

# MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

ISSUE No. 41

OCTOBER 2013

## THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT PART II

IN APPROXIMATELY THE LAST FOUR HUNDRED YEARS, FROM PLYMOUTH ROCK TO PUNK ROCK, AMERICA'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES HAVE SERVED AS BOTH THE AGENTS AND TARGETS OF TECTONIC CHANGE. ONLY SLIGHTLY REMOVED FROM THEM BY CUSTOM OR BY CONSTITUTIONAL DECREE ARE OTHER PUBLIC CONSTITUENCIES SUCH AS EDUCATION, RELIGION AND COMMERCE.

THIS CONTINUING PUSH/PULL PROCESS OF CHANGE BETWEEN THE ELEMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY THAT WE CALL UPON TO PROVIDE GOVERNMENT HAS DISTORTED MANY OF OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS, AND HAS RESULTED IN OUR DISTANCING OURSELVES FROM MANY OF OUR EARLIER COMMITMENTS. IT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO OUR PRESENT INABILITY TO FRAME ISSUES IN THE NATION'S INTEREST.

IT'S FAIRLY CLEAR THAT THIS PATTERN OF INCREASING DISREGARD FOR OUR TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME SELF-DEFEATING, AND THAT WE WILL HAVE VENTURED SO FAR FROM THE PHILOSOPHICAL SAFETY OF OUR ORIGINS THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETRIEVE THEM. ALREADY THE KNOT HAS LOOSENED, THE ROPE HAS SLIPPED FROM THE PIER AND THE SHORE RECEDES.

FROM MOC'S EARLIEST ISSUES WE HAVE CITED INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE AS ONE OF THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE FORCES AT WORK IN OUR SOCIETY. LOOK AROUND AT SOME OF

OUR MOST VENERABLE INSTITUTIONS. THEY HAVE BEEN BOTH ASSAULTED FROM THE OUTSIDE AND POISONED FROM WITHIN.

THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF THIS PERSISTENT ANTAGONISM HAS SERIOUSLY WEAKENED THEIR IMMUNE SYSTEMS AND, AS IT HAS PROCEEDED, ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST HALF CENTURY, HAS RESULTED IN A DIMINISHED SENSE OF PUBLIC INTEGRITY AND ENERGY.

OUR DEMOCRACY IS AT A TIPPING POINT WHICH MAY LIE BEHIND US OR, PERHAPS, JUST AHEAD. WHICHEVER, WE ARE WITHIN ITS ZONE OF CONSEQUENCE.

THE QUESTION THAT OUR HISTORY POSES TO US IS "CAN WE CREATE THE KIND OF PUBLIC THINKING AND AWARENESS THAT WILL ENABLE US TO RESTORE THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO ITS FORMER, RIGHTFUL PLACE IN OUR PUBLIC LIFE? THE QUESTION ASKED BY OUR FUTURE IS, "DO WE HAVE THE WILL?"

THE WORDING OF THESE QUERIES IS SIMPLE AND EASY TO COMPREHEND, BUT, TO ANSWER AFFIRMATIVELY AND TO IMPLEMENT WHAT THAT RESPONSE WILL REQUIRE WILL ENTAIL A COMBINED EFFORT OF AS GREAT FORCE, UNITY AND PURPOSE AS ANY WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MUSTER IN THE PAST.

THERE ARE MANY STEPS ALONG EACH PATH AND NO SHORTAGE OF OPPOSED INTERESTS EAGER TO PULL OR PUSH US OFF, BUT SUCCESS IS NOT BEYOND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

THE FIRST STEP IS RECOGNITION; THE NEXT IS AROUSAL AND COALESCING AROUND A CENTER; AND THE THIRD

**IN THIS ISSUE:** WE CONTINUE TO EXAMINE WAYS IN WHICH OUR GOVERNMENT'S OPERATION FAILS ITS MISSION.

**IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:** WE WILL CONTINUE THIS RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT SERIES BY INVESTIGATING THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF OUR INSTITUTIONAL FAILURES.

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IS IMPLEMENTATION, ACHIEVEMENT AND THEN SECURING THE GOAL. THIS PROCESS WILL REQUIRE THE BREAKING OF MANY EGGS AND THE GORING OF MANY OXEN, BUT IT CAN BE DONE AND IN THE PROCESS WE CAN CLEANSE OUR GOVERNMENT AND PERHAPS EVEN OUR SOULS.

ANY GENUINE EFFORT TO ELEVATE THE NATIONAL INTEREST MUST INCLUDE RESTORING OUR INSTITUTIONS TO THEIR PRIOR LEVELS OF RESPECT. THEY HAVE BEEN FORMED AND STRUCTURED TO PROVIDE PROTECTION AND CONTINUITY BEYOND THE SPAN OF HUMAN LIVES FOR OUR PROCLAIMED IDEALS AND LAWS. THEY ARE ESSENTIAL TO MOST SOCIETIES, BUT EVEN MORE SO TO OPEN, DEMOCRATIC MODELS SUCH AS OURS. IN OUR COUNTRY THE STRESS OF TIME AND CHANGE HAS NOT SPARED THEM. RATHER, WITH THE HELP OF OUR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, FROM WHICH MANY RECEIVE THEIR FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT, THEIR VULNERABILITY HAS BECOME MORE APPARENT.

## POWER MAP

WE SHOULD TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT THE MAP OF THE U.S. AND, ESPECIALLY, THE LOCATION OF OUR CAPITAL. IT IS NOT LOCATED ON A MAJOR RIVER; NOR DOES IT HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF A COMMERCIAL HARBOR. IT IS NOT CENTRALLY POSITIONED RELATIVE TO OUR GEOGRAPHY OR OUR POPULATION. RATHER, IT IS SQUEEZED BETWEEN OUR NORTH AND SOUTH, BORDERED BY MD TO ITS NORTH AND EAST AND VA TO ITS SOUTH AND WEST. ITS TWO NEAREST TOPOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE ARE CHESAPEAKE BAY (EAST) AND THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS (WEST). IT IS ABOUT 400 MILES FROM BOSTON, A LITTLE LESS THAN 3,000 MILES FROM LA AND SF AND ABOUT 700 TO 800 MILES FROM OUR MIDWESTERN CITIES OF ST. LOUIS AND CHICAGO.

THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, WE HAVE DEVELOPED CENTERS OF ENORMOUS CAPITAL ACCUMULATION FROM SOURCES AS VARIED AS STEEL FABRICATION, MINING, FARMING, FILM MAKING, AIRCRAFT AND AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTION AND FINANCIAL SERVICES. THESE EFFORTS ALL REQUIRE, IN DIFFERENT DEGREES, THE COSTS OF PLANT, EQUIPMENT AND LABOR WHICH, WHEN SUBTRACTED FROM REVENUES, LEAVES A PROFIT.

BUSINESSES ARE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN THIS EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES WHILE EXPANDING THEIR PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF WIDGETS, OR WHATEVER. BUT EXPANSION CAN CREATE MARKET SATURATION WHEREBY

REVENUES EITHER DECREASE OR BECOME MORE EXPENSIVE TO ATTAIN, OR BOTH.

AT THIS POINT, THE PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGER/OWNER MAY OPT TO PRESS HIS ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN DC FOR LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANCE. IN DUE COURSE, THERE FOLLOWS A ROLL CALL VOTE IN CONGRESS, THE FLOURISH OF AN OVAL OFFICE PHOTO-OP SIGNING AND THE EMERGENCE OF CORPORATE BENEFITS SUCH AS SUBSIDIES, TAX BENEFITS, CONTRACTS AND OTHERS WHICH TEND TO HAVE LONG LIVES, AS, ONCE GRANTED, THEY ARE NOT EASILY REMOVED.

THIS ASPECT OF GOVERNMENT IS FAR MORE PREVALENT NOW THAN IT HAS BEEN AT ANY TIME IN OUR PREVIOUS HISTORY. OUR GREAT CENTERS OF WEALTH CREATION, AND OUR SMALLER ONES, ALL PRODUCE WEALTH AND POWER WHICH FINDS ITS WAY TO DC TO EXPRESS ITSELF AND INCREASE THROUGH POLITICAL, RATHER THAN COMMERCIAL, MEANS.

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MAP AND MENTALLY DRAW MONEY/POWER LINES ACROSS IT FROM ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY TO DC. THEN IMAGINE THE TRAFFIC JAM THAT RESULTS WHEN ALL THESE MONEY/POWER SEEKERS ARRIVE AT THE SAME PLACE AND TIME. GRIDLOCK!

AND YET THEY MUST BE SERVED; AND SO, TO ESTABLISH SOME SEMBLANCE OF EFFICIENCY, ORDER, PRIORITY AND ECONOMY, OUR PRESENT LOBBYING SYSTEM CAME INTO BEING. IT SERVES INDUSTRY/COMMERCE AND OUR POLITICAL CLASS EQUALLY WELL, BUT IT IS BY NO MEANS FREE OF FLAWS AND EXCESSES WHICH CHALLENGE THE FAIRNESS WE HAVE CLAIMED FOR OUR SYSTEM.

THE CONGRESS IS ONE OF OUR NATION'S MOST IMPORTANT AND POWERFUL INSTITUTIONS, AND OUR ACCEPTANCE OF THIS DISTORTION OF ITS PRINCIPLES HAS BEEN A KEY FACTOR IN ITS GROWING FAILURE TO PERFORM ITS BASIC GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS.

BUT EVEN BEYOND ITS FAILURE AT THE CONGRESSIONAL LEVEL, THIS FLOW OF MONEY/POWER FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY TO DC HAS SENT A MESSAGE TO STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT THAT IT IS THE WAY THINGS WORK IN WASHINGTON, AND NEW ARRIVALS ARE EXPECTED TO "GET WITH THE PROGRAM". THE RESULT IS THAT NEW MEMBERS' PLANS FOR A PRINCIPLED REPRESENTATION ARE OFTEN DEFLECTED OR DERAILED BY THE GRIP OF PRAGMATIC POLITICS.

THERE IS A KEEN NATIONAL INTEREST IN SEEING OUR LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT REORDERED TO ELIMINATE WHAT HAS BECOME A PERVERSIVE FORM OF CORRUPTION. THIS CAN BE DONE,

BUT AT THIS TIME, BECAUSE OF THE ADVANCED STATE OF ITS PRACTICE, SPONTANEOUS CHANGE CANNOT BE EXPECTED FROM WITHIN.

NEW VOICES WILLING TO CHALLENGE PARTY PROCEDURE AND FUNDING WILL HAVE TO SPEAK AND BE HEARD. THESE NEW INDEPENDENTS WILL HAVE TO RUN ON THE NATIONAL INTEREST AGAINST LONG ODDS OF SUCCESS. THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THEIR REMOTE CHANCES OF SUCCESS AND NOT VIEW ELECTORAL POLITICS AS A LIFE-LONG CAREER BY WHICH THEY ARE NEGATIVELY DEFINED IF THEIR FIRST ATTEMPTS TO SEEK OFFICE FAIL.

AS OUR TWO PARTY SYSTEM IS IN A STATE OF CONSIDERABLE FLUX NOW, THE ELECTION OF EVEN A VERY FEW NEW INDEPENDENTS CALLING FOR ACTION IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST COULD HAVE AN IMPACT FAR BEYOND THEIR NUMBER, AND MIGHT EVEN QUALIFY THEM FOR SOME LIMITED, OR EVEN ANONYMOUS, FUNDING FROM MAJOR PARTY SOURCES.

THIS IS UNLIKELY, BUT POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCE CHANGES INSTANTLY. THE WHIFF OF OPPORTUNITY IS READILY DISCERNIBLE AND HEDGE BETS OFTEN CAN BE PUT TO DISCREET USE. ONLY ONE THING IS NOW CERTAIN, AND THAT IS THAT MORE OF THE SAME WILL LEAD TO DISASTER.

## TECHNOLOGY AND POLITICS

THE GREAT AGE OF RAIL TRAVEL IN THE US EXTENDED FROM APPROXIMATELY THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR TO WWII. ONE OF ITS ENDURING IMAGES IS THAT OF POLITICAL CANDIDATES ADDRESSING LOCAL CROWDS FROM THE SMALL, OPEN, RED-WHITE-BLUE BUNTING DRAPED PLATFORM OF THE LAST CAR. THIS IMAGE MADE DEFINING STATEMENTS ABOUT OUR TECHNOLOGY AND OUR POLITICAL INTIMACY WHICH WOULD BE REFLECTED IN OUR EMERGERCE AS A WORLD POWER.

THIS SAME PERIOD CAN BE SEEN AS OUR GOLDEN AGE OF TECHNOLOGY WHEN, IN THE SPACE OF ONLY A HALF CENTURY, AMERICAN LIFE WAS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED BY A SERIES OF MAJOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES. WE TEND TO THINK OF THE AMERICAN HOME AND OFFICE, OR PLANT, BEING THE MAIN BENEFICIARIES OF THIS SURGING TECHNOLOGICAL FERTILITY, BUT OTHER SECTORS ALSO PARTICIPATED. ELECTORAL POLITICS, CYCLICAL AND OCCASIONAL BY NATURE, BUT IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THEIR RESULTS, STARTED SLOWLY, BUT HAVE ACCELERATED IN RECENT YEARS.

THE FIRST GREAT BREAK FROM THE PAST CAME WITH THE TELEGRAPH AND WAS QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY THE TELEPHONE. THESE TWO TECHNOLOGIES FREED COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE EARTH — THE SPEED OF MAN, ANIMAL, TRAIN AND SHIP.

BUT THE REAL POLITICAL GAME CHANGER CAME AFTER WWI IN THE FORM OF RADIO WHICH PROVIDED FREE, LIVE COVERAGE OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND CONVENTIONS AND THEN CHANGED THE ARENA AGAIN, A DECADE LATER, WHEN FDR'S COMMAND AND USE OF THIS NEW MEDIUM THROUGH HIS WEEKLY "FIRESIDE CHATS" BROUGHT THE WHITE HOUSE INTO AMERICA'S DEPRESSION ERA HOMES.

STILL, RADIO WAS AUDIO ONLY AND IT TOOK POSTWAR

TECHNOLOGY IN THE FORM OF COMMERCIAL TELEVISION TO BRING AUDIO AND VIDEO TOGETHER. THE LATTER WAS ANOTHER GAME CHANGER, AS IT SHOWED HOW CANDIDATES LOOKED, DRESSED, ACTED, MOVED, GRIMACED, SMILED, ETC. TO THOSE WHO WATCHED CLOSELY, FROM THE COMFORT OF THEIR HOMES, IT REVEALED TENSION, SINCERITY OR ITS LACK, UNEASE, ARROGANCE, HUMILITY, UNCERTAINTY AND OTHER TELLING CHARACTERISTICS NOT PREVIOUSLY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

AND, JUST AS WE THOUGHT TV WAS THE LAST SHOT OUT OF OUR TECHNOLOGICAL ROMAN CANDLE, THE DIGITAL AGE AND ITS FLAGSHIP, THE INTERNET, ARRIVED. TO SOUND AND PICTURE READABLE TEXT WAS ADDED WITH THE CAPABILITY FOR FREE, GLOBAL, INSTANTANEOUS TRANSMISSION.

THE WORLD WAS NOW DIGITAL AND WE AND OTHERS STRUGGLED AND RUSHED TO AVOID BEING LEFT BEHIND. THIS WAS NEITHER A SIMPLE NOR A SMOOTH PROCESS, FOR MASSIVE AND RAPID TECHNOLOGY CHANGE HAS GENERALLY INVOLVED SPREADING KNOWLEDGE TO BROADER AND LESS AFFLUENT LEVELS OF OUR POPULATION. IN DOING SO, IT WEAKENS THE POSITION OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL, THAT DERIVE THEIR POWER FROM EARLIER, MORE LIMITED TECHNOLOGY. WIDER, CHEAPER, MORE EFFICIENT ACCESS TO INFORMATION HAS A MINGLING, COMMUNAL EFFECT THAT ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES FIND THREATENING, AND SO IT IS WITH POLITICS.

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THROUGHOUT MUCH OF OUR HISTORY CANDIDATES FOR BOTH NATIONAL AND STATE OFFICES WERE SELECTED BY POLITICAL BOSSES "IN SMOKE FILLED ROOMS" WHO MANAGED TO SURVIVE GROWING CALLS FOR REFORM. THE POLITICAL CONVENTION ENTERED OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM PARTIALLY IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC OPINION THAT FAVORED REFORM AND PROVIDED TRANSPARENCE.

IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY OUR REPORTING TECHNOLOGY CONSISTED OF EARLY TELEPHONES, THE TELEGRAPH AND OVERNIGHT RAIL DELIVERY THAT WERE USED BY REPORTERS FOR THE MAJOR PRINT MEDIA AND THE SYNDICATES THAT SERVED THE SMALLER PUBLICATIONS.

WITH THE ELECTION OF BOSS-PICKED WARREN GAMALIEL HARDING IN 1920 AND THE SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION OF HIS BRIEF, TWO YEAR TERM IN OFFICE, THE PRESSURE FOR A MORE OPEN PROCESS INTENSIFIED AND WAS GREATLY AIDED BY THE ADDITION OF LIVE RADIO COVERAGE.

RADIO BROUGHT REAL CHANGE. FIRST, IT PROVIDED LIVE AUDIO TRANSMISSION CAPABLE OF REACHING RURAL AMERICA WHERE NEWS WAS MOSTLY OBTAINED FROM SMALL WEEKLY PAPERS. AND IT ENABLED ANOTHER CONSTITUENCY — THOSE WHO COULD NOT READ BECAUSE OF BLINDNESS OR LACK OF EDUCATION.

THIS IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY UPON OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESS BOTH ACCELERATED AND EXPANDED AS TV, COMPUTERS AND DIGITALIZATION WERE ADDED TO THE MIX. INSTANTANEOUS TABULATION OF CONVENTION VOTING ELIMINATED MUCH OF THE SUSPENSE OF STATE BY STATE ROLL

CALLS AND OVER TIME THE CONVENTIONS MADE OTHER CHANGES DESIGNED TO CREATE MORE POPULAR APPEAL. TODAY, THEY ARE MOSTLY A JOINT EXERCISE OF SELF-CONGRATULATION AND POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT.

PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE CHOICE OF CANDIDATES AT BOTH THE NOMINATING AND ELECTORAL STAGES WAS SHIFTED TO A SERIES OF TELEVISED DEBATES COMMENCING IN 1960 WITH THE NIXON/KENNEDY SHOWCASE CONFRONTATION.

POLITICAL PARTIES, HOWEVER, SEEMINGLY CANNOT AVOID EXCESS, AND OVER TIME THE DEBATE AS A CAMPAIGN INSTITUTION WAS MOLDED BY BOTH PARTIES IN WAYS THAT LIMITED ITS SCOPE, INTENSITY AND APPEAL WHILE INCREASING ITS EXPOSURE TIME. THE RESULT IN THE ROMNEY/OBAMA CAMPAIGN AND THE PRIOR NOMINATING CAMPAIGNS WAS THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS GAVE SET, ‘STUMP’ SPEECHES REGARDLESS OF WHAT QUESTION HAD BEEN ASKED. AS THE PANEL OF QUESTIONERS COOPERATED BY ASKING MOSTLY “SOFT” QUESTIONS, THE BOREDOM FACTOR ZOOMED UPWARD AND OFF THE CHART.

IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT A NEW FORMAT IS BEING READIED. THIS IS NECESSARY BECAUSE OUR POLITICAL CAMPAIGN INSTITUTION WAS NOT ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY ADAPT AND ABSORB NEW TECHNOLOGIES. BOTH PARTIES SHOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED THE MORE INTRUSIVE AND PENETRATING QUALITIES OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA, BUT THEY WERE FOOLISH — THINKING THEY COULD PICK AND CHOOSE WHICH ASPECTS OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES THEY COULD USE WHILE IGNORING OTHERS. AND THEY DARED NOT RISK GIVING UP THE OLD BEFORE BELIEVING IN THE NEW.

BUT TECHNOLOGY DOESN’T OFFER SUCH A CHOICE, AND IT HASN’T SINCE MAN FIRST USED FIRE. IN OUR ELECTRONIC ERA, POLITICIANS RECEIVE THE SAME SCRUTINY, THE SAME CLOSE, HARD, HONEST, INTENSE, DETAILED IMAGING AS WARS, CRIME SCENES, TORNADO VICTIMS, AND TERRORIST ATTACKS. IT’S A TWOFER. YOU GET ONE; YOU GET BOTH.

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TECHNOLOGY TOUCHES EVERYTHING, HOWEVER, AND IT IS NOT JUST THE CONVENTION FORMAT THAT HAS BEEN CHANGED. THE MOST CONTINUOUSLY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR TWO PARTIES’ ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN THEIR FUNDING. UNLIKE PARTY PLATFORMS OR VOTER PARTICIPATION, WHICH CAN VARY SIGNIFICANTLY FROM ONE ELECTION TO THE NEXT, THERE IS ONE ELEMENT THAT DEMANDS AND RECEIVES CONSTANT PRIORITY. IT IS FUND RAISING WITHOUT WHICH OUR POLITICAL PARTIES COULD NOT EXIST.

IN 1952, WITH WARTIME PRESIDENTS FDR AND HST GONE, OUR FIRST 5-STAR GENERAL, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, BECAME THE GOP NOMINEE. HIS MIDWESTERN (KS) ORIGINS, MODERATE CONSERVATISM AND HIS WARTIME HERO IMAGE CUT ACROSS MANY TRADITIONAL VOTING LINES AND EXPANDED FUND RAISING CONCEPTS.

SINCE THEN, AIDED BY OUR GROWING POPULATION AND

EVER MORE POPULAR AND POWERFUL MEDIA FORMS, CAMPAIGN FINANCING HAS STEADILY GROWN, REACHING \$6 BILLION IN THE 2012 ELECTIONS. AND IN AMERICA, WHEN FINANCIAL FORMULAS ARE CHANGED, PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING CHANGES.

WHEN HOWARD DEAN, GOVERNOR OF VT, ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY FOR BECOMING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY’S NOMINEE FOR THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST, IT DID NOT SHAKE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. HE WAS A LIBERAL DEMOCRAT WITH A RECORD OF SOME INTERESTING AND SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS IN VT, BUT HE WAS A LONG SHOT, A VERY LONG SHOT.

BUT THEN SOMETHING CHANGED. HIS CAMPAIGN MANAGERS TAPPED INTO INTERNET FUNDING SOURCES AND THE MONEY POURED IN, TRANSFORMING HIM FROM A MOSTLY LOCAL, LOW-ODDS CONTESTANT TO A VERY VISIBLE, NATIONAL, HIGH-ODDS PRESENCE.

THIS SUCCESS WAS NOT LOST UPON THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN STAFF WHO EXPANDED AND REFINED DEAN’S TECHNIQUE IN DEFEATING GOV. ROMNEY.

VERY FEW MEMBERS OF OUR POLITICAL CLASS ARE ABLE TO VIEW OUR INSTITUTIONS AS ANYTHING MORE THAN EXTENSIONS OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL OR PARTY EXISTENCES. THIS IS A TERRIBLE FAILURE THAT CRIES OUT FOR CORRECTION, BUT IS SEEMINGLY BEYOND OUR REACH.

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BUT, REPEAT, TECHNOLOGY CHANGES EVERYTHING —MORE THAN JUST CAMPAIGN FUNDING AND DEBATES. IN SHORTER ORDER THAN WE MIGHT HAVE THEN IMAGINED WE MAY DISCOVER THAT THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF PRESENTING CANDIDATES AND HOW WE RESPOND TO THEM WILL RELEGATE OUR CURRENT METHODS TO THE STATUS OF THE SPEAKING PLATFORM OF THE TRAIN’S LAST CAR.

THE LATTER MAY SEEM QUIANT AND REMOTE NOW WHEN CANDIDATES’ IMAGES APPEAR ON EVERY FLAT SURFACE AND SOME CURVED ONES, BUT THE SPEECH FROM THE LAST RAIL CAR HAD SOME ADVANTAGES THAT ARE MISSING TODAY. IT WAS CLOSE, PERSONAL, EVEN INTIMATE BY POLITICAL STANDARDS — MUCH THE WAY FDR’S “FIRESIDE CHATS” WERE.

IT SEEMS THAT THESE METHODS ARE GONE. WILL WE MISS THEM? IF SO, WHAT WILL WE DO? WILL TECHNOLOGY HOLD THE ANSWER FOR THEIR RESCUE AS IT DID FOR THEIR DISPLACEMENT? HAVING REMADE OUR WAYS OF CONDUCTING AND FINANCING OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL CONTESTS, IT IS LIKELY TECHNOLOGY WILL PROVIDE FURTHER INNOVATION TO OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE FUTURE.

AT THE END OF WWII, AMERICAN PRINT MEDIA OCCUPIED A UNIQUE POSITION. THIS ENORMOUS INDUSTRY CONSISTED OF THE MANY DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN OUR LARGE AND MEDIUM SIZE CITIES; THE NEWS SERVICES AND SYNDICATES THAT SERVED THEM; NUMEROUS WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS THAT OFFERED MOSTLY LOCAL COVERAGE TO SMALL TOWNS; AND THE MANY WEEKLY AND MONTHLY NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED

MAGAZINES (I.E., TIME, LIFE, COLLIERS, SATURDAY EVENING POST, LOOK, VOGUE, WOMEN'S HOME COMPANION, READER'S DIGEST, ETC.) WHOSE COMBINED CIRCULATIONS RAN INTO MANY MILLIONS OF READERS.

THEIR EXTRAORDINARY EDITORIAL AND MARKETING SUCCESSES WERE INTERTWINED AND WERE THE RESULT OF THEIR BEING BOTH CREDIBLE AND TIMELY. HAVING CULTIVATED READER CREDIBILITY THAT EMBRACED THEIR EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING MATTER, SUBSCRIPTION AND NEWSSTAND SALES ROSE STEADILY, AS DID THE PRODUCTS ADVERTISED IN THEIR INCREASINGLY THICK ISSUES.

TIMELINESS WAS A SOMEWHAT LARGER SCALE OF MEASUREMENT. THE RELEASE OF PENT-UP CONSUMER DEMAND AND THE NEW PRODUCT TECHNOLOGY IN THE POSTWAR YEARS CREATED A POWERFUL COMBINATION; AND ADDED TO THEM WAS THE UNSCATHED EMERGENCE OF AMERICA'S PRODUCTION CAPABILITY FROM THE WAR YEARS.

CUSTOMERS WERE READING AND BUYING; PROFITS WERE GROWING; AND FUNDS FOR NEW PLANT/EQUIPMENT WERE READILY AVAILABLE FROM CASH FLOW AND/OR WILLING BANKERS.

WITHIN A FEW DECADES, ALL THIS HAD CHANGED. THE GREAT NAMES OF POSTWAR PUBLISHING — LUCE, CHANDLER, HEARST, PULITZER, SULZBERGER, REID, DOUBLEDAY, GRAHAM, MCCORMICK — NO LONGER OCCUPY THE PLACES THEY ONCE DID IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE. SOME HAVE BEEN BOUGHT OUT; OTHERS STRUGGLE TO STAY AFLOAT AS TECHNOLOGY'S TIDE RISES; AND MANY MORE EXIST AS LESS THAN MAJOR ELEMENTS IN THE MASSIVE MIX OF OUR CONGLOMERATE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY — MUSIC PUBLISHING/PERFORMANCE, SPORTS, RADIO/TV, FILMS, TRAVEL, BOOK PUBLISHING — ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE USED TO IMPRINT THE CONSUMING PUBLIC.

WHAT COMES NEXT? IT WOULD BE FOLLY TO THINK THAT OUR VOTING PROCESS, WHICH REQUIRES THE RECORDING OF LARGE NUMBERS OF VOTES WITHIN A BRIEF PERIOD, CAN AVOID THE IMPACT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY. IT CAN'T. NOR WILL IT BE ABLE TO AVOID THE RIPPLE SIDE EFFECTS THAT PUSH SOCIETAL CHANGES. WHAT FORM WILL THESE TAKE AND WHEN CAN WE EXPECT THEM? WE DO NOT KNOW, BUT MAY HAVE ONE EARLY TOE-IN-THE-WATER INKLING.

IN 2011 NON-PARTISAN, ONLINE AMERICANS ELECT. ORG ANNOUNCED IT WOULD CONDUCT AN ONLINE NOMINATING PROCESS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS. "ANY CONSTITUTIONALLY ELIGIBLE, QUALIFIED CITIZEN — NO MATTER THEIR PARTY — CAN SEEK THE NOMINATION OR BE DRAFTED BY AMERICANS ELECT DELEGATES. WE WILL NEVER PROMOTE ANY CANDIDATE OF OUR OWN — AND THE WINNING TICKET IS CHOSEN DIRECTLY BY AMERICAN VOTERS THROUGH A SECURE, ONLINE PROCESS."<sup>1</sup>

AMERICANS ELECT WAS ABLE TO RAISE OVER \$20 MILLION AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, GET ON THE BALLOT IN TWENTY-EIGHT STATES IN 2012<sup>2</sup> BUT WAS UNABLE TO COMPLETE ITS PRIMARY PROCESS IN A WAY THAT PRODUCED A NATIONAL CANDIDATE AND ONLINE CONVENTION. WE SUSPECT THAT AMERICANS ELECT WILL REAPPEAR IN 2016 IN ITS ORIGINAL

OR (PERHAPS MORE LIKELY) ALTERED FORM.

AT THIS TIME IT IS ONLY A BRIEF AND EARLY COMMENT ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ELECTRONIC CHANGE IN OUR TWO PLUS CENTURIES OF DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. IS IT NOTICE OF WHAT IS TO COME? AGAIN, WHO KNOWS? BEHIND THE CURTAIN LURKS THE FUTURE.

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THERE IS AN EVER WIDENING RIFT IN OUR CULTURE OVER WHO IS, OR SHOULD BE, AN AMERICAN. IT HAS INTENSIFIED OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE BROAD AGENDA OF MULTICULTURAL FORCES, AND PLAYS OUT, SOMETIMES MORE LOUDLY THAN OTHERS, IN MATTERS AND/OR LEGISLATION REGARDING IMMIGRATION, THE TAX CODE, LABOR, NATIONAL SECURITY, SOCIAL PROGRAMS, VOTING RIGHTS AND OTHERS.

THIS ARGUMENT HAS BECOME A POLITICAL CONSTANT. IT CONSUMES A GROWING SHARE OF OUR NATIONAL THOUGHT, BUT IS NEVER MENTIONED IN CAMPAIGN SPEECHES. IT IS ONE THAT WE HAVE STRUGGLED WITH FOR OVER A CENTURY AND FOR WHICH THE SOLUTION SEEMS INCREASINGLY REMOTE IN OUR PRESENT TIME OF ENTRENCHED HIGH IMMIGRATION AND RELENTLESS POPULATION GROWTH.

THE ASPECT OF THIS ARGUMENT THAT IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST HERE IS THAT OF VOTING RIGHTS. PRIOR TO WWII, AND EVEN TO THE PASSAGE OF IMMIGRATION REFORM IN 1965, MOST AMERICANS HELD THE BELIEF THAT VOTING WAS A PRIVILEGE LIMITED TO NATIVE BORN AND NATURALIZED CITIZENS. IN THE YEARS SINCE 1965 THIS CONCEPT HAS BEEN UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK, FIRST WITH REGARD TO LOCAL AND STATE ELECTIONS AND NOW NATIONAL ONES AS WELL, WHEREBY IT IS CLAIMED THAT HAVING TO OFFER ANY FORM OF PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP IS A VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

OUR NATIONAL DISCUSSION SEEMS TO ENLARGE ITSELF AS IT CONTINUES, EMPLOYING STATEMENTS SUCH AS "AMERICANS DON'T HAVE TO CARRY PAPERS", WHEREAS IN REALITY THEY ARE REPEATEDLY ASKED TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES IN THE NORMAL USE OF OUR COMMERCE, TRANSPORTATION, AND TRAFFIC SYSTEMS.

BUT BACK TO VOTING RIGHTS AND, OF COURSE, TECHNOLOGY; TODAY'S MOST ADVANCED IDENTIFICATION TECHNOLOGY INVOLVES SCANNING OF UNIQUE BIOMETRIC FEATURES FOR COMPARISON TO AN IMAGE ON RECORD. A MATCH OF BOTH IMAGES ASCERTAINS IDENTIFICATION; OTHERWISE, IT IS REJECTED.

AMERICANS ELECT REPRESENTS A QUANTUM CHANGE IN OUR VOTING METHOD BROUGHT ABOUT BY TECHNOLOGY WHICH WE CAN ASSUME WILL CONTINUE TO REFINE AND IMPROVE ITSELF. AND IN THE COURSE OF THIS EVOLUTION VOTER IDENTIFICATION METHODS WILL BE CALLED UPON TO KEEP PACE.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEWLY AVAILABLE VOTING PROCEDURES WE MIGHT ANTICIPATE AT MID-CENTURY, THEY WILL HAVE TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY EQUALLY EFFECTIVE IDENTIFICATION METHODS. WILL THOSE WHO TODAY ARGUE

AGAINST IDENTIFICATION BY DRIVER'S LICENSES, OR OTHER FORMS OF "CARRYING PAPERS", QUESTION THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF ELECTRONIC, CYBERSPACE OR SOME OTHER MORE ADVANCED, BUT AT PRESENT UNKNOWN, TECHNOLOGY?

MONEY AND POWER IN ENORMOUS AMOUNTS ARE PRESENT ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS ARGUMENT, BUT TECHNOLOGY, PLANNED OR ACCIDENTAL, CHANGES EVERYTHING. EVERYONE INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENT, IN EVEN THE MOST PERIPHERAL WAY, MUST KNOW THIS, AND YET PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT IS A RARITY BECAUSE A VARIETY OF MONEY/POWER SOURCES OPPOSE CHANGE THAT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DIMINISH THE STATUS AND COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE WHICH THEY HAVE BUILT BY LARGE AND LONG INVESTMENT.

WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF CORPORATE-LOBBYIST-CONGRESSIONAL INTERACTION, TECHNOLOGY THAT MIGHT DESTROY WHOLE INDUSTRIES, OR A COMMERCIAL SECTOR, OR UPSET LONG STANDING VOTER LOYALTIES IS TREATED WITH GREAT CAUTION. NOWHERE WILL THIS BE MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE MANY AREAS OF COMMERCIAL COMPETITION AND THE EXERCISE OF POLITICAL FORCE THAT ATTEND OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS.

GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE ITS HANDS FULL IN TRYING TO MAINTAIN ITS EQUILIBRIUM IN COMING ELECTIONS. AND THERE ARE OTHER AREAS IN WHICH IT HAS ALLOWED ITSELF TO BECOME SEPARATED FROM THE INTERESTS AND THE EXPRESSED OPINION OF ITS CITIZENS.

IT IS EVIDENT FROM THIS SKETCH THAT OUR GOVERNMENT'S MANAGERIAL MODEL IS NOT THAT OF A "TIGHT SHIP", AND THAT IN THE AREAS OF CONFUSION OR CONFLICT BETWEEN THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES POLITICS CAN PLAY THE DOMINANT ROLE.

ONE EXPRESSION OF THIS ROLE HAS TAKEN THE SHAPE OF SELECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT (SLE) WHEREBY AT DIFFERENT TIMES AND IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES EXECUTIVE AND/OR LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY CAN CHOOSE HOW, WHEN AND EVEN WHETHER THE DULY PASSED LAW OF THE LAND WILL BE ENFORCED.

WE HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT THIS BEFORE, MOSTLY IN RELATION TO OUR IMMIGRATION LAW WHICH, COMMENCING WITH PRES. G. H.W. BUSH, HAS BEEN LARGELY UNENFORCED OVER THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY. IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT IS SLE'S BANNER ISSUE, BUT THERE ARE OTHERS THAT SUGGEST A GROWING ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PRACTICE. AS NOTHING IS AS THREATENING AND DAMAGING TO OUR DEMOCRACY AS SLE, WE ARE INCLUDING HERE SOME OTHER EXAMPLES.

## THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

THE FCC IS CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAINTAINING DECENCY STANDARDS FOR BOTH EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING CONTENT OF BROADCAST MEDIA, AND IN A JUNE, 2012 DECISION THIS RESPONSIBILITY WAS CONFIRMED BY THE

SUPREME COURT.

AND YET THE FCC HAS PERSISTENTLY REFUSED TO IMPOSE ANY PENALTY OTHER THAN OCCASIONAL TOKEN AMOUNT FINES ON THE MEGA MEDIA HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS, PRODUCERS AND DIRECTORS AND THEIR INDEPENDENT COUNTERPARTS. GIVEN THE CURRENT NOTORIETY OF VIOLENCE, SEX AND SMUT, THESE FINES OF \$25,000 OR \$50,000 SERVE AS A CHEAP PRICE TO PAY FOR HIGH RATINGS.

THERE IS AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL FACTOR BEHIND THE FCC'S REFUSAL TO ENFORCE DECENCY STANDARDS. THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY HAS BEEN A LONG AND GENEROUS CONTRIBUTOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. IT IS RICH, POWERFUL AND LAYERED WITH LAWYERS WHO HAVE OFTEN PREVAILED AGAINST THE FCC IN COURT.

FOR THE LAST DECADE THE BROADCAST MEDIA HAVE ALLOWED, FEATURED AND PROMOTED INCREASINGLY GRAPHIC PORTRAYALS OF SEX AND VIOLENCE IN THEIR PROGRAMS TO INCREASINGLY YOUNGER AUDIENCES. THIS DEGRADATION IS SO WIDESPREAD NOW THAT MANY PEOPLE IN PUBLIC LIFE CONDEMN IT. STILL, IT CONTINUES.

BEFORE LEAVING OFFICE, RECENTLY RETIRED FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI DISMISSED OVER A MILLION PUBLIC INDECENCY COMPLAINTS AS BEING "STALE", A STATUS GAINED BY THE FCC'S FAILURE TO RESPOND TO THEM.<sup>3</sup> PRES. OBAMA WILL APPOINT A SUCCESSOR. CAN WE EXPECT GREATER ATTENTION TO THE LAW OR JUST MORE OF THE SAME?

SLE IS ALIVE AND WELL, NOT ONLY IN CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE, BUT ALSO IN WASHINGTON'S REGULATORY AGENCIES.

## THE IRS

NO MENTION OF SELECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD EXCLUDE OUR JUSTLY BELEAGUERED IRS WHICH FOR CLOSE TO A DECADE HAS CHOSEN TO IGNORE WIDESPREAD FILING OF RETURNS CONTAINING FALSE INFORMATION FOR CLAIMS TO CASH AND SERVICES BENEFITS. MUCH OF THIS HAS INVOLVED IMMIGRANT CLAIMS FOR MINOR DEPENDENTS WHO EITHER DON'T EXIST OR LIVE OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY.

THIS FRAUD CONSTITUTES A CLEAR ABUSE OF CURRENT LAW AND THE IRS HAS BEEN ADVISED OF ITS EXISTENCE BY BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES. RETURNS USUALLY SHOW LOW ENOUGH INCOMES SO THAT CREDITS FOR DEPENDENTS ARE PAID IN CASH TO THE FILER. WHEN THE DEPENDENTS NUMBER 8 OR 10 OR MORE AND THEIR ADDRESSES ARE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES, MOSTLY MEXICO, THAT MIGHT BE REASON ENOUGH TO TAKE ACTION, TO INVESTIGATE AND EVEN PURSUE THE MANY LEGAL/CRIMINAL ACTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE IRS.

THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE. THIS PRACTICE CONTINUES WITHOUT IRS ACTION. IT IS WIDESPREAD AND WELL KNOWN TO CONGRESS, THE DEPARTMENTS OF JUSTICE, HOMELAND SECURITY, TREASURY, ETC. IT APPEARS TO BE "PROSECUTION PROOF".

FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN TURN TO THE WORK OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER BOB SEGALL OF WTHR TV IN INDIANAPOLIS WHO RESEARCHED EXTENSIVE FRAUD AND MISMANAGEMENT IN THE IRS. IN 2012 HE WROTE AND BROADCAST A REPORT THAT REVEALED HOW SOME ILLEGAL ALIENS WERE ALLOWED TO RECEIVE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

OF IMPROPER TAX REFUNDS AND THAT FOR A DECADE IRS MANAGERS HAD ENCOURAGED TAX EXAMINERS TO IGNORE THIS FRAUDULENT PRACTICE.

SEGALL'S REPORT WAS BROADCAST IN 11 PARTS TO AN AUDIENCE OF 9 MILLION VIEWERS. IT WAS NOT A ONE-TIMER, BUT "GOT LEGS" BY BUILDING AUDIENCE AND PUBLICITY. OUTRAGED VIEWERS CONTACTED THEIR STATIONS, NEWSPAPERS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, AND YET THERE WAS NO EFFECTIVE ACTION BY THE IRS OR CONGRESS.

MORE RECENTLY, THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT (DOJ) TOLD FEDERAL PROSECUTORS NOT TO PURSUE MARIJUANA USE CASES IN CO AND WA WHICH HAD PASSED LAWS PERMITTING ITS USE AND SALE FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES, EVEN THOUGH IT IS AN ILLEGAL DRUG UNDER FEDERAL LAW.

THIS IS ANOTHER EVENT IN OUR ONGOING CONFLICT OVER DRUG USE. IT MAY HAVE A TURN-AROUND EFFECT IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES NOW DEBATING DRUG LEGALIZATION LAWS, AS IT WILL PROVIDE LEGALIZATION PROPONENTS WITH AN ADDITIONAL ARGUMENT. A STATE DEPARTMENT (DOS) SOURCE, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE DOJ ACTION, STATED:

"MARIJUANA IS AND REMAINS ILLEGAL UNDER FEDERAL LAW. WE CONTINUE OUR IMPORTANT COUNTER NARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO COMBAT DRUG TRAFFICKING, AND USE, AND TO IMPROVE CITIZEN SECURITY."<sup>4</sup>

THE DOJ IS A KEY DETERMINANT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTING UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL (AG) HOLDER, LOOKING AHEAD, CAN FORESEE GROWING PRESSURE FOR LIBERALIZATION OF OUR DRUG LAWS AND, ESPECIALLY, OF MARIJUANA USE. ALREADY ENGAGED IN IMMIGRATION AND VOTING RIGHTS LITIGATION AGAINST SEVERAL STATES, HOLDER AND THE ADMINISTRATION MIGHT VIEW A WIDENING RANGE OF FEDERAL ACTION AGAINST STATE LAWS AS CARRYING TOO HEAVY A POLITICAL COST, ESPECIALLY IN CONGRESSIONAL AND GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS.

IT IS A BASIC ELEMENT IN OUR CONSTITUTION THAT, WHERE THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE LAW, THE FEDERAL CODE HAS PRECEDENCE, BUT AN EXCEPTION HAS BEEN CREATED. AG HOLDER MADE A POINT OF EMPHASIZING THAT CO AND WA MUST FOLLOW OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR DRUG LAW, BUT AFTER YEARS OF THE "WAR ON DRUGS" IT WOULD BE UNDERSTANDABLE TO CONCLUDE THAT "VICTORY" IS BOTH LESS PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE, AND THE BATTLEFIELD MOMENTUM HAS SHIFTED.

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE FORMAL TITLE FOR AMERICA'S FOOD STAMP PROGRAM IS THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) AND IT IS ADMINISTERED BY OUR

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S (USDA) FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (FNS). IN 2012 IT PROVIDED FREE GROCERIES TO 46 MILLION PEOPLE, OR ABOUT 15% OF OUR POPULATION, WITH BOTH NUMBERS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT AND STEADY INCREASES OVER THE PAST DECADE.<sup>5</sup>

PRIOR TO THIS, GOING BACK AS FAR AS THE '70S AND '80S, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALLOWED ILLEGAL ALIENS TO RECEIVE FOOD STAMPS, BUT, PROBABLY RECOGNIZING THESE PAYMENTS AS AN UNAUTHORIZED EXTENSION OF THE USDA'S FUNCTION, HAD MONITORED AND CONTROLLED THEIR USE.

AS EARLY AS 2006 THE MEXICAN CONSUL IN SANTA ANA, CA HAD APPEARED IN US GOVERNMENT-FINANCED TV COMMERCIALS THAT PROMOTED SNAP AND ASSURED VIEWERS THAT PARTICIPATION "WON'T AFFECT YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS"<sup>6</sup>.

USDA CONTINUED ITS WORK ON BEHALF OF MAKING THE SNAP PROGRAM MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS THROUGH EFFORTS THAT INCLUDED THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE. THE LATTER'S CO-OPERATION WAS CITED TO PERSUADE THE MEXICAN EMBASSY IN DC THAT SNAP AND OTHER PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTED BENEFITS TO ILLEGAL ALIENS WERE CONSISTENT WITH U.S. POLICY.

IN AUGUST, 2011 THE USDA FNS CONTACTED THE MEXICAN EMBASSY IN NYC TO COMMENCE PROGRAMS THERE THAT WERE ALREADY FUNCTIONING IN DC AND PHILADELPHIA. THE EMBASSY CONSUL GENERAL'S RESPONSE WAS ENTHUSIASTIC AND EMPHASIZED THE SNAP PROGRAM.

THEN, IN JANUARY OF 2012, THE KANSAS CITY STAR CARRIED AN ARTICLE ANNOUNCING THAT KANSAS WAS HALTING FOOD STAMP PAYMENTS TO ILLEGAL ALIENS, AND TWO MONTHS LATER THE USDA REQUESTED THE MEXICAN EMBASSY'S APPROVAL TO DRAFT A LETTER TO MEXICO'S US CONSULATES TO TRAIN THEIR PERSONNEL IN EXPANDING MEXICAN IMMIGRANT'S USE OF SNAP.

THIS IS A CAPSULE FORM CONDENSATION OF A LONG AND VERY WORDY ACCOUNT OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN VARIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THEIR MEXICAN CONTACTS WITHIN THAT COUNTRY'S DIPLOMATIC STRUCTURE HERE AND IN MEXICO. FOR THIS RECORD, IT CONCLUDED IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR WITH THE RELEASE BY JUDICIAL WATCH OF DOCUMENTATION SHOWING THAT THE USDA "IS WORKING WITH THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION BY ILLEGAL ALIENS IN THE U.S. FOOD STAMP PROGRAM"<sup>7</sup>

AND HERE'S THE KICKER. THE PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL INCLUDED "A SPANISH-LANGUAGE FLYER PROVIDED TO THE MEXICAN EMBASSY BY THE USDA"<sup>8</sup> WITH THIS STATEMENT:

"YOU NEED NOT DIVULGE INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS IN SEEKING THIS BENEFIT . . ."<sup>9</sup>

NB. (EMPHASIS IN SOURCE DOCUMENT)

FROM ITS EARLIEST DAYS, WHEN THE U.S. HAD A PRIMARILY AGRARIAN ECONOMY AND POPULATION, AGRICULTURE HAS ENJOYED A POWERFUL POLITICAL PRESENCE IN GOVERNMENT. IT COMMANDS EXTENSIVE GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND RESPONDS WITH ACTIVE VOTING. EVERY STATE ENGAGES IN SOME FORM OF FARMING OR RANCHING ACTIVITY

THAT COMES UNDER THE USDA'S REGULATION. AND YET ITS ACTIONS IN REGARDS TO SNAP FOR ILLEGAL ALIENS, ARE BEYOND ITS DESIGNATED DUTY. IT HAS CHOSEN A FORM OF SLE BASED NOT ON IGNORING THE LAW, BUT RATHER CREATING POLICY AND LAW THAT DOES NOT EXIST.

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAS HEAVILY ADVERTISED SNAP FOR ILLEGAL ALIENS AND HAS OFFERED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN BONUSES FOR STATES THAT PARTICIPATE WITH THE RESULT THAT THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER SHELLED OUT JUST OVER \$80 BILLION LAST YEAR.<sup>10</sup>

THE USDA HAS ALSO COME IN FOR CRITICISM FOR LAXITY IN ITS PAYMENTS SYSTEM, AS ITS RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY, WHICH ADMINISTERS ITS CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM, "PAID \$22 MILLION TO MORE THAN 3,400 POLICYHOLDERS WHO HAD BEEN DEAD FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS."<sup>11</sup>

\* \* \*

FOR THE USDA THESE ARE ONLY TWO PROGRAMS OUT OF MANY; AND IT IS ONLY ONE OF MANY MORE AGENCIES THAT OPERATE WITHIN OUR GOVERNMENT'S RANGE OF FUNDING AND INTEREST. WE HAVE REFERRED PREVIOUSLY AND FREQUENTLY TO THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE AS BEING THE "POSTER BOY" FOR SLE, AND PERHAPS THAT STATUS IS BEYOND CHALLENGE. AND YET, AS WE CAN SEE, THE COMPANY IT KEEPS IS LARGE, EXPENSIVE AND IMPOSES AN IMPOSSIBLE BURDEN ON GOVERNMENT — ESPECIALLY THE POPULIST, ETHICAL AND OPEN DEMOCRACY WHICH OUR FOUNDERS CONCEIVED, CONSTRUCTED AND LEFT TO US AS THEIR LEGACY.

ON ITS OWN, UNDEFENDED, CAN OUR SYSTEM SURVIVE THE STEALTH, DISHONESTY AND GREED THAT ACCOMPANY SLE? WILL WE COME TO ITS RESCUE?

SLE IS A RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO OUR NATIONAL POLITICAL SCENE, SEEMINGLY TIED IN TIME AND ACCEPTANCE TO THE GROWTH IN THE MONEY/POWER ELEMENT WITHIN OUR GOVERNMENT. CONGRESS POSSESSES POWERS THAT ENABLE IT TO COMBAT SLE. ON ITS OWN IT CAN CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS, ISSUE WARNINGS AND CITATIONS FOR CONTEMPT, HOLD HEARINGS, WITHHOLD FUNDING AND CREATE NEW LEGISLATION TO ALTER OR EXPAND THE ORIGINAL LAW SO AS TO REQUIRE ITS ENFORCEMENT. AND IT CAN ALSO USE ITS MANY POWERS TO NUDGE A LETHARGIC OR AMBIVALENT PRESIDENT TO COMPLY WITH THE DIRECTION GIVEN IN SECTION 3, ARTICLE II OF THE CONSTITUTION THAT "HE SHALL TAKE CARE THAT THE LAWS BE FAITHFULLY EXECUTED".

IN RECENT YEARS, POLITICAL CANDIDATES AND INCUMBENTS, ALIKE, HAVE REPEATEDLY INFORMED THE AMERICAN VOTER, THE MEDIA AND EVEN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES THAT "WE ARE A NATION OF LAWS", AND YET, AS WE HAVE SEEN, THERE ARE MANY POWERFUL SOURCES WITHIN OUR GOVERNMENT THAT PURPOSEFULLY IGNORE AND/OR SUBVERT THE LAWS LEGITIMATELY PASSED BY CONGRESS.

OUR COUNTRY DESPERATELY NEEDS TO HAVE A CANDIDATE FROM EITHER PARTY WHO WILL ASK WHY WE PERMIT

THIS TRASHING OF OUR SYSTEM. WE BELIEVE SUCH A CANDIDACY WOULD RESONATE STRONGLY WITH VOTERS AND COULD SPREAD ELECTORAL TERROR THROUGH THE TWO PARTIES' RANKS AND RELATIONSHIPS.

HOW IS IT THAT WE ADVERTISE OURSELVES AS A "NATION OF LAWS" TO OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD WHEN, IN FACT, OUR PRESENT SYSTEM IS LACED THROUGH WITH CORRUPTION AND HYPOCRISY THAT ARE ONLY marginally DIFFERENT FROM THEIRS?

THIS IS VERY MUCH A VALUE PROBLEM, AND WE MUST DEAL WITH IT. OUR SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND POLITICAL VALUES ARE ALL AT STAKE, AND HAVE TO BE REEXAMINED IN LIGHT OF THE BRUISING PRESSURE EXERTED BY OUR POSTWAR SUPERPOWER STATUS. FOR MOST POLITICIANS, SUCH AN INQUIRY HAS NO PLACE IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING. IT RAISES TOO MANY QUESTIONS NOT GLIBLY ANSWERED IN MINI-SOUND BYTES; IT CAUSES ARGUMENT NOT SUBJECT TO STATISTICAL PROOF OR RESOLUTION; AND IT EXTENDS WELL BEYOND THE PROTECTIVE TENT OF PARTY IDEOLOGY AND PROMOTION.

WHAT IS AT THE ROOT OF OUR DISREGARD FOR OUR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND THE PROCESS PROVIDED BY OUR FOUNDERS TO CREATE AND APPLY IT?

FIRST, IS THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR COUNTRY INTO THE GLOBAL SUPERPOWER OF OUR TIME. THIS HAS CAUSED CONFLICT WITH MANY OF OUR HISTORICAL SOCIOCULTURAL PATTERNS.

FOR INSTANCE, THERE HAS LONG BEEN AN ELEMENT IN AMERICA'S PROGRESS THAT EMBRACED EXCEPTIONALISM AND VIEWED OUR COUNTRY AND PEOPLE AS SUPERIOR TO OTHERS. AS WE CHARTED OUR SUPER- POWER COURSE AFTER WWII, THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF OUR COUNTRY'S POSITION IN THE WORLD EXPANDED. LIKE BLOWING UP A BALLOON, ALL ITS AREAS EXPANDED AND ATTITUDES SUCH AS EXCEPTIONALISM ALSO WERE ENLARGED AND EXTENDED. UNFORTUNATELY, SUCH AN IMAGE IS BETTER SUITED TO INSPIRING DOMESTIC POLITICS THAN DIPLOMACY AND THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY.

OUR CONSTITUTION IS AN AMAZING DOCUMENT. WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN, IT HAD TO BRIDGE MANY DIFFICULT AND EMOTIONAL ISSUES THAT DIVIDED THE THIRTEEN STATES-TO-BE THAT UNDERTOOK ITS CREATION. THOSE ISSUES WERE EVERY BIT AS BITTER AS THE ONES THAT PLAGUE OUR GOVERNMENT NOW.

AND YET TODAY, WHEN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SPEAK OF THE CONSTITUTION, OR QUOTE FROM IT, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ITS PARTS ARE GREATER THAN ITS WHOLE, AND THAT THEY FAIL TO GRASP THE GENIUS AND SPIRIT OF THIS DOCUMENT, STATED OR UNSTATED.

THIS LACK OF CONNECTION TO WHAT WAS INVESTED BY OUR FOUNDERS IN THEIR PLAN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE IS FAR MORE WIDESPREAD THAN IN JUST DC. SADLY, IT SEEMS TO BE PART OF OUR PRESENT NATIONAL SPIRIT WHICH VIEWS THE CONSTITUTION AS AN ARCHAIC, QUAIN BIT OF OUR HISTORY RATHER THAN THE POWERFUL, ACTIVE DESIGN THAT HAS GUIDED OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS FOR OVER TWO CENTURIES.

IT IS EVEN-HANDED IN WHAT IT GIVES AND TAKES.

RESTRICTIONS AND PENALTIES ARE BALANCED BY OPEN SPACES AND REWARDS, AND THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEM TAKES PLACE IN THE LANGUAGE OF FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY. IT WOULD BE A GREAT BENEFIT TO OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO HAVE TO TAKE A ONE SEMESTER COURSE ON THE WRITING AND MEANING OF OUR CONSTITUTION. SUCH A COURSE COULD PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO THE REALITIES OF GOVERNMENT AND HOW AND WHEN ITS TRUE NATURE AND PURPOSE SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM POLITICS. IT COULD PROVIDE A VANTAGE POINT TO ENABLE THE STUDENT TO EXPERIENCE ELECTORAL POLITICS AS SOMETHING CONSIDERABLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE “CANNED” STUMP SPEECHES AND PHOTO-OPS RELENTLESSLY PUSHED BY BOTH PARTIES.

OUR PRESENT TRUTH IS THAT GOVERNMENT, LIKE OUTER SPACE, IS COMPOSED OF AN IMMENSE AMOUNT OF INVISIBLE (I.E., POLITICAL) DARK MATTER. TIP O’NEILL’S COMMENT THAT “ALL POLITICS ARE LOCAL” WAS TRUE IN MANY WAYS. MOST OF THE ELECTED MEMBERS OF OUR LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES START THEIR CAREERS IN LOCAL POLITICS, AND IT IS THERE THAT CONTINUING, LONG-TERM EFFORTS TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENT MUST BE PURSUED.

WHAT A PLUS IT WOULD BE TO BE ABLE TO IMPRINT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE SO THAT THEY ARE ARMED WITH IT AS THEY PROCEED TO COLLEGE AND/OR CAREERS!

EDUCATION, HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF ITS CURRENT EXTENSIVE FEDERAL FUNDING, IS ALSO SUBJECT TO STATE/ LOCAL FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT WITH THEIR OWN POLITICAL INTERESTS. AND EVEN SOMETHING AS GENERAL AND ACADEMICALLY CONCEIVED AS THE COURSE SUGGESTED HERE, WOULD DRAW POLITICAL FIRE FROM COUNTY AND LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS/TEACHERS AND STATE LEGISLATURES.

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT OUR GOVERNMENT — ITS STRUCTURE, STAFF AND PRACTICES; AND ASK WHETHER THEY ARE THE GOVERNMENT ENVISIONED BY OUR CONSTITUTION; WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN’T; WHAT’S TRUE AND WHAT’S FALSE; AND WHAT MUST BE DONE TO REPAIR IT. REMEDIES ARE NOT EASY TO COME BY. WHERE LEGISLATION IS REQUIRED, IT CAN ONLY BE PASSED BY CONGRESS WITH, IN MOST CASES, EXECUTIVE APPROVAL. BUT, INVARIABLY, ANY SUCH PROCESS WOULD HAVE TO BE INITIATED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE PRESSURE OF PUBLIC OPINION.

THIS IS, PERHAPS, THE PARAMOUNT POLITICAL CHOICE OF OUR TIME. IT UNDERLIES EVERY IMPORTANT ISSUE THAT WE FACE WITHOUT, FOR THE MOST PART, BEING RECOGNIZED OR MENTIONED. WHAT WILL WE DO? HOW WILL WE CREATE THE CRITICAL MASS NECESSARY TO OVERCOME DECADES OF INDIFFERENCE? IT WILL NOT BE EASY, BUT IT CAN BE DONE. AND WHATEVER WE DO — WHETHER WE ACT OR DON’T ACT — WILL DETERMINE OUR POLITICAL LEGACY TO SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS.

\* \* \*

WE MUST STEP BACK FROM OUR CLOSE-UP VIEW OF INDIVIDUAL ROLES IN OUR GOVERNMENT AND CONSIDER THE

EFFECTS OF THEIR COMBINED BEHAVIOR ON HOW GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS TODAY AND WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED IN THE FUTURE.

IN THIS CHAPTER WE HAVE CALLED ATTENTION TO A RATHER SURPRISINGLY LARGE GROUP OF ENTITIES WITHIN GOVERNMENT THAT HAVE ENGAGED IN SLE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER: THE CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENT, THE DEPARTMENTS OF JUSTICE, HOMELAND SECURITY AND STATE, THE FCC, THE IRS, AND THE USDA. THESE, ALONE, REPRESENT A FORMIDABLE CROSS SECTION OF OUR GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE. BUT THEY ARE NOT ALONE; THERE ARE BOUND TO BE MORE.

FOR STARTERS, THEN, THESE EIGHT SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR OPERATIONS AS NOT BEING BOUND BY OUR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW PROCESS. TIME AND MONEY/POWER HAVE FOSTERED THE GROWTH OF THIS WAY OF THINKING WITH MINOR DEFECTIONS AT FIRST AND LARGER ONES LATER, ALL WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT THEY WOULD GO UNNOTICED OR UNPUNISHED. AND, AS THE PRACTICE GREW, SO DID THE PROTECTION OF “SAFETY IN NUMBERS”. LOOKING AT OUR GOVERNMENT TODAY, CAN WE HAVE ANY REASONABLE CONFIDENCE THAT IT IS CAPABLE OF MEETING THE FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CHALLENGES THAT IT WILL FACE BETWEEN NOW AND MID-CENTURY?

ANOTHER TROUBLING ASPECT OF SLE IS THAT ITS ACCEPTANCE OF LAXITY SEEPS INTO OTHER FUNCTIONS BESIDES ENFORCEMENT. THOMAS KEAN AND LEE HAMILTON, CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION, HAVE REPORTED THAT THE DEPT. OF HOMELAND SECURITY, WHICH WAS CREATED IN 2002 TO CONSOLIDATE AND IMPROVE OUR NATIONAL SECURITY APPARATUS, COMBINED TWENTY-TWO AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS. OVERSIGHT FOR THIS MASSIVE NEW ENTITY HOWEVER REMAINED UNCHANGED IN CONGRESS WITH THE RATHER AWKWARD RESULT THAT “MORE THAN 100 CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES CLAIM JURISDICTION OVER IT”.<sup>12</sup>

EFFICIENCY WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED BY SERIOUSLY PRUNING THIS OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE OR BY REMOVING DHS AUTHORITY FROM ALL BUT A CAREFULLY SELECTED HANDFUL OF MONITORS, BUT EACH COMMITTEE IS A TURF BATTLEFIELD WHERE POLITICAL WARS ARE WAGED. STILL, THE PROSPECT OF NATIONAL SECURITY MATTERS BEING SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY OVER A HUNDRED COMMITTEES CAN’T HELP BUT RAISE CONCERNS.

THERE IS ANOTHER CURIOSITY HERE. CONGRESS IN ITS INTERNAL WORKINGS MANAGES TO INVOKE THE OLD, TRADITIONAL RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN IN EFFECT FOR MANY YEARS. THIS IS GOOD IN MANY WAYS AS IT BUILDS STABILITY, TRADITION, DIGNITY AND A MOLD TO WHICH NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS MUCH FIT THEMSELVES AND CONFORM. BUT IT ALSO ACTS TO LIMIT INTROSPECTION AND EVEN MODEST, REASONABLE CHANGE. THERE IS A BALANCE AVAILABLE, BUT CONGRESS HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO REACH IT.

AS TURF BATTLES AND POLARIZATION INCREASE, AS THEY HAVE IN RECENT YEARS, OLD RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE ARE CONVERTED TO DEFENSIVE WEAPONS BEHIND WHICH EACH SIDE DIGS IN EVER DEEPER, SHRINKING ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR OPEN DEBATE, COMPROMISE OR CONSENSUS.

LOOKING TO OUR FUTURE, HOW DO WE RECONCILE

THESE FORCES THAT ARE BEARING DOWN ON OUR COUNTRY — A RAMPANT, GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY GROWTH THAT SETS ITS OWN TIMETABLE; SPREADING ACCEPTANCE OF SLE THAT THREATENS OUR CONCEPT AND EXERCISE OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW; AND A CONGRESS DEEPLY DIVIDED BY IDEOLOGY AND DRIVEN BY SELF-INTEREST?

TECHNOLOGY CHANGES EVERYTHING, AND NEITHER ITS TIMING NOR ITS CONSEQUENCES ARE UNDER OUR CONTROL. ONCE OUT OF THE LABORATORY AND INTO THE MARKET PLACE, THE BEST WE CAN HOPE FOR IS A BENIGN RESULT, BUT OUR LACK OF CONCERN FOR POPULATION, ENVIRONMENTAL AND THEIR INTERRELATED ECONOMIC ISSUES IS NOT ENCOURAGING.

SOMEHOW, OUT OF THIS PERILOUS MIX OF TECHNOLOGY, SLE AND DYSFUNCTIONAL GOVERNMENT WE MUST BEGIN TO IDENTIFY NATIONAL INTERESTS AND RAISE THEM TO THE LEVEL ABOVE OTHERS THAT THEY DESERVE AND THAT THEY ENJOYED IN THE PAST.

THIS EFFORT WILL HAVE TO COME FROM FIRST A FEW, AND THEN MORE, COURAGEOUS CANDIDACIES THAT WILL REJECT THE OLD, FAMILIAR WAYS AND PROMISES IN FAVOR OF TODAY'S PAINFUL POLITICAL TRUTH. OUR NEW CANDIDATE WILL ADMIT THAT THE ODDS ARE AGAINST HIS/HER SUCCESS, BUT IS RUNNING BECAUSE THE COUNTRY IS IN DANGER AND BECAUSE HIS/HER MESSAGE MUST BE HEARD.

IN THESE EARLY RACES VICTORY IS NOT PROBABLE. WHAT IS IMPORTANT, HOPEFULLY POSSIBLE AND A MEASURE OF SUCCESS IS THE AROUSAL OF THE VOTING PUBLIC TO MOVE IN THE NEW DIRECTION OF THE NATION'S INTEREST.

ROSS PEROT, RUNNING AGAINST BILL CLINTON AND BUSH I CAPTURED AN ASTOUNDING 20% OF THE POPULAR VOTE AND THEN VANISHED FROM POLITICS. RESTORING THE NATIONAL INTEREST IS NOT A ONE SHOT EVENT. IT WILL TAKE WORK AND PATIENCE, BUT, IF DONE CORRECTLY OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW ELECTIONS, COULD PRODUCE MEMORABLE RESULTS.

WE ARE AT A TIPPING POINT WHERE THE OLD WAYS ARE PAST THEIR PRIME AND RECEDING. WE MUST REAFFIRM OUR NATIONAL INTEREST AND THEN USE IT TO CLEAN UP OUR PAST MESS AND TO FACE THE FUTURE.

## SYRIA

WE DO NOT USUALLY WRITE ABOUT FAST BREAKING ISSUES THAT ARE BETTER SERVED BY REPORTING, RATHER THAN COMMENT, BUT SYRIA SHOWS SIGNS OF NOT GOING AWAY. IT IS A COMPLEX PROBLEM COMPOSED OF SEVERAL PARTS AND MULTIPLE ISSUES, AND IT NOW APPEARS THAT ITS CAUSES, AND THEIR COURSES OF ACTION, MAY PLAY OUT FOR MUCH LONGER THAN ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED BY ANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

THE FIRST ISSUE IS THAT OF THE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN BASHAR ASSAD'S GOVERNMENT AND A SEGMENT OF THE SYRIAN PEOPLE SO ANTAGONIZED BY ASSAD'S CONTINUING OPPRESSION THAT IT FIRST ENGAGED IN PEACEFUL PROTEST, THEN CIVIL UNREST WITH MASS DEMONSTRATIONS CALLING FOR ASSAD'S REMOVAL AND, FINALLY, ARMED RESISTANCE.

CIVIL WARS USUALLY ADDRESS MATTERS OF POLITICAL

RIGHTS, AND SYRIA IS NO EXCEPTION, BUT IN THE ETHNIC, SOCIAL, CIVIL, TRIBAL, RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL CALDRON OF THE MIDDLE EAST ONE ISSUE EASILY ATTRACTS AND COMBINES WITH ANOTHER, THEREBY DRAWING OTHER PEOPLE AND THEIR PURPOSES INTO THE STRUGGLE, PROVIDING THEM WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL MESSAGE, TURF AND RECRUITMENT, AND PROVIDING THEM WITH AN ALTERED IDENTITY WITHIN AND BEYOND THE NEAR EAST.

THESE NEW ADD-ON FORCES WERE NOT ONES THAT THE SYRIAN REBELS WOULD HAVE CHOSEN, BUT THEY CAME ARMED, READY TO FIGHT AND OFTEN WITH PROPER REFERENCES. SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR BECAME, IN POLITICAL TERMS, A CIVIL WAR PLUS.

THE SECOND LEVEL OF THE SYRIAN PROBLEM IS ITS REGIONAL EFFECT AMONG THE COUNTRIES THAT COMPRISE THE NEAR EAST AND THE SEEMINGLY AGELESS TRIBAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES THAT CAN SIMMER FOR CENTURIES AND THEN SUDDENLY BOIL OVER. IN RECENT DECADES, AS POPULATION AND RELIGIOUS PRESSURES HAVE INCREASED, THE BOILING POINT HAS BECOME THE NEW NORMAL. NEW FUEL HAS BEEN ADDED IN THE FORM OF OIL, THE POLITICS OF MILITANT ISLAM AND GLOBAL CONSUMER COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY. THE LATTER, ON ITS OWN, HAS PROBABLY BEEN THE SOURCE OF MORE REGIONAL CHANGE AND DESTABILIZATION THAN ANY OTHER FORCE.

WE MUST EXAMINE US POLICY IN RELATION TO THESE FIRST TWO ISSUES BEFORE CONSIDERING THE THIRD.

MOST PROBLEMS ARE MADE EASIER BY HAVING A PHYSICAL MODEL WITH MOVING PARTS THAT CAN REFLECT THE FORCES THAT ACT UPON THEM. MODELING SYRIA REQUIRES AN UNUSUAL PROTOTYPE. IT WOULD CONSIST OF A CENTER SHAFT REPRESENTING THE HOPED FOR GOALS OF PEACE, THE REMOVAL OF ASSAD FROM OFFICE AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY A COALITION OF INTERESTED PARTIES. THIS COALITION WOULD COMMIT TO NON-SECTARIAN, REPRESENTATIVE, ELECTED GOVERNMENT PLEDGED TO ENGAGE IN HUMAN AND PEACEFUL PRACTICES.

ATTACHED TO THIS SHAFT AND ROTATING AROUND IT ARE THE THREE ISSUES, AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES, THAT COMMAND OUR INVOLVEMENT AND ACTION. THESE ELEMENTS ARE NOT SYMMETRIC. THEY ARE OF DIFFERENT SIZES, SHAPES, WEIGHTS AND DISTANCES FROM THE SHAFT. MOREOVER, THEY MOVE AT DIFFERENT VELOCITIES, SOMETIMES START OR STOP INDEPENDENTLY OF ONE ANOTHER AND CAN MOVE IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. ANOTHER COMPLICATION IS THAT THE CENTER SHAFT IS NOT IN A FIXED, VERTICAL POSITION. IT CAN LEAN, PRODUCING A WOBBLE OR A DIP.

IN MOST MECHANICAL SYSTEMS, IF FAULTS OCCUR, WE ASSUME THAT CORRECTING THEM ONE BY ONE WILL RESTORE THE SYSTEM TO FULL FUNCTION. THAT IS NOT A VALID ASSUMPTION IN SYRIA BECAUSE THE THREE ISSUES ARE VERY DIFFERENT AND EFFORTS TO RESOLVE ONE MAY ACTUALLY HAVE A NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCE FOR ANOTHER.

THIS MODEL FOR SYRIA IS NOT A HELPFUL ONE. IT WOULD BE BEST PUT ASIDE WHERE A MAGICIAN COULD PUT A BLACK VELVET COVER OVER IT AND THEN, WITH ONE QUICK FLOURISH, MAKE IT DISAPPEAR. WITH THE CONCENTRATION OF

REGIONAL AND MAJOR POWER OBJECTIVES IN SYRIA, THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN.

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OUR VISIBLE ROLE IN SYRIA BEGAN WHEN SOME SYRIAN PROTESTERS BEGAN TO FORM RESISTANCE UNITS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF, AT FIRST, LOCAL LEADERS AND THEN A CENTRAL COMMAND. THEY IDENTIFIED THEIR COMBINED FORCES AS THE FREE SYRIAN ARMY (FSA) WITH THE ANNOUNCED OBJECTIVE THAT BASHAR ASSAD (BA) MUST BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE BECAUSE OF HIS LONG RECORD OF ABUSING HIS PEOPLE AND DEPRIVING THEM OF THEIR BASIC HUMAN AND POLITICAL RIGHTS. THIS STRUCK A RECEPTIVE CHORD WITH OUR GOVERNMENT AND WE PLEDGED AID IN THE FORM OF “NON-LETHAL ASSISTANCE” (I.E., FOOD, MEDICINE, BLANKETS, CLOTHING, TENTS, ETC.). WE ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO CALL WORLD AND REGIONAL ATTENTION TO OUR GENEROSITY/HUMANITY AND OUR COMMITMENT TO THE FREEDOM AND POPULARLY ELECTED SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THAT WE ENJOY. THIS RESONATED THROUGHOUT THE LOCAL GROUPS THAT COMPRISED THE FSA. THEY REACHED OUT, GRABBED AND HELD FIRMLY TO THE BELIEF THAT THE US WAS THEIR PARTNER.

BUT THERE IS SOME BAD HISTORY OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION THAT THE FSA OVERLOOKED. WE HAD OFFERED VERBAL SUPPORT TO NASCENT UPRISINGS IN EGYPT, IRAN, IRAQ (KURDS IN THE NORTH; MARSH ARABS IN THE SOUTH) AND AFGHANISTAN, BUT FAILED TO GO ANY FURTHER WHEN THESE HOPEFUL RESISTANCE GROUPS CONFRONTED THEIR OPPRESSORS. LIVES, DREAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES WERE LOST, AND A BASIC FLAW IN THE POLITICS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY WAS REVEALED.

WE SEEM TO ENJOY THE ROLE OF SUPERPOWER AND YET REJECT THAT OF “THE WORLD’S POLICEMAN” WHICH RAISES THE QUESTIONS, “IS THERE A WORKABLE DISTINCTION? ARE THEY NOT JOINED? IF YOU ARE ONE, MUST YOU NOT ALSO BE THE OTHER?” ADMITTEDLY, THESE QUESTIONS GET IN THE WAY OF OUR PUBLIC PREFERENCE POLLS AND OUR POLITICIANS’ RHETORIC, BUT ASKING MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS OF POWER, ALTHOUGH OUR COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SURPASSES ITS CAPABILITY OF EVEN A GENERATION AGO, HAS BECOME FAR MORE DIFFICULT.

IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR IT WAS STILL LARGELY A POLITICAL STRUGGLE. AS OUR NON-LETHAL AID ADDRESSED THE RESULTS OF WAR, NOT ITS CONDUCT, THE CALLS FOR HELP IN THE FORM OF ARMAMENTS THAT COULD BE USED BOTH FOR ATTACK AND DEFENSE BY THE FSA GREW LOUDER AND MORE FREQUENT, BUT THEY MET WITH LITTLE OR NO RESPONSE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (IC).

THE FSA’S POSITION BECAME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT AND, NEEDING HELP FROM ANY AVAILABLE SOURCE, IT ACCEPTED THE SERVICES OF VOLUNTEERS FROM OUTSIDE SYRIA WHO CLAIMED TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO ITS CAUSE. SOME WERE; OTHERS WERE NOT, BUT HAD COME TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN INTEREST IN A VOLATILE TIME AND PLACE TO GAIN BENEFITS IF THE FSA PREVAILED.

UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THESE OUTSIDE FORCES

WERE MEMBERS OF AL-QAEDA OR ITS AFFILIATES WHO MAINTAINED A SORT OF SEMI-INDEPENDENT STATUS AND CREATED DIFFICULT DIVISIONS WITHIN THE FSA STRUCTURE, BOTH AT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS AND IN ITS COMBAT FORCES.

THEIR PRESENCE GREATLY WIDENED THE AREA OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE, AS AL-QAEDA FIGHTERS ARE DRAWN FROM COUNTRIES IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD, AND THE WAR’S ORIGINAL POLITICAL ISSUE EXPANDED TO ACCOMMODATE RELIGION.

AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A GAME CHANGER THIS WAS, ON SEPTEMBER 13 BBC WORLD NEWS AIRED A REPORT ON DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE FSA BETWEEN SYRIAN AND AL-QAEDA COMMANDERS. IT SHOWED ONE AL-QAEDA GROUP GOING FROM TOWN TO TOWN ISSUING ITS OWN ORDERS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT. ALL ADULTS AND LITTLE CHILDREN LINED THE TOWN SQUARE AND ANYONE WHO PROTESTED, HESITATED OR DISOBEYED WAS HANDCUFFED, BLINDFOLDED, MADE TO KNEEL AND THEN BEHEADED.

THIS PROCEDURE PRODUCED FANATICAL CHEERING BY THE AL-QAEDANS, THE MOST APPALLING LOOKS ON THE FACES OF THE CHILDREN AND A NEW FORM OF CIVIL AUTHORITY FOR THE TOWN NOT LIKELY TO BE CHALLENGED. AT ITS CONCLUSION, THE AL-QAEDA FORCES DEPARTED FOR THE NEXT TOWN WHERE IT WAS REPEATED.

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAD SEEN AMERICA’S ROLE AS THAT OF A SENIOR STATESMAN WHO COULD CAJOLE, URGE, NUDGE AND OCCASIONALLY THREATEN THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE FSA TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WHEREBY BA WOULD EITHER GO INTO FOREIGN EXILE OR, PERHAPS, SOME KIND OF DOMESTIC RESIDENCE IN AN ENCLAVE OR AREA UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION. BUT, NO MATTER HOW HARD WE PUSHED THIS APPROACH, THE FSA WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT. AFTER DECADES OF ASSAD’S POLICE STATE, ITS MOMENT HAD COME AND HE HAD TO GO.

FROM TIME TO TIME, AS THE WAR SPREAD, CLAIMS WERE MADE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD USED CHEMICAL WEAPONS, ALTHOUGH ON A MINOR SCALE. THEN, ABOUT A YEAR AGO, IN RESPONSE TO SUCH A REPORT, PRES. OBAMA DREW HIS “RED LINE” AND INTRODUCED A TOTALLY NEW ISSUE INTO THE MIX — AMERICAN CREDIBILITY. IF THE LINE WERE CROSSED, WOULD THE US RETALIATE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY?

ULTIMATUMS, RED LINES, ETC. ARE ONLY SUCCESSFUL IF THEY ARE ACTED UPON QUICKLY AND FORCEFULLY. IF THEY REVEAL UNCERTAINTY OR TIMIDITY, THEY BECOME COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. COMMITTEES, POLLS, NEGOTIATIONS, WHETHER DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL, WEAKEN ANY ADVANTAGE GAINED BY AN ULTIMATUM/RED LINE. THE PRESIDENTIAL RED PEN SHOULD STAY ON THE DESK MARKED “LOOK; DON’T TOUCH”. OTHER PRESIDENTS HAVE USED FOREIGN POLICY TO RESCUE FALLING POLITICAL FORTUNES, BUT SUCCESS IS NEVER GUARANTEED AND THE RISK IS THAT, WHILE THE PRESIDENT’S IMAGE MAY BE IMPROVED, THE NATION’S STATUS WITH OTHER LEADERS, STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS MAY SUFFER.

AT PRESENT, WITH A PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT TO DO AWAY WITH SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS HAVING BEEN REACHED BY RUSSIA AND THE US, THE INITIAL ISSUE OF A

CIVIL WAR TO REMOVE BA HAS BEEN EXPANDED FROM ONE OF NATIONAL POLITICS TO STAGE TWO OF REGIONAL POLITICAL AND SECTARIAN CONFLICT TO WHICH HAS BEEN ADDED GREAT POWERS NEGOTIATIONS OVER GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS.

DIPLOMACY MOSTLY TAKES PLACE OUT OF SIGHT SO THAT THE PROCESS DOES NOT SUFFER FROM EXPOSURE. THERE IS SILENCE AND THEN A DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT. THE PUBLIC'S EXPERIENCE HAS CHANGED FROM SPECULATION AS TO WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN INTO ANALYSIS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED. THIS BLANK SPACE BETWEEN THE TWO MAKES DIPLOMACY DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE.

ONE METHOD WE FAVOR FOR RATING DIPLOMACY IS TO ASK WHETHER THE ANNOUNCED AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO EITHER PARTY IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THEIR CONFRONTATION. IN SYRIA, THIS TRANSLATES INTO AN OUTCOME IN WHICH MANY THOUSANDS OF LIVES ARE LOST; 7 MILLION PEOPLE (ONE THIRD OF ITS POPULATION) ARE HOMELESS REFUGEES EITHER IN SYRIA OR IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES; THE COUNTRY'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMY ARE LARGELY DESTROYED; RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IS INCREASED; BASHAR ASSAD IS STILL IN CONTROL OF ALL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS AND MILITARY FORCES AND HUMAN AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS ARE REDUCED.

THIS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY TURN OF EVENTS, AS BOTH THE FSA AND THE USA EARLY ON COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE GOAL OF "HASSAD MUST GO". THE REBELS HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL FIGHT ON ALONE, AND PROBABLY AT INCREASING DISADVANTAGE BECAUSE OF BAS STRENGTHENED POSITION. IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF THEY AND OTHER NEAR EAST POPULATIONS SEEKING AMERICA'S POLITICAL FREEDOM AND BLESSING WERE TO VIEW SYRIA AS ANOTHER BETRAYAL.

IT WILL TAKE MONTHS FOR THE DETAILS OF THE ANNOUNCED RUSSIAN/US AGREEMENT AND ITS WORKING ARRANGEMENTS TO BE REVEALED IN FULL. PRES. OBAMA'S RECKLESS RED LINE HAS BEEN REPLACED BY AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT AND HIS IMAGE, BUFFED BY INTENSE MEDIA ATTENTION, HAS IMPROVED.

THERE WILL BE OTHER, AT THIS TIME NOT YET KNOWN, CONSEQUENCES. WE ARE AWARE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S AVERSION TO FURTHER INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT IT'S NOT AS IF WE AREN'T ALREADY THERE. WE ARE, AND WE HAVE BEEN SINCE THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WHEN HENRY FORD AND JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER LEFT THE HORSE IN THE BARN AND REMODELED OUR, AND THE WORLD'S, TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS. STILL, WHATEVER MOVES WE MAKE IN THAT REGION, IN OR OUT, SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO BENEFIT US.

FROM WHAT WE CAN TELL NOW, BA EMERGES FROM SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR WITH ONLY THE LOSS OF SOME WEAPONS AND WITH A STRENGTHENED RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN HIS DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL POSITION, WHILE THE "ASSAD MUST GO" POSITION THAT WE AND THE SYRIAN REBELS AT ONE POINT INSISTED UPON, HAS BEEN SWEEPED FROM THE TABLE. REGARDLESS OF BOLSTERED POLITICAL STATUS, POLLS, MSM, POPULAR OPINION, VANITIES, DIPLOMATIC EGOS, PHOTO-OPS, QUICK QUOTES, ETC. THE AGREEMENT, AS NOW REPORTED, RANKS AS A FOREIGN POLICY FAILURE.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE PROCESS WHEREBY WE AND OTHERS HOPE TO SOLVE THE SYRIAN PROBLEM? IT HAS BECOME GREATLY MORE COMPLICATED, LIKE ADDING THE THIRD DIMENSION TO BOARD GAMES. THERE ARE MORE INTERESTS AT WORK AND MORE REPRESENTATIVES CIRCLING THE PEACE TABLE — RUSSIA, HEZBOLLA, IRAN, TURKEY, CHINA, ISRAEL, SAUDI ARABIA, QATAR. NOT ALL WILL BE SEATED, BUT THOSE WHO AREN'T WILL BE ABLE TO FLASH SIGNALS TO THOSE WHO ARE.

AND, SHOULD THE PROCESS MOVE TO THE UN, IT WILL BECOME EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO SOLVE, AS MORE SPEAKERS AND A LARGER AUDIENCE WILL TRANSLATE INTO MORE POINTS OF VIEW AND INTERESTS TO BE CONSIDERED.

BUT IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER NOW OF MORE NUMBERS. RATHER, THE FIRST AND SECOND ISSUES HAVE BEEN JOINED. THE FIRST, LOCAL POLITICAL ISSUE OF BA'S MISTREATMENT OF HIS OWN COUNTRYMEN HAS CHANGED IN SIZE AND SHAPE. IT HAS BONDED TO THE SECOND ISSUE OF RELIGION AND REGIONAL POLITICS WITH ITS ENLARGED CAST OF INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS.

AT THIS ELEVATED LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT THE US CANNOT UNILATERALLY DECLARE WHO HAS STATUS. OUR TASK IS MORE DIFFICULT, BUT PERHAPS SOMETHING CAN BE COBBLED TOGETHER VAGUE ENOUGH SO THAT IT CAN BE VIEWED AS SATISFACTORY TO ALL.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE? NEAR EASTERN ALLIANCES AND AGREEMENTS ARE NOT KNOWN FOR THEIR LONGEVITY. OIL, RELIGION, MONEY, POPULATION AND WATER ARE NOT STATIC POLITICAL ELEMENTS. THEY HAVE LIVES AND AGENDAS TO WHICH WE ARE NOT A PART. OUR MESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS BECOME MESSIER.

AND AGAIN, WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE? BY MID-CENTURY WILL THERE BE DANCING IN THE STREETS? WILL THE LION LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB? WILL SHEEP BE GRAZING ON THE GRASS NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE UN BUILDING?

THERE IS ONE THING FOR WHICH WE CAN BE THANKFUL. THE MORE PARTICIPANTS, THE LESS EFFECTIVE DRAWING UNILATERAL RED LINES BECOMES.

WE ARE NOW 37 YEARS FROM MID-CENTURY. IN 1910 THE EUROPEAN MONARCHIES WERE IN FULL FLOWER. BY 1947, THEY WERE GONE, ALONG WITH THE TITANIC, THE BRITISH RAJ IN INDIA, AND HORSE TRANSPORTATION. ADD TO THIS PERIOD, TWO WORLD WARS, WORLDWIDE DEPRESSION, THE A-BOMB AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, NONE OF WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN FORESEEN IN 1910.

LOOK AT A WORLD MAP IN 1910 AND IN 1947. THEN LOOK AT OURS NOW. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN 2050?

## THE MOTHER OF ALL PIN PRICKS ?

WE HAVE OMITTED SO FAR ANY ATTENTION TO THE THIRD ISSUE WITH WHICH THE SYRIA PROBLEM CONFRONTS US. IT EXISTS IN A DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE WITHOUT IMMEDIATE, HEADLINE, HUMANE OR BATTLEFIELD CONSEQUENCES AND POSES THE QUESTION OF WHAT RESULTS OUR CURRENT POLICY

AND ACTIONS MAY HAVE IN THE FUTURE. IT SUGGESTS THAT WHILE OUR POLICY MAY HAVE AVERTED WAR NOW, IT MIGHT HAVE MADE IT, OR THE THREAT OF IT, MORE LIKELY IN THE FUTURE. LOOKING AHEAD, INACTIVITY NOW MIGHT BE EQUALLY AS DANGEROUS AS THE MEDIA-CHARGED ACTION WE AVOIDED.

WE REFER TO THE EFFECT UPON INTERNATIONAL LAW AND BEHAVIOR OF OUR AND THE IC'S NOT TAKING PROMPT AND FIRM ACTION TO PUT SYRIA'S USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS ON THE WORLD STAGE WHEN IT WAS FIRST REPORTED, TO KEEP IT THERE AND TO UNDERTAKE A CONCERTED ACTION, MILITARY OR OTHER, TO SHUT IT DOWN.

EASY TO SAY AND, SURELY, MORE DIFFICULT TO DO, BUT THE PRESENT METHOD, BY WHICH ASSAD STAYS IN POWER AND SUFFERS NO PUNISHMENT OTHER THAN THE LOSS OF SOME MOSTLY UNUSED MILITARY HARDWARE, SENDS THE MESSAGE TO OTHER ROGUE NATIONS THAT THE COST OF VIOLATING INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PRINCIPLES IS SMALL, AND PERHAPS EVEN RISK FREE.

FOLLOWING THE CARNAGE OF WWI TRENCH WARFARE, ITS COMBATANTS AGREED VIA THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO BANISH THE USE OF POISON GAS FOREVER. THERE WERE A FEW ISOLATED REPORTS OF ITS USE IN WWII, BUT THEY WERE NEVER PROVEN AND WERE QUICKLY OVERTAKEN BY THE GLOBAL SCALE OF EVENTS AND THE MUCH GREATER SUFFERING AND LOSS OF LIFE IMPOSED BY WEAPONS OF THE ATOMIC AGE.

THE FATE OF THE LEAGUE WAS PRETTY MUCH CONSISTENTLY DOWNHILL FOLLOWING OUR REFUSAL TO JOIN IT. IT COULD DEBATE AND RENDER OPINIONS AND SANCTIONS, BUT LACKED THE COMMITMENT FROM ITS MEMBERS TO ENGAGE IN ANY FORCEFUL MEASURES OF CONTROL OR DISCIPLINE. BY THE MID-30S, WHEN HITLER AND MUSSOLINI USED MILITARY FORCES IN ETHIOPIA AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, THERE WAS NOT MUCH LEFT OF THE LEAGUE EXCEPT ITS IMPOSING BUILDING IN GENEVA. AT THE TIME, THERE APPEARED A HIGHLY SYMBOLIC PHOTO IN THE PRESS SHOWING SHEEP GRAZING ON THE LAWN. THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS WAS FORMALLY DISSOLVED IN 1946 TO MAKE WAY FOR THE UN.

THE IC'S EARLIER RELUCTANCE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE USE OF POISON GAS (I.E., THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR) IS NOT NECESSARILY A PRECURSOR OF ITS SYRIAN RESPONSE. CIRCUMSTANCES WERE CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT. BUT IN THE MIND OF THE NEXT USER (NORTH KOREA, TALIBAN?) THE PATTERN OF IC ACTION THAT COMES ACROSS AS MOST LIKELY IS THAT MILITARY RETALIATION CAN BE AVOIDED.

MANY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS' LOFTY IDEALS DIED WITH IT LONG AGO, BUT THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CHEMICAL WEAPONS MANAGED TO OUTLIVE THEM. ONLY THE FUTURE CAN TELL WHETHER THE IC WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP THIS SAFEGUARD IN PLACE, OR WHETHER IT WILL FALL INTO GRADUAL DISUSE.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CAN BE USED FOR OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES WITH ANY DISTINCTION OFTEN BEING IN THE EYE OF THE USER. WILL THE TYPE OF RESOLUTION ACHIEVED IN SYRIA PROVE AN EFFECTIVE DETERRENT IN THE FUTURE? WE CAN HOPE SO, BUT HISTORY SUGGESTS OTHERWISE.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE IC, OR A COALITION OF THE WILLING, OR WHATEVER OTHER NAME MIGHT BE CHOSEN,

MUST COME UP WITH NON-MILITARY RESPONSES THAT HAVE THE ABILITY TO IMPOSE MEANINGFUL, BEHAVIOR CONTROLLING DISCIPLINE.

IN SYRIA'S CASE, AND PERHAPS OTHERS TO COME, WHERE A CREDIBLE REPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM UN INSPECTORS, IT CAN PROVIDE THE RATIONALE FOR NON-LETHAL ACTION WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE BRINGING AN ACTION AGAINST ASSAD BEFORE THE COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AT THE HAGUE; PLACING SYRIA ON A FORM OF PROBATION FOR A PERIOD OF, SAY, THREE OR FIVE YEARS DURING WHICH HARSH ECONOMIC SANCTIONS WOULD BE INCREASED AND MAINTAINED; BRINGING A MOTION BEFORE THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO SUSPEND SYRIA'S MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES FOR USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS; OR, LACKING THE ABILITY TO SUSPEND, ALLOW THE REBELS TO ALSO REPRESENT SYRIA IN THE UN.

THERE IS NOTHING FIXED ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THEY CAN BE COMPLICATED, INTENSE AND CAPABLE OF CHANGING INSTANTLY. PARIAS STATUS, AS WE HAVE LEARNED IN OTHER MID-EASTERN COUNTRIES, CAN BE EFFECTIVE IF DEEMED NECESSARY AND CAN BE IMPOSED SILENTLY AND QUICKLY.

WE LAY NO CLAIM TO EXPERTISE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, BUT IT SEEMS VERY CLEAR THAT, IF THE IC ACCEPTS NO MILITARY PUNISHMENT AS PUNISHMENT, THEN IT MUST DEVISE AND EXERCISE SOME VERY FIRM NON-MILITARY MEASURES TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW, THE UN CHARTER, REGIONAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS AND OTHER OBLIGATIONS ON BEHALF OF CIVILIZED BEHAVIOR.

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PICK YOUR FAVORITE BOARD GAME: CHESS, CHECKERS, TIC-TAC-TOE. THEY ARE OF DIFFERENT COMPLEXITIES AND STRATEGIES, BUT ARE PLAYED ON A FLAT SURFACE IN TWO DIMENSIONS. NOW, ALTER THEM FOR THREE DIMENSIONAL PLAY BOUNDED BY LENGTH, WIDTH AND HEIGHT. THIS ADDITION OF ONE DIMENSION MAKES THE GAME VASTLY MORE DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED. SYRIA IS A THREE DIMENSIONAL PROBLEM MADE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT BY THE FACT THAT ITS ELEMENTS OFTEN OPPOSE AND ANTAGONIZE EACH OTHER.

THE THREE ISSUES THAT DOMINATE THE SYRIAN PROBLEM COMPETE FOR BOTH OUR ATTENTION AND OUR INTENTIONS. THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED AGREEMENT SERVES THE POLITICAL INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES, BUT FAILS TO PUNISH ASSAD FOR HIS INHUMANITY AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE.

SIMILARLY, IT IMPOSES A KIND OF POLITICAL "COOLING OFF" PERIOD FOR THE REGION, MARKED BY A LARGER RUSSIAN PRESENCE, BUT DOES NOT ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF MILLIONS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN AND TURKEY, NOR HOW THE SYRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMY CAN BE REBUILT TO PROVIDE BOTH RETURNING REFUGEES AND THOSE WHO NEVER LEFT WITH THE HOUSING AND ECONOMIC SUSTENANCE TO WHICH THEY ONCE HAD ACCESS.

IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF MONEY TO REBUILD SYRIA.

END NOTES

WHERE WILL IT COME FROM? SOME WILL POINT TO RUSSIA, BUT THE RUSSIANS ARE REALISTS AND WILL FOOT NO LARGER BILL THAN WHAT IS ESSENTIAL. RECALL THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS WHEN CUBA WAS THE USSR'S ONLY BASE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND WAS ECONOMICALLY TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON MOSCOW.

FOLLOWING THE CRISIS' RESOLUTION AND THE REMOVAL OF THE MISSILES, CUBA BECAME FAR LESS IMPORTANT IN RUSSIA'S WORLD SCHEME. CASTRO CONTINUED TO MAKE CEREMONIAL VISITS TO MOSCOW FOR PHOTO-OPS WITH RUSSIAN LEADERS, BUT THE MAINSTAY FUNDING OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY WAS REDUCED AND THEN ELIMINATED.

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THE AMERICAN PRESS HAS MADE A BIG DEAL OF THE POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO THE PRESIDENT'S CREDIBILITY THAT MIGHT RESULT FROM OUR RECENT COURSE OF ACTION, BUT THAT SEEMS TO PLAY TO MOSTLY THE LOCAL AUDIENCE.

WHAT THE IC MUST DO IS CHART A COURSE THROUGH THE SYRIAN PROBLEM'S MINEFIELD OF LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, BEARING IN MIND THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE CONSEQUENCES. SO FAR, IT APPEARS TO US THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE WORK LEFT TO DO TO STRENGTHEN OUR FUTURE COMMITMENT TO PREVENT USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, AND TO PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL MEASURE OF HUMANE CARE TO THIS WAR'S VICTIMS — THOSE WHO DARED TO TRY TO TURN OUR POLITICAL RHETORIC INTO THEIR OWN REALITY.

THE TENDENCY AMONG GOVERNMENTS FACING CRISES AND TRYING TO RESOLVE THEM IS TO LET THE CYCLE OF PUBLIC ATTENTION TAKE OVER AND ALLOW THEM TO FADE INTO THE BACKGROUND. IN THIS RESPECT AMERICA IS WELL-SERVED BY ITS ELECTORAL RENEWALS EVERY TWO YEARS WHICH SERVE AS REMINDERS. HOWEVER, WE AND THE REST OF THE IC, WILL HAVE TO DO BETTER IF THE CONVENTION AGAINST THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IS TO SERVE ITS PURPOSES IN THE FUTURE.

LATE NOTE AT PRESS TIME

IT HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED THAT THERE IS HEAVY AND CONTINUOUS FIGHTING BETWEEN FSA AND AL-QAEDA FORCES IN NORTHWESTERN SYRIA CLOSE TO ITS TURKISH BORDER. THIS IS A SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT — WHETHER OR NOT IT SPREADS TO OTHER REGIONS AND REGARDLESS OF WHO PREVAILS.

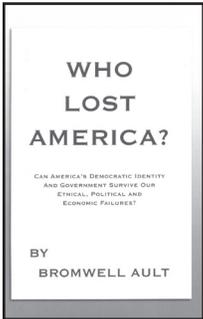
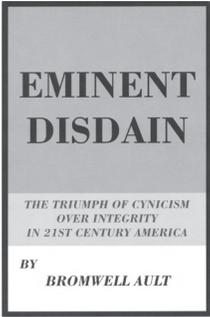
LOOKING AHEAD, AL-QAEDA CAN CLAIM A SPEAKING ROLE IN DETERMINING SYRIA'S FUTURE. IF ASSAD IS REMOVED, IT CAN CITE ITS EFFORTS TO ASSIST THAT RESULT; AND, IF HE STAYS, IT CAN ARGUE THAT IT OPPOSED THE FSA. MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHATEVER THE RESULT, IT WILL HAVE ESTABLISHED AT MODEST COST AN ARMED PRESENCE IN A MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRY THAT SHARES BORDERS WITH ISRAEL, LEBANON, JORDAN, IRAQ AND TURKEY!

1 THE END OF BIG: HOW THE INTERNET MAKES DAVID THE NEW GOLIATH BY NICCO MELE. ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, NYC, NY, 2013
2 IBID
3 PARENTS' TELEVISION COUNCIL. LETTER FROM TIM WINTER, PRES., TO MEMBERSHIP 5/10/13
4 WHY SHOULD COUNTRIES KEEP UP DRUG WAR? BY ANDRES OPPENHEIMER. PALM BEACH POST 9/6/13
5 VERDICT, JUDICIAL WATCH, WASHINGTON, DC JULY 2013.
6 IBID
7 IBID
8 IBID
9 IBID
10 IBID
11 PALM BEACH POST, 7/31/13 VIA NY TIMES MILLIONS IN SUBSIDIES GO TO DEAD FARMERS, BY RON NIXON.
12 CONGRESS STUCK IN PRE-9/11 ERA BY THOMAS H KEAN AND LEE HAMILTON. NY TIMES VIA PALM BEACH POST 9/12/13

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