

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

LECTURE SERIES
NORTHEAST MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1972

IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE WITH YOU NORTHEAST MISSOURI STATE STUDENTS WHO REPRESENT, I UNDERSTAND, A TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION OF OUR VERY ATYPICAL AMERICAN YOUNG POPULATION. EARLIER IN THIS CAMPAIGN I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, TO SPEAK WITH STUDENT AUDIENCES. I REMEMBER QUITE DISTINCTLY SEVERAL OF THE CAMPUS VISITS I MADE DURING THE SUMMER AND PRIOR TO THE NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTIONS OF BOTH PARTIES.

AT THAT TIME, IT WAS THE COMMON WISDOM -- CONFIDENTLY ASSERTED BY MANY OBSERVERS OF THE NATIONAL SCENE -- THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WERE OPPOSED TO THE PRESIDENT. STUDENTS ESPECIALLY, IT WAS SAID. WOULD NEVER SUPPORT PRESIDENT NIXON FOR RE-ELECTION.

ALSO A PART OF THE COMMON WISDOM THEN, WAS THE NOTION THAT GEORGE MC GOVERN COULD NEVER WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, BUT THAT IF HE EVER DID, HE WOULD SURELY HAVE THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO WOULD FLOCK TO HIM AS TO SOME LATTER DAY PIED PIPER.

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COMMON SENSE SUPERSEDES 'COMMON WISDOM' OF POLS

THE COMMON WISDOM OF LAST SUMMER, HOWEVER, IGNORED ONE DOMINANT CHARACTERISTIC OF YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY, NAMELY THEIR TENDENCY TO CHALLENGE THE COMMON WISDOM AND TO PROVE IT WRONG, AS OFTEN AS NOT.

AND THAT -- IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST TWO MONTHS OR SO -- **IS** PRECISELY WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

WHEN RICHARD NIXON SIGNED THE 26th AMENDMENT, HE ALSO GUARANTEED HIS OWN DEFEAT. OR SO SAID THE COMMON WISDOM.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY ALONE WOULD PROVIDE THE MARGIN OF VICTORY FOR HIS OPPONENT, **OR** SO SAID THE COMMON WISDOM.

THAT WAS THE COMMON WISDOM LAST SUMMER, BUT NOW THE POLLS SHOW QUITE THE OPPOSITE.

AND THE COMMON WISDOM OF GEORGE MC GOVERN HAS BEEN SUPERSEDED BY THE COMMON SENSE OF AMERICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE.

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MC GOVERN IGNORES SELF-CONTRADICTIONS

IN 19th CENTURY AMERICA, THERE WAS A POPULAR SAYING THAT WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS: "IT ISN'T IGNORANCE THAT HURTS SO MUCH AS KNOWING ALL THOSE THINGS THAT AIN'T SO."

THUS, IT IS WITH GEORGE MC GOVERN. HE IS STRANGELY CERTAIN OF THE CORRECTNESS OF ALL HIS POSITIONS -- EVEN THOSE HE HAS CHANGED SEVERAL TIMES -- AND HE ASSERTS IT WITH A MORAL CERTITUDE THAT IGNORES THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH HE HAS CONTRADICTED HIMSELF.

ON THE NOW FAMOUS EAGLETON AFFAIR, FOR EXAMPLE, TIME MAGAZINE QUOTES SENATOR MC GOVERN AS SAYING: "I HANDLED THE MATTER OF SENATOR EAGLETON'S CANDIDACY WITH COMPASSION AND WITH GENUINE CONCERN..." SENATOR MC GOVERN SEEMS QUITE SURE OF HIMSELF ON THAT, BUT MOST AMERICANS DON'T AGREE.

AND THEN THERE WAS THE SALINGER INCIDENT, WHEN SENATOR MC GOVERN DENIED AT NOON, ANY KNOWLEDGE OF MR. SALINGER'S TRIP TO PARIS AND THEN -- ONLY THREE OR FOUR HOURS LATER -- ISSUED A QUITE DIFFERENT STATEMENT, CLAIMING THAT HE HAD SENT SALINGER WITH INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT TO DISCUSS WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATORS.

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WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION, MC GOVERN AGAIN SUMMONED ALL THE MORAL CERTITUDE HE COULD MUSTER, TO ASSERT THAT THERE "WAS NOT CONTRADICTION" IN THE TWO STATEMENTS.

FOR SENATOR MC GOVERN, IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT. NO PROOF IS NEEDED. ALL THAT IS REQUIRED IS A SIMPLE ASSERTION ABOUT HIS OWN UNASSAILABLE PROBITY. HE IS RIGHT BY DEFINITION. HE IS GEORGE MC GOVERN.

THOSE WHO DISAGREE SIMPLY WRONG

AND THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH HIM ARE WRONG -- AND WORSE -- BY DEFINITION, SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY DISAGREE WITH HIM.

HE HAS SAID THAT ANY YOUNG PERSON OR WORKER WHO IS GOING TO VOTE FOR THE PRESIDENT "OUGHT TO HAVE HIS HEAD EXAMINED", AND AGAIN HE HAS SAID THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT ARE "TOO CO
CONFUSED TO KNOW WHICH END IS UP."

SUCH LANGUAGE HAS, IN MY VIEW, VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH THE NEW POLITICAL "POWER OF LIFE AND FAITH TO MOVE MOUNTAINS" WHICH SENATOR MC GOVERN PROCLAIMED SO PROUDLY AT HIS CONVENTION IN JULY.

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BUT THEN, HIS CAMPAIGN WAS ON THE UPBEAT. THINGS WERE GOING WELL. IT WAS EASY TO BE INSPIRATIONAL.

BUT NOW THERE ARE ONLY THREE WEEKS LEFT IN THE CAMPAIGN. PRECISELY THREE WEEKS FROM THIS EVENING, WE WILL BE COUNTING THE VOTES OF ELECTION DAY 1972. AND I BELIEVE WE WILL BE COUNTING THE VOTES OF A NEW MAJORITY IN THIS COUNTRY. AN OVERWHELMING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESIDENT AND, AS OVERWHELMING A VOTE OF REJECTION OF THE PROGRAMS AND PROPOSALS OF GEORGE MC GOVERN.

IT WILL HAVE BEEN THE PROGRESS THIS PRESIDENT HAS MADE IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS THAT WILL BE CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT VOTE. THE PROGRESS HE HAS MADE TOWARD LASTING WORLD PEACE, FOR EXAMPLE, BY HIS HISTORIC VISITS TO MOSCOW AND TO PEKING AND BY HIS SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS OF THE FIRST STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THIS APPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR AGE.

SINCE WORLD WAR II, THROUGHOUT A PERIOD THAT HAS SPANNED THE LIVES OF MOST OF YOU HERE TONIGHT, THE WORLD HAS BEEN ON THE ANXIOUS EDGE OF NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE. RICHARD NIXON HAS PULLED US AWAY FROM THAT EDGE, PERHAPS JUST A LITTLE, BUT HE HAS MADE A BEGINNING.

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HE HAS PULLED US AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF CONTRONTATION WITH THE COMMUNIST CHINESE -- A CONFRONTATION THAT MANY THOUGHT WOULD BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME, UNLESS WE COULD BEGIN, AT LEAST, TO TALK. AND THAT BEGINNING HAS BEEN MADE.

RICHARD NIXON HAS MOVED US AWAY FROM SO MANY POLICIES OF OUR PAST THAT MADE WAR SEEM ALMOST INEVITABLE AND HAS STARTED US IN A DIRECTION -- GRADUAL PERHAPS, BUT ALSO FIRMLY ESTABLISHED -- TOWARD PEACE THAT CAN LAST, AND TOWARD INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION WITHOUT ARMED CONFRONTATION.

RICHARD NIXON HAS ACHIEVED THE PROGRESS AND MADE THE BEGINNINGS I SPEAK OF, NOT BECAUSE HE WAS ALWAYS CERTAIN OF HIS COURSE -- HE KNOWS THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY IN THIS DYNAMIC AND COMPLEX WORLD OF HUMAN AFFAIRS.

RATHER, HE MADE PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE BECAUSE HE WAS WILLING TO TAKE RISKS FOR PEACE.

PRUDENT AND CAREFULLY CONSIDERED, THEY WERE NONETHELESS, RISKS.

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GEORGE MC GOVERN DOESN'T SEE, IN HIS OWN PROPOSALS, ANY ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY. NO ELEMENT OF RISK.

INDEED, IF ONLY HE DID, THEY WOULD BE FAR MORE BELIEVABLE.

BUT NO, HE DOESN'T DEFEND HIS FOREIGN POLICY PROPOSALS AS REPRESENTING RISKS WORTH TAKING. HE SAYS THEY ARE SURE THINGS. PEACE WILL COME, HE SAYS, IF ONLY WE WILL FOLLOW HIM. PEACE WILL COME, HE SAYS, IF ONLY WE REGARD OUR ADVERSARIES AS OUR FRIENDS, HE SAYS, THOUGH THERE ARE NO PRECEDENTS FOR IT.

FIRST, HE SAYS, WE SHOULD CUT OUR BUDGET FOR DEFENSE. BY AT LEAST A THIRD. THERE ARE THOSE WHO AGREE WITH HIM, BUT MOST WHO, DO, I BELIEVE, AGREE FOR DIFFERENT REASONS THAN HE HIMSELF PUTS FORTH.

IF HE SAID WE SHOULD CUT OUR DEFENSES IN A POLICY OF DELIBERATE DIMINISHMENT OF OUR STRENGTH, IN THE HOPE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD FOLLOW OUR EXAMPLE IN THEIR EAGERNESS TO BE DONE WITH THE ARMS RACE, THEN AT LEAST HIS CLAIMS WOULD BE CREDIBLE. BUT MCGOVERN ASSERTS, QUITE THE CONTRARY, THAT WE CAN CUT OUR DEFENSE SPENDING BY THIRTY-TWO BILLION DOLLARS AND STILL "KEEP AMERICAN MILITARY DEFENSE STRENGTH SECOND TO NONE." HE WANTS THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS, STRONG DEFENSES AND LESS MILITARY SPENDING. HE WANTS TO MAINTAIN THE STRENGTH WE NOW HAVE, BUT HE SAYS HE CAN GET IT FOR US WHOLESALE. HE WANTS IT BOTH WAYS.

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I DIDN'T SEND SALINGER. I DID SEND SALINGER.

HE WOULD HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

THIS IS THE DISTURBING ELEMENT IN THE MC GOVERN CANDIDACY. FACED WITH CONTRADICTIONS IN HIS OWN CLAIMS, HE ASSERTS THAT BOTH TERMS OF THE CONTRADICTION CAN BE FULFILLED.

HE IS CAUGHT IN THE PARADOX OF WANTING TO KEEP WHAT WE NOW HAVE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND WANTING, AT THE SAME TIME, TO PURSUE POLICIES THAT WOULD GIVE MUCH OF IT AWAY.

HE CALLS FOR AMERICA TO COME HOME, IN ONE BREATH, AND PROCLAIMS A NEW INTERNATIONALISM IN THE NEXT. AND SEES NO CONTRADICTION.

HE CALLS FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO SETTLE THEIR OWN CONFLICTS IN ONE BREATH, AND ANNOUNCES PLANS TO TAKE AWAY THE EQUIPMENT THEY NEED TO DO SO, IN THE NEXT. AND SEES NO CONTRADICTION.

HE PROPOSES MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE PLANS FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM AND IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF HIS ROCK-BED BELIEF IN SO MANY THINGS THAT JUST MAYBE "AIN'T SO."

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

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A RISK IN EITHER CHOICE

AND WE ARE NOW AT A FORK IN THAT ROAD. A TIME OF DECISION. WE CAN CONTINUE ALONG THE ROUTE WE HAVE FOLLOWED FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS, DURING THE NEXT FOUR ~~YEAR~~ OR WE CAN FOLLOW GEORGE MC GOVERN DOWN A SIDE ROAD PURSUING HIS NOTIONS OF WHAT IS GOOD FOR AMERICA AND PLACING OUR TRUST IN HIS CERTITUDE ABOUT ALL THOSE THINGS THAT VERY PROBABLY "AIN'T SO."

WITH RICHARD NIXON, THERE IS AN ACKNOWLEDGED -- BUT I THINK HEALTHY -- ELEMENT OF RISK. HE HAS TAKEN THOSE RISKS FOR PEACE THAT I SPOKE OF, BUT HIS RISK-TAKING HAS BEEN BORNE OUT BY EVENTS. OR WE CAN CHOOSE GEORGE MC GOVERN. WITH HIM, WE CHOOSE A PATH WHICH HE ACKNOWLEDGES IS A NEW AND UNTRIED DIRECTION. HE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT, BUT ASSERTS THAT WE BEAR NO RISK BY TAKING IT. HISTORY PROVES THAT TAKING RISKS FOR PEACE MAY YIELD POSITIVE RETURNS, BUT THAT IGNORING RISKS OR WISHING THEM AWAY WITH AN INFLATED SELF-CONFIDENCE AND BELIEF IN THINGS THAT MAYBE "AIN'T SO," IS THE BIGGEST RISK OF ALL.

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THE CHOICE IS UP TO YOU AND DEPENDS ON FAR MORE THAN WHAT I, OR OTHERS, MAY SAY DURING THIS CAMPAIGN. IT DEPENDS ON YOUR OWN PERCEPTIONS -- AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF MOST VOTING AMERICANS -- ABOUT WHERE THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY LIES AND WHICH DIRECTION WE OUGHT TO TAKE, AND WHOSE LEADERSHIP WE OUGHT TO TRUST.

I ASK YOU TO MAKE THAT CHOICE CAREFULLY -- AND, UNLIKE GOERGE MC GOVERN -- TO MAKE THAT CHOICE FULLY AWARE OF THE RISKS IT MAY IMPLY.

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