

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

LEARNING FROM THE BOURNE AFFAIR

THE BOURNE AFFAIR STARTED AS A GROSS, BUT SIMPLE MISTAKE IN JUDGMENT. IN FACT, WHEN THE STORY FIRST BROKE IT LOOKED LIKE A QUICK LEAVE OF ABSENCE MIGHT EFFECTIVELY QUIET THE STORY. BUT OTHER FACTS SOON CAME TO LIGHT THAT EMBROILED THE WHITE HOUSE IN A STORY THAT LASTED LONGER THAN THEY HAD FEARED. THE ALLEGATION THAT BOURNE, WHILE SERVING AS THE WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR ON DRUG ABUSE, HAD HIMSELF USED MARIJUANA AND COCAINE, CAUSED QUITE A STIR--AS DID BOURNE'S OWN ALLEGATION THAT OTHER WHITE HOUSE STAFFERS ALSO USED MARIJUANA AND COCAINE. THOSE DEVELOPMENTS KEPT THE STORY ON THE FRONT PAGES AND TURNED THE ENTIRE EPISODE INTO A MAJOR EMBARRASSMENT.

INVESTIGATIONS PENDING

DRUG AUTHORITIES IN VIRGINIA ARE STILL INVESTIGATING THE CASE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY WILL PROSECUTE, AND A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON AND ELSEWHERE ARE INSISTING THAT THE PRESIDENT DO THE ONLY RESPONSIBLE THING HE CAN DO, AND THAT IS TO INVESTIGATE HIS OWN DRUG ADVISOR'S ALLEGATIONS OF DRUG ABUSE IN THE WHITE HOUSE. SO FAR THE PRESIDENT SEEMS DETERMINED NOT TO DO THIS, AND TO JUST STONEWALL THE ISSUE.

AMERICANS ARE WATCHING

BUT ALL THE WHILE AMERICANS WATCH WITH INCREASING FASCINATION AS THE PRESIDENT AND HIS MEN TRY, AFTER NINETEEN MONTHS, TO FIGURE OUT WHAT GOVERNING AMERICA INVOLVES.

THERE IS MUCH TO FASCINATE THEM. THE BOURNE EPISODE PROVIDES COMMENTATORS WITH AN EXCELLENT VEHICLE FOR RECONSIDERING ALL THE OTHER ERRORS IN JUDGMENT AT THE WHITE HOUSE. OBVIOUSLY, THIS AFFAIR HAS IMPLICATIONS FAR BROADER THAN A PHONY PRESCRIPTION OR EVEN DRUG ABUSE IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

THE PROBLEM IS WIDESPREAD

BECAUSE THE PROBLEM IS NOT JUST DR. BOURNE. THE PROBLEM DID NOT BEGIN WITH HIM, NOR WILL IT END WITH HIM. HIS RESIGNATION CAN NO MORE CLEAR THE CLOUDS OF SUSPICION AND CONCERN THAT SURROUND THE WHITE HOUSE, THAN JOHN MITCHELL'S RESIGNATION CLEARED THE CLOUDS OF SUSPICION AROUND WATERGATE. DR. BOURNE WAS A MINOR PLAYER, WHOSE ROLE IN THE WHITE HOUSE DEPENDED ON HIS CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. CARTER, AND DID NOT DIRECTLY AFFECT OUR NATION'S CRITICAL ACTIONS.

TIME AND TIME AGAIN, WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS OF HIGHER STATION THAN DR. BOURNE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE SAME LACK OF JUDGMENT OR DISCRETION WHICH BROUGHT HIM DOWN. WHETHER IT INVOLVED TREATING THE WIFE OF THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR WITH AN EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT OF DISCOURTESY, SPITTING ON PEOPLE, MAKING OUTRAGEOUS STATEMENTS ABOUT POLITICAL PRISONERS, OR OFFERING BALD ASSERTIONS OF INNOCENCE IN THE FACE OF INCRIMINATING BANK RECORDS-- TIME AND TIME AGAIN THE VERY HIGHEST MEN IN THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE EMBARRASSED THEIR PATRON, AND DISGRACED THEIR NATION.

THE WHITE HOUSE IS NOT JUST ANOTHER OFFICE. IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OFFICE IN THE COUNTRY. ITS STAFF HAS CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES, AND THE HIGHEST OF THESE IS NOT TO PROTECT AND DEFEND EACH OTHER, TO TRY TO PUT THE BEST FACE ON THE WORST EXAMPLE OF EXECUTIVE ABILITY IN THE WHITE HOUSE IN RECENT HISTORY, OR TO ASSURE EACH OTHER THAT THIS RECORD OF DISASTER IS THE FAULT OF THE PRESS, OR A HOSTILE CONGRESS, OR OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. IF IT WEREN'T FOR REPUBLICANS, CARTER WOULDN'T HAVE ONE SINGLE SUCCESS IN THE CONGRESS, BECAUSE HIS OWN PARTY DOESN'T WANT HIM. HIS HAND-PICKED PARTY CHAIRMAN HAS BEEN FORCED TO THREATEN DEMOCRATS TO STOP ATTACKING HIM.

SOUND JUDGMENT NEEDED

NOW THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TOP STAFF IN THE WHITE HOUSE IS TO THOSE WHO ARE PAYING THEIR VERY RESPECTABLE SALARIES--THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THAT RESPONSIBILITY REQUIRES FIRST AND FOREMOST THE EXERCISE OF SOUND JUDGMENT. WHERE THERE IS NO CAPACITY FOR JUDGMENT, THE LIKELIHOOD OF IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR BECOMES OVERWHELMING. AND IT IS BECAUSE AMERICANS DOUBT THE JUDGMENT OF MR. CARTER AND HIS TOP STAFF PEOPLE THAT THEY HAVE FALLEN SO LOW IN THE ESTEEM OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS NATION.

WHAT WE SEE TODAY ARE NOT ISOLATED INSTANCES OF POOR JUDGMENT ON THE PART OF INEXPERIENCED PEOPLE. WHAT WE SEE IS A PATTERN OF IRRESPONSIBILITY AND BRAZEN DEFIANCE OF MINIMUM STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE FOR NINETEEN MONTHS. SO WHAT WE SEE TODAY IS MORE THAN A MINOR STAFF PROBLEM.

THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF HAS MADE MANY FAULTY JUDGMENTS-- BUT THEIR ELEVATION TO THESE POSITIONS WAS NOT THEIR FAULT. THE PRESIDENT APPOINTED THESE PEOPLE. HE APPOINTED THEM ON THE BASIS OF QUALIFICATIONS WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH EXPERIENCE--OR WISDOM--OR DISCRETION.

QUALIFICATIONS NOT RELEVANT TO APPOINTMENTS

RATHER, FAITHFUL CAMPAIGN SERVICE (PREFERABLY EARLY ON), PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP, AND GEOGRAPHY ARE THE MAJOR QUALIFICATIONS. BOURNE IS ONLY THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE PRESIDENT DRAWS FROM SUCH A SMALL AND SHALLOW POOL OF TALENT.

OF COURSE, CRONYISM DIDN'T START WITH THIS WHITE HOUSE. BUT IN THE PAST, POLITICAL CRONIES TENDED TO HAVE EXTENSIVE POLITICAL BACKGROUNDS, LOTS OF POLITICAL SAVVY AND A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DISCRETION. THAT'S WHAT USED TO MAKE A CRONY. BUT NOT WITH THIS CROP.

THESE PEOPLE WILL SAY ANYTHING, DO ANYTHING, AND
BEHAVE JUST AS THEY PLEASE. THAT SEEMED RATHER
REFRESHING TO SOME PEOPLE AT FIRST, BUT IT HAS SINCE
BECOME A DISASTER. EVERYBODY IS OFF ON THEIR OWN
TRIP--EVERYBODY IS DOING HIS OWN THING--MANY ARE LETTING
IT ALL HANG OUT--AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T LIKE
WHAT THEY SEE.

THE NEED TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOR

PRESIDENT CARTER HAD THE RIGHT IDEA WHEN HE ISSUED HIS DIRECTIVE THAT MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF SHOULD OBEY THE DRUG LAWS. NOW HE NEEDS TO IMPRESS THEM WITH THE MESSAGE THAT THEY SHOULD BEHAVE IN EVERY OTHER RESPECT AS WHITE HOUSE STAFF MEMBERS. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE NO WAY TO WAVE A WAND AND IMPROVE THEIR JUDGMENT--BUT MAYBE THE PRESIDENT AND HIS STAFF COULD IMPROVE SOMEWHAT IF ONLY THEY REFLECTED ON THEIR ACTIONS A LITTLE MORE BEFORE TAKING THEM.

QUESTIONS MUST BE ASKED

ON A RELATED POINT, PRESIDENT CARTER, THROUGH JODY POWELL, SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REASONABLE WAY TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF DRUGS BY WHITE HOUSE STAFF. I DISAGREE. CERTAINLY, A FULL BLOWN QUASI-JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE. BUT CERTAIN QUESTIONS CAN BE ASKED, AND SOME OF THE MORE OUTRAGEOUS CASES COULD BE UNCOVERED. THIS KIND OF INVESTIGATION WOULDN'T UNCOVER EVERYTHING--BUT IT MIGHT UNCOVER ANY FLAGRANT, OPEN VIOLATIONS OF THE TYPE THAT WOULD FURTHER SAP PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S JUDGMENT.

NEED FOR A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE

ABOVE ALL, I HOPE THAT THEY WILL LEARN SOMETHING FROM ALL THIS. EVER SINCE THE MUCH PUBLICIZED "TRIP TO THE MOUNTAIN" AT CAMP DAVID IN APRIL, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LOOKING--WITH HOPE--FOR SOME SIGN THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS GETTING ITS ACT TOGETHER. AMERICANS ARE STILL LOOKING, BUT INSTEAD OF IMPROVEMENT THEY GOT PETER BOURNE. INSTEAD OF A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AND A CHANGE IN THE METHOD OF OPERATION, THEY GOT AN ADVERTISING FLACK ON THE PUBLIC PAYROLL TO MAKE MR. CARTER LOOK BETTER. THE POINT THAT THEY ARE MISSING IS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESPERATELY WANT MR. CARTER TO DO BETTER.

JUST AS THE BOURNE AFFAIR HAS FOCUSED THE ATTENTION OF
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ON WHITE HOUSE PROBLEMS ONCE AGAIN,
I HOPE THAT IT WILL FINALLY FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF
PRESIDENT CARTER ON THOSE PROBLEMS. HIS ATTENTION--
AND APPROPRIATE ACTION--IS DESPERATELY NEEDED.