

MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE[©]

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RENEWAL I

SINCE WE COMMENCED PUBLICATION, WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE DETERIORATION OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENT EFFECT UPON THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY. IN SPITE OF YEARS OF INCREASING IDEOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL SEPARATION BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS, IT HAS OFTEN SEEMED POSSIBLE THAT GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ABLE TO CURE ITSELF. WE NO LONGER THINK THIS IS TRUE.

BOTH SIDES CARRY THE TRADITIONAL BAGGAGE OF PERSONAL AND PARTY POLITICS. POLITICS IS ONE THING; GOVERNMENT IS QUITE ANOTHER, AND THE DIMENSIONS THAT WE USE IN OUR MEASUREMENT ARE ITS VISION, METHODS AND FAIRNESS. THESE ARE SUBJECTIVE TERMS, AS FAIRNESS TO ONE GROUP MAY SEEM JUST THE OPPOSITE TO ANOTHER, BUT FROM ITS BEGINNING OUR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC HAS IDENTIFIED ITSELF WITH A SENSE OF BROAD FAIRNESS DELIVERED TO ITS CITIZENS BY ITS LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES. TODAY WE THINK THIS IDENTIFICATION HAS BECOME MORE RHETORICAL THAN REAL AND DISAPPOINTS A LARGE SEGMENT OF OUR POPULATION.

IN OUR EXPLORATION OF EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA'S GOVERNMENT WE FIND A VARIETY OF NEGATIVES — SELECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT, CORRUPTION AT EVERY LEVEL, POLITICIZATION OF BUREAUCRACIES AND THEIR APPOINTIVE OFFICES, RECKLESS FISCAL ABANDON, DOMINATION OF THE CONGRESS BY MONEY PROVIDED BY SPECIAL INTERESTS, LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY, CONGRESSIONAL INCUMBENT REELECTION RATES OVER 90%, AND MANY MORE.

ONE CAN EXCUSE ONE, OR A FEW, OF THESE FAULTS BY A "WELL, THAT POLITICS; IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY." ATTITUDE. TO SOME EXTENT, THIS IS CORRECT, BUT THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT PREVIOUSLY WE COULD CALL UPON AND EXERCISE THE POWER OF SELF-CORRECTION.

IF WE LOOK CLOSELY AT THE PRESENT CONDUCT OF OUR GOVERNMENT, IT IS CLEAR THAT THOSE OFFICES AND PEOPLE THAT COMPRISE IT, WHETHER AT THE INSTITUTIONAL OR INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, NO LONGER HAVE THE WILL OR THE WAY OF SELF-CORRECTION. THEY ARE COMFORTABLE WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE AND SEE THEMSELVES AS "TEAM PLAYERS" IN WASHINGTON'S CULTURE.

IN OUR HALF CENTURY OF SUPER POWER STATUS TWO ELEMENTS HAVE SUFFERED DIMINISHMENT — OUR POLICIES AND THE QUALITY OF OUR DEMOCRACY. THEY ARE TIED CLOSELY TO EACH OTHER AND ARE FAR TOO IMPORTANT FOR US TO ALLOW THEIR DECLINE TO CONTINUE.

ONE REASON THAT IMPROVING OUR GOVERNMENT IS SO DIFFICULT IS THAT ITS FAILURES ARE NOT SEPARATE, ISOLATED EVENTS. WE CANNOT SIMPLY OPEN A DOOR, FIND A FAULT AND THEN APPLY A SIMPLE FIX. RATHER, OUR MANY FAULTS AND FAILURES ARE TIED TOGETHER BY A CURIOUS MIX OF TIME, PLACE, OPPORTUNITY AND MOTIVATION. THE DOOR WE OPEN WILL INVARIABLY REVEAL NOT JUST ONE FAULT/FAILURE BUT MANY JOINED TOGETHER IN A WEB OF CONSEQUENCE THAT EXTENDS TO MULTIPLE TIMES AND PLACES AND WHICH HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, COME TO SERVE AND DEFINE OUR STANDARD OF GOVERNMENT.

IN THIS ISSUE WE CONTINUE OUR ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENTAL FAILURE AND MAKE OUR INITIAL RECOMMENDATION AS TO HOW WE SHOULD GO ABOUT THE REPAIR PROCESS. THE LATTER WILL INTRUDE UPON OUR SENSE OF IDENTITY AND REQUIRE MODIFICATION OF MANY OF OUR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE CITIZEN/GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP. IT IS PROBABLE THAT THESE TOPICS WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF OUR NEXT SEVERAL ISSUES.

WE ALSO VISIT THE GULF OIL SPILL AND ARIZONA'S NEW IMMIGRATION LAW.

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FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE TO LOOK NO FURTHER THAN CORRUPTIVE SYMPTOMS SUCH AS CRONYISM AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, UNETHICAL SEXUAL OR ELECTORAL CONDUCT OR ABUSE OF HOUSE/SENATE RULES SUCH AS “EARMARKS”. THESE AND OTHERS HAVE BECOME PERVASIVE IN OUR POSTWAR GOVERNMENT. IF YOU FIND ONE HERE, YOU WILL ALSO FIND IT ELSEWHERE. THE WHOLE BODY IS INFECTED. DR. REPUBLICAN BLAMES DR. DEMOCRAT, AND VICE-VERSA.

RECENTLY, IN DISCUSSING THE BP OIL SPILL, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR SALAZAR REPLIED TO QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LAX MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AT THE MINERALS AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES OFFICE BY SAYING THEY WERE “INHERITED FROM THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION”. THIS MAY BE TRUE, BUT THEY HAD BECOME ACCEPTED PROCEDURE. SALAZAR HAD SERVED AS GOVERNOR OF CO WHOSE EXECUTIVE SKILLS WERE HIGHLY TOUTED AT THE TIME OF HIS APPOINTMENT, AND WE ARE NOW MORE THAN A QUARTER OF THE WAY THROUGH THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION. MIGHT NOT A KEEN, “ENERGY EFFICIENT” EXECUTIVE HAVE NOTED SUCH AN OBVIOUS AND EXTENSIVE BREACH OF HIS AGENCY’S REGULATIONS AND TAKEN REMEDIAL ACTION?

SALAZAR’S RESPONSE TO BLAME HIS PREDECESSOR WAS, OF COURSE, A CONVENIENCE OF THE MOMENT FOR HIM, AS HE FACED STRONG QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS THAT CARRIED WITH THEM WHAT MIGHT WELL BE CONSIDERED CRITICISM OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION. BUT THERE IS A LARGER POINT TO BE MADE.

THE PRACTICE OF LAYING POLITICAL BLAME TO A PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION HAS GROWN EXPONENTIALLY IN THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, AND HAS BEEN A STRONG ENABLER OF THE IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE AND THE PRESENT POLARIZATION OF OUR TWO PARTY SYSTEM. IT IS MOST EFFICIENTLY USED WHEN COMPARING NUMERICAL STATISTICS — ESPECIALLY THOSE INVOLVING MONEY — AND IS A BY-PRODUCT OF OUR ENORMOUS GROWTH IN MONEY, TECHNOLOGY AND MARKETS. THE UBIQUITOUS COMPUTER CAN PROVIDE INSTANT STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON ALMOST ANY SUBJECT WHICH CAN THEN BE MANIPULATED TO CREATE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE.

THIS PROCESS, HOWEVER, IS PART OF AN EVEN LARGER ONE. OUR GOVERNMENT WORKS BY LEGISLATION AND ITS SUBSEQUENT APPLICATION AND REGULATION. THE LAWS THAT ARE PASSED ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY CONVERTED INTO PUBLIC PRACTICE AND ACCEPTANCE. THEY MUST, IN ORDER TO REACH THE PUBLIC AND

BECOME OPERATIONAL, BE REGULATED AND ADMINISTERED. THE COMBINATION OF THESE TWO GOVERNMENT FORCES — LEGISLATION AND REGULATION — FORMS WHAT WE WILL CALL OUR GOVERNMENTS “BASE”, AS, IN ORDER FOR GOVERNMENT TO BE SUCCESSFUL, BOTH ELEMENTS HAVE TO BE PRESENT AND IN WORKING BALANCE.

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE WHY OUR GOVERNMENT IS IN SO MUCH TROUBLE. WE HAVE 535 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, MOST OF WHOM ARE ACCEPTING PAYMENT FROM OUTSIDE INTERESTS TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR VARIETY OF PURPOSES. AND THEN, ONCE LEGISLATION IS FINALLY AGREED TO AND PASSED, IT REMAINS TO BE PUT INTO PRACTICE BY ONE OR MORE ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS HEADED AND STAFFED BY A MIX OF POLITICAL APPOINTEES AND CIVIL SERVANTS. THESE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES ARE RECIPIENTS OF A CONTINUING AND MASSIVE FLOW OF MONEY.

THIS HAS BEEN OUR BASIC GOVERNMENT MODEL. CONGRESS PASSES LAWS AND STIPULATES THEIR FUNDING. MONEY IS ASSIGNED/ TRANSFERRED TO OPERATING ENTITIES WHICH CREATE AND MANAGE THE PROGRAMS CONGRESS HAS VOTED INTO EXISTENCE. THE AMOUNTS OF MONEY ARE LARGE AND COMPETITION FOR IT LURKS AT EVERY STEP.

BUT WHY HAS GOVERNMENT BECOME SO DIFFICULT, SO CONTRADICTORY, SO POLARIZED? HERE AGAIN WE ARE DEALING WITH CHINESE BOXES WHERE QUESTIONS YIELD ONLY ANSWERS THAT TURN INTO MORE QUESTIONS.

AMERICA’S GROWTH IN THE PAST HALF CENTURY HAS BEEN PHENOMENAL — IN POPULATION, IN WEALTH AND IN LEGISLATION — AND IT HAS CAUSED A COMMENSURATE EXPANSION OF OUR GOVERNMENT’S “BASE” — THE COMBINED MASS OF ITS LEGISLATION AND REGULATION.

THROUGHOUT THIS POSTWAR PERIOD ALL THE FORCES THAT ADVANCE CULTURES HAVE MOVED FURTHER AND FASTER, BUT THIS MASS ACCELERATION HAS NOT BEEN REFLECTED IN THE CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT OR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE 535 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. IN THE LATTER ESPECIALLY, ITS INABILITY TO SERVE THE NATIONAL INTEREST BY CRAFTING REASONED AND FAIR LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO LESSEN OUR DIFFERENCES HAS BEEN ON PRETTY MUCH CONSTANT DISPLAY. THIS PLAYS OUT IN TWO WAYS DETRIMENTAL TO OUR DEMOCRACY.

AS OUR GOVERNMENT’S BASE HAS EXPANDED, SO HAS THE BODY OF RULES THAT LEGISLATION AND REGULATION REQUIRE TO BE EFFECTIVE. AND IT IS THIS INCREASE IN RULES

THAT HAS BEEN A KEY FACTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE PHYSICAL SIZE OF GOVERNMENT.

OUR GREATER ACCEPTANCE OF AND COMMITMENT TO SPECIAL INTERESTS, HOWEVER, POSES ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR OUR GOVERNMENT IN THAT FOR EVERY RULE THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS. THIS MEANS THAT FOR EVERY WAY WE DEVISE TO SLICE AND DICE OUR COUNTRY — ECONOMICALLY, ETHNICALLY, POLITICALLY, RELIGIOUSLY, GEOGRAPHICALLY, ETC. — WE CREATE SEPARATE, SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS THAT HAVE THE ABILITY TO ALTER WEAKEN OR CONTRADICT OUR PRIMARY DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE. FOR PROOF, ONE NEEDS ONLY TO CONSULT THE THOUSANDS OF PAGES OF OUR VARIOUS TAX CODES — FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL.

THESE RULES, AND THEIR EXCEPTIONS, RESIDE IN THE LAWS AND FUNDING AGREEMENTS PASSED BY CONGRESS AND IN THE AGENCY/DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING REGULATIONS. BECAUSE THEY ARE COMPLICATED, AND OFTEN OBSCURE, THEY OFFER A POWER BASE TO ANYONE WHO CAN IDENTIFY AND PUT THEM TO USE FOR HIS/HER OWN PURPOSES.

ROBERT A. MOSES, NY'S ALL-POWERFUL PARKS COMMISSIONER FOR FORTY YEARS, HELD SO MANY OFFICES AND TITLES THAT LITTLE OF LOCAL OR STATE SIGNIFICANCE COULD TAKE PLACE WITHOUT HIS APPROVAL. HIS REAL POWER STEMMED NOT FROM HIS MULTIPLE TITLES, BUT FROM HIS EARLY DAYS IN THE LEGISLATURE WHEN, AS A YOUNG MAN, HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO READING AND WRITING EVERY PIECE OF LEGISLATION THAT AFFECTED HIS INTERESTS. HIS DETAILED, SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE OF ARCANE LEGAL LANGUAGE, MUCH OF WHICH HE HAD WRITTEN OR AMENDED, ALLOWED HIM TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL VICTORIES OVER SENATORS, GOVERNORS, PARTY HEADS AND PRESIDENTS, INCLUDING FDR.

“ . . . IF WE ARE A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS,
WE ARE ALSO A GOVERNMENT OF LOOP-HOLES.”

“WE ARE A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS NOT MEN”¹, HAS BECOME ONE OF OUR MOST DURABLE CLAIMS WHICH IS HELD READY FOR USE BY ALL POLITICIANS AND MOST FREQUENTLY ACTIVATED DURING NOMINATING OR ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS. IT IS ONLY PARTIALLY TRUE, AS CIRCUMSTANCES OFTEN DETERMINE HOW, IF AND WHEN WE UPHOLD OUR LAWS. BUT THE POINT IS THAT, IF WE ARE A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS, WE ARE ALSO A GOVERNMENT OF LOOP-HOLES.

WE FACE A DUALITY OF NATURE IN OUR GOVERNMENT'S “BASE” WHICH HAS MADE OUR GOVERNMENT CUMBERSOME AND SLOW TO RESPOND. OCCASIONALLY, WHEN LEGISLATION FAILS TO WORK AS INTENDED OR WHEN NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE ITS REVISION, CONGRESS CAN UNDERTAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION, BUT REVISION IS AWKWARD, ESPECIALLY IN REGARDS TO LEGISLATION THAT HAS ALREADY HAD THE BENEFIT OF SPECIAL INTERESTS' ATTENTION AND FUNDING — I.E., HAS BEEN BOUGHT AND PAID FOR.

WHEREAS RULES CAN BE REVERSED, THE EXCEPTIONS TO THEM SEEM TO BE ABLE TO RESIST CHANGE MORE SUCCESSFULLY.

SOMETIMES THEY DEVELOP A LARGER IDENTITY AND ARE WOVEN INTO OUR POLITICAL CULTURE AS ELEMENTS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH, OR EVEN PROMOTE, OUR DEMOCRACY.

TIME PASSES, POPULATIONS GROW, ECONOMIES FLUCTUATE, ISSUES EMERGE, CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE — AND ALL WITH INCREASING SPEED. CAN ALL WHO LABOR UNDER THE CAPITOL'S DOME (REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS, LOBBYISTS, STAFF, CONSULTANTS, ETC.) KEEP PACE?

AND HERE IS THE CRITICAL ELEMENT, THE LAST OF THE CHINESE BOXES. IN A DEMOCRACY ONLY THE PEOPLE CAN BRING ABOUT CHANGE. IN MANY COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD POLITICAL CHANGE EITHER DOESN'T OCCUR OR IT CONSISTS OF REPLACING ONE GROUP OF GENERALS WITH ANOTHER. WE DO IT DIFFERENTLY, BUT TO DO IT OUR WAY SUCCESSFULLY WE MUST BE ABLE TO CALL UPON THE COLLECTIVE WISDOM OF OUR CITIZENS — THE VOX POPULI, THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE. UNFORTUNATELY, OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST HALF CENTURY THIS VOICE HAS BECOME MORE FRAGMENTED AND LESS INFORMED, CREATING A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR OUR DEMOCRACY.

IN OUR PREVIOUS EFFORTS WE HAVE MOSTLY WALKED THE GOVERNMENT SIDE OF THE STREET. THIS HAS MEANT ANALYZING, CRITICIZING, AND INQUIRING INTO GOVERNMENT'S STRUCTURE, POLICIES AND OPERATION, ALL OF WHICH HAVE EXPERIENCED ENORMOUS CHANGE. WE ARE NOW GOING TO CROSS OVER TO DETERMINE HOW, IN A TIME OF GREAT CHANGE AND POLITICAL TURMOIL, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE CAN BRING ABOUT THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF OUR POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT THAT IS NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO REMAIN TRUE TO OUR ORIGINS AND PROMISE.

WASHINGTON WILL NOT CHANGE. PRES. OBAMA HAS ALREADY SHOWN THAT HE IS HEIR TO MANY OF THE FAULTS THAT PLAGUED THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND WHICH HE RIGHTFULLY CRITICIZED IN HIS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. AGENDAS VARY AND, UNFORTUNATELY, AS THEY BECOME INCREASINGLY BITTER, OUR NATION SUFFERS THE CONSEQUENCES.

AT THIS TIME OF POLITICAL CRISIS IN OUR HISTORY, ANY SOLUTION CAN ONLY COME FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. WHAT IT MAY REQUIRE AND HOW IT MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED ARE MATTERS THAT NOW REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION.

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THE GOOD NEWS OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS THAT THROUGH OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM ONLY THE PEOPLE CAN FORM OUR GOVERNMENT. AT THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY IT IS ALSO THE BAD NEWS, AS THE PUBLIC IS HELD AT BAY BY THE ENDLESS INFORMATION DISPENSING SYSTEMS OF OUR TWO POLITICAL PARTIES AND OUR HIGHLY PAID MASS MEDIA. AND AT A TIME WHEN ISSUES ARE MORE COMPLEX, MORE COSTLY AND HAVE AN INCREASINGLY BROAD IMPACT UPON THE PUBLIC, THE LATTER'S ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND JUDGE HAS BEEN DIMINISHED BY THE WIDESPREAD DETERIORATION OF OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM OVER THE PAST CENTURY.

IN SHORT, TODAY'S VOX POPULI IS NOT YOUR PARENTS'

VOX POPULI, AND THE PROSPECT OF REMAKING OUR PRESENT MODEL INTO SOMETHING MORE RESPONSIVE AND ELECTORALLY EFFECTIVE WILL PRESENT US WITH SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES WHICH OFFER NO ASSURANCE OF SUCCESS.

THE DAMAGE DONE IN RECENT YEARS TO OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT IS SO EXTENSIVE THAT TURNING IT AROUND COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED POSSIBLE WERE IT NOT FOR ONE FACTOR, AND THAT IS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S ABILITY TO DEFY ALL ODDS AND TO JOIN TOGETHER TO RESPOND WHEN CRISES THREATEN OUR SYSTEM.

OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN THOSE OF PEARL HARBOR, THE GREAT DEPRESSION OR THE CIVIL WAR, FOR INSTANCE, IN THAT THE CORRECTIVE ACTION WE MUST NOW UNDERTAKE IS PREEMPTIVE RATHER THAN RESPONSIVE. ATTACK OR DISASTER IS AN INSTANT UNIFIER, WHEREAS MAKING CORRECTIONS INVITES DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND INTERESTS.

THE VOX POPULI OF OUR PARENTS DERIVED FROM A FAR MORE HOMOGENEOUS POPULATION AND CULTURE THAN OURS. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THERE WERE NO DIFFERENCES. THERE WERE, BUT NATIONAL CRISIS REORDERED THEM IN A WAY TO SERVE THE NATIONAL INTEREST. OUR EFFORTS IN PURSUIT OF GLOBAL SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL UNIFICATION HAVE EMPHASIZED MULTICULTURALISM HERE AND ABROAD. IT'S MULTIPLE INDEPENDENT ENTITIES AND THEIR INTERESTS FOSTER SEPARATENESS RATHER THAN HOMOGENEITY AND, WHILE NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERCOME, WILL MAKE A UNIFIED CRISIS RESPONSE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE.

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY POLITICIANS MOSTLY CAMPAIGNED BY TRAIN, GIVING IMPORTANT SPEECHES IN CITIES AND MAKING BRIEF "WHISTLE STOPS" AT SMALL TOWNS IN BETWEEN. TEXTS WERE SENT BY PRINT OR TELEGRAPH AND SET BY HAND IN LEAD TYPE AT NUMEROUS, MOSTLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS.

" . . . AS TELEVISION USHERED IN OUR PRESENT UNRELENTINGLY VISUAL AGE."

THE SPEED AND IMMEDIACY OF ACTUAL VOICE TRANSMISSION BECAME POSSIBLE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF RADIO IN THE 1920S AND 1930S. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS MASS POLITICAL INTIMACY. RADIO RULED FOR ONLY TWO DECADES, THE 30S AND 40S, AND THEN COMMENCED ITS DECLINE IN THE 50S AS TELEVISION USHERED IN OUR PRESENT UNRELENTINGLY VISUAL AGE.

PRIOR TO TELEVISION, OUR TWO MAJOR PARTIES HELD NOMINATING CONVENTIONS SEVERAL WEEKS APART IN JULY AND AUGUST. THEY WERE RATHER EXTRAORDINARY MIXTURES OF PUBLIC DISPLAY AND THE BACKROOM EXERCISE OF POWER WITH A SENSE OF MAGIC, OF ILLUSION, THAT CREATED HIGH SUSPENSE AND WILD ENTHUSIASM AT THE TIMES WHEN THEY WERE NEEDED. THESE CONVENTIONS ARE NOW PART OF OUR POLITICAL CHILDHOOD AND WE CAN RECALL THEM AND THEIR FEELING ONLY WITH INCREASING DIFFICULTY.

FOLLOWING THESE SUMMER CONVENTIONS, USUALLY

ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND, THE CAMPAIGNS WOULD COMMENCE IN EARNEST WITH EACH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE GIVING A SERIES OF SPEECHES DURING THE TWO MONTHS LEADING UP TO ELECTION DAY. IF THERE WERE MULTIPLE CANDIDATES FOR THE PARTY NOMINATIONS, THEY TOOK THEIR CASES TO THE PUBLIC AND TO THE BOSSES OVER A PERIOD OF APPROXIMATELY SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE CONVENTIONS. ALL IN ALL, THE NOMINATING AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS COULD TAKE ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS AT THE MOST!

OUR RECENT 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND NOMINATING PROCESS STRETCHED TO TWO YEARS, MOST OF WHICH WAS DEVOTED TO THE NOMINATING PHASE, AND EXPOSED US TO TEAMS OF EIGHT TO TEN ASPIRING CANDIDATES BEING INTERROGATED BY A MODERATOR. THESE EVENTS WERE LABELED "DEBATES", BUT THE FAVORED FORMAT WAS THAT, NO MATTER WHAT QUESTION WAS ASKED BY THE MODERATOR, THE RESPONDENT WOULD USE IT TO ADDRESS HIS/HER PREFERRED ISSUES AND GIVE STOCK, "STUMP SPEECH" REPLIES. THE LATTER, REPEATED OVER AND OVER, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, APPEARANCE AFTER APPEARANCE, CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE OF BOREDOM THAT DEMEANED THE PROCESS.

FOR OUR PURPOSE, FOR DETERMINING HOW OUR SYSTEM MAY BE RESCUED FROM ITS BANALITY, THIS TYPE OF CAMPAIGNING HAS TWO VERY SERIOUS NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. FIRST, IT DENIES ACCESS TO "REAL" INFORMATION BY AN INTERESTED CITIZEN, AS THE QUESTIONS ARE REVIEWED AND SELECTED IN ADVANCE BY THE PROGRAM'S SPONSOR.

THE SECOND CONSEQUENCE OF OUR SYSTEM THAT HAS EMERGED AS THE RESULT OF OUR ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY IS THAT THE CONTENT OF OUR TELEVISED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IS LARGELY UNDER THE CONTROL OF OUR ENORMOUSLY WEALTHY, PRIVATELY OWNED COMMERCIAL MEDIA.

OVER THE TWO GENERATIONS SINCE 1950, AS OUR POPULATION HAS DOUBLED FROM ABOUT 150 TO 300 MILLION, OUR PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA HAVE GREATLY EXPANDED THEIR AUDIENCES, MARKETS AND REVENUES TO THE POINT WHERE TRADITIONAL LINES OF SEPARATION AS TO FUNCTION AND FORM NO LONGER EXIST. NEWS, PUBLISHING, FILMS, ENTERTAINMENT ARE ALL PART OF THE NEW MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY WHICH NOW RANKS AS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST.

SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH ITS PROCESS OF PHYSICAL GROWTH, OUR MEDIA INDUSTRY HAS UNDERGONE A PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION, AS THE MANY MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS WHICH SERVED ITS EXPANSION PLACED ITS OWNERSHIP INTO FEWER HANDS.

CONSOLIDATION, BOTH TECHNOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL, ALLOWS PUBLIC INFORMATION TO BE MORE EASILY CONTROLLED AND OPINION TO BE MANIPULATED. THESE ARE NOW ACCEPTED CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ARE PUT TO CONSTANT AND EFFECTIVE USE BY OUR TWO MAJOR PARTIES.

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THE DIMENSIONS OF OUR DILEMMA ARE BEGINNING TO BE RECOGNIZABLE. WE HAVE AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM THAT

IS CONTROLLED BY TWO PARTIES. THAT CONTROL IS NEARLY ABSOLUTE AND IS ONLY ONE PARTY REMOVED FROM THE SINGLE PARTY CONTROL OF TOTALITARIAN MODELS.

VOTING IN AMERICA REMAINS VERY MUCH A LOCAL EVENT. WE GO TO A NEARBY POLLING PLACE AND VOTE FOR A MIXTURE OF LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL CANDIDATES/ISSUES. BALLOTS ARE COUNTED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH PARTIES AT PRECINCT AND COUNTY LEVELS AND THEN PASSED UPWARD TO BE COMBINED INTO STATE AND FEDERAL TOTALS. THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN QUICKENED BY THE USE OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT, BUT IT IS STILL SUBJECT TO HUMAN AND/OR MECHANICAL ERROR.

AND, IN SPITE OF OUR ELECTRONIC AGE, OUR SYSTEM REQUIRES A HIGH DEGREE OF HUMAN INVOLVEMENT. POLLING PLACES HAVE TO BE MANNED; MACHINES HAVE TO BE DELIVERED, RETURNED TO STORAGE AND MAINTAINED; SUPPLIES ORDERED; VOTER INFORMATION COLLECTED, RECORDED AND UPDATED; BALLOTS SEALED, TRANSPORTED, COUNTED AND STORED; AND INSPECTORS AVAILABLE TO MONITOR THE PROCESS AT ITS FREQUENT CONTACT OR TRANSFER POINTS.

THESE ARE NECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS, BUT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR NATIONAL ELECTORAL FUNCTION THERE IS ONE, AND ONLY ONE, KEY ELEMENT WHICH OVERRIDES ALL OTHERS — EFFECTIVE ACCESS TO THE BALLOT IS CONTROLLED BY THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES.

THERE HAVE BEEN EXCEPTIONS — MOST RECENTLY AND NOTABLY ROSS PEROT WHO WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE ENOUGH MANPOWER AND FUNDING TO ESTABLISH HIS PARTICIPATION IN ALL STATES AND THEN TO CAPTURE JUST UNDER 20% OF THE POPULAR VOTE.

IN ANY INSTANCE OF THIRD PARTY CANDIDACY WE ARE TREATED TO A PSYCHOLOGICAL QUIRK IN THE MINDSET OF BOTH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS WHEN THEY CONDEMN THE THIRD PARTY FOR DRAWING VOTES FROM THEIR OWN SLATES. THIS RESPONSE IS LOUD AND INSTANT, AND REVEALS HOW THEY HAVE BECOME CONDITIONED TO VIEW THEIR POLITICAL STATUS AS SOMETHING SPECIAL AND NOT SUBJECT TO CHALLENGE.

ELECTIONS ARE THE MEANS BY WHICH INDIVIDUAL EFFORT AND OPINION ARE ACCUMULATED AND TRANSLATED INTO NATIONAL POLITICAL POWER AND POLICY. IN ANY SYSTEM IT REQUIRES A REAL STRETCH IN OUR THINKING TO TREAT POLITICAL PARTIES AS PERMANENT STRUCTURES, AND OUR DEMOCRACY HAS BORNE THIS OUT AS ITS POLITICAL CAST HAS CHANGED.

TODAY, WITH MORE POWER AND MONEY AT STAKE THAN EVER BEFORE, THE PARTIES' GRIP ON OUR PROCESS HAS TIGHTENED TO KEEP PACE. THIS CANNOT CONTINUE INDEFINITELY, AND ALREADY THERE ARE SIGNS OF CHANGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNET SITES WHERE OPINION THAT DOESN'T CONFORM TO THE TWO-PARTY TEMPLATE CAN BE GATHERED AND EXPRESSED.

THE CONTROL OF BALLOT ACCESS IS A CONFINING ELEMENT OF OUR DEMOCRACY THAT LIMITS OUR POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND EXPRESSION. FAR MORE SERIOUS IS OUR ATTITUDE OF ENTRENCHED, PERMANENT STATUS FOR OUR TWO PARTIES, AS IT LIMITS THE WAY WE THINK.

OUR POLITICAL LEADERS ARE GIVEN TO ENDLESS REPETITION OF HOW WE MUST BECOME AND REMAIN GLOBALLY

COMPETITIVE TO SUCCEED IN THE CENTURY AHEAD OF US. THE KIND OF COMPETITION THEY HAVE IN MIND IS USUALLY A MIX OF ECONOMIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND MILITARY EFFORTS THAT WILL BENEFIT THE NATION AT HOME AND ABROAD.

“ . . . IT IS OUR ATTITUDES THAT HAVE ALLOWED THESE THINGS TO HAPPEN AND ONLY WE CAN CHANGE THEM.”

WE HEAR NO CALLS FOR GREATER POLITICAL COMPETITION. CAMPAIGN RHETORIC NOW OFTEN INCLUDES PROMISE OF MORE OPEN GOVERNMENT, BUT IS QUICKLY SILENCED WHEN IT CONFRONTS THE REALITY OF CONGRESS WITH ITS ALIGNMENT OF COMMITTEES, PROCEDURES, LOBBYISTS, CAUCUSES, SENIORITY AND PARTY DISCIPLINES. IN BRIEF: INCUMBENCY = YES, MORE, GOOD; COMPETITION = NO, LESS, BAD. THIS CAPSULE FORM COMMENT ON OUR DEMOCRACY WOULD BRING TEARS TO THE EYES OF OUR FOUNDERS, AND YET IT IS OUR ATTITUDES THAT HAVE ALLOWED THESE THINGS TO HAPPEN AND ONLY WE CAN CHANGE THEM.

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OUR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DECLINE IN GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS CARRIES A DEBT TO FORCES OTHER THAN POLITICS, FOR IN THE YEARS OF INCREASING PARTY CONTROL A SERIOUS PARALLEL PROBLEM HAS BEEN AT WORK IN OUR COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

FROM THE TIME OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ARRIVAL OF OUR FIRST PERMANENT COLONISTS THROUGH THE END OF WW I OUR COUNTRY CONSISTED OF A PRIMARILY RURAL/ AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE DOMINATED BY OPEN SPACES AND SMALL TOWNS. ITS EDUCATIONAL CAPABILITY, WHICH HAD STARTED IN THE ONE ROOM “LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE”, HAD GROWN INTO SOMEWHAT LARGER FACILITIES WHERE POPULATION REQUIRED THEM. BUT THE PRIMARY MISSION WAS EDUCATION AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES WERE FEW. THE STUDENT'S EDUCATION WAS MOSTLY FORMED AROUND CORE SUBJECTS WITH ONE TEACHER OFTEN ASSIGNED PLURAL CLASSES.

IT WAS BASICALLY A NO-FRILL, NO-THRILL SYSTEM WHICH WORKED WELL ENOUGH UNTIL OUR INDUSTRIALIZATION AND POPULATION GROWTH, IN COMBINATION WITH THE G.I. BILL, CHANGED EDUCATION FOREVER. EDUCATION FOLLOWING WW II, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, HAD TO RUN TO KEEP EVEN AND BUDGETS WERE USUALLY THIN. SOCIETAL ROLES AND ATTITUDES CHANGED AND, ACCORDINGLY, SO DID GOVERNMENT. A DEPT. OF EDUCATION WAS CREATED AND TEACHERS WERE UNIONIZED.

ONE MIGHT BE TEMPTED, IN VIEW OF ALL THIS EXPANSIONARY ACTIVITY, TO RECORD IT AS PROGRESS, AND FOR SOME INVOLVED THE NEW NAMES AND NUMBERS WERE SO RECOGNIZED. BUT THE POLITICIZATION OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM CARRIED WITH IT ONE OVERRIDING NEGATIVE.

EDUCATION IN AMERICA WAS “DUMBED DOWN”.

STANDARDS WERE LOWERED; BUDGETS WERE TRIMMED; HORIZONS WERE SHORTENED; CONFORMITY IN THOUGHT AND RESULTS WAS EMPHASIZED; CURRICULA WERE MODIFIED TO MEET SOCIAL/POLITICAL AGENDAS.

THERE WERE OTHER FACTORS AT WORK WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO HOW AND WHY OUR SYSTEM CHANGED, BUT FOR OUR PURPOSES IN WRITING ABOUT GOVERNMENTAL FAILURE ITS MOST NOTABLE CONSEQUENCE IS THAT WE HAVE PRODUCED TWO GENERATIONS THAT ARE PROGRESSIVELY LESS EDUCATED AND ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME. COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET SHOW SIGNS OF REVERSING THIS TREND, BUT THEY POSE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS AND, TO BE REALLY EFFECTIVE, WILL REQUIRE THE COOPERATION OF OUR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT.

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AS THE QUALITY OF OUR EDUCATION FALTERED, ANOTHER CULTURE-CHANGING FORCE WAS GATHERING STRENGTH. RADIO HAD BROUGHT OUR REAL AND FANTASY WORLDS INTO THE HOME. WITH A PICTURE AND A FEW MORE CONTROL KNOBS ADDED, THERE WAS ALMOST NO FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT THAT WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN OUR LIVING ROOMS. ENTERTAINMENT CEASED BEING SOMETHING THAT REQUIRED A TRIP TO A THEATRE OR STADIUM. IT WAS SIMPLY THERE, AT HOME, OFFERING MORE AND MORE PROGRAMS AND CAPTURING MORE OF OUR TIME AND ATTENTION.

SCHOOL-AGE BOYS AND GIRLS WERE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE AND WILLING TO TRADE THE HARD WORK OF LEARNING FOR BEING ENTERTAINED. AND THE ADDITION OF NEW COMPUTER AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY CAME TO DOMINATE OUR CULTURE, OUR COMMERCE AND MANY OF OUR VALUES.

IF WE STOP AND THINK ABOUT OUR MASS ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, WE CAN RECOGNIZE ITS DANGERS. BUT WE DON'T. TECHNOLOGY CAN BE ADAPTED, BUT RARELY RESISTED, AND WE HAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY JOINED ENTERTAINMENT'S BIG PARADE. WE HAVE ABSORBED IT, AND IT IS PART OF US. THERE ARE PENALTIES, CONSEQUENCES FOR SUCH RECKLESS COMMITMENT, BUT WE CAN ALWAYS DEAL WITH THEM LATER, OR SO WE THINK.

AND YET, THEY ARE ALL AROUND US. WE HAVE WITNESSED THE DISAPPEARANCE OF OUR INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR PROUD TRADITION OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM. THAT FORMER PINNACLE OF AMATEUR ATHLETICS, THE OLYMPIC GAMES, HAS BECOME A MAJOR MARKETING EVENT IN WHICH PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES ARE ALLOWED TO COMPETE. THE SPACE BETWEEN YOUTH AND PROFESSIONALISM WHICH WE CALLED AMATEUR IS UNDER CONSTANT PRESSURE AND SHRINKING.

TECHNOLOGY'S DANGER IS THAT WE ACCEPT IT BECAUSE IT FEELS GOOD, OR IT'S PROFITABLE, OR IT SAVES TIME, OR IT COSTS LESS, OR IT PROVIDES NEW INFORMATION, OR ANY NUMBER OF OTHER WAYS BY WHICH WE SEE OUR LIVES

IMPROVING. BUT BENEATH ALL THESE BENEFITS LIE SOME INSIDIOUS CONSEQUENCES WHICH, IF THEY ARE TO BE AVOIDED, SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD DEVELOP STANDARDS, AND PERHAPS EVEN RULES, AS TO HOW NEW TECHNOLOGIES CAN BEST BE USED.

THERE IS NO TECHNOLOGY TODAY WITH THE CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE OUR LIVES EQUAL TO THAT OF OUR ENTERTAINMENT — NEWS — COMMUNICATIONS — COMPUTER — PUBLISHING INDUSTRY. IT IS BIG, AND GROWING BIGGER. WHETHER MEASURED BY DOLLARS OR THE WAYS IN WHICH IT TOUCHES OUR LIVES, IT IS PROBABLY OUR LARGEST INDUSTRY AND, AS SUCH, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR IT NOT TO IMPRESS ITSELF UPON OUR POLITICAL LIFE AND STRUCTURE.

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THE TIGHT CONTROL OF OUR POLITICAL PROCESS BY THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM AND THE DECLINE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL CAPABILITY LEFT VACUUMS THAT WERE QUICKLY AND NATURALLY FILLED BY OUR FAST MOVING ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY. THE ORIGINAL LINK WAS THROUGH NEWS COVERAGE OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS, ESPECIALLY NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL ONES.

STRAIGHT NEWS REPORTING REACHED ITS PEAK OF IMMEDIACY, IMPORTANCE AND STYLE IN WW II'S RADIO BROADCASTS. THEIR SIMPLICITY AND DIRECTNESS CARRIED OVER INTO THE EARLY DAYS OF B&W TV, BUT WITH THE ADVENT OF COLOR AND 24/7 TRANSMISSION, PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES AND CONTENT ASSUMED STEADILY GREATER IMPORTANCE.

TODAY TV COVERAGE DICTATES LIGHTING, STAGING, CLOTHES SELECTION, FACIAL MAKE-UP, HAIR STYLING, POSITION OF CANDIDATES, CONTENT AND FORMS OF SPEECH, AUDIENCE APPLAUSE CUEING CONTROL, SPOUSAL APPEARANCE, ACOUSTICS, ETC. NEWS REPORTING AND MARKETING HAVE COMBINED TO PRODUCE LARGER AUDIENCES AND THE REVENUES AND VOTES THEY GENERATE.

OUR GREAT TWENTIETH CENTURY SURGE IN MONEY AND POWER SENT SHOCK WAVES THROUGH OUR POLITICAL STRUCTURE. BOTH PARTIES HAD TO BE PUSHED TO NEW LEVELS OF OUTREACH, AS ESSENTIALLY WHAT WAS GOOD FOR ONE WAS GOOD FOR ALL.

POLITICAL OPINION THAT HAD ORIGINALLY DERIVED FROM A NEWSPAPER REPORT AND THEN A RADIO BROADCAST HAD TO BE FORMED FROM SOUND BYTE QUOTATIONS MOSTLY SIXTY SECONDS OR LESS IN LENGTH. AND THERE WAS A STATISTICAL REVOLUTION TAKING PLACE. COMPUTERS PROVIDED NUMBERS FOR EVERYTHING ON A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN SCALE. THEY COULD BE COMBINED OR DIVIDED, INCREASED OR REDUCED AND THE RESULT APPLIED TO EVER SMALLER BASES SUCH AS STATE, COUNTY, TOWN, PRECINCT, ETC. ELECTION REPORTING CREATED ITS OWN NEW MATH AS WELL AS THE MULTIPLE VOICES AND BACK-UP STAFF REQUIRED TO PACKAGE IT FOR MASS MARKET CONSUMPTION.

WHEN TECHNOLOGY AND ITS MARKETING EXPLODE, NO ONE WANTS TO BE LEFT BEHIND, AS NOT KEEPING UP TRANSLATES INTO ISOLATION AND THEN FAILURE. THE RESULT WAS THAT

EVERY PART OF OUR GOVERNMENTAL AND POLITICAL MACHINERY RUSHED TO EMBRACE THE NEW MEDIA AND PUT IT TO USE.

THE TROUBLE IS THAT IN OUR HEADLONG RUSH INTO OUR ENTERTAINMENT FUTURE WE HAVE LOST TRACK OF SOME RATHER DURABLE AND HELPFUL PRACTICES FROM OUR PAST. MANY AMERICANS HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES NOT AS DEEPLY ENGAGED WITH POLITICAL MATTERS AS THEY HAD BEEN. WHY?

THE ANSWER LIES IN A COMBINATION OF THREE CULTURAL CURRENTS THAT CAME TOGETHER QUITE BY CHANCE AND PRODUCED A SPECIFIC RESULT.

FIRST, THERE WAS THE GROWING POLITICAL POLARIZATION BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS. PARTY LINES AND IDEOLOGY DIDN'T OFFER MUCH IN THE WAY OF CENTRIST OPPORTUNITY. EITHER/OR ATTITUDES RULED AND DIDN'T INVITE CONSENSUS OR DISCUSSION. THIS WAS REINFORCED BY THE TWO PARTIES' CONTROL OF BALLOT ACCESS SO THAT IN A TIME OF WIDESPREAD GENERAL KNOWLEDGE INCREASE OUR POLITICAL MACHINERY WAS BOUND BY TRADITIONAL RESTRICTIONS.

ON THE EDUCATIONAL FRONT, THINGS WERE SIMILAR. IN A TIME OF NEWLY DISCOVERED KNOWLEDGE IN MANY FIELDS FUELED BY MONEY AND TECHNOLOGY THE DECLINE OF OUR SCHOOLS PRODUCED A LEVEL OF PUBLIC LEARNING LESS CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING DIFFICULT ISSUES.

AND FINALLY, THE RAISING OF ENTERTAINMENT TO A NATIONAL CULTURAL PRIORITY THROUGH OUR MASS MEDIA DREW AWAY TO THE EDGES OF PARTICIPATION, OR BEYOND, THOSE WHO FOUND OUR NEW POLITICS TOO CHALLENGING OR DEMANDING AND WERE WILLING TO SETTLE FOR PARADES, HOOPLA, CROWD CONTROL, CELEBRATION, ETC.

NOTHING POINTS THIS OUT AS CLEARLY AS THE CHANGE IN OUR NOMINATING CONVENTIONS. THE CURRENT FORM USED BY BOTH PARTIES IS A MIXTURE OF MARKETING, FASHION, SHOW BUSINESS, DIALOGUE FRAMED BY SELF CONGRATULATORY HUMOR AND IN-JOKES ALL AIRED AT PRESENTING PEOPLE RATHER THAN A POLITICAL PLATFORM. IT HAS BEEN QUITE A TRANSFORMATION IN THE SHORT SPACE OF HALF A CENTURY.

THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE HAVE BEEN LONG TERM, MOSTLY SLOW-MOVING TRENDS THAT TEND TO INFLUENCE, BUT NOT INTERRUPT, OUR LIVES. SOMETIMES THEY CORRESPOND WITH SHORT TERM MOVEMENTS AND REINFORCE THEM, BUT NOT ALWAYS. WE TEND TO SEE THE SHORTER FORCES MORE CLEARLY.

FOR INSTANCE, IN THE RUN OF PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS PRECEDING OBAMA'S, ELECTION FIGURES FOR THE PERCENTAGE OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS PARTICIPATING SHOWED A STEADY DECLINE. MOST OBSERVERS CITED VOTER APATHY, WHICH WAS REVERSED BY OBAMA'S FIRST BLACK CANDIDACY, AS ITS CAUSE, BUT IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE WIDER AND LARGER CULTURAL CHANGES WE HAVE PORTRAYED HAVE PLAYED THEIR PART. IN WHAT PROPORTIONS? WE DO NOT KNOW.

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WHILE BROAD CHANGE USUALLY DEVELOPS AND MOVES SLOWLY, IT CAN QUICKLY BE REDIRECTED, OR EVEN REVERSED,

BY TECHNOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL SURPRISES — ESPECIALLY THE LATTER.

AMERICA'S POLITICAL COURSE SINCE ITS FOUNDING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A MOSTLY MODERATE ONE. THERE WERE, OF COURSE, BLIPS IN OUR ROAD, BUT WE WERE A PRIMARILY AGRICULTURAL AND POPULIST SOCIETY NOT GIVEN TO EITHER FREQUENT OR GREAT POLITICAL EXCESS. GENERALLY, REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS WERE ABLE TO FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH ARGUMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS TO ACCOMMODATION.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION REORDERED MANY ASPECTS OF LIFE IN THE USA. THE PAIN IT CAUSED AND THE NEED FOR ITS RELIEF WERE SO GREAT THAT FDR AND HIS ADVISORS WERE FORCED TO ADOPT EXTREME ECONOMIC MEASURES THAT WOULD PREVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN UNACCEPTABLE. FOR THIS HE FACED A BITTER OPPOSITION THAT WAS INCREASED BY THOSE WHO, WITH WAR SPREADING IN EUROPE, OBJECTED TO HIS FOREIGN POLICY. THE ISOLATIONIST AMERICA FIRST BLOC WAS BOTH VOCAL AND POWERFUL, AND AMERICA WAS A DEEPLY DIVIDED NATION.

“ . . . THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AND THAT OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP WERE JOINED.”

BUT THEN A TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE EVENT OCCURRED WHEN THE JAPANESE ATTACKED PEARL HARBOR. LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER ASSUMING HIS THIRD TERM IN OFFICE EVERYTHING CHANGED. THE ECONOMY WAS FLIPPED ALMOST INSTANTLY FROM PEACE TO WAR, AND THROUGH OUR MILITARY AND DEFENSE PROCUREMENT/PRODUCTION PROCESSES THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AND THAT OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP WERE JOINED.

IN FOREIGN POLICY, WE WERE NO LONGER OBSERVING WAR; WE WERE AT WAR! AND MUCH OF FDR'S POLITICAL OPPOSITION SLIPPED QUIETLY INTO THE PAST IN THE FACE OF THE NEED FOR WARTIME UNITY. THE DEMOCRATIC OCCUPANCY OF THE WHITE HOUSE WAS EXTENDED BY TRUMAN'S SEVEN YEARS DURING WHICH TIME TWO OTHER EXTERNAL EVENTS OCCURRED THAT STRONGLY IMPACTED OUR NATIONAL POLITICS.

THE FIRST WAS THE FOUNDING OF THE UN AND THE OTHER WAS THE RISE OF SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. BOTH, OF COURSE, GREW OUT OF WW II'S GLOBAL EFFORTS TO CONTAIN AND DEFEAT THE FASCIST FUTURE PROCLAIMED BY THE GERMAN, ITALIAN AND JAPANESE AXIS.

AND IT WAS FROM THE TERRIBLY INHUMAN TREATMENT INFLECTED IN THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS, THE JAPANESE PRISONS AND, AS WE DISCOVERED LATER, THE RUSSIAN GULAGS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS EMERGED AS A POLITICAL ISSUE. IT HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING BROAD ENOUGH TO OVERSHADOW ALL PARTY AND NATIONAL CONCERNS AND TO COMBINE COMPASSION AND HUMANITY.

THESE POWERFUL FORCES ALL FIRST APPEARED AND THEN GAINED TRACTION DURING THE SERIES OF DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTS STARTING WITH FDR IN 1932 AND ENDING WITH TRUMAN IN 1952. TWO EISENHOWER TERMS INTERVENED AND THEN WERE FOLLOWED BY THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON YEARS. THE TWENTY YEARS OF FDR AND HST WAS AN EXTREMELY

BRIEF TIME TO HOST SUCH MAJOR EVENTS. NOW, ABSENT THE COMPLICATIONS OF THAT TIME, HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE MAKES IT APPEAR TO MOST OBSERVERS EASIER THAN IT WAS; AND TO SOME EVEN INEVITABLE. REGARDLESS OF OPINION THEN OR NOW, THESE FORCES AT WORK AROUND THE WORLD MOVED THE DIRECTION OF AMERICAN POLITICS AWAY FROM THE CENTER TOWARDS THE LEFT. THIS WAS NOT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE, BUT, AS WITH MOST GRADUAL MOVEMENTS, IT COULD GAIN ACCEPTANCE MERELY BY ITS EXISTENCE WHICH WAS ASSURED BY THE SUPPORT OF THE RAPIDLY GROWING UN MEMBERSHIP OF MOSTLY SMALL AND POOR COUNTRIES THAT STILL BORE THE MARKS OF NINETEENTH CENTURY COLONIALISM.

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TODAY, OUR WW II UNITY IS LONG GONE, AND OUR COLD WAR IDENTITY OF BEING JOINED WITH OTHERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WORLD COMMUNISM CRUMBLLED WITH THE BERLIN WALL. SINCE THEN, EVEN AS SOLE SUPERPOWER, OUR SELF-IMAGE HAS BECOME FRACTIONATED BECAUSE WE CANNOT AGREE ON PRIORITIES.

MEGATRENDS ARE NOT EASY TO DETECT AND RARELY REVEAL THEMSELVES TO THOSE WHO SHARE THEIR TIME AND PLACE. OUR TIME IS NO DIFFERENT THAN OTHERS, AND YET, IF OUR NATION IS TO SURVIVE, WE MUST CREATE A NEW POLITICAL CLASS WHOSE CONSCIENCE CAN BE EXPRESSED PEACEFULLY AND PERSUASIVELY BOTH PUBLICLY AND IN THE PRIVACY OF THE VOTING BOOTH. BY "CLASS" WE DO NOT INFER OR INTEND "PARTY". WE REQUIRE A GROUP OF LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY BE REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS BUT WHO ARE FIRMLY AND FIRSTLY COMMITTED TO RESCUING OUR NATION FROM ITS PRESENT POLITICAL MESS BY ARTICULATING, ADVANCING AND INSISTING UPON GOOD GOVERNMENT IN ALL ITS ASPECTS.

“ . . . THE APPALLING FACT
IS THAT THERE IS NO "SHORT LIST." ”

HOW IS AMERICA TO DO THIS? WHO WILL PROVIDE THE ENERGY, DECENCY AND CONTINUITY THAT WILL BE NECESSARY? WE HAVE NO MODEL FOR SUCH A PEACETIME (ALTHOUGH WE NOW FIGHT TWO WARS) EFFORT. INDEED, IT CAN WELL BE SAID THAT WE HAVE NO MODEL, NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE OF THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE AND THEIR SPECIFIC CHALLENGES — I.E., GLOBAL ECONOMICS, EXCESS POPULATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE, NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, ROGUE STATES THAT RESIST WITH IMPUNITY THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL NORMS OF THE WORLD'S COMMUNITY OF NATIONS, PUBLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION AND POVERTY PROBLEMS, RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM (BOTH CHRISTIAN & MUSLIM), SPECIES LOSS, AND DEGRADATION OF THE AIR, WATER AND LAND THAT COMPRISE OUR ENVIRONMENT, TO NAME A FEW. THE APPALLING FACT THAT EMERGES FROM ENUMERATING THESE THREATS IS THAT THERE IS NO "SHORT LIST".

TO WHOM IN AMERICA CAN WE TURN? WHOM MIGHT WE COUNT ON TO BEGIN THE TASK OF REMAKING OUR IMAGE OF

GOVERNMENT? TO RECOGNIZE, CREATE AND GIVE FORM TO A NATIONAL INTEREST? AND TO DO SO SERVING THE INTERESTS OF ALL RATHER THAN THE PURPOSE OF A FEW?

HERE THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION CAN BE HELPFUL. WE CAN QUICKLY EXCLUDE THE REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AS THEY SEEM TO BE FULLY FOCUSED ON RAISING MONEY AND A WAR OF TOTAL DESTRUCTION AGAINST EACH OTHER. WHETHER IN CONGRESS OR THE CAMPAIGN CIRCUIT, THEIR CARPING AND SELF-INTEREST MAKE FOR A SORRY PERFORMANCE.

BOTH PARTIES HAVE DEVELOPED MENUS OF CAPSULE PHRASES AND MANTRAS TO HURL AT EACH OTHER, BUT THESE ARE MOSTLY TIRED RETREADS FROM THE PAST. IN THE MINDS OF PARTY LEADERS THESE CHARGES SERVE THEIR POLITICAL INTERESTS, BUT EVEN THAT IS NOW DOUBTFUL AS EVIDENCE MOUNTS OF WIDENING CORRUPTION AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST. THERE IS NOTHING TO SUGGEST THAT TAKING THE NEXT STEP, FROM THEIR POLITICAL TO OUR NATIONAL INTEREST, IS POSSIBLE.

SIMILARLY, ANYONE WHO HAS SERVED IN CONGRESS OR AS PRESIDENT OR IN A CABINET LEVEL OFFICE DURING OUR GREAT FINANCIAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS DECLINE OF THE PAST THIRTY YEARS WOULD LACK CREDIBILITY UNLESS HIS/HER VOTING RECORDS COULD PROVE OTHERWISE.

IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THE MILITARY OFTEN HOLDS AND PLAYS A "HOT HAND" IN POLITICALLY CHARGED SITUATIONS EVEN THOUGH ITS ROLE AND TRAINING ARE SUPPOSED TO BE APOLITICAL. AS A GROUP, HOWEVER, IT SHOULD HAVE NO ROLE IN REFORMING OUR POLITICAL VIEWS.

ANOTHER GROUP TO BE EXCLUDED FROM ANY GOVERNMENT MAKE-OVER WOULD BE REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR MASS MEDIA. THE LATTER IS MORE DEEPLY INTERESTED FINANCIALLY IN OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS THAN ANY OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR GROUP AND THE BEST USE OF ITS HUMAN AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES CAN BE PUT TO REPORTING, NOT MAKING, NEWS.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR, OF COURSE, IS MADE OF MANY PARTS MOST OF WHICH ARE CLOSELY TIED TO OUR GOVERNMENT BY THEIR LOBBYING EXPENDITURES THAT SUPPORT LEGISLATION WHICH DELIVERS A VARIETY OF FINANCIAL BENEFITS IN THE FORM OF SUBSIDIES, TAX BREAKS, TARIFFS, TRADE AGREEMENTS, PRICE/WAGE STABILIZATION, CURRENCY CONTROLS, ETC.

IN TRUTH, MOST LARGE US BUSINESSES, (AND MANY SMALLER ONES) WHETHER AGRICULTURAL, MANUFACTURING OR SERVICE ORIENTED, HAVE FINANCIAL TIES TO GOVERNMENT THAT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THEIR RESULTS. AND WHILE THEY MAY REGULARLY CALL FOR LESS GOVERNMENT, IT IS DOUBTFUL THEY WOULD WANT TO DO WITHOUT ITS BENEFITS.

THE CORPORATE SECTOR, DEPENDING UPON HOW IT'S APPROACHED, COULD PRODUCE NEGATIVE, NEUTRAL OR POSITIVE RESULTS. FOR THE LATTER, AS WITH POLITICIANS, IT WOULD HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT A NEW WAY OF THINKING IS REQUIRED. MORE ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FOLLOW.

“ . . .ACADEMIA IS AS STRONGLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE POLITICS OF THE LEFT AS THE CORPORATE SECTOR IS WITH THE RIGHT.” ”

ACADEMIA IS ANOTHER GROUP THAT HARBORS GOOD MINDS AND SCHOLASTIC BACKGROUNDS IN ITS HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS. OTHER DISCIPLINES SUCH AS THE SOCIAL SCIENCES CAN ALSO BE HELPFUL, BUT THE CAVEAT HERE IS THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THAT ACADEMIA IS AS STRONGLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE POLITICS OF THE LEFT AS THE CORPORATE SECTOR IS WITH THE RIGHT.

ANY EFFORT TO ASSEMBLE A BODY OF NEW AND FUNCTIONAL THOUGHT ABOUT OUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHOSE SPECIALTY IS CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. WHETHER PRACTICING ATTORNEY OR JUDGE IS NOT IMPORTANT. WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IS THAT THEY RECOGNIZE THAT MANY OF THE STRANDS THAT BIND OUR GOVERNMENT TOGETHER, NOT JUST LEGAL ONES, ARE IN NEED OF REPAIR.

WE WILL NOT NEED PARTISAN, POLITICAL “THINK TANKS” OF WHICH WASHINGTON HAS MANY, BUT THERE ARE SOME VERY USEFUL NON-PARTISAN INSTITUTIONS, OF WHICH WASHINGTON HAS TOO FEW, WHOSE OUTLOOK AND EXPERIENCE COULD PROVE USEFUL. SOME OF THESE HAVE THE ADDED BENEFIT OF HAVING BEEN IN OPERATION FOR ENOUGH YEARS TO HAVE DEVELOPED AUTHORITATIVE STATISTICAL BASES CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING OUR RENEWAL EFFORT’S NEEDS AND METHODS.

THERE ARE MANY MORE FIELDS OF ENDEAVOR WE MIGHT MENTION, BUT THESE SEEM TO BE THE MOST PROMINENT. AND YET, READING THROUGH THEM, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO FILL THE LEADERSHIP ROLE WHICH WILL IMMEDIATELY REQUIRE CREDIBILITY, ENERGY, FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND WIDE EXPERIENCE.

ONE GROUP IN OUR SOCIETY SEEMS TO STAND OUT ABOVE ALL OTHERS AS BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE THESE RESOURCES. WE REFER TO OUR NATION’S PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS FROM WHICH A SMALL TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS COULD BE SELECTED AS A FOUNDING BODY.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PRESENTING THIS PROJECT THROUGH PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS ARE MANY AND REAL. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEIR ACTIVITIES USUALLY INVOLVE A PUBLIC BENEFIT AND THEIR LEADERS ARE USED TO VIEWING THEIR ACTIVITIES IN TERMS OF LONG TERM BENEFIT TO OTHERS, RATHER THAN TO THEMSELVES.

THIS PROVIDES THEM WITH AN AURA OF PUBLIC SERVICE OPPOSITE TO THE EVER EXPANDING FORMS OF SELF-SERVICE THAT PROVIDE OUR GOVERNMENT’S DOMINANT FLAVOR.

AND FROM A FUNCTIONAL POINT OF VIEW PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AGAIN MEET ALL THE NECESSARY EARLY REQUIREMENTS. IN THIS ORDER, THEY ARE UNIQUELY EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE THE CREDIBILITY, THE LEADERSHIP, THE INITIAL FUNDING AND THE EARLY MANAGEMENT. AS GROWTH OCCURS, WHETHER RAPID OR SLOW, THE MANAGEMENT ROLE COULD BE CONVERTED TO ONE OF SUPERVISION OF WHATEVER PAID STAFF IS REQUIRED.

THIS PROCESS CAN BE CONDUCTED ON A SEQUENTIAL BASIS WHEREBY, FOR INSTANCE, FUNDING DOES NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL LEADERSHIP AND AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. SIMILARLY, THE INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT/PROMOTIONAL/MANAGEMENT EFFORTS NEED NOT BE ACTIVATED UNTIL FUNDING IS IN PLACE. AND THE CHANGE FROM MANAGERIAL

TO SUPERVISORY STATUS WILL BE ENABLED BY THE PROJECT’S SUCCESS AND DETERMINED BY THE FOUNDERS.

THE SIZE OF THE FOUNDING BOARD IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL. IT MUST BE LARGE ENOUGH TO SHOW A BROAD RANGE OF FOUNDATION INTERESTS AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS, BUT NOT SO BIG THAT IT APPEARS OVERPOWERING, UNWIELDY OR THE BASIS FOR A NEW EXERCISE IN BUREAUCRACY. IT SHOULD BE SMALLER RATHER THAN LARGER, BUT IT MUST BE ABLE TO PROJECT FROM ITS INITIAL MAKE-UP A NATIONAL CHARACTER AND CAPABILITY.

AT THIS POINT WE THINK THE ORIGINAL FOUNDERS’ GROUP SHOULD NUMBER IN THE THREE TO SEVEN RANGE, ALWAYS WITH THE OPTION TO EXPAND OR REDUCE ITSELF AS CIRCUMSTANCE, PLANS AND RESULTS DEVELOP.

“ . . . TO RECLAIM OUR GOVERNMENTAL BIRTHRIGHT, TO RETRIEVE WHAT WAS LOST.”

MANY OF THESE ARE NOT NOW FORESEEABLE, BUT ONE FACT IS VERY CLEAR. THIS PROJECT, FROM ITS INCEPTION, WILL BE DEALING WITH PUBLIC OPINION AND WILL BEST BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS IF IT ESCHEWS PARTY POLITICS AND ALIGNMENTS. THERE IS NO MAGIC HERE; IT CAN BE DONE! THE MAGIC LIES IN THE WISDOM OF THE GOVERNMENT WE WERE GIVEN AND HAVE LOST. OUR EFFORT WILL BE TO RECLAIM OUR GOVERNMENTAL BIRTHRIGHT, TO RETRIEVE WHAT WAS LOST. REPEAT; IT CAN BE DONE!

THE FIRST NOTE TO BE STRUCK BY THE FOUNDING GROUP IS SUPREMELY IMPORTANT. IT MUST, ABOVE ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AT THE EARLY STAGE, RING WITH CREDIBILITY. NOT ALL FOUNDATIONS SHARE EQUALLY THIS ELEMENT — SOME BECAUSE THEIR CHARTERS CONFLICT WITH THIS PROJECT’S GOALS, OTHERS BECAUSE THEIR LEADERSHIP IS UNWILLING OR INSUFFICIENT AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE (SOME OF WHICH ARE AMONG OUR COUNTRY’S LARGEST) WHOSE PAST RECORD OF POLITICAL AND/OR SOCIAL ADVOCACY RENDERS THEM UNSUITABLE.

WE RECOGNIZE THESE CAVEATS FOR WHAT THEY ARE — LIMITS ON OTHERS’ ACTIONS, NOT ON OURS. GIVEN THE NEED AND NATURE OF OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WOULD HOPE THAT A SMALL GROUP OF FOUNDERS COULD BE IDENTIFIED AND FORMED RELATIVELY QUICKLY. FOLLOWING THEIR INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMATION THEY SHOULD GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO ESTABLISHING A STRUCTURE THAT COULD ATTRACT BOTH PUBLIC AND ADDITIONAL FOUNDATION SUPPORT AT REGIONAL OR STATE LEVELS.

THE NATURE OF THE EFFORT REQUIRED, THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT AND ITS ABILITY TO PROGRESS INCREMENTALLY ALL COMBINE TO SUGGEST THAT IT COULD BE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT REQUIRING THE EXPENDITURE OF LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO COMMENCE. SOME KEY POINTS AND STEPS ARE:

- 1) THE EVENTUAL TARGET OF OUR EFFORTS IS THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. WE ARE NOT TRYING TO SELL IT ANYTHING, BUT RATHER ARE ASKING IF IT IS SATISFIED WITH OUR

PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND ARE SUGGESTING SOME THINGS WE THINK SHOULD BE CHANGED AND HOW TO GO ABOUT DOING IT.

- 2) THE NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE EFFORT'S STRUCTURE — I.E., THERE SHOULD BE PLANS FOR AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF PRESENTATION BETWEEN THE SMALL FOUNDERS' (NATIONAL) GROUP AND THE PUBLIC. AS GROWTH OCCURS AND DEMAND BUILDS, A LARGER, REGIONAL BODY OF FOUNDATIONS SHOULD BE ADDED TO CONDUCT LOCAL OPERATIONS AND CONTACTS. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE MANY FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT LOCAL CAUSES AND IT IS INEVITABLE THAT THE EFFORTS OF THIS PROJECT WILL BRUSH UP AGAINST LOCAL POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND COMMERCIAL CONSTITUENCIES.
- 3) THE FUNDING PROCEDURE CAN ALSO BE INCREMENTAL. ONCE THE FOUNDING GROUP IS FORMED AND IDENTIFIED AND A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AGREED UPON, THE FOUNDERS CAN PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF OPERATIONS. THIS STAGE CAN BE DEFINED BY THE FOUNDERS FOR ITS SUCCESS TO BE MEASURED BY ONE OR MORE STANDARDS WHEN THE FOUNDERS HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE FIRST STAGE HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND WARRANTS CONTINUATION, THEY CAN ESTABLISH THE GOALS, PROCEDURES AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NEXT STAGE. AT SOME POINT OPERATIONAL REVENUES WILL REACH A LEVEL AT WHICH INTERNAL FUNDING BECOMES OPTIONAL, NOT REQUIRED.
- 4) BEFORE ANY PUBLIC EXPOSURE IS OBTAINED, IDENTIFYING MATERIALS FOR DIRECT MAIL, A WEBSITE AND PAID MEDIA ADVERTISING SHOULD BE PREPARED AND COMPLETED SO THAT IT CAN BE INSTANTLY MADE AVAILABLE WHEN REQUESTED.
- 5) FOUNDATIONS ARE ACCUSTOMED TO PROVIDING FUNDS WITHOUT THE CERTAINTY OF IMMEDIATE OR PERIODIC RETURNS. THIS CAN BE HELPFUL TO THE FOUNDERS IN DETERMINING BOTH SHORT AND LONGER TERM BUDGETS.
- 6) BECAUSE OF THE EXTREMELY BROAD RANGE OF THIS EFFORT, RESPONSES FROM ONE AREA ARE JUST AS VALUABLE AS THOSE FROM ANOTHER. PAID MEDIA ADVERTISING, THEREFORE, DOES NOT HAVE TO BE DIRECTED INITIALLY TO THE HIGH COST URBAN MARKETS.

OUR NATION BADLY NEEDS AN EFFORT SUCH AS THIS, WHEREBY PART OF ITS POPULATION ENGAGES IN MULTIPLE ACTIONS TO EXPLAIN THE NEED AND POSSIBILITY FOR NEW AND BETTER GOVERNMENT. A FEW FOUNDERS CAN PLAY A CRITICAL EARLY ROLE, BUT ULTIMATELY SUCCESS WILL DEPEND UPON THOSE CITIZENS WHO REJECT WHAT OUR GOVERNMENT HAS GROWN TO BE AND WHO WILL JOIN TOGETHER TO REAFFIRM OUR EARLY VALUES.

FINALLY, THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF REAL AND RARE POETIC JUSTICE IN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE WEALTH OF OUR GREAT PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS, GAINED FROM OUR CAPITALIST SYSTEM, CAN BE PUT TO USE TO ENABLE THE RENEWAL OF OUR HISTORIC IMAGE AND PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

AMERICA HAS FEWER OPTIONS THAN WE MIGHT THINK. MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO IS ONE, BUT THE STATUS QUO

IS UNTENABLE AS, IF WE DO NOTHING, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SLIP FURTHER INTO OUR MESS OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM WHILE PASSING GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS. THE QUALITY OF AMERICAN LIVES AND GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT DEPEND UPON WHO CAN CRANK UP THE MOST MONEY AND POWER EVERY FOUR YEARS ONLY TO CONTINUE THE FAILED POLICIES AND PERSONNEL OF THE WASHINGTON MERRY-GO 'ROUND.

AMERICA NEEDS A PROGRAM SUCH AS THE ONE WE HAVE OUTLINED, OR SOMETHING VERY MUCH LIKE IT. WE NEED ITS ABILITY TO SEPARATE US FROM OUR PRESENT AND RECENT PAST, WE NEED ITS OBJECTIVITY AND ITS ABILITY TO UNIFY. OUR POLITICAL FUTURE IS UNKNOWN, BUT OF GREAT VALUE TO ALL AMERICANS — AND FAR TOO VALUABLE TO LEAVE IN THE HANDS OF OUR TWO POLITICAL PARTIES. WE MUST CALL AND THEN WE MUST LISTEN FOR THE SOUNDS OF THE VOX POPULI.

* * *

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT

IN 1942, ONLY A FEW MONTHS REMOVED FROM PEARL HARBOR, A LARGELY UNPREPARED AMERICA FACED THE EXTERNAL THREAT OF WAR AGAINST THE GERMAN/JAPANESE/ITALIAN AXIS AND, AS WE CONVERTED FROM A PEACE TO WARTIME ECONOMY, ENORMOUS CHANGES TO OUR WAY OF LIFE.

ONE RESPONSE TO THESE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES WAS THE FORMATION OF THE WAR ADVERTISING COUNCIL (WAC) BY A GROUP OF PROMINENT BUSINESS LEADERS IN NEW YORK CITY ALL OF WHOM REPRESENTED EITHER LARGE ADVERTISERS, ADVERTISING AGENCIES OR THE DOMINANT PRINT AND BROADCAST (I.E. RADIO) MEDIA.

THE ANTI-WAR RESISTANCE TO FDR MOSTLY DISAPPEARED UNDER THE WAVE OF UNITY THAT FOLLOWED PEARL HARBOR, BUT WARTIME EMERGENCY MEASURES BROUGHT NEW RULES AND METHODS TO OUR ECONOMY/SOCIETY WHICH, BECAUSE THEY DISTURBED OLD PATTERNS, WERE OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY RESENTMENT AND MISUNDERSTANDING.

THE WAC UNDERTOOK A CAMPAIGN, MOSTLY IN PRINT MEDIA, TO EXPLAIN THE NEW FORCES WE FACED — SHORTAGES OF NATURAL RESOURCES SUCH AS RUBBER AND GASOLINE AND OF MANY CONSUMER PRODUCTS WHOSE PRODUCTION AND TRANSPORT WERE SUDDENLY MARKED FOR MILITARY USE ONLY; THE MILITARY DRAFT; BOND DRIVES; RATIONING; TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS; LIMITATIONS ON FOOD SUPPLIES AND INGREDIENTS; AND MANY MORE.

IN ITS ADS THE WAC SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN AND SUPPORT OUR WAR EFFORT, TO FOSTER UNITY, TO CREATE HOME-FRONT EFFORTS TO GROW FOOD AND COLLECT MATERIALS THAT COULD BE RECYCLED AND TO MOBILIZE THE AMERICAN CIVILIAN POPULATION TO MAXIMIZE ITS ABILITY TO ASSIST THE WAR EFFORT.

SOME OF ITS ADS WERE BRILLIANT; SOME WERE JUST GOOD; BUT ALL CONTRIBUTED TO AN AMAZING EFFORT WHICH PROVED SO SUCCESSFUL THAT, RATHER THAN DISBAND AFTER

THE WAR, IT DROPPED THE “WAR” FROM ITS NAME AND, AS THE ADVERTISING COUNCIL, CONTINUES TODAY TO RUN PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENTS ON IMPORTANT ISSUES.

OUR COUNTRY NOW FACES A THREAT, INTERNAL RATHER THAN EXTERNAL, AS SERIOUS IN MANY WAYS AS OUR CONFLICT WITH THE AXIS POWERS. ONE DIFFERENCE IS THAT WE HAVE NO ALLIES. WHATEVER WE DO, WE WILL HAVE TO DO IT OURSELVES. ANOTHER, THANKFULLY, IS THAT OUR EFFORT TO RESTORE GOOD GOVERNMENT WILL NOT RESULT IN LOSS OF LIFE ON A FOREIGN BATTLEGROUND OR IN OUR OWN COUNTRY.

THE CRISIS THAT WE FACE HAS BEEN GRADUAL, BROAD AND RELATIVELY SILENT IN ITS MAKING. THE QUESTION FOR US IS: WILL WE FIND THE MOTIVATION AND RESOURCES WITHIN OURSELVES AND THE MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A FIRM STAND AND MOUNT AN EFFECTIVE EFFORT TO COUNTER THE CORRUPTION, DISTORTION AND DEGRADATION OF OUR GOVERNMENT THAT HAS BEEN ALLOWED AND ENCOURAGED BY BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR PAST ERRORS ARE VISIBLE WHEREVER GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS — IN THE WHITE HOUSE, THE CONGRESS AND OUR VAST BUREAUCRACY. BUT NO WHERE HAS IT DONE MORE HARM THAN IN ITS CAPABILITY TO DEFLECT OR DESTROY LEGITIMATE PUBLIC OPINION.

IT IS THAT OPINION, FREELY EXPRESSED BY CITIZENS AND THEN WELCOMED AND HONORED BY THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, THAT FORMS THE BEDROCK OF OUR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. ITS RESTORATION IS IN ORDER, AND LONG OVERDUE!

LAW WEST OF THE PECOS

DURING THE COURSE OF OUR WESTERN EXPANSION AND SETTLEMENT, LAW ENFORCEMENT WAS THIN AND NOT ALWAYS EVEN-HANDED. TEXAS FRONTIER JUDGE ROY BEAN, IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF LAWLESSNESS, KEPT A .45 REVOLVER IN FULL VIEW OF THE COURT ON HIS BENCH AND A LARGE PICTURE OF ACTRESS LILLY LANGTRY² ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM. HE DECLARED HIMSELF TO BE THE LAW WEST OF THE PECOS AND ACTED ACCORDINGLY.

JUDGE BEAN WOULD HAVE A HEAVY WORKLOAD TODAY, AS OUR WESTERN STATES THAT SHARE UNPROTECTED BORDERS WITH MEXICO ARE HOSTS TO A FLOURISHING TRADE IN ILLEGAL ARMS, DRUGS AND HUMANS. THE LATTER HAVE MEASURED IN THE MILLIONS AND ARE EUPHEMISTICALLY REFERRED TO AS “UNDOCUMENTED” BY THE VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT THEIR EASY ACCESS AND ENTRY AND WHO DERIVE LARGE POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL PROFITS FROM THEIR PRESENCE.

ARIZONA HAS EXPERIENCED THE HEAVIEST INFLOW OF THESE MIGRANTS WHICH, AS THEY OFTEN PARTICIPATE IN THE DRUG TRADE, HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE OF MULTIPLE VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS. SUCH WAS THE CASE THIS SPRING WHEN AN

AZ RANCHER WAS SHOT AND KILLED.

THE MAJORITY OF ARIZONANS HAVE LONG FAVORED INCREASED BORDER SECURITY AND OTHER EFFORTS TO RESTRICT UNCONTROLLED IMMIGRATION, AND IN MAY GOVERNOR JAN BREWER SIGNED SB 1070 WHICH AUTHORIZED LAW OFFICIALS TO INQUIRE INTO THE IMMIGRATION STATUS OF SOMEONE SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN A CRIME.

DETERMINATION OF STATUS BY LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENTITIES HAS BEEN CONSIDERED “RACIAL PROFILING” BY PRO-IMMIGRANT GROUPS, AND THEIR EFFORTS TO THWART IT BY BOTH POLITICAL AND JUDICIAL MEANS HAS SERVED AS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR TO OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S FAILURE TO ENFORCE ITS EXISTING IMMIGRATION LAW. THIS IS ONE OF THE KEY ELEMENTS IN OUR PRESENT IMMIGRATION CONFLICT. ANOTHER EQUALLY KEY FACT IS THAT NATIONAL OPINION POLLS HAVE REPEATEDLY INDICATED THAT BETWEEN 60% AND 70% OF AMERICAN VOTERS FAVOR GREATER CONTROL OVER OUR BORDERS AND IMMIGRATION PROBLEM.

“ . . . THESE EMOTIONS MAY MOVE BEYOND THEIR CONTROL TO CIVIL UNREST AND VIOLENCE.”

THIS IS BACKGROUND. WE WILL NOT OFFER COMMENT HERE PRO OR CON ON THE MANY CONCERNS THAT PLAY OUT IN THIS ISSUE. EITHER SIDE OF THIS TOPIC CAN BE ARGUED, BUT WHAT SEEMS INARGUABLE IS THAT AMERICA AT THIS TIME DOES NOT NEED TO BE SPLIT OVER SUCH A DIVISIVE ISSUE. IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND EXPRESSION OF THEIR ARGUMENT FOR RIGHTS, WHICH ARE BY NO MEANS GENERALLY ACCEPTED, THE PRO-IMMIGRATION FORCES HAVE RE-IGNITED HISTORICAL EMOTIONS OF ANGER AND ENVY. SHOULD THEY USE THE FEDERAL/STATES RIGHTS ISSUE AS AN IMPETUS FOR WIDESPREAD DEMONSTRATIONS OR CONFRONTATIONS, THESE EMOTIONS MAY MOVE BEYOND THEIR CONTROL TO CIVIL UNREST AND VIOLENCE.

IN ANY SUCH EXPANSION OF THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE THE “SPIRIT OF THE MOB” WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN DETERMINING WHETHER THESE INCENDIARY FORCES CAN BE REINED IN, OR WHETHER A LARGER CONFLICT WILL RESULT. EITHER WAY IS EQUALLY POSSIBLE.

THE DEPT. OF JUSTICE (DOJ) HAS FILED SUIT TO STRIKE DOWN ARIZONA’S LAW. WE SEE THIS AS THE POSSIBLE SOURCE OF THE GREATEST CONSTITUTIONAL CONFRONTATION THIS COUNTRY HAS EXPERIENCED SINCE THE ONGOING DEBATE ON SLAVERY THAT CULMINATED IN OUR CIVIL WAR.

LIKE SLAVERY, IMMIGRATION IS HOME TO MANY ARGUMENTS — ETHNIC, ECONOMIC, EMOTIONAL, POLITICAL, ELECTORAL, CULTURAL, HUMANITARIAN, SOCIAL, PUBLIC HEALTH, DEMOGRAPHIC, FAIRNESS AND OTHERS. IN THE COURSE OF A FEDERAL CASE AGAINST AZ’S LAW, ALL OF THESE ARGUMENTS, NO MATTER HOW VALID OR KEENLY FELT, MAY RECEDE INTO THE BACKGROUND. WHAT WILL PLAY OUT ON OUR NATIONAL STAGE AND SCREEN COULD BE THE MOST EXPLOSIVE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VS. STATES’ RIGHTS CONTEST IN OUR HISTORY. WE SAY THIS BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IT WILL BE WAGED

WITH ALL THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF OUR 24/7 MULTI-MEDIA COVERAGE.

THE FEDERAL VS. STATES' POWER ARGUMENT HAS BEEN WITH US SINCE WE FIRST BECAME A NATION. IT ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE FOR ANY NUMBER OF PURPOSES WHERE FEDERAL POWER STOPS AND THAT OF THE STATES COMMENCES; OR VICE-VERSA. THERE IS NO CLEAR TERRITORIAL LINE HERE. WHAT THERE IS WINDS ITS WAY THROUGH THE PHRASES AND PAGES OF THE CONSTITUTION LIKE A STREAM, SOMETIMES DISAPPEARING FROM VIEW AND THEN REEMERGING IN ANOTHER ASPECT OF OUR THOUGHT OR CONSCIENCE.

THE POSSIBILITY FOR LEGAL THEATRE OF THE HIGHEST ORDER WILL BE PRESENT AT ALL TIMES IN THE CLAIMS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS OF BOTH SIDES. AND BEHIND THE CURTAINS OF THE ATTORNEYS' ARGUMENTS WE WILL BE ABLE TO DISCERN THE MOVING SHAPES AND IDENTITIES OF THE MAJOR MONEY/POWER SOURCES BOTH AT WORK AND AT RISK. THEIR INTERESTS ARE OF SUCH SCALE THAT THEY WILL BE OPENLY REVEALED FROM TIME TO TIME WHETHER BY INTENT OR ACCIDENT.

FROM THE BEGINNING THERE WILL BE IMPORTANT CHALLENGES. THE DOJ MAY CHOOSE TO BRING SUIT IN FEDERAL COURT, WHEREAS AZ MIGHT WELL HOLD THAT, AS THE OBJECT OF THE ACTION IS A STATE LAW, IT BELONGS IN A STATE COURT. WHICHEVER VENUE IS CHOSEN, THE GOVERNMENT'S STANDING MAY BE OPEN TO QUESTION BECAUSE OF ITS LONG AND DETERMINED ABANDONMENT OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER APPLICABLE LAW. IN ANY EVENT, IT WILL PROBABLY WORK ITS WAY TO THE US SUPREME COURT WHICH MAY BE SHOWING SIGNS OF THE SAME POLARIZATION THAT INFECTS CONGRESS. WHATEVER THE DETAILS, WE ARE PROMISED A SPECTACULAR BATTLE OVER THE DEFINITION, DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF FEDERAL/STATE POWER. BOTH SIDES' CASES WILL BE BASED ON THE SAME EVIDENCE (I.E., THE CONSTITUTION) AND IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO FOLLOW THEIR OPPOSING ARGUMENTS AND THE COURTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THEM IN THEIR DECISIONS AS THE MATTER MOVES THROUGH OUR JUDICIAL PROCESS.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE AZ LAW WAS CHOSEN IN THE EXPECTATION THAT IT WOULD BE CHALLENGED IN COURT. THE ADMINISTRATION WILL PRESS TO ADD ANOTHER MAJOR VICTORY TO ITS HEALTH CARE BILL, AND, EVEN IF IT FAILS, THERE WOULD BE SOME POLITICAL GAIN IN THAT IT COULD MARK ITS OBLIGATION TO THE PRO-IMMIGRANT GROUPS "PAID" AND BE RELIEVED OF THE FURTHER EFFORT, COST AND DISTRACTION OF CONTINUING ATTENTION TO THEIR AGENDA.

THIS WILL BE A TRULY HISTORICAL EVENT WITH THE POWER TO AROUSE, DIVIDE AND INVOLVE THE PUBLIC ON A SCALE WE RARELY EXPERIENCE, AS OTHER STATES ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF FRAMING LEGISLATION SIMILAR TO ARIZONA'S.

THE 14TH AMENDMENT CONTAINS LANGUAGE SPECIFIC TO THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM WHICH COULD BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW OR ALTERATION AS THE RESULT OF A FEDERAL/STATE LEGAL CONFRONTATION. THIS RAISES THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE APPROVAL BY TWO THIRDS OF BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE FOLLOWED BY RATIFICATION BY THREE QUARTERS OF STATE LEGISLATURES.

SUCH A PROCESS CAN STIR PASSIONS AND TAKE TIME.

GIVEN THE LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AND POWER INVOLVED, IT COULD COMPLETELY CAPTURE OUR PUBLIC AND POLITICAL ATTENTION, AND WILL LIKELY HAVE THE EFFECT OF ALTERING OUR NATION IN MORE WAYS THAN MIGHT NOW BE READILY APPARENT.

. . . AND OIL SOUTH OF THE DELTA

WHAT WE OBSERVE IN THE GULF OIL SPILL IS A TEXTBOOK CASE IN MONEY WORKING ITS WILL IN A HIGHLY CHARGED POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE. IN THE FIRST PLACE, ALTHOUGH NO DEFINITIVE BLAME HAS BEEN FIXED BY A COURT OF LAW, FROM THE VARYING ACCOUNTS OFFERED BY BP, TRANSOCEAN AND THE MMS REGARDING OPERATING PROCEDURES, IT IS CLEAR THAT THEIR NEGLECT WAS MOTIVATED BY THE MONEY THAT COULD BE SAVED BY COST CUTTING AND/OR TIME SAVING MEASURES.

SIMILARLY, ONCE THE WELL WAS DESTROYED AND THE LEAK FLOWING, BP WAS LESS THAN PRECISE REGARDING THE TRUE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM. IT ALMOST CERTAINLY WANTED TO AVOID A MASSIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM AND THE DROP IN THE PRICE OF ITS CORPORATE SHARES THAT WOULD FOLLOW.

THE NEXT FAILURE WAS ADMINISTRATIVE AND COLORED BY POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. EACH OF THE FOUR STATES AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HELD MULTIPLE PRESS CONFERENCES AND PHOTO OPS DESIGNED TO SHOW VOTERS THAT THEY WERE TAKING ACTION. THERE WAS MUCH TALK AND MOTION, AND THE VARIOUS STATE OFFICIALS WERE PUSHED AND PULLED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS BY WIDELY DIFFERENT OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE MULTIPLE COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSTITUENCIES INVOLVED.

A MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR THE FOUR STATES AND THE FEDS TO CONVENE AND FORM A JOINT COMMISSION TO DEAL WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE SPILL, MAKE THE MESSY DECISIONS AND ISSUE ALL PUBLIC STATEMENTS. THE DELEGATION OF EACH STATE AND THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE CONSISTED OF AN ENGINEER, AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST AND PREFERABLY A FORMER POLITICAL OFFICE HOLDER SUCH AS AN EX-SENATOR OR GOVERNOR. SUCH A COMMISSION SHOULD HAVE BEEN FORMED FOR 24/7 OPERATION AS LONG AS NECESSARY. IT WOULD HAVE SAVED BOTH TIME AND MONEY AND ELIMINATED A LOT OF POLITICAL POSTURING.

NOW, WE GO BACK TO THE MOVEMENT OF MONEY. IN MAY BP GRANTED FL \$25 MILLION FOR AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN THAT WOULD HOPEFULLY CUT THE LOSS OF TOURISM DOLLARS RESULTING FROM THE POLLUTED BEACHES, POISONED FISHES AND CANCELLED HOTEL AND CHARTER BOAT RESERVATIONS THAT HAVE HAD DAILY TV COVERAGE.

THE REQUEST FOR THIS GRANT MOST CERTAINLY ORIGINATED WITH FL'S GOVERNOR, CHARLIE CRIST, WHO IS ENGAGED IN A CLOSE CAMPAIGN FOR A SENATE SEAT THAT HE HOPES WILL SPRINGBOARD HIM TO WASHINGTON AND NATIONAL

PROMINENCE.

BUT THERE ARE MORE MONEY MATTERS IN THE WORKS. BP HAS ANNOUNCED IT IS UNDERTAKING A \$50 MILLION ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN TO EXPLAIN THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AND ITS ROLE IN DEALING WITH THEM. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF CONSEQUENCES,

NOT WANTING TO BE OVERSHADOWED BY SUCH CORPORATE LARGESSE, GOV. CRIST CALLED FOR BP PRESIDENT LAMAR MCKAY TO “IMMEDIATELY COMMIT \$100 MILLION TO THE FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF OCEANOGRAPHY”³ TO STUDY THE SPILL’S PROGRESS. “THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE SPILL ON OUR ECONOMY, HABITAT AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES DEMANDS THAT OUR STATE HAVE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE RESPONSE.”⁴ CRIST ADDED.

THERE HAVE BEEN SCIENTIFIC CLAIMS AND COUNTER CLAIMS EXCHANGED BETWEEN THE INSTITUTE AND BP WHICH EVENTUALLY WILL BE TESTED AND RESOLVED. IT’S EVIDENT THAT CRIST WANTED TO GET FL’S HAND IN BP’S POCKET BEFORE HIS FELLOW SUFFERERS, BUT THIS KIND OF ELECTORAL GRANDSTANDING ONLY MAKES THE RESTORATION/REPAIR PROCESS MORE DIVISIVE AND COSTLY, AND COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED BY THE COMMISSION SUGGESTED ABOVE.

EVENTUALLY, WE MAY COME TO SOME MEASURE OF AGREEMENT ON THE MANY SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS POSED BY THIS SPILL. THE MONEY TRAIL MAY PROVE MUCH HARDER TO FOLLOW IN ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE THE SPILL’S FINAL COSTS. THERE ARE NUMEROUS DIFFERENT KINDS OF DAMAGE AND WAYS BY WHICH THEY WILL BE EXPERIENCED. TIME MAY WITHHOLD SOME ANSWERS FOR YEARS, BUT THE TOTAL WILL SURELY RUN INTO MANY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

IN SPITE OF ALL THE UNKNOWNNS, ONE THING WE KNOW FOR SURE — FROM SARAH PALIN TO BARACK OBAMA THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE ON OFFSHORE DRILLING UNDERWENT A SUDDEN AND SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE!

GULF LOTTO

IN THE SLIGHTLY OVER TWO MONTHS SINCE THE EXPLOSION AND COLLAPSE OF DEEPWATER HORIZON WE HAVE RECEIVED A FAIRLY STEADY STREAM OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION THAT HAS GIVEN US AN UNDERSTANDING WE DID NOT HAVE PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT. THE PUBLICITY GENERATED BY THE ACADEMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES THAT ISSUE THESE REPORTS, HOWEVER, MAY LEAD US TO DERIVE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY FROM THEM.

WHILE WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR (7/9/10) IS CERTAINLY USEFUL, IT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING STAGE OF A PROCESS THAT WILL CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS. AT THIS POINT, ALTHOUGH WHAT WE KNOW IS DISTURBING, THE REAL DANGER LIES IN WHAT WE DON’T KNOW, AND CAN’T OR WON’T KNOW FOR MANY YEARS.

DEEPWATER HORIZON HAS UPSET NATURE’S PATTERNS OVER A WIDE SPACE. IN THIS AREA, PREVIOUSLY SHAPED BY ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL PROCESSES, WE NOW HAVE A MASSIVE TOXIC INVASION SURE TO CAUSE CHANGES IN CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY AND NUTRITION THAT WILL AFFECT THE

FEEDING, MATING, NESTING, TERRITORIAL AND SURVIVAL CAPABILITIES OF ALL THE SPECIES INVOLVED.

THE CONSEQUENCES ARE VAST AND WE HAVE NO WAY TO PREDICT THEM, AS THEY WILL ANNOUNCE THEMSELVES BY THEIR PRESENCE AS THEY WORK THEIR WAY THROUGH THE FOOD/LIFE CHAIN. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE DECIMATION OF THE GREAT PLAINS BUFFALO HERDS, WE MAY BE WITNESS TO THE LOSS OF WHOLE SPECIES RATHER THAN SMALLER UNITS. AGAIN, WE SHOULD NOT BE COMFORTED BY WHAT WE ARE NOW TOLD. OUR REAL CONCERNS LIE AHEAD!

AND, AS FOR KNOWING THE TIME FRAME TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING, IT HAS ONLY RECENTLY COME TO LIGHT THAT HERRING IN ALASKA IN THE AREA BLIGHTED BY THE EXXON VALDEZ DISASTER HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR FORMER POPULATION LEVELS.

“ THERE ARE NO “WINNING TICKETS.”

WE ARE FACED WITH AN ENORMOUS POOL OF EVENTS, COMBINATIONS, MUTATIONS, VARIANTS AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF ALL OF THESE THAT HAVE BEEN GATHERED AND ROTATED, AND FROM WHICH RESULTS, BOTH ABOVE AND BELOW THE SURFACE, WILL BE PICKED AT RANDOM AND THEN ANNOUNCED TO US. THERE ARE NO “WINNING TICKETS”.

WE WILL HAVE TO LEARN AS WE GO, QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY IN SOME INSTANCES, AND IN DOING SO WE WILL HAVE TO CHALLENGE PREVIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MODELS.

* * *

HOWEVER AND WHENEVER IT ENDS, THE GULF OIL SPILL IS A CAUTIONARY TALE OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN, WHAT DID HAPPEN AND WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN AGAIN.

WE HAVE BEEN TOLD OF SEX, DRUG AND MONEY GAMES BETWEEN REGULATORS AND THOSE THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO REGULATE. SECRETARY SALAZAR AND BP CEO TONY HAYWARD HAVE BOTH SAID THEY’RE LEARNING. THEY COULD HAVE AND SHOULD HAVE KNOWN. IN OUR OPINION THEY SHOULD BE REPLACED, BUT SALAZAR’S DEPARTURE WOULD BE A POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR OBAMA AND CORPORATE BOARDS ARE NOT KNOWN TO TAKE SUCH ACTION UNTIL IT BECOMES UNAVOIDABLE.

OIL IS AN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY. AS WITH COPPER, COAL, ETC., IT LOCATES, EXTRACTS, PROCESSES AND THEN SELLS NATURAL RESOURCES FROM THE DARKNESS BENEATH THE EARTH’S SURFACE. THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PRODUCED ARE OFTEN DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS AND RESULTS ARE BY NO MEANS ASSURED.

THE DEEPWATER HORIZON EXPLOSION AND COLLAPSE IS VERY MUCH A METAPHOR OF OUR TIMES. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF WELLS OPERATING IN THE GULF AND MANY MORE STANDING READY TO JOIN THEM. AND ANY ADDED PRODUCTION WILL INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF STRESS BY WITHDRAWAL THAT

OUR SOCIETY IS APPLYING TO OUR SUPPLY OF VITAL NATURAL RESOURCES.

MANY PEOPLE IGNORE THIS BECAUSE THEY SEE IT AS SOMEONE ELSE'S (I.E. GOVERNMENT'S) RESPONSIBILITY; BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT INTERESTED OR TOO BUSY; OR BECAUSE THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE, THE ENGINEERING OR THE ECONOMICS INVOLVED. AND FINALLY THERE ARE THOSE WHO VIEW UNRELENTING GROWTH AS A GOAL IN ITSELF, AS AN ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT FOR US. THESE ARE OUR MODERN ICARIANS⁵ WHO FAIL TO REALIZE THAT PRESSURE ON A SYSTEM'S PARTS CAN CAUSE THE FAILURE OF THE WHOLE.

NATURALLY, THE FIRST AND PRESENT EFFORT HAS TO BE TO CONTAIN AND THEN ELIMINATE THE DAMAGE. BUT FOR US, AS A PEOPLE, THERE IS A LARGER LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THE GULF SPILL. IT IS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND OUR PLANET. CAN WE EXPECT TO TREAT IT AND TAKE FROM IT IN THE SAME WAY AND AMOUNTS AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST?

THESE ARE NOT QUESTIONS TO BE PUT TO THE OIL COMPANY CEOs IN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, OR PRES. OBAMA AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, OR TO SECRETARY SALAZAR AT A CABINET MEETING. THEY ARE QUESTIONS WE MUST PUT TO OURSELVES AND THEN, WHEN WE HAVE MADE OUR EXAMINATION AND HAVE ANSWERS, MAKE INTO INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE WE ELECT TO CONDUCT OUR GOVERNMENT.

IN THIS PROCESS, NATURE CAN BE HELPFUL IN PROVIDING US WITH INFORMATION. IF, HOWEVER, WE FALTER, FAIL OR LOSE INTEREST, WE CANNOT COUNT ON NATURE TO DO OUR PART. IT HAS ITS OWN WAYS AND TIMETABLES WHICH WE MAY IGNORE ONLY AT GREAT RISK AND PERIL. IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY OUR ONLY SENSIBLE OPTION IS COOPERATION.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA
JULY 4, 2010

IN THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF OUR INDEPENDENCE AMERICA CAN LOOK BACK WITH SOME PRIDE, BUT NOT SATISFACTION, ON WHAT IT HAS ACCOMPLISHED. OUR POLITICAL PRESENT IS DIFFICULT, ARBITRARY, CORRUPT, MEAN-SPIRITED AND PAINFUL TO COMPARE TO THE VALUES OF OUR FOUNDING.

OUR FUTURE OFFERS HOPE, BUT NOT IF WE CONTINUE ON THE SAME PATH. OUR GOVERNMENT MUST BE REORDERED. THIS WILL BE NEITHER QUICK NOR EASY, BUT IT CAN BE DONE! IT SHOULD BE OUR WAY OF GIVING BACK TO OUR FOUNDERS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEIR LIVES, THEIR FORTUNES AND THEIR SACRED HONOR TO OUR INHERITANCE.



IMPORTANT

SOME OF M.O.C.'S SUBSCRIBERS MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR OWN FAMILY FOUNDATIONS OR MAY SERVE ON THE BOARDS OF OTHERS. SHOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING THE ROLE OF FOUNDATIONS IN AMERICA'S RENEWAL, AS PROPOSED HERE, PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR.

END NOTES

- ¹ JOHN ADAMS, ORIGINAL DRAFT OF MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION, 1779
- ² MS. LANGTRY, A POPULAR LEADING LADY OF THE BRITISH STAGE, MAINTAINED A LENGTHY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH QUEEN VICTORIA'S OLDEST SON EDWARD, BOTH AS THE PRINCE OF WALES AND AFTER HE ASSUMED THE THRONE AS EDWARD VII. THE EDWARDIAN ERA, WHICH BROUGHT TO A CLOSE THE OLD ORDER IN EUROPE, WAS NAMED AFTER HIM.
- ³ PALM BEACH POST – 6/09/10
- ⁴ IBID – 6/5/10
- ⁵ ICARUS WAS A FIGURE IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY FROM CRETE WHO YEARNED TO BE FREE FROM EARTHLY CONSTRAINTS. HE BUILT A PAIR OF LARGE WINGS TO BE FASTENED TO HIS BACK WITH WAX WHICH HE COULD OPERATE BY HIS ARMS. IGNORING WARNINGS FROM HIS FATHER ABOUT THE DANGERS OF FLYING TOO HIGH, HE CAME TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN, ITS HEAT MELTED HIS WAX AND HE PLUNGED TO HIS DEATH.

EDITOR'S BIO

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

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