

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
KENNEDY POLITICAL UNION
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1977

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU THIS EVENING ABOUT A SUBJECT THAT BRINGS TOGETHER THE POLITICAL SCIENCE CLASSROOM AND THE REAL WORLD OF POLITICS. AND THAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM. HAVING TWO STRONG PARTIES IS IMPORTANT IN THEORY -- AND IN REALITY. I APPEAR AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ENDANGERED SPECIES: THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. YET I COME FULL OF OPTIMISM ABOUT WHAT MY PARTY HAS TO OFFER THE NATION. CONTRARY TO THE DISMAL PROGNOSSES OF SOME OF OUR FRIENDS IN THE MEDIA AND IN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, I HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE CAPACITY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY AND TO REMAIN A VIABLE FORCE IN AMERICAN LIFE. IF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN WHICH WE OPERATE CONTINUES TO BE FAIR AND EVENHANDED. AND IF IT CONTINUES TO PLACE A PREMIUM ON THE VALUE OF TWO STRONG PARTIES. FOR, WITHOUT WISHING TO SOUND ALARMIST, I BELIEVE THE VIABILITY OF THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM MAY BE IN MORE DANGER THAN MANY OF US -- ON THE CAMPUS OR IN THE CAPITOL -- REALIZE.

Content: GOP
Vote Reg.
Antitrust
Pub Finance

- 2 -

I BEGIN WITH AN ASSUMPTION THAT I THINK MOST OF US CAN ACCEPT. AND THAT IS THAT THE COMPETITION BETWEEN TWO STRONG PARTIES HAS SERVED THIS COUNTRY WELL IN THE PAST AND CAN DO SO IN THE FUTURE. THERE WAS NO PROVISION IN THE CONSTITUTION FOR PARTIES. THE FOUNDING FATHERS THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE A DISRUPTIVE POLITICAL INFLUENCE. AS IT TURNED OUT, PARTIES HAVE BEEN A UNIFYING ELEMENT, A RECONCILING FORCE, IN OUR POLITICS. THROUGHOUT AMERICAN HISTORY, IT WAS WHEN THE PARTIES WERE NOT FUNCTIONING WELL THAT THE PEOPLE BECAME DISILLUSIONED ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO GUIDE THE COURSE OF NATIONAL POLICY.

ALMOST 30 YEARS AGO -- IN 1950 -- A COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION ISSUED A REPORT THAT WAS ENTITLED "TOWARD A MORE RESPONSIBLE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM." THE AUTHORS OF THAT REPORT TALKED OF THE DANGERS THAT THEY SAID WOULD BECOME MORE ACUTE UNLESS THE FORCES WEAKENING OUR TWO-PARTY SYSTEM WERE CORRECTED. ONE OF THE DANGERS THEY TALKED ABOUT WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT "WITH GROWING PUBLIC CYNICISM AND CONTINUING PROOF OF THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE PARTY SYSTEM, THE NATION MAY EVENTUALLY WITNESS THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES." SOME YEARS LATER, IN 1971, DAVID BRODER REMARKED IN HIS BOOK "THE PARTY'S OVER" THAT:

- 3 -

"RESPONSIBLE PARTY GOVERNMENT HAS NOT JUST DISAPPEARED FROM THE FACE OF AMERICA; IT IS IN DANGER OF BEING ERASED AS AN IDEAL IN THE MINDS OF THOSE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT AMERICAN POLITICS."

NOW, IN THE BLAND NAME OF "ELECTORAL REFORM," THE NEW DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION IS PROPOSING A SERIES OF CHANGES THAT ARE INTENDED, IN MY OPINION, TO DO NO LESS THAN DESTROY THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AS A STRONG, VIABLE SECOND PARTY.

SPLINTER PARTIES

JUST AS ONE-PARTY DOMINATION WOULD REMOVE THE CHECKS AND BALANCES THAT MAKE IT EASIER FOR TRUTH AND WISDOM TO FIND THEIR WAY TO THE SURFACE -- SO, TOO, A PROLIFERATION OF MANY SPLINTER PARTIES WOULD TAKE AWAY A UNIQUE FEATURE OF OUR POLITICS THAT HAS WORKED WELL IN THE PAST.

- 4 -

HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE VOICES FROM THE PARTY OF LOYAL OPPOSITION, THE ILL-ADVISED \$50 TAX REBATE THAT THE PRESIDENT RECOMMENDED WOULD HAVE BEEN QUICKLY STEAMROLLED THROUGH THE CONGRESS, MUCH TO THE PRESIDENT'S LATER REGRET. THE WEAKNESSES OF THAT APPROACH WERE PINPOINTED, AND THE ADMINISTRATION CAME TO ITS SENSES IN TIME FOR AN INFLATIONARY, ILL-TIMED REBATE TO BE WITHDRAWN.

REPUBLICANS CAN SERVE THEIR COUNTRY RESPONSIBLY -- AND WARRANT THE CONFIDENCE OF THE VOTERS -- BY SPEAKING OUT WHEN THE PRESIDENT IS WRONG. BUT JUST SAYING "NO" ISN'T ENOUGH. I THINK WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THE PEOPLE WILL LISTEN TO WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY ONLY IF WE OFFER SPECIFIC CONCRETE ALTERNATIVES OF OUR OWN . . . PHASING IN GRADUAL TAX RATE CUTS INSTEAD OF A HIGHLY INFLATIONARY ONE-SHOT REBATE . . . AN EMPLOYMENT TAX CREDIT INSTEAD OF AN EXPANSION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS PROGRAM.

THE SYSTEM WORKS BEST WHEN THERE ARE TWO PARTIES TESTING ONE ANOTHER'S POSITIONS -- TWO PARTIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTHY GIVE-AND-TAKE OF LEGISLATION.

- 5 -

FOR BOTH PARTIES TO BE STRONG, THEY MUST EACH BE A CROSS-SECTION OF THE ELECTORATE AND NOT REPRESENT SOME NARROW SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION, WHETHER THAT BE A REGION OR A SOCIAL CLASS. THAT IS NOT SOMETHING ALL REPUBLICANS HAVE ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD AS WELL AS THEY SHOULD. THIS HAS BEEN ONE OF OUR PERENNIAL PROBLEMS.

GOP MUST BROADEN ITS APPEAL

DURING A PERIOD WHEN MANY NEW AND YOUNGER VOTERS WERE NOT INTERESTED IN AFFILIATING WITH EITHER PARTY, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY BECAME IDENTIFIED AS A PARTY THAT CARES FOR THE COUNTRY CLUB SET AND NOT THE PATRONS OF THE CORNER TAVERN; THE BUSINESSMAN AND NOT THE CONSUMER; THE INDUSTRIALIST AND NOT THE HOUSEWIFE WORRIED ABOUT POLLUTION; THOSE WHO CAN HELP THEMSELVES AND NOT THOSE WHO NEED HELP. WE WERE ACCUSED OF WRITING OFF ENTIRE GROUPS OF AMERICANS -- THE TEN MILLION BLACKS AND HISPANIC CITIZENS.

- 6 -

I HAPPEN TO BELIEVE THE NATION WAS NEVER IN GREATER NEED THAN IT IS TODAY OF A PARTY THAT STANDS AS A CHECK AGAINST THE GROWTH OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT -- A PARTY THAT STANDS FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY -- A PARTY THAT WILL SPEAK UP FOR THE STRENGTHS OF THE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM. I HAPPEN TO BELIEVE THAT THESE PRINCIPLES ARE IN TUNE WITH THE ATTITUDES OF MOST OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I HAPPEN TO BELIEVE WE CAN REMAIN TRUE TO OUR PARTY PRINCIPLES AND APPEAL TO MINORITY GROUPS AND ALL WORKING-CLASS AMERICANS. WE CAN BROADEN THE BASE OF OUR PARTY BY TAKING SENSIBLE POSITIONS AND THEN TRANSLATING WHAT WE ARE DOING IN TERMS THAT MAKE SENSE.

BUT THE SO-CALLED REFORMS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND WERE DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO MAKE THE REPUBLICAN PARTY EXTINCT -- AND GIVE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY A POWER MONOPOLY.

- 7 -

INSTANT REGISTRATION

UNFORTUNATELY, SOME REPUBLICAN LEADERS IN WASHINGTON WERE SUCKERED INTO AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE FIRST OF THESE "REFORM PROPOSALS" -- INSTANT, ON-THE-SPOT VOTER REGISTRATION ON ELECTION DAY. THE PRESIDENT AND A GREAT MANY OTHER DEMOCRATS WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO VOTE IN A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION JUST BY WALKING IN OFF THE STREET AND PRESENTING SOME KIND OF PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION.

THIS WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FRAUD ON A SCALE THAT THE BOSSES IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, COULD NEVER HAVE DARED DREAM OF.

I WANT TO MAKE IT AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO VOTE TO VOTE -- BUT ONLY ONCE IN ANY ONE ELECTION.

- 8 -

THE PROBLEMS OF POLICING SUCH A DUAL SYSTEM OF REGISTRATION WOULD BE ALMOST INSURMOUNTABLE. THE STATE OF WISCONSIN HAS EXPERIMENTED WITH A SIMILAR PLAN. IN LAST NOVEMBER'S ELECTION, OVER 63,000 NEW VOTERS IN MILWAUKEE ALONE WERE REGISTERED ON ELECTION DAY AND PARTICIPATED IN THAT ELECTION. THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL LATER FOUND WIDESPREAD EVIDENCE OF FRAUD. THE WISCONSIN SYSTEM REQUIRES THAT THE COUNTY CLERK ATTEMPT TO VERIFY THE ACTUAL EXISTENCE OF THE NEW VOTERS BY POSTCARD AFTER THE ELECTION. BUT BY THE TIME ANY DISCREPANCIES ARE IRONED OUT, INAUGURATION DAY WILL HAVE COME AND GONE.

IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY THE NEED FOR SUCH A DRASTIC PROPOSAL, IT FIRST HAS TO BE ESTABLISHED THAT THE STATE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS -- BACKED UP, AS THEY ARE, BY THE FEDERAL VOTER RIGHTS ACT -- MAKE IT TOO DIFFICULT FOR AMERICANS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AND WHO WANT TO VOTE -- TO VOTE. I AM NOT AWARE THAT THIS EVIDENCE EXISTS. THE REAL REASON FOR THE PROPOSAL, AS REPORTED BY SOME NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS, IS THE PRESIDENT'S FEELING THAT THE ADDITION OF MANY MORE VOTERS IN THE SOUTH AND IN THE NORTHEAST IS THE KEY TO HIS REELECTION PREPARATIONS.

- 9 -

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT SOME 25 MILLION ADDITIONAL VOTERS WOULD TAKE PART IN THE ELECTION IF ALL ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS WERE ELIMINATED. ALL REAL LIVE AMERICANS WHO ARE OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE -- AND WANT TO VOTE -- SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO -- ONCE. WHETHER THE SUDDENLY INSPIRED VOTERS WOULD VOTE DEMOCRATIC OR REPUBLICAN IS BESIDE THE POINT. IF THE CHANGE IS NEEDED -- AND IF IT IS RIGHT -- THEN IT OUGHT TO BE APPROVED. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT VOTING OUGHT TO BE A POSITIVE DECISION. WE DON'T WANT POLITICAL BOSSES DRAGOONING REAL OR IMAGINED CITIZENS TO THE POLLS -- CITIZENS WHO PROBABLY WON'T HAVE THE FOGGIEST NOTION WHO THE CANDIDATES ARE. LOW VOTER TURN-OUT IS NOT CAUSED BY UNDULY DIFFICULT REGISTRATION PROCEDURES.

THE ACT OF NON-VOTING IS ITSELF OFTEN A DELIBERATE DECISION, THE EXPERTS TELL US. BOTH OF OUR PARTIES SHOULD DWELL ON HOW BETTER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THESE POLITICALLY DISINTERESTED AMERICANS. WE SHOULD TRY TO GET THEM INTERESTED IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS. WE NEED BETTER INFORMED VOTERS, NOT A MASS DISPLAY OF NUMERICAL STRENGTH BY SOME WELL ORGANIZED INTEREST GROUP. HAVING LABOR UNIONS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ROUND THEM UP AND HERD THEM OFF THE THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY IS NO ANSWER TO THE POLITICAL APATHY NOW EXHIBITED BY MANY PEOPLE.

- 10 -

HATCH ACT REPEAL

ANOTHER OF THE CARTER "REFORMS" HAS PARTISAN IMPLICATIONS. THE PRESIDENT HAS CALLED FOR THE REPEAL OF THE HATCH ACT PROTECTION AGAINST POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES. THIS WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO MOBILIZE THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY INTO A POWERFUL POLITICAL MACHINE. THE HATCH ACT WAS DESIGNED TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE FROM POLITICAL ABUSE. IT WAS DESIGNED TO PROTECT CIVIL SERVANTS FROM THE POLITICAL PRESSURES OF THEIR BOSSES. UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN, POLITICAL CONFORMITY COULD BE ENFORCED. THE BATTLE TO CONTROL THE GROWTH AND INFLUENCE OF THE BUREAUCRACY WOULD BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT IF THAT BUREAUCRACY WERE TURNED INTO A GIANT POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. GIVEN THE REPUBLICAN OPPOSITION TO THE GROWTH OF BIG GOVERNMENT, SUCH A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION WOULD NOT BE SYMPATHETIC TO CANDIDATES WHO ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH THE COST OF GOVERNMENT.

- 11 -

PUBLIC FINANCING

THE THIRD REQUEST IS TO PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC FINANCING OF CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS. THIS WOULD INVOLVE LIMITATIONS ON PRIVATE SPENDING IN CAMPAIGNS. THE TROUBLE WITH THAT IS THE DIFFICULTY IN RESTRICTING ALL PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS. A PUBLIC SUBSIDY WOULD FREE THE LABOR UNIONS TO INVEST THEIR ENORMOUS HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN THE KIND OF CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD NOT BE COVERED BY LIMITATION.

AS YOU KNOW, PUBLIC FINANCING OF THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION WAS SUPPOSED TO SHUT OFF PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TWO MAJOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

ACCORDING TO NATIONAL JOURNAL, LABOR SPENT AT LEAST HALF AS MUCH TO HELP ELECT PRESIDENT CARTER AS PRESIDENT CARTER WAS ABLE TO SPEND HIMSELF OUT OF PUBLIC FUNDS -- WHICH WAS \$21.8 MILLION. THE MAGAZINE WENT ON TO SAY:

- 12 -

"PUBLIC FINANCING COULD LEAVE LABOR IN AS DOMINATE A POSITION ON CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS AS IT WAS IN 1976 ON THE PRESIDENTIAL. UNIVERSAL REGISTRATION WOULD PERMIT LABOR TO DIVERT THE RESOURCES IT NOW APPLIES TO REGISTRATION TO SUCH PURPOSES AS BEEFING UP ITS COMMUNICATIONS AND VOTER PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS. WHEN LABOR UNITES BEHIND ONE CANDIDATE, AS IT DID IN 1976, A FLAT-GRANT SYSTEM OF PUBLIC FINANCING IN WHICH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS ARE PROHIBITED LEAVES IT IN A POSITION NO OTHER GROUPS CAN MATCH."

TAKEN TOGETHER -- VOTING WITHOUT ADVANCE REGISTRATION, PUBLIC FINANCING OF CAMPAIGNS WITH A LIMIT ON PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY -- THESE PROPOSALS ARE INTENDED BY THE PRESIDENT TO STRENGTHEN HIS PARTY'S HOLD ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. PARTISAN DISADVANTAGE IS NOT REASON ENOUGH TO BE AGAINST THESE PLANS, I KNOW. TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY ALSO ENCOURAGE THE SPLINTERING AWAY OF THIRD PARTIES, THEY WOULD LEAD TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF OUR STRONG TWO-PARTY SYSTEM AT A TIME, I SUBMIT, WHEN MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, AMERICA NEEDS A REVIVAL OF TWO STRONG PARTIES.

- 13 -

TAKEN TOGETHER, THESE "REFORMS" WOULD, IN FACT, BRING ABOUT A MAJOR TRANSFORMATION OF THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM. A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT AND A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS WOULD LIKE TO PRESIDE OVER THIS READJUSTMENT, AND FURTHER TIP THE BALANCE OF POLITICAL POWER -- ALL IN THE NAME OF "REFORM."

DIRECT ELECTION

I SUPPORT THE OBJECTIVE BEHIND ANOTHER ELECTORAL REFORM PROPOSAL -- NAMELY, THE POPULAR ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT. I AGREE THAT THE CANDIDATE WHO GETS THE MOST VOTES OUGHT TO WIN, AND THAT NO ELECTORAL COLLEGE TECHNICALITY SHOULD INTERFERE WITH THAT. BUT I AM SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT HOW THE DIRECT ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT CAN BE PROVIDED WITHOUT ENCOURAGING SPLINTER PARTIES AND MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR A CANDIDATE TO WIN IF "THE MOST VOTES" IS ONLY 35 OR 40 PERCENT. I HOPE A WORKABLE DIRECT ELECTION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CAN BE DEVELOPED, ONE THAT WOULD BE LIKELY TO MAINTAIN OUR TWO-PARTY SYSTEM.

- 14 -

YOU DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A REPUBLICAN SPEECH, GOODNESS KNOWS. IF THE ADMINISTRATION CAN GET ITS ACT TOGETHER AND JUGGLE ALL THE CONFLICTING CONSTITUENCES IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, WE REPUBLICANS WILL HAVE PROBLEMS ENOUGH WITHOUT BEING LED DOWN THE PATH TO OUR OWN POLITICAL EXECUTION BY A PRESIDENT PREACHING TO US ABOUT "REFORM." THESE QUESTIONS ARE IMPORTANT. THEY INVOLVE THE BASIC POLITICAL STRUCTURE UNDER WHICH WE GOVERN OURSELVES.

REPUBLICANS ARE, OR CAN BE, IN TOUCH WITH YOUNG VOTERS. THERE IS NO SOLID REASON WHY OURS CANNOT BE THE PARTY RIDING THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE. BECAUSE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS SO COMMITTED TO GOVERNMENT ACTION -- SO TRADITION-BOUND -- IT IS THE REPUBLICAN PARTY THAT OFFERS THE EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW APPROACHES, THE DOWN-TO-EARTH APPLICATION OF NEW IDEAS. PARTISAN CONSIDERATIONS ASIDE, WE ALL HAVE A STAKE IN THE CONTINUATION OF TWO COMPETITIVE PARTIES. WE REPUBLICANS CAN DO OUR BIT. WE ONLY ASK THAT THE RULES ARE FAIR.

#####