

"THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICA"
REMARKS OF

CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE

HI-12

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1968

TOPEKA, KANSAS

AS WE ARE GATHERED HERE, THE FINAL DAYS AND HOURS BEFORE THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1968 ARE TICKING AWAY. AMIDST RUMORS OF PEACE AND THE HARSH REALITY OF WAR; AMIDST TREMENDOUS PLENTY AND EVEN GREATER PERIL AND MISGIVINGS, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE PREPARING TO CHOOSE THE LEADERSHIP WHICH WILL LEAD THEM THROUGH WHAT THE BIBLE CALLS "THE VALLEY OF DECISION".

AT NO TIME IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY, EVEN IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE BLOODY CIVIL WAR, HAS SO MUCH BEEN AT STAKE AT ONE TIME.

-MOMENT TO DECIDE-

SO, TO BE AN AMERICAN, ANY AMERICAN TODAY, IS TO FACE A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE. THE OBSTACLES ARE GREAT. BUT WITH THE IDEALS AND PRACTICAL KNOW-HOW WHICH THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE HAS ARMED US WE CAN OVERCOME THEM.

IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, IT WILL DEPEND ON US, EACH OF US, INDIVIDUALLY.

YOUNG AND OLD, BLACK AND WHITE, RICH AND POOR -- OUR SUM TOTAL OF GOOD AND BAD, STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IS AMERICA.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, A GREAT AMERICAN OF ANOTHER TROUBLED ERA, WROTE THAT: "ONCE TO EVERY MAN AND NATION COMES THE MOMENT TO DECIDE."

THIS YEAR, AS WE LOOK ABOUT US AND SEE THE WORLD FALLEN INTO CHAOS AND OUR OWN NATION TORN APART BY THE FORCES OF IGNORANCE, HATRED AND ANARCHY, THE CONCLUSION IS INESCAPABLE: THIS IS OUR MOMENT TO DECIDE.

-WHAT IS THE DECISION?-

THE DECISION, PUT QUITE SIMPLY, IS THIS:

ARE WE GOING TO LET THE WORST THAT IS IN EACH OF US
COME TO THE FORE AND DESTROY THIS NATION? ARE WE GOING TO
LET THE BLACK RACISTS AND THE WHITE RACISTS AND THE
LAWBREAKERS AND THE SOCIAL DROPOUTS POLLUTE THE GREAT
MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN LIFE? OR ARE WE GOING TO COMMIT
OUTSELVES TO RENEWING AMERICA'S IDEALS AND AMERICA'S GREATNESS?

TO THOSE WHO SAY "IT'S TOO LATE", I NEED ONLY POINT
TO THE DEDICATION AND SACRIFICES OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS
WHO ARE ALREADY PROVING THAT IT IS NOT.

-HOW DO THEY DO IT?-

THEY DO IT IN MANY WAYS. SOME OF THEM ARE FAR FROM THE
COMFORTS AND CONSOLATION OF THEIR HOMES, RISKING THEIR LIVES
IN THE JUNGLE HELL OF VIETNAM -- UNSUNG HEROES PUSHED OFF THE
FRONT PAGE BY A HANDFUL OF UNWASHED PROTESTORS.

OTHERS ARE YOUNG AMERICANS SERVING AS VOLUNTEERS AROUND THE WORLD -- SOME THROUGH THE MISSION WORK OF THEIR CHURCHES, SOME IN THE PEACE CORPS, OTHERS THROUGH PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS.

BUT WE DON'T EVEN NEED TO LEAVE AMERICA'S SHORES, WE DON'T EVEN NEED TO LEAVE TOPEKA, TO SEE THE AMERICAN IDEAL AT WORK.

-HERE: THE MAINSTREAM-

I AM LOOKING AT IT RIGHT NOW -- AT THIS GATHERING OF HARD-WORKING, CONCERNED CITIZENS -- MEN WHO PROVIDE THIS COMMUNITY WITH LEADERSHIP, A HEALTHY ECONOMIC BASE AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL WHO ARE WILLING TO MAKE THE EFFORT TO PARTAKE OF AMERICA'S BOUNTY.

OF COURSE, WE DON'T SEE TOO MUCH OF THIS SIDE OF AMERICA ON TELEVISION, AND WE DON'T READ MUCH ABOUT IT IN TIME, LOOK AND LIFE, BUT, THANK GOD, IT IS STILL HERE, AND IT IS STILL THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICA.

-BIRTH OF A NATION-

WE CAN TRACE IT BACK TO THE VERY BEGINNINGS OF OUR NATION. LIKE A SMALL MOUNTAIN STREAM FLOWING INTO A MIGHTY RIVER, IT GAINS MOMENTUM AS THE YEARS PASS. AT TIMES THE FLOW IS TRANQUIL AND UNDISTURBED; AT OTHER TIMES, THE WATERS FOAM AND RAGE, BUT ALWAYS, THE CURRENT IS THE SAME.

IT WAS, AFTER ALL, A GATHERING VERY MUCH LIKE THIS ONE THAT MET IN PHILADELPHIA NEARLY TWO CENTURIES AGO -- BUSINESSMEN, DOCTORS, LAWYERS AND FARMERS -- A CROSS-SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY.

AND LOOK AT THE LIST OF LEADERS WHO FOLLOWED WASHINGTON FROM THE DARK DESPAIR OF VALLEY FORGE TO THE CROWNING VICTORY OF YORKTOWN:

NATHANAEL GREENE, A QUAKER BLACKSMITH; HENRY KNOX,
A BOSTON BOOKSELLER; ALEXANDER HAMILTON, A BRILLIANT, SELF-
EDUCATED MEN, RAISED BY THE STRENGTH OF HIS OWN WILL TO
SUCCEED; DAN MORGAN, A KENTUCKY TEAMSTER WHO TAUGHT HIMSELF
TO READ AND KEEP ACCOUNTS AND ^{WHO} BECAME A FIRST-RATE OFFICER
AND LATER, CONGRESSMAN.

THERE WERE MEN OF EVERY CONCEIVABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
BACKGROUND -- MEN OF DIFFERENT CLASSES, RELIGIONS AND PER-
SONALITIES.

WHAT WAS IT THAT HELPED THEM OVERCOME THEIR DIFFERENCES?
WHAT WAS IT THAT BOUND THEM TOGETHER AND PLACED THEM IN THE
FOREFRONT OF THE GREATEST ADVENTURE IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND
-- THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE?

- COMMON GOAL: FREEDOM-

A COMMON GOAL, A COMMON IDEAL.

THE IDEAL: THE RIGHT OF EVERY MAN TO BE FREE AND
MAKE THE MOST OF HIS GOD-GIVEN SKILLS.

THE GOAL: A SOCIETY IN WHICH THIS BASIC IDEAL COULD
BE REALIZED TO THE UTMOST.

NOW I DON'T SUPPOSE THAT OLD DAN MORGAN, THE FORMER
MULE SKINNER, WOULD HAVE PUT IT QUITE THAT WAY, AND I
DON'T SUPPOSE A VIRGINIA PLANTER LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON
WOULD ~~BECOME~~ ^{EITHER.} BUT BOTH OF THEM SENSED THIS IDEAL,
SERVED IT AND LIVED IT.

THEY WERE THE SOURCE OF THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM. A
SMALL SOURCE IN TERMS OF SIZE, NUMBER AND WEALTH, BUT A NOBLE
ONE.

-OTHER TIMES, MEN-

AND AS AMERICA'S MAINSTREAM COURSED ALONG, OTHERS CAME TO TAKE THEIR PLACES. MEN OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM, AND JUST AS IMPORTANT, MEN OF COURAGE AND ACTION. PROPER NEW ENGLANDERS LIKE DANIEL WEBSTER, SOUTHERN CAVALIERS LIKE ROBERT E. LEE AND STURDY STATESMEN OF THE FRONTIER LIKE ABE LINCOLN.

AND FOLLOWING EACH OF THESE MEN AND OTHERS CAME MILLIONS MORE OF AMERICANS -- PLOWBOYS, MACHINISTS, FARMERS AND BUSINESSMEN.

IN WAR, THEY WERE THE BACKBONE OF OUR ARMED STRENGTH. IN PEACE, THEIR HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION TO BUILD A BETTER MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE WAS THE SOURCE OF AMERICAN GREATNESS.

WAVE AFTER WAVE OF THESE UNCOMMON COMMON MEN HAVE KEPT THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM FLOWING FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION -- SOME FORGOTTEN, BUT ALL WHO MADE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS, VERY VITAL, VERY ALIVE.

-THE MAINSTREAM TODAY-

TODAY WHAT BEGAN AS A TINY MOUNTAIN BROOK HAS BECOME A MIGHTY RIVER. IT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS TREACHEROUS POINTS. THERE ARE ROCKS, AND THERE ARE RAPIDS, AND, AS WITH ALL MODERN WATERWAYS, THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF POLLUTION.

BUT AS LONG AS EACH OF US LIVES UP TO THE IDEALS WHICH CREATED THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM, WE CAN KEEP IT FLOWING, PURE AND UNTRoubLED.

-HOW???

HOW? RIGHT NOW, THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE IS THE ELECTION OF SOUND, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP -- LEADERSHIP THAT SHARES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN IDEAL.

BUT IT CANNOT STOP THERE; THERE IS A PERSONAL COMMITMENT WHICH EACH OF US MUST MAKE.

-REFLECTING THE ELECTORATE-

FOR THE MOST IMMUTABLE OF POLITICAL LAWS IS THIS: ELECTED OFFICIALS REFLECT THEIR ELECTORATE.

IF YOU ARE APATHETIC, IF YOU "DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED", NEITHER WILL THE MEN YOU ELECT TO PUBLIC OFFICE. IF THE ELECTORAL CAT-SLEEPS, THE ELECTED MICE WILL PLAY. IF YOU SHRUG AND SAY "LET UNCLE SAM TAKE CARE OF IT", SO WILL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES.

TODAY, THROUGHOUT AMERICA, WE ARE SEEING GRIM EVIDENCE OF THIS.

- ANYTHING GOES??-

YEARS OF GOVERNMENT BY HANDOUT AND THE SPIRIT OF "ANYTHING GOES" PERMISSIVENESS HAVE OPENED THE PANDORA'S BOX OF ANARCHY.

WHILE POLITICIANS AND THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAVE STOOD BY, THE BINDING MORTAR WHICH HOLDS THIS NATION TOGETHER HAS BEGUN TO CRUMBLE.

LAW IS FALLING INTO DISRESPECT. ORDER IS BEING SWEEPED UNDER BY A CROSS-CURRENT OF ANARCHY.

-LAW AND ORDER-

NOW I REALIZE THAT TO SOME, "LAW AND ORDER" IS A DIRTY PHRASE. IN FACT, TO THOSE PERSONS, LAW AND ORDER ARE "CODE WORDS" FOR RACISM AND REPRESSION.

WELL, YOU AND I KNOW DIFFERENTLY.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LAW AND ORDER IS, IN FACT, THE EXACT OPPOSITE. IT IS THE VERY ELEMENT IN A SOCIETY WHICH PROTECTS CITIZENS FROM RACISM AND REPRESSION. AND IT IS LAW AND ORDER WHICH MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR CITIZENS TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE ELECTED LEADERS, AND EVEN MORE BASIC, THE RIGHT TO WALK THE STREETS, CONDUCT THEIR BUSINESS AND RAISE THEIR FAMILIES IN SAFETY.

TODAY, THE SHRIEKS AND CURSES OF THE RADICALS -- ON BOTH ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM -- TRY TO DROWN OUT THE REASONED CALL FOR LAW AND ORDER.

THESE EXTREMISTS CLAIM THEY WANT TO REMAKE AMERICA. IN FACT, THEY ARE SEEKING TO DESTROY HER. AND IT IS TIME FOR ALL OF US TO WAKE UP TO THIS FACT AND TAKE POSITIVE ACTION.

-SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY-

THIS ELECTION YEAR, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO. † IF WE SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY, WE CAN TURN THE TABLES ON THE FORCES OF DESTRUCTION. IF WE DO NOT, IF WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE LULLED TO SLEEP BY THE FALSE PROMISES AND BUM EXCUSES OF OPPORTUNISTIC, LIBERAL POLITICIANS, OR IF WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE TEMPTED INTO THROWING OUR VOTES AWAY IN AN EMPTY GESTURE OF PROTEST, THEN WE WILL HAVE UNDERMINED THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY AND THAT OF OUR CHILDREN.)

WE WILL HAVE CONSIGNED THEM TO A NIGHTMARE TOMORROW
OF RAMPANT CRIME, OPPRESSIVE "BIG GOVERNMENT" AND STIFLED
FREEDOM AND INITIATIVE -- A DARK FUTURE FROM WHICH THERE WILL
BE NO TURNING BACK.

THAT IS WHY LAW AND ORDER, IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS
ELECTION, IS SO IMPORTANT, AND THAT IS WHY I REFUSE TO LET BE
THE SHALLOW CRITICISM AND CARPING OF A HANDFUL OF DISSIDENTS
INTIMIDATE ME ON THIS ISSUE.

-LAW AND ORDER 1968-

LAW AND ORDER -- THE DRIVING CURRENT OF THE AMERICAN
MAINSTREAM -- MUST AND WILL BE THE MOTTO OF THE NEXT ADMINI-
STRATION AND THE NEXT CONGRESS.

AND, MORE THAN A MOTTO, IT MUST BE A COMMITMENT
WHICH EACH OF US TAKES TO HEART.

IT CAN BE DONE. IT MUST BE DONE.

AND WHEN IT IS, WE CAN SAY OF THE AMERICAN MAINSTREAM
WHAT LINCOLN SAID OF THE MISSISSIPPI AS THE DIN OF BATTLE
FADED AND ANOTHER GRAVE NATIONAL ORDEAL ENDED:

"THE FATHER OF WATERS AGAIN GOES UNVEXED TO THE SEA".

THIS IS THE GREAT CHALLENGE OF 1968, A CHALLENGE WE
MUST FACE AND MASTER NOW -- A CHALLENGE WHICH I AM PLEDGED
TO COVERCOME.