

EISENHOWER MIDDLE SCHOOL

OCTOBER 16, 1980

TOPEKA, KANSAS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, WAS THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF A GREAT AMERICAN. HIS LIFE INSPIRES US, HIS LEGACY PROPELS OUR POLITICS, HIS DECENCY AND COMPASSIONATE STRENGTH MAKE EVERY ONE OF US PROUD TO CALL OURSELVES KANSANS.

WHAT WE ARE CELEBRATING THIS WEEK IS NOT JUST A GREAT MAN, BUT A GREAT IDEAL. THERE IS LITTLE THAT WE CAN DO TO ENHANCE THE GREATNESS WHICH WAS DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER. HE HAS MADE HIS CONTRIBUTION TO OUR COUNTRY AND TO THE WORLD. IT IS WE WHO CAN PROFIT FROM THE WEEK OF HONOR WE BESTOW ON HIS MEMORY.

WE REMIND OURSELVES THAT HE CAME OUT OF AMERICAN HERITAGE AND MORE IMPORTANT FOR US, OUT OF KANSAS ROOTS. HE MAKES US REMEMBER THAT IT WAS OUR GREAT EXPERIMENT THAT GAVE HIM THE ROOM TO GROW TO SUCH GREATNESS. HE RECALLS US TO THE CONSTANT NEED FOR LEADERSHIP. HE GRADUATED FROM WEST POINT IN A CLASS CALLED THE CLASS OF STARS BECAUSE OF THE MANY GENERALS WHICH WERE THE PRODUCTS OF THE CLASS OF 1915. YET, AMONG SO MANY DISTINGUISHED MEN, HE STOOD OUT AS THE LEADER AMONG LEADERS.

TWENTY EIGHT YEARS AGO, AMERICA WAS A LAND IN DISTRESS. STRONGER THAN ANY INTERNATIONAL RIVAL, HER PEOPLE AT HOME WERE NEVERTHELESS DIVIDED AND ANGRY. THEY FELT SEPARATED FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON. THEY FELT THEIR DOLLAR SHRINKING WITHIN THEIR GRASP. THEY WONDERED IF THEIR LEADERS WERE STILL CAPABLE OF FRESH APPROACHES TO OLD PROBLEMS INSTEAD OF TRAVELING IN THE RUTTED ROADS OF THE STATUS QUO.

AS THE GREAT LEADER OF WARRIORS, PERHAPS IN OUR ENTIRE HISTORY, HE SET ABOUT TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE THE PEACE, FIRST AS COMMANDER OF SHAPE, (SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED FORCES EUROPE) AND LATER AS PRESIDENT. HE

BROUGHT THE KOREAN WAR TO A RAPID CONCLUSION AND SET THE NATION ON A FIFTEEN YEAR COURSE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

INEXPERIENCED IN ECONOMICS, HE NONETHELESS GRASPED INTUITIVELY THE CORE OF OUR GREAT FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND FOSTERED THE CLIMATE IN WHICH JOBS AND FREEDOM FLOURISHED.

WE WERE LUCKY THEN. WHEN WE WERE THIRSTY FOR LEADERSHIP, WE TURNED TO A MAN FROM KANSAS, A GENUINE HERO WHO EMBODIED IN HIS OWN LIFE THE FINEST QUALITIES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. DWIGHT EISENHOWER WAS A MAN FROM GRASSROOTS AMERICA, STEEPED IN THE TRADITIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND PATRIOTISM AND SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF HIS COUNTRY. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER WAS A STRONG MAN, WHO EARNED HIS STRENGTH IN WAR YET NEVER FORGOT THE DISEASE OF POVERTY OR THE SCOURGE OF PERSONAL SUFFERING.

BECAUSE HE WAS STRONG, BECAUSE HE HAD GAINED A SENSE OF SELF AND OF HIS DIRECTION IN LIFE, DWIGHT EISENHOWER WAS ABLE TO CHART A COURSE FOR AMERICA THAT WAS STRAIGHT AND TRUE AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BEST QUALITIES IN US.

#### SOLVENCY AND STRENGTH

IT WAS HERE, AMIDST THE WHEATFIELDS AND THE GRAIN SILOS OF KANSAS, THAT HE SPOKE THE FOLLOWING PROPHETIC WORDS....."TODAY, AMERICA MUST BE SPIRITUALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND MILITARILY STRONG, FOR HER OWN SAKE AND FOR HUMANITY. SHE MUST GUARD HER SOLVENCY AS SHE DOES HER PHYSICAL FRONTIERS. THIS MEANS ELIMINATION OF WASTE, LUXURY, AND EVERY NEEDLESS EXPENDITURE FROM THE NATIONAL BUDGET."

THE WARNING THAT PRESIDENT EISENHOWER GAVE AMERICANS A QUARTER CENTURY AGO HAS NOT LOST ITS FORCE. IT REMAINS THE CORNERSTONE OF WHAT WE, AS AMERICANS, ARE ALL ABOUT. IT IS OUR STRONG BELIEF IN FREEDOM -- FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND FREEDOM OF OUR ECONOMY -- THAT SETS US APART FROM OTHER NATIONS.

BELIEF IN THE AVERAGE AMERICAN, IN HIS OR HER RIGHT TO MAKE ALL THAT IS POSSIBLE FROM THEIR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS.

BELIEF IN A STRONG AMERICA, POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DEFEND HER IDEALS AND DETERMINED ENOUGH TO HOLD AN UMBRELLA OF FREEDOM OVER ALL THE WORLD'S PEOPLE WHO SEEK HUMAN RIGHTS AND INDIVIDUAL JUSTICE.

BELIEF IN OURSELVES, IN OUR ABILITY TO OVERCOME THE TEMPORARY CRISES OF ENERGY AND INFLATION.

BELIEF IN THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, RATHER THAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AS THE ULTIMATE INSURER OF JOBS AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.

BELIEF THAT PRODUCTION, NOT REGULATION, IS THE KEY TO A STRONG ECONOMY -- PRODUCTION ON THE FARM, IN THE FACTORY, AND IN THE SEARCH FOR NEW AND ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY.

#### NEED TO RETURN TO GREATNESS

IT IS NOW TWO DECADES SINCE THE EISENHOWER PRESIDENTIAL YEARS ENDED AND AMERICA IS IN DISTRESS ONCE AGAIN. HIS LEGACY OF STRENGTH, PROSPERITY, AND PEACE IS ONCE AGAIN IN PERIL. ONCE AGAIN THE NATION MUST FIND THE STRONG LEADERSHIP TO RECOVER THE ROAD TO SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND MATERIAL PLENTY WHICH WAS IKE'S GIFT AND WISH FOR HIS BELOVED NATION. ONCE AGAIN, THE PARTY OF EISENHOWER HAS CHOSEN A SON OF THE MIDWEST TO CARRY ITS BANNER. THE REPUBLICAN PARTY SENSES WHAT WE IN KANSAS KNOW. THE BEST OF AMERICA IS NURTURED ON OUR PLAINS, AND IN OUR FIELDS, FULL OF THE FOOD AND STRENGTH WHICH FUELS THE NATION.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE RESTIVE FOR LEADERSHIP THAT IS EXPERIENCED, THAT IS MORALLY ADMIRABLE, THAT KNOWS HOW TO MAKE GOVERNMENT WORK, WITHOUT ALWAYS RESTORING TO GOVERNMENT AS THE SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEMS.

AMERICA HAS ALWAYS BEEN FORTUNATE. THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY, WHEN DISASTER THREATENED, OR BRIGHT OPPORTUNITY BECKONED, WE SOMEHOW FOUND OURSELVES A LEADER TO BRING US TOGETHER, BIND UP OUR DIFFERENCES, AND PULL US THROUGH. WHEN KANSAS WAS BLEEDING AND TORN ASUNDER BY CIVIL WAR, IT WAS ONLY A PRELUDE TO THE ELECTION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

WHEN AMERICA WAS FESTERING WITH DIVISIONS, CONFRONTED WITH AN IMPLACABLE COMMUNIST FOE ABROAD AND WIDESPREAD DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT ITSELF HERE AT HOME, THEN WE TURNED TO DWIGHT EISENHOWER. IT WAS AS ALIEN TO THE CHARACTER AND MIND OF EISENHOWER TO SUBMIT TO BEING SECOND AS IT WAS TO GIVE IN TO MILITARY DIFFICULTIES. FOR HIM THERE WAS NO SECOND BEST EITHER FOR HIMSELF OR FOR HIS COUNTRY.

ONCE AGAIN, WE MUST TURN TO A MAN OF COMMON SENSE, A MAN OF THE PEOPLE, WHO HAS BEEN NURTURED FROM HIS YOUTH WITH THE CONVICTION THAT THE STRENGTH OF AMERICA IS ITS PEOPLE. IF EISENHOWER, THE GENERAL, THE PRESIDENT, THE MAN, WERE TO SPEAK TO US NOW, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HE WOULD SAY, ("KEEP FAITH WITH AMERICA. BE STRONG TO MAINTAIN THE RIGHT TO PRESERVE THE PEACE. TRUST THE STRENGTH WHICH HAS BEEN DEEDED TO YOU BY THE PEOPLE WHO BUILT THE REPUBLIC.")

DWIGHT EISENHOWER WAS A SOLDIER, A STATESMAN AND A SCHOLAR. BUT, HE WAS ABOVE ALL THESE THINGS A LEADER OF THE FREE PEOPLE, WHO WERE AS SURE AS HE WAS THAT AMERICA HAD THE STRENGTH AND CHARACTER TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER SO LONG AS WE DID NOT LOSE FAITH IN OUR GOD AND THE VISION OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS.

#### LEADERSHIP AND FAITH

TODAY, WE ARE ONCE AGAIN AT A CROSSROADS. WE ARE NOT A HAPPY PEOPLE IN 1980. WE SEEM UNCERTAIN OF OUR PURPOSE, CONFUSED OF OUR DIRECTION, AND DOUBTFUL EVEN OF OUR POTENTIAL.

WE WANT LEADERSHIP, WE WANT A PRESIDENT WHO WILL ENCOURAGE OUR BEST INSTINCTS, YET BE STRONG ENOUGH TO PUT THE VAST STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO WORK FOR US IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY AND NOT PUT US TO WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. WE DON'T WANT A MAN ON HORSEBACK. WE DON'T WANT SOMEONE LARGER THAN LIFE. WE WANT SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT AVERAGE LIVES, WHO COMES FROM THE VERY HEARTLAND OF AMERICA, WHO KNOWS ABOUT SACRIFICE AND STRUGGLE AND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO OVERCOME TOUGH ODDS.

IN A TIME WHEN OUR NATION SEEMS TO SPEAK WITH AN UNCERTAIN VOICE IN THE WORLD, WE NEED AGAIN A LEADER WITH HIS QUALITIES. WHEN OUR COUNTRY IS BESET WITH WAVERING LEADERSHIP IN DOMESTIC POLICY, WE NEED A RETURN TO THOSE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH MADE THE FIFTIES YEARS OF PEACE AND FRUITION. WHEN IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHO IS FRIEND AND WHO ENEMY FROM OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES, WE NEED ONLY RETURN TO THE VIEWS OF THE MAN WHO CREATED AND OPERATED THE GREATEST ALLIANCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

ULTIMATELY, THE GREATEST HONOR WE CAN DO DWIGHT EISENHOWER IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE AMERICA WHICH HE DID SO MUCH TO SAVE AS A SOLDIER AND TO STRENGTHEN AS A STATESMAN SHALL ENDURE AND GROW STRONGER. THAT GOAL IS IN THE HANDS OF EACH OF US ESPECIALLY IN YOU, THE COMING GENERATION. IT IS YOU WHO WILL BE THE PRESERVERS OF OUR TRADITION. IT IS YOU WHO WILL LEAD US IN ALL TOO SHORT A TIME, AND IT IS WHO WILL PASS ON THE BENEFITS OF A FREE SOCIETY TO FUTURE GENERATIONS. WE CAN ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS BY OUR OWN ACTS NOW AND BY THE LEADERSHIP WHICH WE CHOOSE FOR AMERICA IN THE NEXT DECADE.