

THE COMMITMENT GAP

REMARKS OF
CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
MIDWEST FEDERATION OF COLLEGE REPUBLICAN CLUBS
SHERMAN HOUSE HOTEL
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
APRIL 26, 1968

Handwritten notes:
Tweed
Lytle
Dobson
Lester
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H. R. Keith
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Wendell

CAN ANYONE DENY THAT SOMETHING IS SERIOUSLY WRONG WITH AMERICA? CAN ANYONE DISPUTE THAT THE AMERICAN DREAM IS IN DANGER OF BECOMING THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE? CAN ANYONE CHALLENGE THAT OUR NORMALLY OPTIMISTIC, CONFIDENT NATION IS RACKED AND RIDDLED WITH PESSIMISM AND UNCERTAINTY?

LOOK IN ANY DIRECTION.

OUR SOARING CRIME RATE NOW COSTS US 20 BILLION DOLLARS A YEAR. A MAJOR CRIME IS COMMITTED EVERY EIGHT SECONDS. PARKS ARE AVOIDED AT NIGHT FOR FEAR OF MUGGERS. A WOMAN IS STABBED TO DEATH IN THE STREET, AND 20 OF HER NEIGHBORS DO NOTHING BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO GET "INVOLVED".

A PROMINENT AMERICAN IS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD AND WITHIN ONE WEEK 125 CITIES ARE RIPPED BY RIOTING AND INSURRECTION. DURING A 7-DAY PERIOD EARLIER THIS MONTH, MORE THAN 40 PERSONS WERE KILLED, MORE THAN 3,500 INJURED, MORE THAN 20,000 ARRESTED, MORE THAN 2,600 FIRES SET, AND PROPERTY DAMAGE ACROSS THE NATION AMOUNTED TO AT LEAST 50 MILLION DOLLARS.

11

-SERIOUS FINANCIAL CRISIS-

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD SAYS THAT WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF THE MOST SERIOUS FINANCIAL CRISIS SINCE 1931 -- THE DEPTHS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

BUT THIS TIME WE ARE FACED WITH INFLATION, NOT RECESSION, AS A RESULT OF THE UNRESTRAINED SPENDING POLICIES OF OUR GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. FOR EXAMPLE, BETWEEN 1960 AND 1968, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SPENT NEARLY 57 BILLION DOLLARS MORE THAN IT COLLECTED IN TAXES.

FURTHERMORE, THE UNITED STATES IS CONFRONTED WITH THE PROSPECT OF BACK-TO-BACK FEDERAL DEFICITS AND OF 20 BILLION DOLLARS FOR LAST YEAR AND THIS YEAR. AND IT IS ESTIMATED THAT AT THE END OF THIS FISCAL YEAR THE NATIONAL DEBT WILL REACH AN ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE TOTAL OF 370 BILLION DOLLARS.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN TO CALL FOR A 10 PERCENT TAX INCREASE WHILE CONCEDING THAT SOME CUTS CAN BE MADE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET. HE DOES NOT -- OR, IS UNWILLING -- TO CONCEDE THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE PERMANENT, NOT TEMPORARY, REDUCTIONS IN UNNECESSARY SPENDING AND THEN SET SENSIBLE PRIORITIES AND STAND BY THEM.

-OUR PRESTIGE ABROAD-

ABROAD, POLLS SHOW THAT AMERICAN PRESTIGE HAS NEVER BEEN LOWER, NOT OUR ALLIES MORE UNWILLING TO SUPPORT US.

ONE REASON FOR THEIR RELUCTANCE OCCURRED IN JANUARY, WHEN THE U.S.S. PUEBLO WITH ITS CREW OF 83 MEN WAS SEIZED IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS BY NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS. TODAY THE SHIP AND CREW ARE STILL IN COMMUNIST HANDS.

IN VIETNAM, WE ARE ENMESHED IN A GIGANTIC LAND WAR
CURRENTLY INVOLVING 500,000 AMERICAN TROOPS.

THE PRESIDENT HAS STATED FLATLY THAT HE OR REPRESENTATIVES
OF OUR GOVERNMENT WILL GO ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME TO TALK ABOUT
ENDING THE WAR. AT PRESENT, WASHINGTON AND HANOI ARE DEBATING
THE RESPECTIVE MERITS OF ~~WARSAW AND GENEVA~~ AS A MEETING PLACE
WHILE THE WAR CONTINUES.

-ANYTHING GOES???-

"ANYTHING GOES" SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME A NATIONAL MOTTO.

PORNOGRAPHY FILLS BOOKS, FILMS AND PLAYS. STUDENT POWER
THROBS ON CAMPUSES LIKE SAN FRANCISCO STATE WHERE STUDENTS
BEAT UP THE CAMPUS NEWSPAPER EDITOR BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T LIKE
A STORY ABOUT THE HOMECOMING QUEEN. DRUGS LIKE MARIJUANA AND
LSD ARE "IN". THE PILL IS SMART. A FAITH IN GOD AND IN ONE'S
SELF HAVE BECOME OLD-FASHIONED AND SQUARE.

EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING IS SUSPECT. A RECENT GALLUP POLL
REPORTED THAT SIX OUT OF TEN PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT UNETHICAL
CONDUCT BY CONGRESSMEN IS "FAIRLY COMMON".

IF I MAY BE PERMITTED A PARTISAN REMARK, THE SENATOR AND
THE CONGRESSMAN WHO UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTED THE MOST TO THIS
PUBLIC OPINION WERE BOTH DEMOCRATS -- SENATOR THOMAS DODD OF
CONNECTICUT AND CONGRESSMAN ADAM CLAYTON POWELL OF HARLEM.

I TAKE NO PLEASURE IN RECITING THE PRECEDING. BUT
I BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO FACE THE REALITY OF AMERICA 1968,
AND THEN RESOLVE TO RECLAIM THE AMERICAN DREAM.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WE CAN. WE HAVE ALWAYS RESPONDED
TO A CRISIS, TO A CHALLENGE. WE ARE A NATION OF PROBLEM
SOLVERS. "PROGRESS IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT PRODUCT" IS NOT
JUST AN ADVERTISING SLOGAN BUT THE WAY OF OUR LIFE. WE
ARE A CAN-DO NATION -- AND YOU HERE IN THIS AUDIENCE ARE
LIVING PROOF THAT YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING TOGETHER CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. AND IF ENOUGH MEN AND
WOMEN WORK TOGETHER IN A THOUSAND DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES,
THEY CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR NATION.

-THE CREDIBILITY GAP-

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AMERICA?

WELL, WE ALL HAVE HEARD A GREAT DEAL OF LATE ABOUT
THE CREDIBILITY GAP IN WASHINGTON -- OF THE PEOPLE'S LACK
OF FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT. I HAPPEN TO THINK THAT THE
PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS DONE MORE THAN A LITTLE TO CREATE
SUCH A GAP.

RARELY IF EVER BEFORE, HAS A NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
SO MUZZLED THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, MANIPULATED NEWS AND INFOR-
MATION AND ATTEMPTED TO MESMERIZE THE PRESS AND THE PEOPLE.

BUT I CANNOT LAY THE ENTIRE BLAME FOR THE CRISIS IN
WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES ON THE ADMINISTRATION. NO

-THE COMMITMENT GAP-

NO, I THINK THAT AMERICA IS BEWITCHED, BOTHERED AND BEWILDERED TODAY BECAUSE OF A COMMITMENT GAP -- WHICH EXISTS IN EVERY STATE AND EVERY COMMUNITY IN THIS UNION.

TOO MANY OF US ARE CONTENT TO LET THE OTHER FELLOW DO IT. WE WASH OUR HANDS OF ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE GHETTOS OR ELSEWHERE.

WE CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH LENDING A HAND TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS. WE USE THE RATIONALE THAT "WE'RE TOO BUSY", BUT ACTUALLY WE'RE TOO SELFISH TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANYONE BUT OURSELVES.

THE ULTIMATE ABSURDITY OF THIS POSITION WAS PINPOINTED BY GEORGE CHAMPION, CHAIRMAN OF THE CHASE MANHATTAN BANK, WHO SAID OF SOME BUSINESSMEN:

" 'LEAVE IT TO GOVERNMENT,' THEY SAY IN ONE BREATH. AND IN THE NEXT, 'GOVERNMENT IS GETTING ITS HAND INTO EVERYTHING.' "

OF COURSE IF YOU AND I DO NOTHING, GOVERNMENT WILL ATTEMPT TO GET ITS HAND INTO EVERYTHING. BUT YOU AND I KNOW THAT GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER HARD IT MAY TRY -- AND LET'S FACE IT, GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TRYING PRETTY HARD SINCE 1933 -- GOVERNMENT CANNOT DO EVERYTHING.

THE WAR ON POVERTY HAS PROVEN THAT BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT. BILLIONS OF DOLLARS HAVE BEEN EXPENDED, MUCH OF IT IN AREAS LIKE DETROIT, WASHINGTON AND NEWARK, AND STILL THERE ARE RIOTS AND LOOTING AND DEMANDS FOR MORE FEDERAL AID.

AMONG ALL THE COMMENTS IN THE WAKE OF THE RIOTING,
I WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY THOSE OF GOVERNOR
SPIRO AGNEW, OF MARYLAND, A REPUBLICAN AND ARCHIE MOORE,
FORMER LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.

IN A MEETING WITH 100 NEGRO LEADERS OF BALTIMORE,
GOVERNOR AGNEW PULLED NO PUNCHES AS HE CRITICIZED THOSE
PRESENT FOR NOT CONDEMNING BLACK RACISM AS HE HAD CONDEMNED
WHITE RACISM. "THEY WILL SURELY DESTROY US," HE DECLARED,
"IF WE DO NOT REPUDIATE THEM AND THEIR PHILOSOPHIES."

HE OFFERED THE NEGRO LEADERS A SOLEMN COMPACT: "LET
US PROMPTLY AND PUBLICLY RENOUNCE ANY WHO COUNSEL OR CONDONE
VIOLENCE. LET US ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE A REAL STAKE IN
OUR SOCIETY. LET US PROUDLY ACCLAIM OUR PATRIOTISM AND OUR
RECOGNITION THAT NO NATION OFFERS SUCH OPPORTUNITY."

ARCHIE MOORE, A PRODUCT OF A NEGRO GHETTO IN ST. LOUIS,
WAS NO LESS ELOQUENT WHEN HE SAID:

"THE WORLD OWES NOBODY -- BLACK OR WHITE--A LIVING.
WE MADE IT BECAUSE WE HAD A GOAL, AND WE WERE WILLING
TO WORK FOR IT. DON'T TALK TO ME OF YOUR 'GUARANTEED
NATIONAL INCOME.' ANY FOOL KNOWS THAT THIS IS INSANITY.
DO WE BRING THOSE WHO WORKED TO GET AHEAD DOWN TO THE
LEVEL OF THOSE WHO NEVER GAVE A DAMN?

"...GRANTED THE NEGRO STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO TO
GAIN A FAIR SHAKE WITH THE WHITE MAN IN THIS COUNTRY.
BUT BELIEVE THIS: IF WE RESORT TO LAWLESSNESS, THE
ONLY THING WE CAN EVER HOPE FOR IS CIVIL WAR, UNTOLD
BLOODSHED, AND THE END OF OUR DREAMS."

EACH MAN, BLACK AND WHITE, MADE THE SAME POINT:
WITH LAW AND ORDER, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE; WITHOUT IT,
NOTHING IS POSSIBLE.

-WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES-

IN MY OPINION, IF 5 OR 10 BILLION DOLLARS HAS NOT
MADE ANY APPRECIABLE DENT IN THE POVERTY OF THIS COUNTRY,
THE ULTIMATE ANSWER IS NOT THE EXPENDITURE OF 20 OR 50
BILLION DOLLARS BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO POVERTY AND TO ALL THAT IS
WRONG WITH AMERICA TODAY LIES WITHIN YOU AND ME.

WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES. WE MUST NOT LET THE OTHER
FELLOW DO IT -- WE MUST DO IT OURSELVES. WE MUST REACH
OUT AND HELP THOSE AMERICANS WHO NEED HELP -- NOT JUST TO
PREVENT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM INTRUDING FURTHER INTO
OUR LIVES -- BUT BECAUSE SUCH HELP, SUCH CHARITY, IS RIGHT!

-MANY AMERICANS ARE COMMITTED-

HAPPILY AND HOPEFULLY, MANY AMERICANS ARE DOING JUST
THAT.

** ON LONG ISLAND, N.Y., BUILDING TRADES
UNION MEN HAVE WORKED AN ESTIMATED HALF
MILLION MAN-HOURS FOR OVER 18 YEARS ON
EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS WITHOUT PAY --
CONSTRUCTING TREATMENT CENTERS FOR THE
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED, SUMMER CAMPS FOR
THE UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN AND SIMILAR
FACILITIES.

** SINCE 1963, MORE THAN 200 RETIRED AND SEMI-RETIRED CITIZENS OF A SUBURB HERE IN CHICAGO HAVE BEEN DONATING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ONCE OR MORE A WEEK TO EXPAND CHILDREN'S HORIZONS AND INCREASE THEIR LEARNING INCENTIVE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS HERE.

** IN INDIANAPOLIS, IND., A FORMER PEACE CORPS MEMBER, NOW ON THE STAFF OF THE FOUNDATION FOR VOLUNTARY WELFARE, ORGANIZED INDIANAPOLIS HOUSEWIVES, TEACHERS, BUSINESSMEN AND OTHERS INTO A PRIVATE, LOCAL "CITIZENS CORPS". HE ASSIGNS EACH VOLUNTEER TO HELP ONE HARD-CORE UNEMPLOYED PERSON FIND A JOB OR LOCATE THE TRAINING PROGRAM HE NEEDS TO BECOME EMPLOYABLE.

-NEED COMMITMENT BY ALL-

WHAT I AM SUGGESTING AND WHAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE AND OTHER AMERICANS PROVES IS POSSIBLE IS A CRUSADE BY 200 MILLION AMERICANS -- ALL AMERICANS, NOT SOME OR HALF OR TWO-THIRDS OR NINE-TENTHS -- BUT A CRUSADE BY ALL AMERICANS TO RECLAIM THE AMERICAN DREAM OF FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL.

IT IS POSSIBLE.

BUT SUCH A CRUSADE CALLS NOT FOR COMPLACENCY BUT FOR COMMITMENT -- NOT FOR DERISION BUT DEDICATION -- NOT FOR INDIFFERENCE BUT FOR INVOLVEMENT.

-LEADERSHIP TO GUIDE & INSPIRE-

SUCH A CRUSADE NEEDS ONE MORE THING: LEADERSHIP. IT NEEDS IMAGINATIVE, NEW LEADERSHIP -- ESPECIALLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL -- THAT CAN INSPIRE AND EXCITE OTHERS.

IT NEEDS LEADERS WHO UNDERSTAND AND BELIEVE IN PEOPLE
--WHO VIEW THEIR FELLOW AMERICANS AS INDIVIDUALS, NOT AS MEMBERS
OF VOTING BLOCS TO BE MOVED ABOUT LIKE SO MANY PAWNS IN A
POLITICAL CHESS GAME.

SUCH A CRUSADE NEEDS LEADERS WITH FAITH AND VISION. UN-
COMMON MEN. NOT SCHEMERS, NOT MEN LUSTING FOR POWER AND GLORY,
OBSESSED BY PERSONAL AMBITION, WHO CALCULATE VOTES BY COMPUTERS,
POLLS AND DOLLAR BILLS.

SUCH LEADERS DO EXIST, AND I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT MANY
OF THEM ARE REPUBLICANS. THEY WILL BE PROVIDING THE LEADERSHIP
THIS YEAR AS NEVER BEFORE. AND THEY WILL BE LOOKING TO YOU
AS NEVER BEFORE. THE FUTURE OF OUR PARTY, AND OUR NATION,
RESTS ON THEM, ON YOU, ON ALL OF US.

-ELECTIONS 1968-

EVERY ELECTION IS IMPORTANT. EVERY CAMPAIGN IS SIGNIFICANT.
AND EVERY CANDIDATE NEEDS THE ENERGY AND THE DEDICATION AND
THE IDEALISM OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU YOUNG REPUBLICANS TO
HELP HIM WIN.

BUT THIS YEAR'S ELECTION IS MORE IMPORTANT, MORE SIGNIFICANT.

AMERICA IS BEING CHALLENGED AT HOME AND ABROAD AS NEVER
BEFORE. THE VERY FOUNDATION OF OUR SOCIETY IS BEING TESTED.
WE ARE ARE A CROSSROADS.

THIS NOVEMBER, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL CHOOSE THEIR
CONGRESSMAN, THEIR SENATOR, THEIR GOVERNOR, THEIR PRESIDENT.

I HAVE FAITH IN THE PEOPLE. I BELIEVE THEY WILL MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE -- IF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY CARRIES ITS MESSAGE TO THEM.

YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. YOUR WORK IN THE PRECINCTS, IN THE POLLING BOOTHS, IN THE SHOPPING CENTERS, IN THE AUDITORIUMS, AT THE AIRPORTS, ON THE CAMPUSES, EVERYWHERE YOU GATHER TO HELP A CANDIDATE AT WHATEVER LEVEL, YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

AND JUDGING BY WHAT I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD HERE TONIGHT, YOU WILL.

end