

# MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

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## DOUBLE COPY ISSUE

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**THIS ISSUE** WILL DEAL WITH SIMILARITIES PRESENTED BY MANY OF THE MAJOR CRISES THAT HAVE CONFRONTED OUR PRESENT AND PAST ADMINISTRATIONS AND WILL EXPLAIN WHY OUR GOVERNMENT, REGARDLESS OF PARTY IN POWER, HAS BEEN SHAMEFULLY INEFFECTIVE IN MEETING THEIR CHALLENGE.

THE CONTENT OF THIS ISSUE HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PLANNED FOR OUR SIXTH ANNIVERSARY IN APRIL, BUT THE FINANCIAL IMPLOSION OF THE CREDIT, SECURITIES AND HOUSING MARKETS LAST FALL PROVED THAT TIME HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY ASSERTIVE FACTOR WHICH WE NO LONGER CAN IGNORE.

THIS ACCELERATION OF OUR FINANCIAL MARKETS' FAILURE HAS ITS COUNTERPARTS IN OTHER MAJOR CHALLENGES TO OUR WAYS OF GOVERNMENT AND LIFE THAT WE HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT IN THE PAST. WHILE WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY AVOIDED SENSATIONALISM OR ALARMIST TECHNIQUES, WHAT WE OFFER IN THIS ISSUE CANNOT BE VIEWED AS "COMFORT READING" FOR OUR PEOPLE OR OUR GOVERNMENT. THE FACTS HAVE BEEN, AND CONTINUE TO BE, AVAILABLE TO ALL. THEY ARE WHAT THEY ARE, AND NOT WHAT WE MIGHT WISH THEM TO BE.

**OUR NEXT ISSUE** WILL RETURN TO EXPLORING ASPECTS, OFTEN ANOMALOUS, OF THE NATIONAL AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT BEAR HEAVILY UPON OUR SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT.

## THE TRUE CRISIS IN AMERICA

"GOOD GOVERNMENT SHOULD PRODUCE AN ATMOSPHERE OF NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY CREATED FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. DIVISIONS WILL ALWAYS EXIST AS TO GOVERNMENT'S DIRECTION, AND DECISIONS MUST BE RESOLVED BY THE OBJECTIVE APPLICATION OF BOTH PERSONAL AND POLITICAL INTEGRITY. THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE FIRM AND OPEN AND SHOULD NOT BE BURDENED BY BECOMING A PROVING GROUND FOR EITHER INDIVIDUAL OR PARTY IDEOLOGY." POLITICS IS ONE THING. GOOD GOVERNMENT IS QUITE ANOTHER!

-- MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE, ISSUE 21, 10/08

MANY PEOPLE READING THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH WOULD DISMISS IT IN ITS ENTIRETY AS BEING IMPOSSIBLY OPTIMISTIC. ACTUALLY, WE HAVE ACHIEVED ALL OF THESE CRITERIA AT ONE

TIME OR ANOTHER IN OUR HISTORY, BUT RARELY ALL AT ONCE. NEVERTHELESS, THIS SHORT, SIMPLE PURPOSE STATEMENT, WERE THE NATION'S PEOPLE AND POLITICIANS TO COMMIT

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THEMSELVES TO IT, COULD CREATE A NEW AND BETTER FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

THE CHOICE IS REALLY A RELATIVELY SIMPLE ONE BECAUSE, IF WE PERSIST IN OUR PRESENT PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES, ALTHOUGH THE AMERICAN ENTITY MAY SURVIVE IN SOME FORM, OUR GREAT DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT WILL FAIL AND/OR BE REPLACED.

TODAY, OUR COUNTRY FACES MULTIPLE, SERIOUS ISSUES EACH OF WHICH IS REFERRED TO FROM TIME TO TIME AS A CRISIS. THESE INCLUDE THE ENVIRONMENT, IMMIGRATION, SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTH CARE, ENERGY, OUR ECONOMY/NATIONAL DEBT AND, OF COURSE, POPULATION. THERE ARE A HOST OF OTHERS SUCH AS NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, EDUCATION, TAXATION, FOREIGN POLICY AND A VARIETY OF REAL AND IMAGINED CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES THAT ARE ENCOURAGED AND EXPLOITED BY THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES OF OUR TIME.

THE SEVEN PRIMARY ISSUES THAT WE CITED ABOVE ARE ONES THAT WE HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT IN DETAIL IN PREVIOUS ISSUES. THEY VIE FOR OUR ATTENTION FROM TIME TO TIME AND SEEM TO MAINTAIN A CONSTANT POLITICAL PRESENCE REGARDLESS OF EFFORTS BY BOTH PARTIES TO PROVIDE LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS.

THESE ISSUES ENDURE AS CRISES BECAUSE OF THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT AND THEIR VERY REAL URGENCY. AND THEY ALSO HAVE IN COMMON CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF ENORMOUS RISK THAT SEEM TO GO UNNOTICED BY THOSE IN WASHINGTON CHARGED WITH CONDUCTING OUR GOVERNMENT AND CREATING ITS POLICIES.

“ . . . APPALLING AND PERVERSIVE  
INCOMPETENCE AND  
INTELLECTUAL ISOLATION ”

ACCORDINGLY, WE MUST COME TO REALIZE THAT AMERICA'S TRUE CRISIS, THAT TRANSCENDS ALL OF THESE ISSUES, IS THE APPALLING AND PERVERSIVE INCOMPETENCE AND INTELLECTUAL ISOLATION OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF OUR GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST THREE DECADES AND, WITH REGARD TO SOME MATTERS, NOTABLY LONGER.

THIS INCOMPETENCE DOES NOT REVEAL ITSELF IN THE MINUTIAE OF WRITING TAX CODES, SEEMINGLY ENDLESS DEBATES AND PHOTO OPS, CAMPAIGNING FOR OFFICE OR RAISING FUNDS. THESE ARE ALL ACTIVITIES WHICH CONSUME A LARGE PART OF OUR LEGISLATIVE TIME AND WHICH THE CONGRESS HAS COME TO UNDERTAKE

AND PERFORM QUITE EASILY.

NO, THE INCOMPETENCE THAT THREATENS OUR NATION EXISTS AT ANOTHER LEVEL. IT IS EMBEDDED IN A FAILURE OF VISION WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE A LOCAL FOCAL LENGTH THAT STOPS AT STATES' BORDERS. BEYOND THEM THERE SEEMS TO BE ONLY A BLANKNESS WHICH OBSCURES THE NATIONAL INTEREST. AND IT CONSISTS OF REFUSING, OR NOT BEING ABLE, TO RECOGNIZE MAJOR FORCES THAT ARE AT WORK AROUND OUR WORLD. IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISM, WHICH WE HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN CONSTRUCTING, THERE CAN BE NO MORE CERTAIN ASSURANCE OF DISASTER. THESE FORCES ALL HAVE TIPPING POINTS WITH THE CAPABILITY, WHEN EXCEEDED, TO OVERWHELM US.

TIPPING POINTS ARE UNIQUE EVENTS THAT CAN BREAK COMPLETELY WITH WHAT TOOK PLACE BEFORE THEM, AND CAN CREATE BOTH NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE AND THE NEED FOR NEW WAYS OF THINKING TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR CONSEQUENCES. IF THEY ARE MODERATE IN THEIR FORM AND EFFORTS, WE CAN COUNT OURSELVES FORTUNATE, AS, MORE TYPICALLY, THEY CAN PRODUCE SEVERE AND SURPRISING RESULTS.

A TIPPING POINT IS AN EVENT WHICH ALTERS THE BEHAVIOR OF A FORCE, USUALLY BECAUSE OF A GRADUAL ACCUMULATION OF STRESS WITHIN OR UPON IT. COMMON TO MOST TIPPING POINTS ARE THAT THEY OCCUR SUDDENLY AND SOMETIMES VIOLENTLY; THAT THEY FREE THE FORCE THAT PRODUCES THEM FROM ITS ORIGINAL CONSTRAINTS; AND THAT THEY CAN OVERWHELM OUR NORMAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL FUNCTIONS.

EARLY IN LIFE WE ARE ABLE TO WITNESS TIPPING POINTS, MOSTLY MINOR, IN OUR ACTIVITIES AND SURROUNDINGS, BUT WITH LARGER FORCES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES WE EITHER FAIL TO RECOGNIZE, OR WE DENY, THEIR REALITY. NOWHERE HAS THIS DANGEROUS, AND POSSIBLY FATAL, LACK OF VISION BEEN MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE UPPER LEVELS OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND ITS ENABLING BUREAUCRACY.

MAJOR TIPPING POINTS IN OUR ECONOMY, OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR POPULATION OR OTHER VITAL AREAS OF LIFE CAN PRODUCE CHANGE, PAIN OR CHAOS ON A GRAND SCALE. NOT ONLY DO WE FAIL TO SEE THESE THREATS IN THEIR TRUE LIGHT, BUT WE ALSO SEEMINGLY CANNOT GRASP THAT MOST TIPPING POINTS ARE IRREVOCABLE.

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HERE ARE THE PRIMARY ISSUES WHICH OUR GOVERNMENT MUST ADDRESS IN A MEANINGFUL WAY:

- 1) OUR REAL AND PERILOUS DEBT LEVEL.
- 2) SOCIAL SECURITY
- 3) ENERGY
- 4) IMMIGRATION/POPULATION
- 5) THE ENVIRONMENT — INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE/ GLOBAL WARMING, SPECIES LOSS, AIR AND SEA POLLUTION, AND ARABLE LAND AND AQUIFER DEPLETION.
- 6) HEALTH CARE

ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF LIMITS (LOL), SOME SOONER AND MORE SEVERELY THAN OTHERS. THIS LAW, STATES, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THAT WITHIN THE CONFINES OF ANY SPACE OR SYSTEM THERE IS A LIMIT AS TO HOW MUCH OF ANY ELEMENT CAN BE ADDED OR SUBTRACTED WITHOUT CAUSING ITS DESTRUCTION. THIS FAILURE IS OFTEN TRIGGERED SUDDENLY BY SILENT AND/OR INVISIBLE TIPPING POINTS WHICH IDENTIFY THEMSELVES ONLY IN RETROSPECT. THE URGENCY OF OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCE IS THAT IN ALL OF THE MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS CITED WE ARE APPROACHING TIPPING POINTS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER WHICH OUR PAST POLICIES HAVE FAILED TO RECOGNIZE.

THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR GOVERNMENT IS PERILOUS BECAUSE ITS PRIMARY FOCUS IS ON REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT IDEOLOGY AND CONFLICT. OUR SYSTEM IS RICH, LARGE, INEFFICIENT AND LACKING IN FAIRNESS. THE LATTER, BECAUSE IT INVOLVES A STATE OF MIND, MAY BE THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGE TO CORRECT, BUT IT MUST BE DONE, AS ANY EFFORT TO RECREATE A GOVERNMENT OF PRINCIPLE MUST BE BASED ON FAIRNESS.

WE HAVE VAST, ALTHOUGH DIMINISHED, RESOURCES OF WILL AND WEALTH WHICH WE CAN DRAW UPON TO CORRECT OUR COURSE, BUT OUR SUCCESS, BOTH NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY, WILL REQUIRE US TO PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON COOPERATION; AND TO REALIZE THAT OUR PAST POLICIES OF ENDLESS GROWTH ARE NOT REALISTIC AND CARRY THE RISK OF ACCELERATING ALL TIPPING POINTS.

ONE GREAT FAULT OF PRESENT GOVERNMENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TODAY IS THAT THEY CONVINCED THEIR PEOPLE THAT THEY ARE MORE THAN THEY ACTUALLY ARE. AT NO TIME HAS THIS BEEN MORE EVIDENT THAN IN OUR PRESENT ECONOMIC MELTDOWN WHEN WE WERE TREATED TO A MENU OF SOLUTIONS, PROPOSALS, CLICHÉS, ARGUMENTS/COUNTER ARGUMENTS AND RHETORIC THAT CHANGED WITH DISCONCERTING SPEED.

THIS ABILITY OF GOVERNMENTS TO OVERSTATE THEIR VALUE IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE ENORMOUS GROWTH IN OUR MEDIA. MEDIA COVERAGE OF TODAY'S REACH AND FREQUENCY GIVES GOVERNMENT A BIGGER BULLHORN, MORE OPPORTUNITY TO PORTRAY ITSELF, AND A LARGER POLITICAL PRESENCE, BUT WHEN WE TURN THE VOLUME DOWN, OR THE SET OFF, WE COME CLOSE TO THE MOMENT OF TRUTH IN FRANK BAUM'S THE WIZARD OF OZ<sup>1</sup> WHEN THE WIZARD IS REVEALED TO BE A SOMEWHAT CONFUSED, BUMBLING, ORDINARY MAN WITHOUT ANY MAGICAL POWERS.

## DEBT

THE WORD "MODEL" IS ONE THAT HAS SHOWN A WIDE INCREASE IN USAGE IN OUR TIME. WE ARE FREQUENTLY EXPOSED TO REFERENCES TO MODELS FOR BUSINESS, WEATHER, ARCHITECTURE, ARCHAEOLOGY, COMPUTERS, ELECTORAL RESULTS AND MANY MORE. MODELS ARE REPRESENTATIONS OF WHAT WE THINK IS, OR IS TO BE.

CONSIDER THIS MODEL AND ITS APPLICATION. ON A FLAT SURFACE SUCH AS A TABLE OR DESK, PLACE A CLOTH COVER. ON THIS WE WILL ERECT THREE STRUCTURES — A HOUSE OF CARDS, A TOWER OF TOOTHPICKS AND A COLUMN OF SINGLE, EMPTY BEER CANS. EACH STRUCTURE IS INHERENTLY UNSTABLE BECAUSE THEIR PARTS ARE JOINED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT OF ONE MUST IMPACT ITS NEIGHBOR, AND ANY FORCE IS TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE ENTIRE SYSTEM. ALSO KEY TO THEIR COMMON INSTABILITY IS THE FACT THAT AT SOME POINT THE ADDITION OF THE NEXT PIECE WILL CAUSE THE STRUCTURES' COLLAPSE.

SUCH POINTS ARE TIPPING POINTS WHICH MOST OF US FIRST EXPERIENCE IN CHILDHOOD PLAYING WITH BLOCKS. THEY ARE MESSENGERS FOR THE PHYSICAL LAWS OF GRAVITY AND BALANCE, AND ARE SHARED BY OUR THREE STRUCTURES BECAUSE THEY ARE COMMON TO ALL STRUCTURES. THE INSTABILITY OF TIPPING POINTS IS AN INTERNAL RISK THAT COMMENCES WITH THE ADDITION OF THE SECOND PIECE TO THE FIRST. EVENTUALLY, ALTHOUGH AT DIFFERENT TIMES, AS THE BUILDING PROCESS PROCEEDS, EACH STRUCTURE WILL SUCCUMB TO THIS RISK.

THERE IS ANOTHER EXTERNAL RISK UNRELATED TO INTENTIONAL CONSTRUCTION. A PASSERBY COULD NUDGE THE TABLE/DESK OR A SEATED OBSERVER COULD MOVE HIS BODY IN A WAY THAT CAUSES THE CLOTH COVER TO ALSO MOVE IN WHICH CASE COLLAPSE WILL ALSO OCCUR. WE HAVE JUST DESCRIBED A MODEL OF OUR NATIONAL DEBT STRUCTURE.

IN TWO PRIOR ISSUES IN 2004 AND 2005 WE DEALT IN DETAIL WITH OUR NATIONAL DEBT AND THE VARIETY OF PERILS IT POSES TO OUR COUNTRY AND WAY OF LIFE, IN VIEW OF WHICH WE FELT A DAY OF RECKONING WAS BOUND TO COME. AMERICA IS AWASH IN DEBT TODAY, AND NOT JUST ITS FEDERAL DEBT. THERE ARE ALSO UNTENABLE LEVELS OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEBT AS WELL AS CREDIT CARD, MORTGAGE, MARGIN, CORPORATE, INSTALLMENT AND PERSONAL DEBT. ALL THESE ARE INTERRELATED TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT IN TIMES OF STRESS THE SUM OF THE PARTS MAY BE GREATER THAN THE WHOLE.

FROM OUR VIEW FOUR YEARS AGO THERE WAS NO WAY TO ANTICIPATE WHICH CARD, TOOTHPICK OR CAN (I.E., — HOUSING, SECURITIES OR CREDIT MARKET) MIGHT BE DISLODGED FIRST, BUT IT WAS READILY APPARENT THAT THE COURSE WE HAVE FOLLOWED WAS NO LONGER TENABLE AND WOULD SELF-CORRECT IF WE TOOK NO ACTION. WRITING IN OUR APRIL, 2005 ISSUE, WE OFFERED:

## SOCIAL SECURITY

“WE MUST BE AWARE OF THE SCALE AND SERIOUSNESS OF OUR TRUE DEBT. ITS ACCUMULATION HAS BECOME A NARCOTIC TO WHICH BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NOW ADDICTED. IT HAS THE POWER TO OVERWHELM OUR GOVERNMENT AND WAY OF LIFE, AND WILL SURELY DO SO IF WE DO NOTHING”

TODAY WE STILL DO NOT KNOW THE TRUE DIMENSIONS OF OUR FINANCIAL CRISIS OTHER THAN TO SAY WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT THEY WILL BE MEASURED BY EXTREME PAIN AND HARDSHIP FOR MANY AMERICANS MOST OF WHOM ARE BYSTANDERS CAUGHT UP IN SOMEONE ELSE’S MESS.

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AGAIN, THERE IS A LARGER SCALE AT WORK. IT IS INTERNATIONAL IN SCOPE AND INVOLVES OUR RELATIONS AND POLICIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, AND THESE ARE AS INTRICATELY BOUND TOGETHER IN THE WORLD MARKETS AS THE CARDS, TOOTHPICKS AND CANS OF OUR MODEL.

OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL SECTORS HAVE BEEN PRIME MOVERS OF OUR EMBRACE OF ECONOMIC GLOBALISM; AND YET THEY SEEM TO HAVE MISSED ONE OF ITS MORE EVIDENT ASPECTS — THAT ITS INTERCONNECTIONS WHICH CAN SPREAD GREAT REWARDS UNDER FAVORABLE CONDITIONS CAN ALSO CAUSE ENORMOUS LOSSES AND PAIN WHEN POLITICAL AND/OR MARKET CIRCUMSTANCES DETERIORATE.

THERE IS NO PLEASURE TO BE HAD FROM LABELING OUR GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENT OR INEPT, BUT FOR WEEKS LAST FALL IT HAD THE LOOK OF A DEER CAUGHT IN HEADLIGHTS. THE IMMOBILIZATION OF OUR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL MARKETS AND THE LOSSES THAT RESULTED ARE DIRECT RESULTS OF MISMANAGEMENT AND LAXITY BY OUR CONGRESS AND WHITE HOUSE OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD, BUT MOST NOTABLY DURING THE G.W. BUSH ADMINISTRATIONS.

THE JOB AHEAD WILL REQUIRE US TO CUT SPENDING, TO START SAVING, TO REDUCE OUR DEBT, AND TO RETURN THE VALUE WE HAVE LOST TO OUR CURRENCY. IT WILL NOT BE EASY AND WILL TAKE A LONG TIME. TO DO IT RIGHT IT MUST BE DONE WITH FAIRNESS AND DETERMINATION — NO RETURNING TO BUSINESS AS USUAL IN A YEAR OR TWO.

WE HAVE SUFFERED A SEVERE STROKE AND OUR REHAB PROGRAM WILL BE LONG AND HARD.

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THIS ISSUE IS UNIQUE IN THAT FREQUENT PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF ITS CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS INVARIABLY INCLUDES PREDICTION OF A TIPPING POINT AT WHICH TIME THE SYSTEM WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO HONOR ITS PRESENT COMMITMENTS. INCREASING POPULATION AND LONGEVITY WILL TRANSLATE INTO GREATER COSTS THAT WILL NOT BE OFFSET BY LARGER REVENUES. THIS IMBALANCE IS WORSENERED BY PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS HAVING SPENT YEARS OF ACCUMULATED SURPLUS WITH THE RESULT THAT SS IS NO LONGER SUSTAINABLE UNDER ITS ORIGINAL FORM AND CONCEPT.

“ . . .THE ASSURANCE THAT THEIR DESTINY NEED NOT BE ONE OF DESTITUTION...”

THIS FINANCIAL SLEIGHT OF HAND, PERFORMED BY BOTH REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS, REVEALS POLITICAL CYNICISM AT ITS WORST AND HOW BADLY OUR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN COMPROMISED, FOR, ALTHOUGH SS DREW EARLY CRITICISM AS BEING SOCIALISTIC, IT GAINED STEADILY IN POPULARITY. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT COMPLETELY ALTERED THE WAY MOST AMERICANS VIEWED THE LIVING OF THEIR LIVES AFTER AGE 65 BY GIVING THEM THE ASSURANCE THAT THEIR DESTINY NEED NOT BE ONE OF DESTITUTION, THAT SOME FUNDS WOULD BE AVAILABLE ON A REGULAR AND CONTINUING BASIS.

THE EARLY PROMISE OF SS’S CONCEPT HAS BEEN SO BADLY TARNISHED BY ITS MISMANAGEMENT THAT ITS CONTINUATION AS A VIABLE PROGRAM IS NOW QUESTIONABLE. PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SOURCES ALIKE NOW MAKE FREQUENT PREDICTIONS THAT IN THE SPAN OF A FEW DECADES IT WILL SLIP INTO NEGATIVE REVENUES AT WHICH TIME ITS PAYMENTS TO BENEFICIARIES WILL FALL FAR BEHIND RISING COSTS, AND THE CHARGES TO NEW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE INSUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN THE SUCCESSFUL MATHEMATICS OF THE PAST.

HERE IS A THREAT TO ONE OF OUR KEY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS IN WHICH A TIPPING POINT IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND PUBLICIZED. AND YET, “GOVERNMENT” (I.E., SUCCESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS OF BOTH PARTIES) HAS CONTINUED TO RAID SS FUNDS FOR OTHER PURPOSES AND HAS LIMITED ITS CORRECTIVE EFFORTS TO TWEAKING AT THE EDGES.

IT IS THIS KIND OF FAILURE THAT OCCASIONS PUBLIC OUTRAGE AND CHARGES OF INEPTNESS AND INCOMPETENCE. WHILE THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE OF THE LATTER IN SS’S MANAGEMENT, THE OVERRIDING DERELICTION OF OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN THEIR TREATMENT OF SS AS A POLITICAL ISSUE RATHER THAN ONE REQUIRING A VISION OF OUR NATIONAL INTEREST.

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## ENERGY

OUR ENERGY CRISIS, UNLIKE SS, HAS SEVERAL TIPPING POINTS, WHICH, EITHER SINGLY OR IN COMBINATION, CAN FACE US WITH DISASTER. THERE IS THE POINT AT WHICH OUR CARBON-BASED NATURAL RESOURCES FIRST BECOME SCARCE AND THEN ARE EXHAUSTED. THERE IS THE TIME WHEN OUR POPULATION HAS INCREASED SO MUCH THAT IT SURPASSES THE CARRYING CAPACITIES OF OUR SUPPLIES OF ARABLE LAND AND CLEAN AIR/WATER. AND THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES THAT OUR ENLARGING EFFORTS TO DEVELOP NEW AND “GREENER” FUELS WILL ALTER THE BASIC NATURAL OR ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR PROTECTIVE COVER OF PLANT LIFE.

FOR EXAMPLE, CONSIDER OUR PURSUIT OF ETHANOL MADE FROM CORN AS A REPLACEMENT FOR GASOLINE. THE ETHANOL FUEL PRODUCTION PROCESS HAS SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL DRAWBACKS, AND ITS NEED FOR CORN AS A FEEDSTOCK HAS PUT PRESSURE ON OUR CORN SUPPLY AND CAUSED A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN ITS PRICE.

SIMILARLY, EFFORTS ARE NOW UNDERWAY TO DEVELOP A GASOLINE REPLACEMENT FROM CELLULOSIC PLANT FIBRE. ANY SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS AND EXPANSION OF THIS TECHNOLOGY WOULD REQUIRE THE HARVESTING OF VAST NUMBERS OF PLANTS/TREES. AS THE LATTER ABSORB CARBON DIOXIDE (CO<sup>2</sup>) AND GIVE OFF OXYGEN, THEIR DISAPPEARANCE WOULD HAVE AN OFFSETTING, NEGATIVE, ENERGY CONSEQUENCE.

THE LARGER FOCUS IS THAT NEW TECHNOLOGY, INCREASED POPULATION AND MORE PERSISTENT MARKETING PRACTICES HAVE GREATLY EXPANDED OUR USE OF ENERGY PRODUCTS/SERVICES. AIR CONDITIONING IS, PERHAPS, MOST NOTABLE, BUT THERE ARE MANY OTHERS.

ALL THESE ARE EASILY VISIBLE PATTERNS OF OUR LIFE. WHAT REMAINS FAR MORE DIFFICULT FOR ELECTED GOVERNMENT TO SEE IS THE INEVITABILITY OF THEIR TIPPING POINTS.

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## IMMIGRATION/POPULATION

THESE TWO ISSUES ARE SO CLOSELY BOUND TOGETHER IN THEIR THREATS AND CONSEQUENCES THAT WE TREAT THEM IN TANDEM. THEY OFTEN APPEAR AS DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE SAME COIN — BUT ARE NOT, IN REALITY, ALL THAT DIFFERENT.

IN BOTH, THE CRITICAL ELEMENT IS WHAT IS SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS A UNIT OF POPULATION — I.E., A PERSON WITH NO DISTINGUISHING FEATURES SUCH AS WEALTH, RELIGION, RACE, LOCATION, INTELLIGENCE OR POLITICAL PREFERENCE ADDED. IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE DEMOGRAPHIC WORLDS THIS UNIT WOULD PROVIDE US WITH THE MEANS TO MEASURE, STUDY AND REPORT ITS MOVEMENTS UNHAMPERED BY THE BLIND CURVES, TRIP WIRES AND PITFALLS OF HUMAN EMOTION, BUT,

AS WE WILL SEE LATER, THAT IS NOT PRESENTLY POSSIBLE. AND IT HAS PROBABLY NOT BEEN SO SINCE WE SURRENDERED OUR NOMADIC WAY OF LIFE IN FAVOR OF PERMANENT COMMUNITIES.

THE BASIC UNIT WITH WHICH WE ARE CONCERNED IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY IS THE HUMAN BEING FOUND IN DECIDEDLY DIFFERENT NUMBERS, FORMS AND CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND OUR WORLD. OVER TIME, SINCE ITS NOMADIC ORIGINS, IT HAS BECOME A PERSON OR, IN PLURAL, PEOPLE OR PEOPLES. AND THIS ADDED HUMANITY HAS BECOME VERY MUCH A COMPLICATING FACTOR.

WHETHER UNITS, PERSONS OR PEOPLE, THEIR NEEDS, AMBITIONS AND MOVEMENTS TRANSLATE INTO CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE MEASURED IN MONEY, VIOLENCE, BLOODSHED, IDENTITY, FAITH, WAR, SOVEREIGNTY, HEALTH AND OTHER AREAS THAT DETERMINE THE FORM AND STRENGTH OF THE EVER CHANGING SOCIAL FABRIC THAT IS NECESSARY TO HOLD US TOGETHER IN A VIABLE SOCIETY. SUCH IS IMMIGRATION/POPULATION AT ITS PRIMAL LEVEL.

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FAST FORWARD TO OUR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA WHERE IMMIGRATION/POPULATION EMOTION RUNS ON HIGH, AND WHEN DIFFERING THOUGHT PROCESSES, INTERESTS AND ETHNICITIES CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE EACH OTHER. AND AGAIN THE UNIT OF POPULATION, WITH ITS ABILITY TO REACH INTO ALL AREAS OF OUR LIFE, IS THE BASIC MEASUREMENT WHICH MAINTAINS A FREE TRANSLATABILITY INTO OTHERS.

LAST AUGUST THE CENSUS BUREAU RELEASED ITS REVISED POPULATION PROJECTIONS PREDICTING THAT OUR POPULATION WILL INCREASE BY 135 MILLION BY MID-CENTURY. AS STEVEN CAMAROTA POINTS OUT<sup>2</sup>, SUCH AN INCREASE “IS EQUIVALENT TO THE ENTIRE POPULATIONS OF MEXICO AND CANADA MOVING HERE.” AND, CAMEROTA FURTHER STATES, IF WE ASSUME OUR PRESENT RATIO OF POPULATION TO INFRASTRUCTURE IS MAINTAINED, WE WOULD NEED 36,000 MORE SCHOOLS, 52 MILLION NEW HOUSING UNITS AND ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY CAPACITY FOR 106 MILLION MORE VEHICLES.

NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN IS THAT SCHOOLS, HOUSING AND ROADS ALL REQUIRE ADJACENT LAND TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR USES AND USERS. AMERICA’S CARRYING CAPACITY<sup>3</sup> HAS BEEN ESTIMATED AT 150 MILLION WHICH WAS OUR POPULATION AT THE END OF WWII. TODAY OUR POPULATION IS 300 MILLION AND WILL INCREASE TO 435 MILLION ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS BUREAU’S RECENT PROJECTION.

“POPULATION IS A PROCESS OF SILENT AND POWERFUL GEOMETRIC INCREASE.”

ANY EFFORT TO COMPREHEND THE EFFECT OF SUCH RAPID GROWTH UPON OUR SOCIETY MUST INCLUDE THE

REALIZATION THAT FOR EVERY ADDED UNIT OF POPULATION WE LOSE ONE ACRE OF LAND TO THE VARIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SUCH GROWTH REQUIRES:

$2 + 4 + 8 = 14$  IS AN ARITHMETIC PROGRESSION

$2 \times 4 \times 8 = 64$  “ A GEOMETRIC “

POPULATION IS A PROCESS OF SILENT AND POWERFUL GEOMETRIC INCREASE.

HISTORY PROVIDES US WITH A WAY TO LOOK BACKWARDS AND SEE THE EFFECTS OF OUR AND OTHERS' ACTIONS. IT CAN ALSO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SCALE AND PERSPECTIVE TO REVEAL THE ACTIONS OF FORCES THAT CREATE TIPPING POINTS AND THE EXACT MOMENTS IN TIME WHEN THEY OCCUR.

BECAUSE POPULATIONS AND NATURAL FORCES ARE IN CONSTANT FLUX AROUND THE EARTH, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ISOLATE THE EXACT EVENT AND MOMENT WHICH MIGHT CAUSE A MAJOR TIPPING POINT THAT WOULD ALTER OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR ENVIRONMENT FROM ONE WHICH SUSTAINS US TO ONE THAT DESTROYS US.

STILL, AS WE MOVE AHEAD ON OUR PRESENT COURSE, WE MUST KNOW THAT JUST ONE MORE BIRTH, ONE MORE SPECIES DESTROYED, ONE MORE AQUIFER DEPLETED, ONE MORE BARREL OF OIL PRODUCED, ONE MORE INCH OF RISING SEA LEVEL, OR ONE MORE DEGREE OF AVERAGE TEMPERATURE COULD IRREVOCABLY MODIFY, OR EVEN DESTROY, THE BALANCE BETWEEN OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OURSELVES.

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OUR VIEW IN AMERICA IS MOSTLY OF IMMIGRATION/POPULATION AS A NATIONAL ARGUMENT. IT IS MORE THAN THAT. IT IS ONE ASPECT OF A GLOBAL MIGRANT PROBLEM MARKED BY THE MOVEMENT OF INCREASING NUMBERS FROM POOR TO RICHER ZONES. IN LATIN AMERICA, HISPANIC NATIVES MOVE NORTH AND JOIN THE MEXICAN EXODUS TO QUIETLY ACCOMPLISH THE RECONQUISTA (RECONQUEST) OF OUR SOUTHWESTERN STATES BY POPULATION.

IN SOUTHEAST ASIA THE ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY WEAK TRY TO ENTER AUSTRALIA; AND EUROPE IS THE TARGET OF CHOICE FOR ALL OF AFRICA AND THE NEAR EAST. THERE ARE THREE IMPORTANT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE US IN THE WAY THESE PATTERNS ARE PLAYING OUT:

- 1) THE EUROPEAN POWERS WHO ADMITTED LARGE NUMBERS OF IMMIGRANTS FROM THEIR FORMER COLONIES ARE BEING REPAID WITH VIOLENCE AND UNREST, AS MAJOR CIVIL DISTURBANCES CAUSING EXTENSIVE DAMAGE HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN SPAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS.
- 2) THESE WEALTHY COUNTRIES ARE THE CENTER OF THE EU AND ARE CHOSEN BY MIGRANTS FOR THEIR PROXIMITY OF WEALTH, JOBS AND SERVICES. THERE IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT MIGRANT FLOW TO ALBANIA, SWITZERLAND, LATVIA, ETC. BUT, UNLIKE THEIR PREDECESSORS OF A CENTURY AGO, MONEY AND EMPLOYMENT ARE NOT ALL THEY SEEK, AS THEY NOW MORE FREQUENTLY AND STRIDENTLY CALL FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE, NOT TO JUST POLITICAL PARTIES,

BUT TO BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS.

THIS PUSH TOWARDS WIDESPREAD UPHEAVAL IS FUELED BY AN ACCUMULATION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ANGER AND ENVY, AND, WHILE THE CAUSES OF THESE VOLATILE EMOTIONS LIE IN THE HOME COUNTRIES, THEIR EFFECTS ARE FELT IN THE MIGRANTS' NEW HOST COUNTRIES WHERE THEY CREATE A VERY DIFFICULT CATCH-22 IN THAT THE MORE MIGRANTS THAT ARE ADMITTED IN ORDER TO RESOLVE HUMAN, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THE EMIGRATING AREAS, THE GREATER WILL BE THE COST OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TURBULENCE IN THE NEW HOST NATIONS.

OUR COUNTRY HAS NOT EXPERIENCED THE SCALE OF PROPERTY DAMAGE AND LOSS OF LIFE THAT EUROPE HAS. FOR THAT GOOD FORTUNE, WE CAN BE GRATEFUL, BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE. IN FACT, GIVEN THE STATE OF OUR PRESENT IMMIGRATION POLICY, IT IS ALMOST INEVITABLE.

- 3 IF WE LOOK AT IMMIGRATION/POPULATION AS THE GLOBAL PROBLEM IT IS, WE FIND THAT EUROPE AND ASIA, ARE ZONES WHERE MOST DEVELOPED (I.E., TARGET) NATIONS MAKE AN EFFORT TO CONTROL THEIR BORDERS. NOWHERE ARE THERE EXTENSIVE BORDERS (LIKE OUR NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN) WHERE THOUSANDS OF NEW ARRIVALS DAILY WALK ACROSS AND START THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING BENEFITS AND EXERCISING "RIGHTS".

IN IMMIGRATION/POPULATION, AS IN PHYSICS, ANY EXERTED FORCE WILL FOLLOW THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE. AS POPULATION, AND WITH IT POVERTY, INCREASES IN THE DESPERATE ZONES, SO WILL THE FLOW OF MIGRANTS TO DEVELOPED AREAS. THERE, EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN OR INCREASE THEIR BORDER CONTROLS WILL SERVE TO MOVE MIGRANTS TO THOSE AREAS OF LEAST BORDER CONTROL WHERE ACCESS IS FAVORED — I.E., TO CANADA AND THE US.

IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION ARE TWO PARTS OF THE SAME ISSUE, EACH OF WHICH HAS ITS OWN TIPPING POINT. MERELY BECAUSE OF ITS SMALLER SIZE THE IMMIGRATION TIPPING POINT WILL BE MORE READILY DISCERNIBLE. THERE IS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS POINT MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REACHED IN EUROPE, BUT WE CANNOT YET DETERMINE WHETHER EVENTS THERE ARE IRREVOCABLE AND BEYOND CONTROL. THAT IS AN HISTORICAL JUDGMENT FOR WHICH MORE TIME IS NEEDED.

BUT WE DO KNOW THAT WE AMERICANS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THIS GLOBAL PROBLEM. AND YET THERE IS NO EVIDENCE FROM ANYONE IN THE CONGRESS OR THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH THAT IT IS MORE THAN A LOCAL ISSUE.

TODAY OUR COUNTRY ANNUALLY ACCEPTS MORE IMMIGRANTS THAN ALMOST ALL THE OTHER DEVELOPED NATIONS OF THE WORLD COMBAINED, AND THE PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANT VS. NATIVE-BORN AMERICANS HAS DOUBLED SINCE 1970<sup>4</sup>. WE STAND ALONE AMONG DEVELOPED NATIONS<sup>5</sup> IN CONTINUING OPEN BORDERS POLICIES WHICH MAY BRING US TO A TIPPING POINT BEFORE OTHERS. AND YET THERE IS NO VISION, NO RECOGNITION OF THIS AS A REALISTIC THREAT

TO OUR SOCIETY. ADMITTEDLY IMMIGRATION/POPULATION IS AN ISSUE THAT RUBS RAW SO MANY LOCAL POLITICAL NERVES THAT MOST NATIONS DO NOT CHOOSE TO REVEAL OR SHARE THE PAIN.

NEVERTHELESS, IT IS THERE; AND WE HAVE A GOVERNMENT. AND ANY CONCEPT OF GOOD GOVERNMENT WOULD VIEW THIS AS A RISK TO BE ENGAGED.

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## THE ENVIRONMENT EARTH, AIR AND WATER — THE FIRE WILL COME LATER

IN USING THE TERM “ENVIRONMENT” WE ARE REFERRING COLLECTIVELY TO A COMBINATION OF NATURAL ISSUES THAT HAVE THE ABILITY TO DEFINE HOW WE LIVE (OR DIE) FROM SOMETHING AS IMMEDIATE AS BREATHING TO AS DISTANT AS EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE. WE INCLUDE CLIMATE CHANGE/GLOBAL WARNING (CC/GW), SPECIES LOSS, AIR AND SEA POLLUTION AND OUR PERSISTENT DEPLETION OF OUR ARABLE LAND AND AQUIFERS.

“ . . . WE HAVE ASSUMED ENORMOUS RISK FOR OTHERS AND OURSELVES ”

WE ARE NOT ALONE IN PUTTING ECONOMIC CONCERNS AHEAD OF CARING FOR THE NATURAL RESOURCES THAT SUSTAIN US. OTHER COUNTRIES AND POPULATIONS DO THE SAME, BUT OUR POSITION AS SOLE SUPERPOWER PROVIDED US WITH A BRIEF MOMENT OF LEADERSHIP WHICH WE HAVE LET PASS BECAUSE IT POSED A CHALLENGE TO BASIC BUSH/CHENEY IDEOLOGY. IN THE LATTER’S FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE AND THE URGENCY OF OUR TIME, WE HAVE ASSUMED ENORMOUS RISK FOR OTHERS AND OURSELVES.

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A HANDFUL OF SCIENTISTS AND ACADEMICS, CC/GW HAS BEEN AN ISSUE OF NOTE FOR ONLY ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. TODAY, DUE TO RAPIDLY INCREASING EVIDENCE OF ITS ACCELERATING EFFECTS, SCIENTISTS AROUND THE WORLD RECOGNIZE THAT OUR RESPONSE TIME IS SHRINKING AND THAT WE MAY WELL HAVE PASSED ONE OR MORE TIPPING POINTS TO WHICH WE MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN.

CC/GW, LIKE MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, IS A GLOBAL ISSUE. THE TIDE THAT FLOODS SOUTH FLORIDA IS THE SAME ONE THAT FLOODS SOUTH AFRICA AND WE CAN NO MORE SEPARATE IT AND PACKAGE IT FOR LOCAL TREATMENT THAT WE CAN CLEAN THE AIR OVER BROOKLYN, BUT NOT MANHATTAN.

HERE IS WHAT WE MUST UNDERSTAND ABOUT CC/GW FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS. IT HAS THE POWER AND THE MEANS TO PERMANENTLY CHANGE, AND PERHAPS DESTROY,

MUCH OF OUR PLANET’S FOOD AND WATER SUPPLY. THIS WOULD DISRUPT OUR GLOBAL SYSTEMS FOR THEIR PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

SUCH A DISLOCATION, WHETHER QUICK OR SLOW, WOULD LEAD TO A TIME WHEN GOVERNMENTS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ASSURE THAT FOOD WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THEIR PEOPLE. ALONG THE WAY, OF COURSE, SUCH MECHANISMS AS MARKETS, CONTRACTS, PRICES AND CURRENCIES WHICH FUNCTION ONLY BY MAINTAINING AN ELEMENT OF SHARED STABILITY, WILL HAVE ALSO BEEN SUBJECTED TO STRESSES AND CHANGES TO WHICH THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESPOND IN AN EFFICIENT AND PROFITABLE WAY.

THIS PROCESS IS ONE OF EMERGING CHAOS IN WHICH THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR PLANET’S ABUSE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT ARE FELT BY ALL COUNTRIES, ALL PEOPLE. THERE WILL BE MANY VOICES THAT WILL DEFLECT ANY MENTION OF TIPPING POINTS AND THE NOTION THAT WE CAN LOSE CONTROL OF OUR NATURAL SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES. WE HAVE HEARD THIS SIREN SONG BEFORE.

AND REMEMBER PILOTTOWN, BURRWOOD AND PORT EADS, THREE THRIVING TOWNS BELOW NEW ORLEANS ON THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA IN 1950 WHICH WERE RECLAIMED BY THE SEA AND NO LONGER EXIST. THAT WAS THEN AND THIS IS NOW, AND OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CLOCK RUNS MUCH FASTER.

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## THE BIRD AND THE BEAR

CANARIES, THOSE EVER-SINGING, SEEMINGLY JOYFUL BIRDS, ARE USED IN COAL MINES TO DETECT THE PRESENCE OF ODORLESS, INVISIBLE POISON GAS. BIRDS ARE PLACED AT THE FRONT OF WORK CREWS AND ARE THE FIRST TO ENCOUNTER THE LETHAL GAS. WHEN THEY DO, THEY DIE. BY THEIR SILENCE THEY WARN AND SAVE OTHERS.

THE POLAR BEAR IS ONE OF NATURE’S MOST MAGNIFICENT CREATURES AND THE RESULT OF HEROIC EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE OVER ITS SPECIE’S LIFETIME. AT SOME POINT, PROBABLY MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO, CLIMATE CHANGE OR CATASTROPHE MAY HAVE ISOLATED A GROUP OF BEARS IN THE ARCTIC REGION, FORCING THEM TO ADAPT TO THEIR NEW ENVIRONMENT OR DIE. FOLLOWING THEIR SEPARATION FROM THEIR BROWN, BLACK AND GRIZZLY COUSINS, THEY CHANGED THEIR COAT COLOR TO WHITE AND THEIR DIET FROM TERRESTRIAL TO MOSTLY AQUATIC SOURCES. SWIMMING BECAME EQUALLY IMPORTANT FOR LOCOMOTION AS WALKING AND, TO FACILITATE IT, SEVERAL PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES WERE MADE. THE REAR END AND LEGS WERE RAISED AND THE TORSO AND THE SKULL WERE BOTH NARROWED. THE RESULT OF THIS STREAMLINING WAS A SMOOTH AND SILENT SWIMMER, AND AN EFFICIENT AND FEARSOME PREDATOR IN ARCTIC AREAS.

TODAY, THE POLAR BEAR POPULATION IS IN RAPID DECLINE AND WILL SOON FACE EXTINCTION DUE TO GLOBAL

WARMING. THE LATTER, ACTING UPON BOTH SEA AND AIR, MELTS THE ICE FLOWS, SHEETS AND BERGS WHICH PROVIDE NECESSARY SHELTER, REST AND HIBERNATION HABITATS. AS THIS ICE GROWS SMALLER IN AREA, IT ALSO BECOMES SOFTER, WEAKER AND UNABLE TO SUPPORT THE WEIGHT OF BEARS AT ITS EDGES. TO WATCH THESE BEAUTIFUL CREATURES ATTEMPT TO CLIMB OUT OF THE SEA ONTO ICE WHICH REPEATEDLY CRUMBLES IS A SAD AND PAINFUL SIGHT. AS THE BEAR CANNOT STAY AFLOAT FOREVER, IT MUST EVENTUALLY WEAKEN AND DROWN.

ARCTIC WATERS ARE NOW KNOWN TO CONTAIN SUBSTANTIAL OIL RESERVES AND THE OIL INDUSTRY PUSHES STRONGLY FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT. ANY SUCH EFFORT WOULD FURTHER DETERIORATE THE POLAR BEAR'S ENVIRONMENT AND ITS CHANCE OF SURVIVAL.

“THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING.”

“BIG OIL” CONTINUES ITS “DRILL MORE, DRILL NOW, DRILL DEEPER” APPROACH TO OUR ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT CRISIS. IN THE PAST, IN THE CORPORATE VS. SPECIES (OURS AND OTHERS) ARGUMENT “BIG OIL” HAD THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE BUSH/CHENEY GOVERNMENT, BUT THIS SEEMS LIKELY TO CHANGE UNDER PRESIDENT OBAMA. IF OUR POLICIES AND PROCESS DO NOT CHANGE, THE POLAR BEAR WILL MOST LIKELY BE EXTINCT BY MID-CENTURY AND PERHAPS EVEN AS SOON AS TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW. THE BEAR IS OUR CANARY, BUT WILL WE HEED ITS WARNING? THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING.

THE BLACK (OIL) AND WHITE (BEAR, ICE) DISTINCTIONS OF THE POLAR BEAR'S PREDICAMENT ARE EASY TO VISUALIZE, BUT SUCH CLARITY IS THE EXCEPTION, NOT THE RULE, IN SPECIES' LOSS. THERE ARE PROBABLY MILLIONS OF SPECIES, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, WHICH MUST FACE THE CHANGES IN AIR, TEMPERATURE, PRECIPITATION, LIGHT AND FOOD SUPPLY THAT ARE NOW TAKING PLACE ON OUR PLANET.

THESE SPECIES EXIST IN SWAMPS, RAIN FORESTS, DESERTS, LAKES, OCEANS AND RIVERS; THE TOPSOIL OF OUR LAWNS, GARDENS AND AGRICULTURAL FIELDS; AND ON THE TOPS AND SIDES OF OUR HIGHEST AND STEEPEST MOUNTAINS. WE KNOW NEITHER THEIR FULL EXTENT, NOR THEIR NUMBERS. WE DO KNOW THAT THEY ARE BOTH PREY AND PREDATOR AND ARE JOINED IN A FOOD CHAIN THAT DOES A SURPRISINGLY CAPABLE JOB OF SUPPORTING ALL.

LIKE OUR TOOTHPICK TOWER, CAN COLUMN AND HOUSE OF CARDS THEY EXIST IN A FINE STATE OF BALANCE AND INTERRELATION WHICH, IF DISTURBED, CAN COLLAPSE INTO CHAOS. BECAUSE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS STRUCTURE IS INCOMPLETE, OUR MEASUREMENT OF CAUSE AND EFFECT IS OFTEN FAULTY. AND YET WE KNOW ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN NOTICE OF VAST CHANGE MUCH OF WHICH WILL BE BEYOND OUR CONTROL.

SPECIES LOSS IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL POLAR BEAR THAT WE CAN SEE OR THE ELUSIVE, AS YET UNIDENTIFIED, BUTTERFLY DEEP IN THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST.

IT IS ALSO ABOUT US. TO THINK OTHERWISE IS A RISK, A HUBRIS, SO GREAT THAT IT MUST CHALLENGE OUR BELIEF IN HUMAN INTELLIGENCE.

THE KYOTO CONFERENCE WAS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS PROPOSING AN INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS. OUR REFUSAL TO VIEW AND FRAME IT AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN A THREAT TO OUR ECONOMY HAS LOST US THE BENEFITS OF ALMOST A DECADE OF PARTICIPATION AND THE SIGNIFICANT CREDIBILITY REQUIRED OF A SOLE SUPERPOWER.

“. . . WE ARE NOT THE TIMEKEEPER.”

WE MUST START OVER; WE MUST TRY TO RETRIEVE WHAT WE IGNORED; WE MUST CATCH UP WITH OTHERS — AND WITH THE CLOCK, REALIZING THAT WE ARE NOT THE TIMEKEEPER.

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## LAND AND WATER

THE TWO MOST VITAL ELEMENTS OF LIFE ON OUR PLANET OVER WHICH WE EXERCISE A MEANINGFUL DEGREE OF CONTROL ARE THE LAND THAT FEEDS US AND THE FRESH WATER WE DRINK. AS MUCH OF THESE IN OUR SOCIETY ARE UNDER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP, WE HAVE FAILED TO ESTABLISH A POLICY TO MAXIMIZE THEIR PUBLIC BENEFITS. INDIVIDUAL OWNERS IN DIFFERENT AREAS, ALL WITH THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CONCERNS, DO NOT FORM A READY POLICY BASE.

THE TRUTH WE HAVE NOT FACED IS THAT OUR SUPPLIES OF LAND AND WATER ARE LIMITED AND THAT THE RATE AT WHICH WE HAVE USED THEM IN THE PAST IS NO LONGER SUSTAINABLE.

THIS IS NOT JUST A MATTER OF PHILOSOPHY OR WAY OF THINKING. WE ARE WELL ALONG THE WAY TO EXHAUSTING OUR NATURAL AQUIFERS; AND BY OUR PRACTICE OF EXPANSIONIST ECONOMIC AND POPULATION POLICIES WE HAVE GREATLY REDUCED THE AMOUNT OF ARABLE LAND AVAILABLE TO US.

OUR COUNTRY AND OUR PLANET ARE FINITE SPACES WITH A VARIETY OF RESOURCES CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING HUMAN LIFE. THE USES OF THESE RESOURCES, MANY OF WHICH ARE IN LIMITED SUPPLY AND UNDER HUMAN CONTROL, ARE OFTEN INTERRELATED. SOME ARE RENEWABLE; OTHERS ARE NOT. BUT THIS DISTINCTION IS NOT APPARENT IN OUR EMBRACE OF UNLIMITED AND CONSTANT GROWTH.

“PLAYING CATCH-UP WILL NO LONGER BE AN OPTION.”

WE HAVE TENDED TO TAKE FOR GRANTED THE GREAT ABUNDANCE OF OUR AMERICAN LANDSCAPE, BUT THAT IS NO MORE A SUSTAINABLE ATTITUDE THAN CONSTANT GROWTH. OUR LAND AND WATER RESOURCES BOTH HAVE TIPPING POINTS AND, AT SUCH TIME WHEN WE REACH OR PASS THEM, THESE ESSENTIAL RESOURCES WILL PASS FROM OUR CONTROL, AND LIFE ON PLANET EARTH WILL TAKE ON A NEW, AND PERHAPS UNRECOGNIZABLE, MEANING. PLAYING CATCH-UP WILL NO LONGER BE AN OPTION.

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## HEALTH CARE

ANOTHER ISSUE OF PRIME CONCERN TO OUR COUNTRY IS ITS HEALTH CARE PROGRAM. THE ONE WE NOW HAVE, AND HAVE BEEN TINKERING WITH FOR SEVERAL DECADES, FAILS IN MANY WAYS, ALTHOUGH ITS ORIGINAL PREMISE COULD HAVE PRODUCED A WORKABLE RESULT.

TODAY, OUR PER CAPITA HEALTH CARE COST IS APPROXIMATELY TWICE THAT OF CANADA, FRANCE, AUSTRALIA & BRITAIN, AND WE HAVE ALLOWED TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR ANNUAL HEALTH CARE EXPENSES APPROXIMATELY \$100 BILLION EACH FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND FRAUD. AGAIN, “WE’RE NUMBER 1.”

WHY DO WE PERMIT THESE UNNECESSARY AND EXCESSIVE COSTS? THE ANSWER IS THAT OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO PRODUCE PROFITS FOR SOME OF ITS PARTICIPANTS AT EACH AND EVERY OPERATIONAL STEP. OVER TIME, THE PROFIT MOTIVE HAS BECOME DOMINANT WITH THE RESULT THAT BENEFITS FOR PATIENTS AND DOCTORS HAVE BEEN REDUCED WHILE THOSE FOR INSURANCE COMPANIES AND MEDICAL/PHARMACEUTICAL PROVIDERS HAVE INCREASED. THIS SHIFT FROM HEALTH TO WEALTH HAS, OF COURSE, BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITH CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.

THERE IS ONE OTHER CRITICAL FACTOR THAT IS NOW THREATENING OUR HEALTH SYSTEM. ITS COSTS ARE RISING AT A RATE FAR GREATER THAN THOSE OF OUR ECONOMY IN GENERAL. AS IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE FOR ITS PARTICIPANTS, THEY WILL SHRINK IN NUMBER AND PER CAPITA COSTS WILL, THEREFORE, RISE EVEN FURTHER. THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATED IN 2005 THE GROWTH OF MEDICARE/MEDICAID’S SHARE OF OUR NATIONAL BUDGET FROM 2% IN 1966 TO AN ESTIMATED 22% IN 2006 AND 35% IN 2046. THIS LAST INCREASE AMOUNTS TO OVER 50% AND, IN ORDER TO TAKE PLACE, WILL REQUIRE THE REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF OTHER BUDGET ITEMS.

THERE ARE MANY DETERMINED BUREAUCRATS AND/OR OTHER CONSTITUENCIES, SOME AT THE PENTAGON, WHO WOULD RESIST ANY SUCH REALIGNMENT OF BUDGETARY SHARES. THIS IS ONLY ONE OF OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM’S TIPPING POINTS. OTHERS LIE IN WAITING WHILE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CLAIM “WE HAVE THE BEST SYSTEM IN THE WORLD”.

THE CLOSURE OF COMMUNITY HOSPITALS DUE TO THE

FINANCIAL DRAIN OF HAVING TO TREAT UNINSURED (AND OFTEN UNDOCUMENTED) PATIENTS IS ANOTHER. ADD THEIR COSTS OF HAVING TO PROVIDE MEDICAL CARE IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE PATIENT. AND INSURANCE COMPANIES HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR EFFORTS TO LIMIT BOTH DOCTORS’ DETERMINATION OF PATIENT CHARGES AND THE PAYMENT OF THEIR CLAIMS. THIS HAS ESTABLISHED AN ONGOING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN OUR MEDICAL AND LEGAL PROFESSIONS.

“ . . . OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM CAN PROVIDE ITS SHARE OF TIPPING POINTS.”

OUR SYSTEM CAN BE REPAIRED, BUT BROAD CHANGES ARE NECESSARY WHICH THE CONGRESS CAN BE COUNTED ON TO AVOID. MEANWHILE THE PROSPECT OF ESCALATING COSTS, DIMINISHING CARE, AND EXPANDING POPULATION ASSURES US THAT OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM CAN PROVIDE ITS SHARE OF TIPPING POINTS.

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## IN SUMMARY

WE HAVE CALLED ATTENTION TO KEY ISSUES FACING OUR COUNTRY ALL OF WHICH HAVE TIPPING POINTS, AND WE HAVE BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF OUR GOVERNMENT’S LACK OF ATTENTION TO THEM. OUR CRITICISM IS NOT OF THE SNIPE AND GRIPE, COCKTAIL PARTY TYPE MOST PEOPLE ENGAGE IN BECAUSE OF A SPECIFIC ACT OR RULING WITH WHICH THEY DISAGREE. RATHER, THESE ISSUES CAN SURELY BE CONSIDERED AS OR AMONG THE MOST SERIOUS WE FACE, AND YET THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE, COLLECTIVE FAILURE ON THE PART OF OUR GOVERNMENT TO BE ABLE TO VIEW THEM AS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF OUR NATIONAL INTEREST.

THE PROCESS OF FAILING TO UNDERSTAND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR ENVIRONMENT IS ONE OF LONG STANDING, BUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF ITS CONSEQUENCES ONLY BEGAN TO BE NOTED IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY IN THE LAST HALF CENTURY AND HAS GREATLY ACCELERATED IN RECENT YEARS.

THERE ARE MANY ELEMENTS IN CONSTANT MOTION THAT, LIKE SUBATOMIC PARTICLES, PUSH, PULL AND COLLIDE WITH EACH OTHER SO THAT THEIR ACTIONS AND REACTIONS BECOME UNDISTINGUISHABLE. THIS MIX IS COMPOSED OF DOLLARS, POPULATION UNITS, FISHERIES, AGRICULTURAL CROPS, TEMPERATURES, PRECIPITATION, FLOODING, FOREST FIRES, DESERTIFICATION, INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION, CONTAGIOUS DISEASES, CONTAMINATION OF OUR OCEANS, RIVERS AND LIVESTOCK, AND OTHER FORMS OF DEGRADATION.

THEY ARE THE TOWER OF TOOTHPICKS, THE COLUMN OF CANS AND THE HOUSE OF CARDS. THEY ARE ALL PHYSICALLY MEASURABLE AND IDENTIFIABLE, AND THEY ALL HAVE TIPPING POINTS.

FOR EXAMPLE, OUR NATIONAL POPULATION IS NOW JUST OVER 300 MILLION. IF WE INCREASE AT THE RATE OF 1% A YEAR, AS WE ARE NOW DOING, AT SOME FUTURE TIME THE ADDED POPULATION WILL OVERWHELM THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES, THE SYSTEM WILL COLLAPSE AND PASS FROM OUR CONTROL. IF WE INCREASE THE POPULATION GROWTH TO 10%, THE TIPPING POINT AND COLLAPSE WILL BE REACHED MUCH SOONER. THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR THE OTHER TOOTHPICKS, CANS AND CARDS THAT FORM OUR ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE. NO GREAT LEAP OF REASON OR VISION IS NEEDED TO RECOGNIZE THIS TRUTH.

AND YET, STRAIN AND HOPE AS WE MAY TO HEAR A VOICE FROM OUR 537 ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE, SENATE AND WHITE HOUSE MAKE THIS CONNECTION, THERE IS ONLY SILENCE.

IT WOULD BE FITTING IF THERE WAS A SPECIAL CIRCLE IN POLITICAL HELL RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN GIVEN GREAT POWER AND, BY PUTTING IT ONLY TO PETTY USE, MOCK THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTATION ON WHICH OUR GOVERNMENT IS BASED. DELAY SEEMS ENDLESS. OPPORTUNITY IS NOT. AND SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE TWO, TIPPING POINTS AWAIT US.

AND THERE IS ANOTHER TIPPING POINT WHICH WE MAY WELL HAVE PASSED AND WHICH MAY CLAIM AS CASUALTIES SOME OF OUR REPUBLIC'S MOST VALUABLE ELEMENTS AND ASPIRATIONS. UNLIKE OUR PREVIOUS ONES, IT DOES NOT INVOLVE MONEY, POPULATION UNITS OR MEASUREMENTS OF SEA LEVEL OR TEMPERATURE. IT IS ONE OF SPIRIT, TRULY A "MATTER OF CONSCIENCE".

WE REFER TO THE MASSIVE, ALMOST PERVASIVE, REACH OF CORRUPTION THROUGHOUT OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM AND GOVERNMENTAL BUREAUCRACY. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT BEFORE, OUR NATIONAL CORRUPTION HAS INCREASED IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE GROWTH OF MONEY AND POWER THAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED IN OUR PURSUIT OF THE ROLE OF SOLE SUPERPOWER.

AS WITH OTHER DEPARTURES FROM OUR HISTORICAL TRADITION, CORRUPTION EXPANDED IN THE RECENT G. W. BUSH ADMINISTRATION. IT APPEARED IN A VARIETY OF FORMS AND ENABLED MANY OTHERS. THIS CORRUPTION OF MONEY, POWER AND SPIRIT WORKS IN SEVERAL WAYS, MOSTLY SILENTLY AND BENEATH THE SURFACE UNTIL IT CAN NO LONGER BE CONTAINED. THEN IT ERUPTS IN A MEDIA FRENZY (I.E., JACK ABRAMOFF) AFTER WHICH THE POLITICAL RANKS ARE CLOSED MORE TIGHTLY THAN THEY WERE BEFORE, AND IT'S BACK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL.

THE PRIME SOURCES OF CORRUPTION IN OUR GOVERNMENT IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA ARE OUR LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES, AND IT IS BECAUSE OF THEIR ACCEPTANCE AND COMPLICITY THAT CORRUPTION HAS BEEN ABLE TO THRIVE IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT MOST AMERICANS PREFER HIGHER ETHICAL STANDARDS. ALTHOUGH CORRUPTION CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, IT GENERALLY FITS THIS PROFILE:

1) LEGISLATIVE — THE NORMAL COURSE OF POLITICAL

PROGRESS IN OUR COUNTRY STARTS WITH ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT TO A LOCAL BOARD OR OFFICE, THEN TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE AND FINALLY TO NATIONAL OFFICE IN THE CONGRESS. BY THE TIME THE LATTER IS REACHED, THE NEWLY ELECTED MEMBER OF CONGRESS CAN LOOK BACK UPON A PERIOD OF PERHAPS TEN TO TWENTY YEARS IN WHICH THE CRITICAL ELEMENT OF PERSUASION WAS NOT THE THOUGHT, LANGUAGE OR PHILOSOPHY BY WHICH WE USUALLY PRESENT HIGH PURPOSE, BUT RATHER THE ABILITY OF MONEY AND POWER TO BRING TOGETHER SEPARATE, AND OFTEN DIFFERENT, INTERESTS AND TO BE SHARED BY THEM. WITH MORE MONEY AND MORE POWER AT HAND IN WASHINGTON, THE FLOW OF POWER CONTINUES AND ACCELERATES. SOMETIMES IT IS REFERRED TO AS "COMPROMISE", AND SOMETIMES AS "THE ART OF THE DEAL", BUT WHAT IT AMOUNTS TO IS A "GO ALONG TO GET ALONG" METHOD OF LEGISLATION MOSTLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC BENEFITS TO SMALL GROUPS OF LOCAL INTERESTS USUALLY IDENTIFIED AS "CONSTITUENTS" OR "THE AMERICAN PEOPLE".

THIS CRAFTING OF OUR NATIONAL LEGISLATION IN A WAY THAT KEEPS IT CAPTIVE TO LOCAL INTERESTS/CONTRIBUTORS IS CORRUPTION IN ITS MOST LETHAL FORM. THE ESSENCE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IS THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS THROUGH THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NATION'S LAWS AND POLICIES. WITH WIDE-SCALE CORRUPTION IN CONGRESS, THAT ACCESS IS EFFECTIVELY DEFLECTED OR DENIED.

IN OUR CONGRESS THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF CORRUPTION AT WORK. THE FIRST IS THE USUAL QUID PRO QUO, BRIDGE-TO-NOWHERE (OR BRIDGES-TO-EVERYWHERE) KIND OF LEGISLATION. THE OTHER IS MUCH DIFFERENT AND MORE LETHAL. IT IS THE CORRUPTION OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE LEGISLATIVE MINDS SO THAT THEY ARE UNABLE TO FORM A TRUE VISION OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST. IN A STATE, COMPOSED OF AS MANY DIFFERING ELEMENTS AS OURS, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT, BUT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL, TO BE ABLE TO HAVE A NATIONAL VISION.

2. EXECUTIVE — THE POWER OF THIS BRANCH CAN BE USED IN TANDEM WITH THE CONGRESS TO MOVE THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT. UNFORTUNATELY, SINCE THE NIXON PRESIDENCY THE TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO BRANCHES HAS INCREASED, MOSTLY AS A RESULT OF VARIOUS PRESIDENTS' EFFORTS TO EXTEND AND STRENGTHEN EXECUTIVE POWER. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BOTH THROUGH OUTRIGHT EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND THE LESS OBVIOUS, BUT EQUALLY DESTRUCTIVE, TOLERATION AND EXPANSION OF EXECUTIVE POWER AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.

AS WITH OTHER FAILURES, THESE HAVE REACHED NEW HEIGHTS IN THE SECOND BUSH ADMINISTRATION IN ITS EFFORTS TO EDIT, DICTATE AND/OR RESTATE SCIENTIFIC OPINION TO MEET WHITE HOUSE IDEOLOGICAL CRITERIA.

3. BUREAUCRATIC — THE WASHINGTON BUREAUCRACY IS HOST TO MANY GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS, AS WELL

AS PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS, ALL OF WHICH TO SOME DEGREE REFLECT THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF GOVERNMENT.

IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, THE PRACTICE OF TYING STAFF EMPLOYMENT AND PROMOTION TO POLITICAL IDEOLOGY HAS HAD A STULTIFYING EFFECT UPON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE, THEREBY REDUCING EFFICIENCY, HAS NARROWED OR ELIMINATED THEIR NATIONAL VISION AND RENDERED THEM INCAPABLE OF SERVING THOSE WHOM THEY ARE CHARGED TO PROTECT — FOR EXAMPLE, THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND OUR NATIVE AMERICAN POPULATION.

PERHAPS NOWHERE HAS THIS IMPOSITION OF THE IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE BEEN PRACTICED WITH SUCH DETERMINATION AND DEVASTATING RESULTS AS IN OUR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE UNDER ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBERTO GONZALES. TODAY, THE DOJ REMAINS VERY MUCH A FLAWED INSTITUTION DIVIDED BY SERIOUS MORALE AND PERSONNEL PROBLEMS, AND UNABLE TO PERFORM ITS ROLE AS THE PEOPLE’S LAWYER. TO REBUILD IT TO A LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL RESPECT WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT BY THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION. THE DOJ IS NOT ALONE, AS THERE ARE OTHER DARK CORNERS AND CORRIDORS OF OUR GOVERNMENT WHERE THE LIGHT OF OUR CONSTITUTION DOES NOT REACH.

OUR SPIRITUAL CORRUPTION AND LOSS OF NATIONAL VISION ARE AN ONGOING PROCESS IN WHICH WE MAY HAVE PASSED THE TIPPING POINT, MEANING THAT WE MAY NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO HAVE OR ASPIRE TO AN ETHICAL GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL VISION. SPIRIT IS NOT EASY TO REGAIN, AND, AS IN NATURE, OURS MAY HAVE BEEN IRREVOCABLY CHANGED OR DAMAGED. NOTHING SHORT OF A CONCERTED PUBLIC/ PRIVATE EFFORT WILL RECAPTURE WHAT WE HAD.

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## POST-ELECTION POLITICAL NOTES

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BROKE NEW GROUND IN SEVERAL WAYS — SOME, PERHAPS, WELCOME SIGNS OF WHAT’S TO COME, AND OTHERS NOT. WITH REGARD TO THE FORMER, THE GRADUAL EROSION OF VOTER TURNOUT OVER THE PAST HALF-CENTURY WAS EMPHATICALLY REVERSED.

AS STATES COMPLETED THEIR ELECTORAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS IN MID-DECEMBER, IT WAS REVEALED THAT SOMEWHAT OVER 131 MILLION PEOPLE VOTED AS COMPARED TO 122 MILLION IN 2004. IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGE OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS, 2008 WAS 61.6 TO 60.1 FOR 2004 .<sup>6</sup> THESE PERCENTAGES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER THAN THE ALMOST 50% LEVEL OF PAST ELECTIONS.

AND ON THE DARK SIDE WE HAVE ESTIMATES THAT THE COST OF OUR ’08 ELECTIONS HAVE ALSO RISEN APPRECIABLY. FOR THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD OF 2007 AND 2008 THE CENTER FOR

RESPONSIVE POLITICS HAS CONCLUDED THAT \$2.4 BILLION WAS SPENT ON OUR PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS AND \$2.9 BILLION ON HOUSE AND SENATE CANDIDACIES, FOR AN EYE (AND WALLET) OPENING TOTAL OF \$5.3 BILLION .<sup>7</sup>

FURTHER FOCUS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS IRRESISTIBLE AND SHOWS THAT THE PER CAPITA PRESIDENTIAL EXPENDITURE (\$2.4 BILLION FOR 131 MILLION VOTES) WAS \$18.32. AS WE MAY TEND TO TAKE EXCESS FOR GRANTED IN AMERICA, THE SHOCK VALUE OF SUCH AN AMOUNT MAY NOT BE READILY RECOGNIZED. WE LACK STATISTICS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT SUSPECT THEY WOULD BE MUCH LOWER.

ALMOST CERTAINLY A NEW, TWO YEAR HIGH WAS REACHED FOR THE TEDIUM LEVEL OF THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS. ENDLESSLY REPETITIVE RHETORIC BY ALL DESIGNED TO AVOID MAKING AN ERROR WHICH COULD BE TURNED BACK UPON THE SPEAKER LEFT VIEWERS/LISTENERS WITH THE FEELING (MOSTLY JUSTIFIABLE) THAT WHAT THEY WERE BEING OFFERED WAS STALE, NOT NEWSWORTHY AND LACKING THE SPECIFICITY NECESSARY TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.

OURS IS NOT NOW A GOOD SYSTEM FOR MAKING SERIOUS CHOICES. IT DEPENDS TOO MUCH ON SPIN, HOOPLA, TRIVIA, MONEY AND THE MANIPULATION OF THE VOTER, BUT, AS ANY CHANGE WOULD HAVE TO HAVE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT IT WILL OCCUR. STILL, WE CAN DREAM OF A TIME WHEN THE PUBLIC MIGHT CALL FOR SOMETHING BETTER.

“ . . . THESE WORK BETTER AS THE BY-PRODUCT, NOT THE PURPOSE, OF GOVERNMENT.”

FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, AND BE SUCCESSFUL, OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE WILL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ROLES IN A NEW LIGHT FOCUSED ON THE GREATER BENEFIT FOR THE NATION — NOT POLITICAL PARTIES, OR LOCAL SPECIAL INTERESTS OR THE ELECTION CYCLE. THESE WORK BETTER AS THE BY-PRODUCT, NOT THE PURPOSE, OF GOVERNMENT. AND, GIVEN SUCH A TRANSFORMATION, WE MIGHT ONCE AGAIN BE ABLE TO VIEW OUR MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AS LEADERS.

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## DYNASTICALLY DETERMINED

CAROLINE KENNEDY, WHO TO DATE HAS SHOWN NO EVIDENCE OF INTEREST IN OR APTITUDE FOR PUBLIC LIFE, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT SHE WANTS TO BE APPOINTED TO SUCCEED HILLARY CLINTON AS ONE OF NEW YORK’S SENATORS. AS THERE IS CERTAINLY NOTHING LIKE STARTING AT THE TOP TO ASSURE SUCCESS, SHE HAS CHOSEN TO ESCHUE THE HURLY-BURLY OF ELECTORAL POLITICS AND IS NOW INTERVIEWING, OR

BEING INTERVIEWED, FOR THIS VERY POWERFUL AND IMPORTANT POSITION.

WE HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED AS TO THE REASONS FOR THIS MOVE AT THIS TIME, BUT PERHAPS SHE WAS GALVANIZED INTO ACTION BY THE PROSPECT OF OUR SENATE WITHOUT A KENNEDY DUE TO HER UNCLE TED'S FAILING HEALTH.

## BEATING THE BUSHES

IN POLITICS, ONE ACT OR EVENT CAN GIVE US A SUGGESTION OF THE FUTURE, OF OTHER EVENTS TO FOLLOW. FUTURE VIEWING IS NOT EASY. IT REQUIRES THAT WE KEEP OUR FEET IN THE PRESENT AND THEN BEND FORWARD FAR ENOUGH TO LOOK AROUND THE CORNER AND SEE WHAT'S COMING. FOR FUN, HERE GOES.

SEN. MEL MARTINEZ (R-FL) HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION WHEN HIS TERM EXPIRES. MARTINEZ, BORN IN CUBA, HAS IMMIGRANT CREDENTIALS. HE SUCCEEDED A HIGHLY POPULAR AND COMMITTED BOB GRAHAM AND HAS BEEN A STRONG AND CONSISTENT SPOKESMAN FOR THE VERY VOCAL ANTI-CASTRO MIAMI CUBAN COMMUNITY WHICH HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL FAR BEYOND ITS NUMBERS IN EXERTING PRESSURE UPON OUR GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES AS FAR BACK AS THE KENNEDY AND NIXON ADMINISTRATIONS. HE SERVED IN THE SENATE WHILE JEB BUSH WAS FLORIDA'S GOVERNOR.

JEB BUSH, GEORGE'S YOUNGER BROTHER, WAS THOUGHT BY MANY PEOPLE WITH A POLITICAL VIEW AND INTEREST, PRIOR TO GEORGE'S BECOMING GOVERNOR OF TX, TO BE THE BUSH FAMILY MEMBER MOST LIKELY TO ENTER POLITICS AND CONTINUE THE FAMILY'S PARTICIPATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (I.E., FINAL DESTINATION — THE PRESIDENCY). THIS PROGRESSION SUFFERED A SLOWDOWN DUE TO GEORGE'S GUBERNATORIAL SUCCESS IN TX AND THEN HIS RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT. JEB STEPPED BACK AND SETTLED FOR FLORIDA'S GOVERNORSHIP.

JEB HAS A HISPANIC WIFE AND A YOUNG SON WHO SPEAKS FLUENT SPANISH AND WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN POINTED TOWARDS POLITICS AND MENTIONED AS THE MEANS FOR CONTINUING THE BUSH POLITICAL PRESENCE INTO THE NEXT GENERATION.

THE LATINO VOTING SIGNIFICANCE GROWS WITH ITS NUMBERS, AND REPUBLICANS WERE DISAPPOINTED BY THEIR INABILITY TO CAPTURE VOTES FROM THIS GROUP IN THE RECENT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. ENTER A MEL MARTINEZ/JEB BUSH EFFORT THAT MIGHT FOLLOW THESE LINES.

- 2008 — MARTINEZ ANNOUNCED HE WOULD NOT RUN FOR REELECTION IN 2010.
- 2010-2016 — MARTINEZ WORKS FOR BUSH OR SOME CONSERVATIVE GROUP OR ORGANIZATION THAT WILL PROVIDE HIM THE COVER AND OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE BUSH AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN 2016. REMEMBER THAT MARTINEZ SERVED AS THE GOP CHAIRMAN AND WAS THE TOP CONTACT FOR STATE AND LOCAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES,

INCLUDING THE ALL-IMPORTANT PERMANENT CONVENTION DELEGATES, THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

G. H. W. BUSH HAD SIMILARLY SERVED AS PARTY CHAIRMAN AND PUT THE CONTACTS IT PROVIDED TO GOOD USE IN OBTAINING HIS NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY. ALSO, RICHARD NIXON, AFTER HIS MELTDOWN DEFEAT FOR CALIFORNIA'S GOVERNORSHIP, SPENT THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS REBUILDING HIS IMAGE AND RESCUING HIS CAREER BY TOURING THE COUNTRY AND GIVING SPEECHES TO ANY AND ALL AUDIENCES. STATE CAPITALS WERE PREFERRED LOCALES BECAUSE MORE STATE/LOCAL OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES COULD BE FOUND THERE. HE ALWAYS DEVOTED AT LEAST ONE DAY OF HIS MANY VISITS TO THIS POLITICAL EFFORT AND, WHEN THE TIME CAME, HE HAD THE VOTES.

- 2016 — WITH MARTINEZ' HELP, BUSH WOULD EXPECT TO OBTAIN FAR GREATER SUPPORT FROM LATINO VOTERS AND, AS THIS BLOC IS SEEN BY MANY AS A "SWING" VOTE, BUSH MIGHT CHOOSE MARTINEZ AS HIS RUNNING MATE. BECAUSE MARTINEZ WAS BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S., HE CAN NEVER BECOME PRESIDENT AND, THEREFORE, THE VICE-PRESIDENCY IS THE HIGHEST OFFICE TO WHICH HE CAN ASPIRE.

BUT EVEN IF HE WERE NOT SELECTED TO RUN WITH BUSH, HE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY RECEIVE A HIGH APPOINTIVE OFFICE SUCH AS SECRETARY OF STATE, AMBASSADOR TO THE UN OR, PERHAPS SOME OTHER HIGH DIPLOMATIC OR GOVERNMENT POST.

JEB BUSH HAD BEEN EXPECTED BY MANY OBSERVERS TO RUN FOR THE MARTINEZ SENATE SEAT IN 2010 AND USE IT TO SEEK THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN 2016. THIS USE OF CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE AS A LAUNCHING PLATFORM IS THE CURRENT METHOD OF CHOICE AS WAS EVIDENT IN BOTH PARTIES' SLATES OF CANDIDATES IN THE RECENT ELECTION.

ON JANUARY 6, HOWEVER, BUSH ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT RUN FOR THE SENATE IN 2016<sup>8</sup>. IN SPITE OF PRIOR SIGNS OF WANTING TO CONNECT THE DYNASTIC DOTS, BUSH MAY HAVE REALIZED THAT SUCH A CAMPAIGN, IF IT FAILED, COULD PROVE A FATAL BLOW TO FURTHER AMBITIONS OF NATIONAL OFFICE, AND THAT IT WOULD BE BURDENED BY TWO RECENT NEGATIVE FACTORS — HIS CONTROVERSIAL AND MEDIOCRE RECORD AS FLORIDA'S GOVERNOR AND THE MOUNTING DISTASTE AND DISAPPOINTMENT OVER HIS BROTHER'S TWO WHITE HOUSE TERMS. IN BOTH OF THESE MATTERS BUSH WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND ITS ABILITY TO MARK THEM AS "PAST" AND "DISTANT".

WELL, THERE IT IS — SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY; THE TAROT READER'S CRYSTAL BALL, OR THE REAL WORLD SPINNING ITS WAY INTO THE FUTURE? WHO KNOWS? ALL WILL BE REVEALED IN TIME.

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THE BUSH AND KENNEDY FAMILIES CERTAINLY THROW A BRIGHT LIGHT ON THE AMERICAN PUBLIC'S EMBRACE OF

POLITICS BY GENETIC DESCENT. CAROLINE'S ATTEMPT TO SLIP INTO THE SENATE WITH MINIMUM SCRUTINY WAS BOTH AWKWARD AND PRESUMPTIVE. SIMILARLY, JEB BUSH'S ANTICIPATED USE OF A TWO-TERM OBAMA PRESIDENCY AS A LATERAL PASS FROM BROTHER GEORGE, AFTER WHICH HE AND HIS CAN RESTART THE LINE, IS EQUALLY OFFENSIVE TO OUR SYSTEM, OR AT LEAST TO WHAT IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST.

DYNASTIC POLITICS ARE DANGEROUS IN MANY WAYS. THEY ARE ALIEN TO OUR ORIGINS AND YET THEY HAVE CAPTIVATED MANY LEVELS OF OUR POLITICAL PROCESS. WHY? HOW?

FIRST, THEY ARE A FORM OF ARROGANCE WHICH APPEARS AS A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT — ACTUALLY TWO ENTITLEMENTS. THE FIRST IS THAT OF THE DYNASTIC FAMILY'S CANDIDATE WHO ASSUMES ELECTION SHOULD BE HIS/HERS BECAUSE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS HAD PREVIOUSLY HELD IT. I AM; THEREFORE, I SERVE.

THIS IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO STAND BY ITSELF AND MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE BELIEF THAT THE COUNTRY'S NEED FOR THE CANDIDATE IS AS STRONG AS VICE-VERSA. THIS IS THE SECOND ENTITLEMENT, WHICH OF COURSE, IS BOGUS, BUT IT ESTABLISHES THE PERCEPTION OF A NEED THAT SERVES THE COUNTRY'S INTEREST. UNDERLYING THE ARROGANCE OF THESE TWO ENTITLEMENTS THAT OPERATE IN TANDEM IS CONDESCENSION TOWARDS THE AMERICAN VOTER THAT SAYS, IN EFFECT, OUT OF OVER 300 MILLION PEOPLE "ONLY THIS FAMILY WILL DO."

WHILE JEB BUSH MAY HAVE FORESEEN THE DIFFICULTY THAT WOULD ATTACH TO A CAMPAIGN FOR THE SENATE AS THE RESULT OF THE EXTENSIVE FAILURES OF HIS BROTHER'S TWO TERMS IN OFFICE, NO SUCH REALIZATION HAS COME TO THEIR FATHER WHO, WITH AN ALMOST PALPABLE SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT, TOLD FOX NEWS ON JANUARY 4 THAT JEB "COULD USE THE SENATE SEAT AS A SPRINGBOARD TO A THIRD BUSH WHITE HOUSE"<sup>9</sup>

AND JUST TO MAKE SURE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE KNOW THEY CAN HAVE ANOTHER BUSH PRESIDENT, "W", HIMSELF, HAD COMMENTED EARLIER THAT "HIS BROTHER WOULD BE AN 'AWESOME' U.S. SENATOR".<sup>10</sup>

THIS PRESSURE HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN. IN COMING MONTHS AND YEARS IT WILL BE INCREASED IN WAYS BOTH SUBTLE AND OBVIOUS. IT IS OUR OPINION THAT THE NATION HAS EXPERIENCED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE FROM THE BUSH POLITICAL PRESENCE, THAT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH AND THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, VIA POLLS OR BALLOTS, WILL BE ABLE TO INFORM THE MEMBERS OF THIS DYNASTY-IN-WAITING THAT ITS MISSION IS ONE THAT WILL NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED.

AND WHY DO AMERICANS ACCEPT THIS NATIONAL PUT-DOWN? IT IS BECAUSE THEIR FIRST FUNCTION — THAT OF DETERMINING WHO SHALL REPRESENT THEM IN GOVERNMENT — HAS LARGELY BEEN TAKEN OVER, WITH THEIR CONSENT, BY THE RELENTLESS SPIN MACHINES OF OUR MASS MEDIA WHOSE WEALTH, TECHNOLOGY AND REACH DOMINATE THE POLITICAL PROCESS, AND BOTH PARTIES AS WELL.

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER WAS THE LAST PRESIDENT OF THE OLD SYSTEM WHICH CAME TO ITS END WITH THE NIXON-KENNEDY DEBATES AFTER WHICH ALL THINGS POLITICAL CHANGED.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE LULLED THEMSELVES INTO A STATE OF POLITICAL SUSPENSION IN WHICH THEY FAIL TO DO THE HARD WORK OF ATTEMPTING TO DECIDE THE MERITS AND/OR FAULTS WITHIN SERIOUS AND COMPLICATED NATIONAL ISSUES. IT IS EASIER TO CONSULT POLLS, LISTEN TO 24/7 TALK RADIO OR TV OR READ THE PROLIFERATING SOURCES OF HOME-DELIVERED DIRECT MAIL, ALL OF WHICH CREATE A STATE OF DEPENDENCY WHICH THE MASS MEDIA AND OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ARE ALL TOO HAPPY TO PUT TO THE SERVICE OF THEIR OWN, RATHER THAN THE NATIONAL, INTEREST.

"BUT IS THERE THE WILL TO  
OVERCOME THE MEDIA'S MOMENTUM?"

AS THE PROSPECTS AHEAD ARE THOSE OF GREATER NUMBERS, MORE TECHNOLOGY, MORE MONEY AND MORE SPIN, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE BACK OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS WITHOUT ENORMOUS AND DEDICATED EFFORT. BUT IS THERE THE WILL TO OVERCOME THE MEDIA'S MOMENTUM?

THERE SEEMS TO BE AN UNSETTLING, INVERSE CORRELATION BETWEEN MONEY/MEDIA AND THE QUALITY OF OUR GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS. AS WE TURNED FROM THE EIGHTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, OUR PRIMARY MEDIUM WAS THE PRINTED NEWSPAPER IN A FORM THAT SEEMS PRIMITIVE BY TODAY'S CAPABILITIES. OUR GOVERNMENT WAS PURPOSEFUL AND SURPRISINGLY RESPONSIVE CONSIDERING THE LIMITED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE.

BY THE NEXT TURN INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE MEDIA/MONEY FACTOR HAD EXPANDED CONSIDERABLY DUE TO GROWING POPULATION, RAILROADS AND THE TELEGRAPH. THE WHISTLE-STOP CAMPAIGN WAS A MARVEL OF EFFICIENCY FOR CANDIDATES — TRAIN PULLS INTO SMALL TOWN AND BLOWS WHISTLE; PEOPLE STOP WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND RUN TO RAILROAD STATION; CANDIDATE GIVES SPEECH FROM TRAIN'S REAR CAR AND MOVES ON TO THE NEXT STOP WITH THE SPEECH'S LENGTH, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, BEING DETERMINED BY THE SIZE OF THE AUDIENCE. THE UNAIDED HUMAN VOICE DID THE WORK, AS THERE WERE NO MICROPHONES. MEANWHILE, GOVERNMENT HAD BECOME MORE MONEY ORIENTED, AND WE HAD UNDERTAKEN TO ASSUME OUR PLACE AS AN INTERNATIONAL POWER — OUR "MANIFEST DESTINY".

TODAY THE MEDIA/MONEY ELEMENT IS DOMINANT IN BOTH THE ELECTION AND FUNCTIONING OF GOVERNMENT. CANDIDATES CAN ADDRESS MILLIONS FROM A STUDIO, STADIUM OR AUDITORIUM. MICROPHONES ARE PINNED DISCREETLY TO LAPELS AND THE MESSAGES THEY CARRY ARE INSTANTLY COMBINED WITH COLORED VISUAL IMAGES. WE HAVE ACHIEVED INSTANT CAMPAIGNING, INSTANT REPORTING AND INSTANT POLITICS.

BUT OUR GOVERNMENT HAS NOT FARED SO WELL. THE BARGAIN IT HAS MADE WITH OUR MULTI-MEDIA FORUMS BEARS A FAUSTIAN IMPRINT. THE DEBT THAT OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OWE THE MEDIA FOR THEIR ELECTION CAN NEVER BE REPAYED. WHAT'S WORSE IS THAT THE EYE OF THE MEDIA, THE CAMERA, KNOWS ALL AND CAN BE PERSUADED TO TELL. THIS COMBINATION OF OBLIGATION AND THREAT HAS BROUGHT US TO OUR PRESENT POINT OF HAVING A GOVERNMENT THAT HAS BEEN DRIVEN TO IRRESPONSIBILITY AND FEAR OF ENGAGING ISSUES THAT GO BEYOND LOCAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONCERNS. EVEN WHEN FORCED BY CIRCUMSTANCE INTO OBVIOUS INSTANCES OF NATIONAL INTEREST, GOVERNMENT MAY OFFER ONLY LIP, NOT REAL, SERVICE.

AMERICA WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE MANY PROBLEMS IT FACES AT HOME AND ABROAD UNTIL ITS GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT ITSELF AND FIND A VOICE AND IDENTITY OF NATIONAL PURPOSE.

IT SHOULD PUT ASIDE ITS POLICY OF AVOIDANCE OF INCREASINGLY GRAVE ISSUES, AS THIS WILL ONLY BRING US MORE QUICKLY TO THE MOMENT WHEN WE MUST FACE ITS CONSEQUENCES.

WHILE BEARING THE GREATER BURDEN, GOVERNMENT IS NOT ALONE IN NEEDING TO BE CHANGED. THE ELECTORATE MUST ALSO BE ABLE TO SEE AND FEEL THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL VISION, AND THE MEDIA MUST BE ABLE TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THEIR UNIQUE ROLE AND OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS THOSE WHO HOLD OR SEEK OFFICE FOR SPECIFIC ANSWERS AND COMMITMENTS.

OUR PAST STRATEGY OF AVOIDANCE IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. FOR EXAMPLE WE HAVE ONLY TO REVISIT OUR POLITICAL CORUPTION PROBLEM. WE ARE BURDENED BY TWO FORMS — THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THAT OF THE PROCESS. THESE ARE CLOSELY JOINED — EACH ONE FEEDING ON AND BREEDING WITH THE OTHER. LISTENING TO PRESIDENT OBAMA'S EARLY STATEMENTS, WE SENSE THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CONFRONT THIS PROBLEM, BUT RECOGNIZES THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF POLITICAL CAPITAL THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE SPENT TO ATTRACT SUPPORT. AND AT THIS TIME WE THINK IT DOUBTFUL THAT OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM COULD GENERATE SUFFICIENT CAPITAL TO MOUNT A CORRECTIVE EFFORT.

THE QUESTION BEFORE THE NATION IS WHETHER ALL ITS PARTS, BUT WITH GOVERNMENT LEADING, CAN JOIN IN VISION, FIND THE WILL, MAKE THE EFFORT AND RETURN US TO THE METHODS AND PURPOSES THAT WE ONCE SAW AS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER.

THIS IS JUST ONE OF MANY CHALLENGES THAT FACE OUR NEW PRESIDENT, BUT IF HE CAN START US ON OUR WAY TO REDISCOVERY, HE WILL ALSO HAVE MADE OUR OTHER PROBLEMS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE MANAGEABLE.

<sup>1</sup>L. FRANK BAUM, THE WIZARD OF OZ, 1900

<sup>2</sup>HOW MANY AMERICANS? BY STEVEN A CAMAROTA, THE WASHINGTON POST, 9/2/08, P A15. MR. CAMAROTA IS DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AT THE CENTER FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES IN WASHINGTON

<sup>3</sup>“CARRYING CAPACITY REFERS TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN BE SUPPORTED IN A GIVEN AREA WITHIN NATURAL RESOURCE LIMITS, AND WITHOUT DEGRADING THE NATURAL SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. THE CARRYING CAPACITY FOR ANY GIVEN AREA IS NOT FIXED. IT CAN BE ALTERED BY IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY, BUT MOSTLY IT IS CHANGED FOR THE WORSE BY PRESSURES WHICH ACCOMPANY A POPULATION INCREASE. AS THE ENVIRONMENT IS DEGRADED, CARRYING CAPACITY ACTUALLY SHRINKS, LEAVING THE ENVIRONMENT NO LONGER ABLE TO SUPPORT EVEN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO COULD FORMERLY HAVE LIVED IN THE AREA ON A SUSTAINABLE BASIS. NO POPULATION CAN LIVE BEYOND THE ENVIRONMENT'S CARRYING CAPACITY FOR VERY LONG. THE AVERAGE AMERICAN'S "ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT" (THE DEMANDS AN INDIVIDUAL ENDOWED WITH AVERAGE AMOUNTS OF RESOURCES, I.E., LAND, WATER, FOOD, FIBER, WASTE ASSIMILATION AND DISPOSAL, ETC. PUTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT) IS ABOUT 12 ACRES, AN AREA FAR GREATER THAN THAT TAKEN UP BY ONE'S RESIDENCE AND PLACE OF SCHOOL OR WORK AND OTHER PLACES WHERE HE OR SHE IS. WE MUST THINK IN TERMS OF "CARRYING CAPACITY" NOT LAND AREA. THE EFFECTS OF UNFETTERED POPULATION GROWTH DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE CARRYING CAPACITY IN THE UNITED STATES.” SOURCE: CARRYING CAPACITY NETWORK, 2000 P STREET NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036 TEL: 202-296-4548.

<sup>4</sup>BOB GOLDSBOROUGH, PRESIDENT; AMERICANS FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL; LETTER, 1/09

<sup>5</sup>CANADA PURSUES A SIMILAR POLICY, BUT ITS POPULATION DOES NOT EXCEED ITS CARRYING CAPACITY AS OURS DOES. MUCH OF ITS LAND MASS IS AVAILABLE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT, BUT THE SEVERITY OF ITS CLIMATE HAS INHIBITED HABITATION.

<sup>6</sup>ASSOCIATED PRESS VIA PALM BEACH POST, 12/15/08

<sup>7</sup>PALM BEACH POST — 10/31/08. GEORGE F. WILL

<sup>8</sup>PALM BEACH POST — 1/7/09 — BY MICHAEL C. BENDER, CAPITAL BUREAU

<sup>9</sup>IBID

<sup>10</sup>IBID



EDITOR'S BIO

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ECD 1/20/09