES IN THEIR POLITICAL VALUES AND GOALS, BOTH PARTIES OFFERED THEIR MEMBERS WAYS TO DEFINE THEMSELVES WHICH SEEMED ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH THE WAY THE COUNTRY WAS DEFINING ITS NATIONAL SELF. AND ONLY AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, WHEN THE SLAVERY ISSUE WAS FINALLY DETERMINED, COULD THE NATION UNDERTAKE ITS OWN DEFINITION WITH ANY SENSE OF COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE.

EVEN IN ITS EARLIEST DAYS, AND INCREASINGLY THEREAFTER, THE G.O.P. OFFERED ITS MEMBERS VALIDATION BY PERMITTING THEM TO CLAIM AND ASSOCIATE WITH ITS SHARED STATUS OF WEALTH, STRENGTH, INDEPENDENCE, POSITION — IN SHORT, ADVANTAGE. ON THE OTHER HAND, DEMOCRATS COULD CONFIRM THEMSELVES BY THEIR GREATER CONCERN FOR THE ELEMENTAL NEEDS OF THE GREATER NUMBER OF OUR SOCIETY.

ONE OF THE ENDURING MIRACLES OF OUR SYSTEM HAS BEEN THAT, IN SPITE OF THEIR BASIC DIFFERENCES OF CONCEPT AND CONSCIENCE, BOTH PARTIES OFFER MEANINGFUL WAYS FOR THEIR MEMBERS TO EXPERIENCE VALIDATION. AND WHEN WE FIND VALIDATION, CAN DIFFERENTIATION BE FAR BEHIND? ANYONE PROFESSING SUPPORT OF ONE PARTY MUST OPPOSE THE OTHER, FOR, WHILE THERE CAN BE AGREEMENT FORGED ON ISSUES, OUR SYSTEM DOES NOT ENCOURAGE THIRD OR MULTIPLE PARTY CANDIDACIES. THE MAIN STREAMS OF OUR POLITICAL POWER, IDENTITY AND MOTIVATION FLOW THROUGH REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT CHANNELS. THE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SYSTEM HAS BEEN ITS CONTINUITY FOR WHICH, HOWEVER, WE HAVE PAID A PRICE IN FLEXIBILITY.

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PEOPLE, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THEIR POLITICAL BELIEFS OR AFFILIATIONS, CAN REPLY TO THE SAME QUESTION WITH A

VARIETY OF RESPONSES THAT DIFFER IN PHRASEOLOGY, EMOTION, BODY LANGUAGE AND INTENT, BUT WHICH ARE REMARKABLY SIMILAR IN THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY REFLECT THE INVESTMENT OF OUR SELF-IMAGE IN OUR POLITICAL PREFERENCE, AND ALSO THE VALUES, REAL OR IMAGINED, WHICH WE THEN DRAW FROM IT TO ACHIEVE SELF VALIDATION. THOSE WHO SEEK VERIFICATION THROUGH INDEPENDENCE, WEALTH, POWER AND THEIR SPECIAL STATUS HAVE BEEN THE MAINSTAY OF THE G.O.P. WHILE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OFFERS ITS MEMBERS THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING SEEN TO CONCERN THEMSELVES MORE WITH SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS THAT REACH OUT TO A LARGER, LESS AFFLUENT AND HISTORICALLY LESS ARTICULATE ELECTORATE.

IN POLITICS THIS PROCESS OF EXCHANGE IS ONLY INTENSIFIED BY THE OTHER PART OF SELF-DEFINITION — OUR DISTINGUISHING OURSELVES TO THE POINT OF SEPARATION FROM OTHERS. WE HAVE PUT SO MUCH OF OUR PERSONAL WORTH AT RISK THAT EVERY VOTE, EVERY ELECTION DELIVERS A VERDICT AS TO OUR RELEVANCE THAT WE ARE ILL-PREPARED TO ACCEPT. AND THEREIN LIES THE ROOT OF THE PERVASIVE POLARIZATION THAT GRIPS OUR GOVERNMENT.

CREATING AN IDENTITY IS A CONSTANT PROCESS. AT TIMES IT IS THE RESULT OF A CONSCIOUS EFFORT; AT OTHER TIMES, IT IS A PRODUCT OF ITSELF. AND WE CAN NEITHER START IT NOR END IT. IT HEEDS WITHOUT FAVOR THE COMMANDS OF BOTH OUR GENETIC CODE AND OUR ENVIRONMENT, OFTEN WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT. IN ITS CONSCIOUS MODE, WE GIVE TO OR TAKE FROM THE VARIETY OF INSTITUTIONS THAT SERVE AS WAY STATIONS ON OUR LIFE PATH — SCHOOLS, CORPORATIONS, CHURCHES, CLUBS, COMMUNITIES, CHARITIES, ETC. AND, OF COURSE, ALSO POLITICS AND THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT.

THE CONFUSION OF OURSELVES WITH POLITICS CAN MAKE FOR WORSE, NOT BETTER, GOVERNMENT. WHETHER WE INVEST TOO MUCH IN ORDER TO CREATE IDENTITY, OR TAKE TOO MUCH TO VALIDATE IT, WE BURDEN THE POLITICAL PROCESS WITH AN UNNECESSARY AND INCOMPATIBLE FORCE. POLITICS IS THE AGENCY BY WHICH WE CREATE GOVERNMENT'S STRUCTURE AND POLICY. OUR FOUNDERS WERE SEEMINGLY AWARE OF THE DANGER POSED BY THE FUSION OF POLITICAL AND PERSONAL IDENTITY, AND BY VISION AND WISDOM DESIGNED A STRUCTURE TO RESIST THEIR COMBINATION.

WE HAVE BEEN TESTED MANY TIMES IN THE PAST BY THE WORST OF DEMAGOGUES FROM BOTH PARTIES. AND TODAY WE FACE THE PERSISTENT EFFORTS OF THE KENNEDY, CLINTON AND BUSH FAMILIES TO MAINTAIN A POLITICAL PRESENCE IN THE WHITE HOUSE. THIS TENDENCY OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TO ACCEPT FAMILY AS A DOMINANT FACTOR IN ITS CHOICE IS A REAL DEPARTURE FROM THE PAST DIRECTION OF OUR DEMOCRACY. MOREOVER, THE WAY IN WHICH IT EXPANDS THE VALUES OF THESE FAMILIES TO THE NATIONAL SCALE PROVIDES A CLEAR EXAMPLE OF MASS SELF-VALIDATION.

DEMOCRACY IS A DELICACY, AND NOT FOR EVERYONE. IT SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED AND RECEIVED WITH TRUST AND REVERENCE. IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE LAST CENTURY, THEODORE ROOSEVELT SENT A GROUP OF NAVAL SHIPS, THE

“GREAT WHITE FLEET”, AROUND THE WORLD TO SHOW THE GREAT EUROPEAN AND ASIAN POWERS THAT THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, WHILE YOUNG, WAS STRONG. FOR THIS DISPLAY WE WERE ACCUSED OF “GUN BOAT DIPLOMACY”. OUR MORE RECENT EXPRESSION OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MID-EAST MIGHT BE LABELED “GUN BARREL DEMOCRACY”, AND WHEN DEMOCRACY IS IMPOSED ITS VERY MEANING IS CHALLENGED. THE INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THIS ELEMENTAL ASPECT OF OUR DEMOCRACY IS A PRIMARY CAUSE OF OUR PREDICTABLE FAILURE TO REWRITE THE POLITICS AND CULTURE OF THIS REGION WITH ONE QUICK, LIGHT MILITARY VENTURE.

AS TO BEING “RECEIVED WITH TRUST AND REVERENCE”, OUR CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FORCES HAVE INTRODUCED EXTENSIVE CORRUPTION, WASTE, FRAUD, VIOLENCE AND HARDSHIP TO THE IRAQI PEOPLE IN THE COURSE OF OUR OCCUPATION AND THE HOPED FOR, BUT NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED, RECONSTRUCTION OF THEIR COUNTRY.

LOOKING BACK OVER THE POST WWII YEARS, WHICH INCLUDE FIVE MAJOR WARS (KOREA, VIETNAM, “COLD” AND IRAQ TWICE) AND SOME LESSER ONES AS WELL, OUR GREATEST FAILURE HAS BEEN NOT TRUSTING OUR DEMOCRACY, WITH ALL ITS BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS, FOR WHAT IT IS AND CAN BE, BUT INSTEAD YOKING IT TO THE “MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX” OF WHICH A FRANK AND PRESIDENT EISENHOWER GAVE US CLEAR WARNING. “TRUSTING OUR DEMOCRACY” MEANS TRUSTING ITS IDEALS, NOT ITS RICHES OR ITS POWER.

THE LATTER IS ENORMOUS, BUT NOT CONSTANT, AND THE EDGE THAT WE HAVE ENJOYED SINCE WWII IS NOW SHRINKING. FLUX IS THE ONLY CONSTANT IN WORLD AFFAIRS AND WE ARE SEEING IT AT WORK IN THE INCREASING AUTHORITY OF CHINA, INDIA AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, RUSSIA WITH ITS GREAT ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND SMALLER POPULATION. TO PROTECT OURSELVES, TO THE EXTENT THAT WE CAN, WE MUST CHANGE OUR CONCEPT OF POWER, AND ELECT AS PRESIDENT NOT SOMEONE WHO MERELY WANTS POWER, BUT SOMEONE WHO CAN WIELD IT IN A MORAL AND BALANCED WAY. ONLY WHEN WE COME TO UNDERSTAND THE LARGER DEMANDS THAT POWER MAKES UPON ALL THOSE WHO HOLD IT IN OUR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WILL WE BE ABLE TO ARRIVE AT A TRULY EFFECTIVE FOREIGN POLICY. THE MULTIPLE FAILURES OF THE LAST HALF-CENTURY CULMINATING IN THE WAR IN IRAQ INDICATE THAT THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION, WHATEVER IT IS, WILL HAVE SOME HEAVY LIFTING TO DO. MORE OF THE SAME WILL NOT PROVIDE THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK, NOR THE RESULTS THAT WE SEEK.

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## POLARIZATION REDUX

AND BACK TO POLARIZATION. THE DEEP AND DIVISIVE ATMOSPHERE THAT PERMEATES OUR POLITICAL LIFE TODAY IS MOST PROMINENTLY ON DISPLAY IN THE CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE, BUT IS BY NO MEANS CONFINED TO THEM. IT EXTENDS TO OUR STATE GOVERNMENTS AND ALSO ENJOYS A

PRESENCE THROUGHOUT THE MANY BUREAUCRATIC AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED TO ADMINISTER AND MAKE FUNCTIONAL OUR LEGISLATIVE INTENTIONS.

THIS DIVISION IS MORE ROOTED IN PERSON THAN IN POLITICAL PARTY. OUR PROCESS OF SELF-DEFINITION BY VALIDATION AND SEPARATION LEADS US TO ASSUME THE VALUES, CHARACTERISTICS, MANNERS, GOALS, ETC. OF ONE OF OUR POLITICAL PARTIES IN ORDER TO CREATE IDENTITY. WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, AS TRADITION/MONEY/POWER/STATUS ALL INCREASE, BOTH THE PRICE OF SUCCESS AND THE COST OF FAILURE ESCALATE. WHATEVER POLITICAL ISSUE IS INVOLVED ACTS LIKE A RAGING RIVER THAT CUTS AN INCREASINGLY DEEPER CHASM BETWEEN ITS TWO SIDES. YES, THERE IS AN OLD ROPE BRIDGE AT THE TOP FRAYING AND SWAYING IN THE WIND. BUT WHO WILL DARE TO CROSS IT? TO RISK ALL, INCLUDING SELF?

THIS IS THE TRUE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF OUR PARALYZING POLARIZATION — IN GOVERNMENT; IN OUR ELECTIONS; AND IN THE PERCEPTIONS OF OUR PUBLIC MEDIA WHOSE ABILITY TO PRESENT AND TO PERSUADE HAVE BEEN VASTLY INCREASED BY THEIR MARKETING REACH, NEW TECHNOLOGY AND FINANCIAL STRENGTH. FROM THEIR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF HAND BILLS AND NEWSPAPERS IN THE TAVERNS AND COFFEE HOUSES OF COLONIAL AMERICA OUR PRESENT MEDIA CAN DELIVER THEIR PRODUCT INSTANTLY AT ANY TIME TO ANY PLACE OF THEIR CHOICE. THE GREATEST PART OF THEIR PRODUCT IS ENTERTAINMENT IN A VARIETY OF FORMS TO A MASS AUDIENCE. IT CARRIES THE POWER TO CREATE, AND THEN TO ANOINT, CELEBRITIES AND THOSE WHO SEEK PUBLIC OFFICE. AND, IF THIS IS NOT ENOUGH, BY PROVIDING THE ESSENTIAL LINK BETWEEN MARKETER AND CONSUMER THEY STIMULATE THE PURCHASING PROCESS FOR INNUMERABLE PRODUCTS UPON WHICH COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AND OUR NATIONAL PROSPERITY DEPEND.

A HALF CENTURY AGO, IN PRE-TELEVISION TIMES, IN MOST OF THE COUNTRY THE MEDIA COVERED LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN SUCH DETAIL AS THEY DEEMED APPROPRIATE AND USUALLY, AS ELECTIONS NEARED, CONCLUDED WITH AN EDITORIAL THAT IDENTIFIED THE CANDIDATE OF CHOICE AND THEIR REASONS. TODAY ON A 24/7 SCHEDULE COMMENTATORS, WHO CAN BE EQUALLY AS POLARIZED AS THE POLITICIANS THEY COVER, HAVE BECOME THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT, NOT MERELY A BYSTANDER OR REPORTER, IN OUR POLITICAL MIX.

LIKE POLITICIANS, THEY DEFINE THEMSELVES BY MANY OF THE SAME REWARDS WHICH ARE FOUND IN MOST FORMS OF PUBLIC LIFE — PUBLICITY, RATINGS, FAME, MONEY AND POWER. THIS MIRROR IMAGE OF THE SELF-DEFINITION PROCESS SHARED BY MEDIA AND POLITICAL PERSONALITIES IS AN INCESTUOUS ONE, HOWEVER. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT INCEST IS THE LAST TABOO REMAINING IN OUR SOCIETY, BUT TO ANYONE WHO VIEWS WHAT NOW PASS FOR DEBATES IN OUR CAMPAIGNS THIS IS A TABOO THAT’S IN TROUBLE.

“GOTCHA POLITICS”, PERSONAL ATTACKS AND “ONE MISTAKE AND YOU’RE OUT” ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY. THESE ARE NOT THE TOOLS OF ISSUE-ORIENTED CANDIDATES OR

REPORTERS. THEY ARE THE WEAPONS OF THE IDEOLOGUE AND ARE DESIGNED TO IMPART BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA. IDEOLOGY IS THE ABSOLUTE ANTITHESIS OF THE POLITICAL VALUES FAVORED BY OUR FOUNDERS. IN POLITICS IT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EXPRESSION OF THE PERSONAL IDENTITY CREATED BY OUR SELF-VALIDATION AND DIFFERENTIATION. IT IS SUCH A STONEWALL, WAGONS-IN-A-CIRCLE WAY OF INTERACTION THAT NO OBJECTIVE ARGUMENT, NO SUGGESTION OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST, NO ACCEPTANCE OF COMPROMISE AS THE SERVANT OF BOTH PARTIES CAN PENETRATE IT. WE SEEM, AS IF MESMERIZED, UNABLE TO DO AWAY WITH IT. IT SHOULDN'T BE, BUT IT IS.

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THE NEXT POLITICAL GENERATION WILL HAVE TO FACE THE SERIOUS FINANCIAL, DIPLOMATIC, MILITARY AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WE ARE LEAVING BEHIND US. CONSIDERING THE OPPORTUNITY THAT HAS BEEN AVAILABLE TO OUR COUNTRY OVER THE PAST HALF-CENTURY, OURS IS A TRAGIC LEGACY. WHAT CAN WE DO BEFORE WE ARE GONE THAT MIGHT OFFER EVEN A HOPE OF MODEST IMPROVEMENT FOR AMERICA AND ITS GOVERNMENT?

THOSE WHO FOLLOW US WILL TAKE OFFICE AT AN EARLIER AGE THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS. THEY WILL COME EQUIPPED WITH EVERY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY FORM OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN THEIR USE. BUT THIS SHOULD NOT CONVINCING US THAT THEY ARE WHIZ KIDS WHO CAN MAGICALLY CHANGE WHO AND WHAT WE HAVE BECOME. THE TWO GENERATIONS SINCE WWII HAVE BENEFITED FROM UNPRECEDENTED TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND YET OUR GOVERNMENT IS MORE CORRUPT, EXPENSIVE, INEFFICIENT AND UNRESPONSIVE TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST THAN IT WAS IN 1945. BUT TECHNOLOGY CAN CHALLENGE AS WELL AS BENEFIT DEMOCRACY. AND, WHILE THE NEW GENERATION MAY WELL BE TEMPTED TO PLACE ITS FAITH IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SUPER GLOBALISM REQUIRED OF A SUPERPOWER, THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT THAT THE RESULTS WILL BE ANY DIFFERENT THAN OUR RECENT EXPERIENCE.

THE GREAT FAULT OF GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA TODAY IS THAT IT IS CONSIDERED A MEANS, NOT AN END. IT IS A MEANS TO BE ELECTED (AND REELECTED) TO OFFICE, TO FIND FAME AND POWER, TO OBTAIN CONTRACTS OR SUBSIDIES, TO BORROW MONEY AND TO FIGHT WARS WITH COMMUNISTS, TERRORISTS OR ANY OTHER OF THE TARGETS DU JOUR OFFERED BY OUR MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. IT IS A MEANS WHEREBY OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES CONNIVE IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR NATIONAL POLITICAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES TO FAVORED AREAS OR INTERESTS. WE HAVE BADLY ABUSED OUR DEMOCRACY AND IN THE PROCESS HAVE DONE OURSELVES A GREAT DISSERVICE.

WE MUST CHANGE OUR VIEW AND CONCEPT OF OUR GOVERNMENT. IT MUST BE VIEWED AS AN END, NOT A MEANS. THE END OF GOVERNMENT MUST ONCE AGAIN, AS IT WAS WHEN IT WAS FOUNDED, BE GOOD GOVERNMENT ITSELF. WE CAN DO WITHOUT THE TIREDSOME REPUBLICAN VS. DEMOCRAT

ARGUMENTS IN WHICH BOTH PARTIES CLAIM THE SUPPORT OF GOD AND THE CONSTITUTION. GOVERNMENT IS DIFFICULT WORK; BIG GOVERNMENT IS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT, AND OURS HAS GROWN SO LARGE THAT IT FAR SURPASSES IN SCOPE THE INTENTION OF OUR ORIGINS.

REPEAT: THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT MUST BE GOOD GOVERNMENT ITSELF — NOT THE WARS OF ANNIHILATION NOW FOUGHT FOR IDEOLOGY AND ADVANTAGE THAT PERVADE OUR GOVERNMENT. THIS IS A THOUGHT THAT, IF STATED, WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED BY MANY AMERICANS, BUT FEW CAN EVEN IMAGINE IT.

AND YET, IT IS AT THE HEART OF A SIMPLE, BUT FAR-REACHING CONCEPT. OUR FRAGILE DEMOCRACY MUST BE TREATED WITH TRUST AND REVERENCE BY THOSE WHO RECEIVE ITS BENEFITS. THE OTHER PART OF THE CONTRACT IS THAT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, WHICH DEPENDS ON THE OPINION AND FUNDING OF ITS CITIZENS, MUST RETURN THE SAME TRUST AND REVERENCE BY PROVIDING THEM WITH GOOD GOVERNMENT.

TODAY WE SHOW MANY OF THE SIGNS OF DECLINE OF THE ROMAN MODEL — CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC AS WELL AS MILITARY. EVERY PREVIOUS SUPER POWER HAS USED WAR TO MAINTAIN ITS STATUS, AND HAS FAILED. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO AVOID THIS TRAP, BUT ONE OF THE CANDIDATES SEEKING PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION HAS ASSURED US THERE WILL BE MORE WARS AHEAD. MILITARY MEN THINK THAT WAY. THEY ARE TRAINED ALL THEIR LIVES IN MILITARY STRATEGY, TACTICS AND WEAPONRY. IT IS WHAT THEY DO, WHAT THEY ARE. BUT WE LIVE IN A NUCLEAR AGE OF ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE AGAINST ENEMIES WITHOUT BORDERS WHOSE REASONS FOR FIGHTING ARE LOST IN THE CULTURAL AND TRIBAL ARGUMENTS OF PRIOR CENTURIES.

WARFARE IS JUST ONE ASPECT OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE THAT REQUIRES NEW THOUGHT. THERE ARE MANY MORE THAT REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION. GOVERNMENT IS NEVER A FINISHED PRODUCT. IT IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS AND THOSE WHO CREATE IT WILL NEVER COMPLETE IT. THIS IS TRUE OF ALL GOVERNMENT, BUT ESPECIALLY OUR DEMOCRACY.

OVER THE LAST TWO CENTURIES OUR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN OBSCURED AND BURDENED BY THE ACCRETION OF MULTIPLE LAYERS OF SELF-INTEREST WHICH WE MUST NOW VERY CAREFULLY AND FAIRLY PEEL BACK AND REMOVE. THIS WILL REQUIRE FIRMNESS AND PATIENCE. IT WILL NOT BE EASY AND WILL CAUSE BOTH PAIN AND FRUSTRATION. BUT AT THE END WE WILL SEE OUR GOVERNMENT IN ITS INTENDED FORM AND STATE. THAT IS THE PRIZE, AND, IF WE TREAT IT WITH PATIENT REVERENCE, WE WILL HAVE A FAR BETTER CHANCE OF SURVIVING THE NEXT TWO CENTURIES.

MOST NOTABLY OUR DEMOCRACY HAS BEEN GREATLY WOUNDED AND WEAKENED BY OUR INABILITY TO MAINTAIN OUR LEGISLATIVE BRANCH AS AN ENLIGHTENED AND FAIR PROPONENT OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST. WE ARE FACED WITH A SITUATION WHEREBY CONGRESS CREATES LEGISLATION PIECEMEAL, SEEMINGLY ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IF ENOUGH PIECES OF THE PIE ARE ACCEPTABLE, THEN THE PIE, ITSELF, WILL BE GOOD.

THIS METHOD HAS BECOME SUCH A COMMON PRACTICE THAT A BILL MARKED UP IN COMMITTEE AND RUNNING INTO HUNDREDS OF PAGES IN LENGTH CAN BE DELIVERED TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ONLY A FEW HOURS BEFORE IT IS TO BE VOTED ON.

FOR FAR TOO LONG FAR TOO MANY AMERICANS HAVE BEEN PERSUADED BY OUR LEADERS TO SEE OUR GOVERNMENT AS "THE PIE" FROM WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEIR PIECE. THEY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED IN THIS FALLACY BY OUR NATIONAL ABUNDANCE AND BY THE BOUNDLESS CAPACITY OF OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES TO SUBVERT OUR SYSTEM FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL BENEFIT.

GOVERNMENT IS NOT "THE PIE". AT ANY GIVEN TIME IT IS A MENU OF CHOICES, EACH WITH ITS OWN MORAL AND ECONOMIC PRICE SHOWN. RESTAURANT MENUS LIMIT OUR CHOICE FROM ALL AVAILABLE FOODS TO A SMALLER SAMPLE BETTER SUITED TO A SINGLE MEAL. GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO THE SAME, PROVIDING AND MAKING CHOICES THAT ARE PRACTICAL AND DISCIPLINED TO SERVE OUR TRULY NATIONAL PURPOSES.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, OUR NATIONAL VISION MUST CHANGE AND WE, AS A PEOPLE, MUST DON SOME CORRECTIVE LENSES. WE MUST ESTABLISH THAT THE ONLY GOAL OF GOVERNMENT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT ITSELF — PLANNING, BALANCING, MANAGING AND SELECTING FROM THE MANY FORCES THAT CONFRONT US THOSE THAT WE HOPE WILL OFFER LONG TERM BENEFIT. WITH OUR NEW, CORRECTED VISION WE WILL HAVE TO REDEFINE THE MEANING OF BEING A SOLE SUPERPOWER, AND WE SHOULD START WITH THE REALIZATION THAT SUPERPOWER STATUS ASSURES ONLY ONE THING — ITS OWN IMPERMANENCE.

OUR REDEFINITION MUST ENABLE US TO SEE THAT THE SUPERCONSUMPTION ASPECT OF BEING A SUPERPOWER IS A TRAP WE HAVE SET FOR OURSELVES WHICH SETS CONSUMPTION AGAINST OUR ENVIRONMENT AND FROM WHICH THE LAW OF LIMITS WILL NOT ALLOW US TO ESCAPE. SIMILARLY IN COMMERCE, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO ADJUST OUR VIEW OF OUR NATIONAL CURRENCY'S VALUE TO REFLECT THAT OF THE WORLD MARKET. THE FALL IN THE DOLLAR'S VALUE IS ONE OF SEVERAL "KEY INDICATORS" OF DECLINE AND CARRIES A MESSAGE OF DANGER WHICH IS ALL TOO EASY TO IGNORE.

AND OUR NEW LENSES MUST REMIND US THAT DEMOCRACY IS A DELICATE PLANT WHICH CAN ONLY BE TRANSPLANTED TO A FERTILE SOIL WHERE IT CAN RECEIVE THE CONSTANT CARE AND ENCOURAGEMENT IT REQUIRES.

MAN'S ASCENDANCY FROM THE MIX OF SPECIES IS DUE TO HIS CRANIAL DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF THREE THINGS — FIRE, WORDS AND NUMBERS. TODAY THESE ADVANTAGES FACE THE THREAT OF BEING LOST TO NATURAL AND/OR HUMAN FORCES THAT COULD REARRANGE OUR PLANET'S AGRICULTURAL, CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL PATTERNS IN WAYS THAT MIGHT FAVOR ANOTHER GROUP IN THE WAY THAT MAMMALS SURVIVED AND PROSPERED AS THE AGE OF GREAT REPTILES CAME TO ITS CLOSE.

WE HAVE DAWDLED TOO LONG LISTENING TO THE MUSIC THAT CARRIES ACROSS THE WATER TO US FROM THE SHORE. WE

CAN NO LONGER ACCEPT THE CAUSES AND EXCUSES OF PAST GOVERNMENTS AS A VIABLE WAY OF ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE. AND WE ARE CHALLENGED TO ALTER THE DIMENSION OF TIME IN WHICH WE FRAME OUR FUTURE.

THE PROBLEMS WE FACE AT HOME AND ABROAD ARE IMMENSE. TO DEAL WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY WILL REQUIRE A NEW, OPEN AND HONEST DIALOGUE BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENT AND ITS PEOPLE. TIME IS SHORT AND DOES NOT FAVOR US AS IT DID TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, BUT WE MUST TRY. AND THE TIME IS NOW!

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WHO LOST AMERICA? THIS IS A QUESTION OF REAL CONCERN TO ALL AMERICANS WHICH MUST BE ASKED. ITS ANSWER IS NEITHER QUICK NOR EASY; IN FACT, JUST THE OPPOSITE, AS MOST OF OUR POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL CONSTITUENCIES ARE AT FAULT.

STARTING AT THE TOP, THE MOST OBVIOUS SOURCE OF RESPONSIBILITY ARE THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT. THEIR MOST TELLING BETRAYAL OF OUR SYSTEM HAS BEEN THEIR ABUSE OF THE PUBLIC TRUST BY ACCEPTING PUBLIC OPINION AND THEN, INSTEAD OF USING IT TO SHAPE A FAIR AND EFFICIENT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, PUTTING IT TO USE IN INTER-PARTY IDEOLOGICAL BATTLES AND TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE WITH REWARDS OF MONEY AND POWER FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTORS.

IN AMERICA TODAY THE TWO PARTIES CONSIDER THEMSELVES THE ULTIMATE GOAL FOR VOTERS' OPINIONS AND HAVE BECOME AN EFFECTIVE BARRIER TO OUR PARTICIPATING IN A HIGHER LEVEL OF NATIONAL PURPOSE WHICH, OF COURSE, WOULD DIMINISH THEIR IMPORTANCE AND POWER.

THE PUBLIC MUST ALSO SHARE IN THE BLAME FOR THIS ABUSE OF ITS CONSTITUTIONAL POWER, AS IT HAS OPTED FOR THE EASY WAY OF VOTING BY PARTY LABEL, THEREBY ALLOWING THE REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT ELECTORAL MECHANISM TO SO DOMINATE THE VOTING PROCESS THAT INDEPENDENT PARTIES OR OTHER VOICES ARE SIMPLY NOT HEARD.

TO BE AS INDIFFERENT AND UNINFORMED AS OUR ELECTORATE CAN APPEAR IS A GREAT TRAGEDY FOR A DEMOCRACY, BUT ESPECIALLY ONE WHICH LACKS THE RECALL CAPABILITY OF A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, FOR ANY ERROR OF PERCEPTION OR JUDGMENT IS FIXED IN PLACE FOR AT LEAST FOUR, BUT MORE FREQUENTLY EIGHT, YEARS.

LABEL LOYALTY IS THE PREFERRED METHOD AT EVERY VOTING LEVEL FROM LOCAL TO PRESIDENTIAL. IT HAS ACHIEVED THIS DOMINANCE BY THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES' COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS OF POLITICS BY EMOTION, IDENTIFICATION AND ENTERTAINMENT.

THE LATTER INTRODUCES THE MEDIA AND ITS OVERSIZED ROLE IN OUR ELECTORAL PROCEDURE. THIS ROLE HAS BEEN FORMED AND EXPANDED IN COOPERATION WITH THE R/D ORGANIZATIONS, AND HAS BEEN SPECTACULARLY SUCCESSFUL IN PROVIDING MASS EXPOSURE TO CANDIDATES



AND VAST REVENUES TO THE MEDIA.

IN KEEPING WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR SOCIETY THE MESSAGES PROVIDED BY THESE ENTITIES TO THE PUBLIC HAVE BEEN BOTH DUMBED DOWN IN CONTENT AND SANDWICHED BETWEEN ENDLESSLY REPETITIVE COMMERCIALS. WITH WASHINGTON’S TWO, FOUR AND SIX YEAR ELECTION CYCLES, WITH POPULATION AND PROFITS GROWING AND WITH PLENTY OF MONEY AVAILABLE TO BACK CANDIDATES WHO, WHEN ELECTED, WILL SEE THAT IT IS RETURNED MANY TIMES OVER THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO EXPECT THAT THIS CYCLE CAN BE INTERRUPTED, AND CERTAINLY NOT BY MEANS OF THE PAST.

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IDENTITY POLITICS, WHEREBY THE VOTER BASES HIS VOTE ON AN EMOTIONAL BOND WITH HIS PARTY, PLAY A LARGER PART IN OUR SYSTEM THAN MOST OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED ARE WILLING TO ADMIT. ALL TOO MANY PEOPLE CITE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS AS THE BASIS FOR THEIR CHOICE. THE MEDIA RECOGNIZE THIS, BUT TRY TO KEEP IT QUIET AS IT ACTS AGAINST THEIR ARGUMENT THAT THEY CAN INFLUENCE OPINION. FOR THE R/D PARTIES, THEY ARE HAPPY TO HAVE VOTES FOR ANY REASON, BUT THERE IS A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE IN THOSE WHO ARE “CARD CARRYING” MEMBERS AND WHOSE SUPPORT IS PRETTY MUCH ASSURED REGARDLESS OF THE ISSUES OR CANDIDATES.

WE MUST FACE THE FACT THAT WE ARE AT A CRISIS THAT WILL NOT CORRECT ITSELF. WE FACE FOUR ISSUES — DEBT, IMMIGRATION, HEALTH CARE/SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE WARS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN — THAT EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR IN CONCERT HAVE THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE DISASTROUS FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR OUR COUNTRY.

THERE IS AN UNSPOKEN HERO IN THIS MIX AND HE IS THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER. BUT THERE ARE LIMITS TO HIS RESOURCES, AND PROBABLY TO HIS PATIENCE. THE IDEA THAT HE/SHE WILL CONTINUE TO PAY AN INCREASING TAX BURDEN TO UNDERWRITE A DETERIORATING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WAY OF LIFE IS NOT REALISTIC.

WE ARE AT A CRITICAL TIME IN OUR HISTORY AND WE, THE PEOPLE, ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN EFFECT THE CHANGES THAT ARE REQUIRED TO REPAIR OUR GOVERNMENT. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN OUR INSTITUTIONS WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO CALL FOR A CHANGE OF COURSE, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN DEALT SERIOUS DAMAGE IN RECENT YEARS AND ARE THEMSELVES IN NEED OF OUR CARE AND ATTENTION.

FROM THIS MESS EMERGE TWO TRUTHS THAT WE MUST EMBRACE. THE FIRST IS THAT AMERICA, THE AMERICA THAT WE WERE, IS WORTH SAVING. AND THE OTHER IS THAT WE MUST ACCOMPLISH OUR RESCUE OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE R/D STRUCTURE THROUGH A GENUINE NATIONAL EFFORT.

WHO LOST AMERICA? THE ANSWER IS THAT WE DID AND, AS A RESULT, THE COURSE OF OUR POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ACTION HAVE REACHED A POINT OF DECISION. ARE WE TO CONTINUE IN OUR PRESENTLY FRAGMENTED STATE IN WHICH GOVERNMENT IS ONLY A MAGNIFIER AND COLLECTION OF PERSONAL SELF-INTERESTS? OR WILL WE ATTEMPT TO REGROUP

AROUND OUR ORIGINAL CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY?

IN THE END WE MUST REFINE AND REDEFINE NATIONAL GOALS AND CHARACTER. WE MUST BE ABLE TO VIEW OUR NATIONAL STRENGTH IN OTHER TERMS THAN MONEY, MILITARY OR SIZE AND TRY TO DO AWAY WITH THE SATISFACTION WE DERIVE FROM REFERRING TO OURSELF AS THE RICHEST, STRONGEST, BIGGEST,, ETC. OUR REAL STRENGTH SHOULD COME FROM THE GOVERNMENT WE CREATE AND ITS ABILITY TO PRESENT OUR VALUES TO OTHERS, AS WELL AS OURSELVES.

THIS IS WHY OUR ARMED INTERVENTION IN THE NEAR EAST IS SUCH A NETTLE FOR US TO GRASP. THROUGH TORTURE, VIOLENCE, CORRUPTION, MARTIAL LAW AND DESTRUCTION WE PUT ALL THE WRONG VALUES AND METHODS ON DISPLAY. AS THESE ARE THE ANTITHESIS OF OUR STATED VALUES, OUR NATION DESTROYS ITS CREDIBILITY BY HAVING TO DEFEND THEM.

CHARACTER AND CREDIBILITY ARE KEY, BUT FRAGILE, ASPECTS OF OUR DEMOCRACY, AND WE ABUSE THEM AS MUCH AT HOME AS WE DO ABROAD. IN CONGRESS, AT THE LEGISLATIVE CORE OF OUR GOVERNMENT, THE WAY OF CHOICE IS OFTEN THAT OF CORRUPTION, UNENFORCED LAWS, CORPORATE INFLUENCE, LOBBYISTS FOR SPECIAL INTERESTS, LACK OF MEANINGFUL ETHICAL STANDARDS AND ENFORCEMENT, ABUSE OF SENIORITY AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF “PROFESSIONAL” ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES.

MONEY FLOWS IN ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE AMOUNTS THROUGHOUT OUR POLITICAL PROCESS AND IS CONSTANTLY DIRECTED AND REDIRECTED BY THE SAME PEOPLE TO THE SAME PLACES. CONGRESS, BY ITS PROFLIGATE WAYS, GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR WEALTH IS UNLIMITED. IT IS NOT, AND AT THIS LATE STAGE ONLY A CONCERTED NATIONAL EFFORT CAN HAVE A CHANCE OF BRINGING A MEASURE OF FISCAL SANITY TO GOVERNMENT.

ARE WE TOO INDIFFERENT, TOO UNINFORMED, TOO RICH, TOO “RIGHT” TO EVEN TRY?

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## EPILOGUE

WHEN WE COMMENCED OUR STUDY OF THE HEALTH CARE ISSUE, IT SEEMED THAT IT WAS AN INTRACTABLE MESS WITH NO HOPE OF SOLUTION, BUT AS TIME PASSED AND WE BECAME MORE FAMILIAR WITH ITS PARTS, THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING A SOLUTION GREW MORE LIKELY. AND WHEN WE HAD COMPLETED OUR TWO ISSUES, WE WERE CONFIDENT THAT A SUCCESSFUL RESULT COULD BE ACHIEVED. WE ARE BEGINNING TO ENGENDER SOME OF THE SAME SENSE OF HOPE REGARDING THE REMAKING OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS CITIZENS.

THE TRUTH IS THAT WE SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE ANOTHER GENERATION OR TWO TO DEVOTE TO THE SAME ARGUMENTS — ABORTION/NO ABORTION; PRIVATE SECTOR/GOVERNMENT; BLACK/WHITE; HIGH/LOW TAXES; LIBERAL/CONSERVATIVE; “COLD”/HOT WARS, ETC. WE ARE VERY FORTUNATE, HOWEVER, THAT OUR TIME AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE COME TOGETHER TO

PRESENT US WITH A REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MASSIVE CHANGE IN DIRECTION AND METHODS THAT OUR CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

THE TECHNOLOGY IS THAT OF THE INTERNET. IT IS INEXPENSIVE, EASY TO USE AND HIGHLY EFFICIENT IN REACHING LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE. AND IT IS THE MEDIUM OF CHOICE FOR ALL OF THE NEW GENERATION AND MANY OF THE OLD.

WHAT SEEMS CALLED FOR NOW IS FOR A SMALL GROUP OF CONCERNED PRIVATE CITIZENS WITH HIGH PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CREDIBILITY AND VISIBILITY TO FORM A NATIONAL GROUP DEDICATED TO THE ANALYSIS AND IMPROVEMENT OF OUR GOVERNMENT/POLICIES? THIS GROUP (LET'S CALL IT TRUTH TO POWER, OR T/P, FOR NOW) WOULD ISSUE COMMENTS ON LINE ON A VARIETY OF ISSUES. MEMBERSHIP WOULD BE FREE, AS INITIALLY MINIMAL EXPENSES WOULD BE COVERED BY PRIVATE DONATIONS. A KEY FUNCTION WOULD BE MAINTAINING A RECORD OF ALL VOTES CAST BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND MAKING THEM AVAILABLE ON LINE.

WITH SUCH AN ORGANIZATION IN PLACE, IT COULD ANNOUNCE THE MESSAGE OF BETTER GOVERNMENT, CALL FOR REFORM AND PUBLICIZE CURRENT ISSUES, AS WELL AS LISTING AND GRADING CONGRESSIONAL VOTES. THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF THIS GROUP WOULD BE EDUCATION, BUT IT WOULD BE EDUCATION WITH A SPECIFIC AND URGENT MESSAGE. IT COULD RESEMBLE, ONLY ON A MUCH BROADER SCALE, THE CONCORD COALITION WHICH HAS ATTEMPTED TO INFORM BOTH GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC OF THE SEVERITY OF OUR COUNTRY'S FISCAL POSITION AND ITS EVER INCREASING AMOUNT OF DEBT. CONCORD AND T/P WOULD SEEM TO BE KINDRED SPIRITS WITH THE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT EACH ONE'S PRESENCE WOULD ENHANCE AND BENEFIT THE EFFORTS OF OTHER. SUCH SYMBIOSIS PRODUCES A MAGNIFIER EFFECT WHEREBY THE SUM OF THE PARTS FAR EXCEEDS THE WHOLE.

IT IS LIKELY THAT MANY OF THE NEW POLITICAL GENERATION WOULD BE DRAWN TO T/P BECAUSE OF ITS BROAD BASE AND ITS GOALS. THEIR ANTICIPATED ENTHUSIASM, HOWEVER, IS SOMEWHAT OF A MIXED BLESSING, AS THEY WILL LACK THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND MATURE JUDGMENT THAT WILL BE NECESSARY. AND THERE IS ALSO THE DANGER OF THEIR BEING SEEN AS PRIMARILY A YOUTH MOVEMENT WITH ITS OBVIOUS LIMITATIONS.

THIS IS NO EASY TASK, BUT AT THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY IT SEEMS WITH GROWING URGENCY TO BE A NECESSARY ONE. THE COMPOSITION OF THE FOUNDING GROUP IS CRITICAL, AS IS THE METHOD BY WHICH IT WILL EXPAND THE MESSAGE AND MANAGEMENT FROM A STANDING START TO THE ACTIVITY OF A FUNCTIONING NATIONAL ORGANIZATION. THE VARIETY OF ISSUES THAT T/P MUST CONFRONT IS GREAT, AND WILL PRODUCE A MIX OF RESULTS FROM OUTRIGHT SUCCESS TO DISAPPOINTING DEFEATS WITH MANY STOPS ALONG THE WAY. PERHAPS ITS MOST IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT, ONE WHICH CONCORD ALSO STRIVES FOR, WOULD BE TO EXORCISE THE MYTH OF ETERNAL GROWTH WITH ENDLESS BENEFITS IN OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CULTURE. WE ARE PAYING AN EVER-HIGHER PRICE BECAUSE WE IGNORE THE LAW OF LIMITS. WE

DESERVE A QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP THAT CAN ARTICULATE THIS DANGER AND CAN FREE US FROM THE POLITICAL DEMAGOGUERY AND CLICHÉS OF THE PAST. THE TIME IS NOW.

THERE IS WIDE DISAPPOINTMENT ACROSS AMERICA OVER THE RESULTS OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS' LEADERSHIP AND POLICIES. BUT THERE IS NO NATIONAL, NON-POLITICAL VOICE THAT CAN EXPRESS, UNIFY AND FOCUS THIS DISCONTENT SO THAT IT BECOMES A STRONG AND ACTIVE INGREDIENT OF PUBLIC OPINION. ONCE HAVING ACHIEVED THAT STATUS, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE IN OUR ERA OF INSTANT COMMUNICATION THAT T/P MIGHT FIND ITSELF UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO UNDERTAKE AN ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE WITH ITS OWN PLATFORM AND CANDIDATES. ANY FUTURE DECISION OF THIS TYPE SHOULD BE BASED SOLELY ON WHETHER SUCH A ROLE WOULD OFFER T/P THE BEST MEANS OF SERVING ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE.

WE HAVE ALWAYS WELCOMED, BUT NEVER ACTIVELY SOLICITED, COMMENT ON THE ISSUES THAT WE DESCRIBE, BUT THE TIME AVAILABLE IN WHICH TO REPAIR AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP AND ITS SENSE OF GOVERNMENT IS QUICKLY AND QUIETLY SLIPPING AWAY. SHOULD ANY OF OUR READERS SHARE A CONCERN AND WISH TO MOVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF A PERSONAL CONVERSATION, WE URGE YOU TO CALL OR WRITE. THE TIME IS NOW, AND IT GROWS SHORT.



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## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

“AS SUPERPOWER, OUR FOREIGN POLICY IS BOUND TO BE RESENTED. IT WILL ALSO BE MISTRUSTED IN VARYING DEGREES BY OTHER NATIONS. THE INHERENT DANGER OF OUR POSITION IS THAT WE WILL COME TO A TIME WHEN OUR POLICIES AND OUR CURRENCY ARE EQUALLY MISTRUSTED. SUCH A MOMENT COULD DEVELOP SPONTANEOUSLY, PERHAPS FROM SOME SEEMINGLY MINOR ORIGIN, AND WITHOUT WARNING. IT COULD CAUSE DISRUPTION IN OTHER CURRENCIES AND COUNTRIES, AND A SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION IN OUR ECONOMY AND WAY OF LIFE.”

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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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