

CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL ACTION CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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UNITED STATES SENATE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

SOMEWHERE ACROSS THIS BROAD LAND THERE MAY BE A CITIZEN WHO LIVES IN THE SERENE AND BLISSFUL IGNORANCE OF THE FACT THAT 1976 IS ANOTHER ELECTION YEAR. BUT I DARE SAY THAT ALL THE REST OF US HAVE ALREADY HEARD ENOUGH ELECTION RHETORIC TO GIVE US INDIGESTION ENOUGH FOR TWO OR THREE CAMPAIGNS--AND THE FIRST PRIMARY HAS NOT YET BEEN HELD. SO IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO GIVE YOU ANOTHER CAMPAIGN SPEECH THIS EVENING.

INSTEAD, I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER A FEW BASIC THOUGHTS ABOUT OUR COUNTRY AND WHERE IT IS GOING.

INDEED, THERE IS ONLY ONE ISSUE IN THIS CAMPAIGN, AND THAT ISSUE IS LEADERSHIP. SO IT IS NOT REALLY NECESSARY TO GO INTO THE TRADITIONAL RHETORIC. YOU CAN--AND WILL-- MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND, AS TO CANDIDATES. THE PEOPLE ARE

FED UP WITH INCOMPETENCE. THEY ARE EVEN FED UP WITH  
COMPETENCE. WE HAVE COME TO THE POINT WHERE MERE  
COMPETENCE IS NOT ENOUGH. AMERICA WANTS LEADERS WHO  
WILL EVOKE OUR NATIONAL SPIRIT OF PRIDE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE INDEED GREAT. IN TWO  
HUNDRED YEARS WE HAVE BUILT THE MOST POWERFUL NATION ON  
EARTH. MOREOVER, WE HAVE DONE SO WITH A RECORD WHICH IS  
UNPARALLELED IN ITS MAGNANIMOUS SPIRIT TOWARD THE REST  
OF THE WORLD. INDEED, WE HAVE BEEN GENEROUS TO A FAULT.  
WE FOUGHT TWO WORLD WARS, AND DISBANDED OUR ARMIES WITHOUT  
EVER A THOUGHT OF ESTABLISHING DOMINION OVER OTHER LANDS.  
WE GAVE AWAY BILLIONS OF OUR DOLLARS TO HELP OTHER NATIONS  
DEVELOP THEIR ECONOMIES--WITHOUT, ALAS, EVER GIVING HEED  
TO OUR OWN FINANCIAL STABILITY. WE HAVE RESPONDED WITH AN  
OPEN HEART TO EVERY DISASTER--EVERY FLOOD, EVERY EARTHQUAKE,  
EVERY FAMINE, WITHOUT LOOKING FOR GRATITUDE. AND WE HAVE  
SENT OUR SOLDIERS TO DEFEND THE FREEDOM OF SMALLER

COUNTRIES THREATENED BY TOTALITARIAN IDEOLOGIES AT  
A TERRIBLE COST IN BLOOD, MONEY, AND SPIRITUAL ANGUISH.

I SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN GENEROUS TO A FAULT,  
BECAUSE OUR HEART OFTEN REIGNED WHEN OUR MIND SHOULD HAVE  
RULED. DESPITE THE COURAGE, BRAVERY, AND GENEROSITY OF  
OUR PEOPLE, WE, AS A NATION HAVE, MORE AND MORE, FOUND  
THE IMPORT OF OUR GENEROSITY GO STALE, AND OUR ACCOMPLISH-  
MENTS SOUR.

THE BICENTENNIAL HAS SCARCELY BEGUN AND ALREADY SOME  
PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT THEY ARE SICK OF IT. AS A NATION,  
WE ARE AT THE HEIGHT OF OUR POWER AFTER TWO HUNDRED YEARS;  
YET THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY WE ARE AT THE END OF OUR  
POWER, AND THERE ARE THOSE AMONG US WHO SAY THAT WE HAVE  
NO BUSINESS HAVING POWER ANYWAY. IT IS A STRANGE REFRAIN  
THAT SAYS IT IS BETTER BY FAR TO ABDICATE, THAT IT IS BETTER  
BY FAR TO QUIT. SOME SEEM TO BE ASHAMED OF THE ATTRIBUTES  
OF POWER, AND OTHERS FRANKLY PROCLAIM THAT WE SHOULD DIVEST

OURSELVES OF ANY INTEREST OUTSIDE OF OUR NATION. IT IS A LOGIC THAT LEADS US INTO THE ULTIMATE DEMOCRACY, A KIND OF ONE-NATION-ONE-VOTE, WHERE SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE FAIRNESS OF MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DECISIONS IS A HERESY.

IT IS TRUE THAT WE AS A NATION HAVE LOST OUR SELF-ESTEEM? IS IT TRUE THAT SOME CANKER, SOME SICKNESS, HAS EATEN PARTIALLY INTO OUR SOUL? IS IT TRUE THAT WE NO LONGER HAVE THE CONFIDENCE IN THE RIGHTNESS OF OUR VALUES THAT ENABLES US TO ACT WITH DISPATCH AND DECISION IN THE WORLD ARENA?

THERE IS INDEED SUCH A STRAIN THAT HAS BEEN RUNNING DEEPER IN AMERICA LIFE. ONE VERSION WOULD SAY BLUNTLY THAT IT IS NOT RIGHT FOR US TO BE A POWERFUL NATION. THE OTHER VERSION SAYS THAT OUR ABILITY TO KEEP OUR POWER IS DECLINING, AND WE SHOULD TRY TO STRIKE A DEAL WITH THE WORLD FOR FIVE OR TEN YEARS AS A TRANSITION PERIOD, SO

THAT THERE WILL BE A SMOOTH CHANGE-OVER TO REVISED INTERNATIONAL POWER RELATIONSHIPS. LEADERSHIP, IN THIS LATTER VIEW, CONSISTS IN HELPING TO AVOID PANIC AS WE MARCH IN ORDERLY LINES OUT OF THE BURNING BUILDINGS INTO THE DARKNESS.

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS SOUR VIEW OF AMERICA, A VIEW THAT WOULD NOT ONLY DOWNGRADE OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE, BUT WOULD ALSO THREATEN OUR VERY SURVIVAL AS A FREE NATION?

THE REASON IS THAT WE HAVE HAD A GENERATION OF LEADERS WHO HAVE LOST FAITH. THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT WESTERN CIVILIZATION IS A UNIQUE EXPRESSION OF MAN'S CULTURE THAT GREW OUT OF SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND WAS SHAPED BY A CODE OF MORAL PRINCIPLES. IN THE PAST, SOME HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE WEST WAS DESTINED BY FATE TO OCCUPY A ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND SUPREMACY IN WORLD AFFAIRS. BUT SUCH ASSUMPTIONS MISSED THE HEART OF THE

MATTER. WHATEVER ROLE WE HAVE, OR WHATEVER SUPREMACY WE EXHIBIT COMES NOT FROM THE IMPERSONAL CAST OF FATE, BUT FROM THE INNER STRENGTH OF THE NATION.

WHEN SOLZHENITSYN CAME TO THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR, HE SPENT SEVERAL WEEKS ON THE WEST COAST, TRAVELLING AROUND THROUGH RURAL COMMUNITIES AND SMALL TOWNS. THEN HE CROSSED THE UNITED STATES AND CAME TO WASHINGTON BY AUTOMOBILE AFTER STAYING IN THE HOUSES OF FRIENDS AND SMALL MOTELS ALONG THE ROUTE. AND WHEN HE TALKED TO ME, HE SAID --RECALLING THE HUNDREDS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE HE HAD MET, AND THE COMMUNITIES HE HAD VISITED WITHOUT PUBLICITY-- "AMERICA IS FULL OF STRENGTH, YET SHE IS NOT USING HER STRENGTH. WHY DOES SHE NOT USE THE STRENGTH THAT IS LYING THERE IDLE?"

NEEDLESS TO SAY, SOLZHENITSYN WAS NOT TALKING OF OUR ECONOMIC STRENGTH, FOR THAT IS GROWING MORE DUBIOUS EVERY DAY. NOR WAS HE TALKING ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC NUCLEAR

STRENGTH, BECAUSE THE RATIO OF THE STRENGTH AS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION IS GROWING WEAKER EVERY DAY. NO, HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THAT INNER STRENGTH WHICH CONSISTS PRECISELY IN THE AWARENESS OF OUR TRADITIONS AND OUR SPIRITUAL ROOTS.

AND WHAT IS THAT TRADITION? IN THE CONFUSION OF TODAY, IT WILL NOT HURT TO SKETCH THE OUTLINE BRIEFLY. FIRST IS THE MORAL LAW--THAT IS, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH GOD GAVE TO THE JEWISH NATION AND WHICH ARE THE HERITAGE OF ALL OF US TODAY. NEXT IS THE RULE OF ORDER AND THE RULE OF LAW, HAMMERED OUT BY THE GREEKS AND ROMANS, AND THE FUNDAMENTAL BASE OF CIVIC ORDER TODAY. THIRDLY, OUR HISTORY IS INTERTWINED WITH THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, WHICH TEACHES US THAT REALITY TRANSCENDS THE MATERIAL WORLD, AND THAT MAN IS A FLAWED CREATURE REQUIRING DIVINE ASSISTANCE TO ATTAIN MAN'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE IN ANOTHER WORLD. FINALLY--AND THIS IS ESPECIALLY

IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED STATES IN OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR--WE HAVE THE LEGACY OF THE ANGLO-SAXON PEOPLES, WHO DEVELOPED THE CONCEPT OF LIMITED GOVERNMENT, IN WHICH DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES ARE DELIBERATELY COUNTERBALANCED WITH POLITICAL PRINCIPLES BASED UPON ORDER, TRADITION, FREEDOM, AND JUSTICE.

THESE FOUR ROOTS OF OUR TRADITION ARE INTERMINGLED, AND REINFORCE EACH OTHER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR FREEDOM. THEY ARE THE HERITAGE OF EVERYONE IN OUR COUNTRY, WHETHER A PARTICULAR CITIZEN IS LINKED BY NATURAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARTS OF THAT TRADITION OR NOT. TO SAY THAT WE ARE BASICALLY A CHRISTIAN NATION IS NOT TO EXCLUDE OTHER MEN OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL CULTIVATION. BUT THESE FOUR TRADITIONS PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK OF PERSONAL MORAL RESPONSIBILITY, OF THE RULE OF LAW, OF A SPIRITUAL VIEW OF MAN, AND OF A DISTRUST OF MAN'S PERFECTIBILITY. THIS FRAMEWORK MUST BE MAINTAINED IF OUR NATION IS TO REMAIN FREE.

FOR, AS A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE, WE ARE CONSTANTLY AWARE THAT EVERY MAN, BE HE HIGH AND MIGHTY, OR BE HE AMONG THE LOWLIEST, IS A FLAWED MAN WHO CANNOT BE TRUSTED TO JUDGE HIS OWN SELF-INTEREST WITH IMPARTIALITY. WE HAVE BUILT THAT BASIC INSIGHT INTO OUR POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. THE TYRANT KING AND THE TYRANNICAL DEMOCRACY BOTH DESTROY THE PROPERTY AND FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIETY.

CONVERSELY, THE ONLY WAY TO REFORM SOCIETY IS FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL TO DEVELOP IN HIMSELF THE HABITS OF VIRTUE AND INITIATIVE. HUMAN NATURE CANNOT BE CHANGED, EITHER BY FORCE OF ARMS OR BY A GOVERNMENT GRANT. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS CANNOT BE REPEALED, EITHER BY INDIVIDUAL MEN SEEKING SELF-INTEREST, OR BY REFORMERS SEEKING SHORTCUTS TOWARD THE RE-STRUCTURING OF SOCIETY. AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM CANNOT BE BASED UPON REDISTRIBUTION THROUGH THEFT. NOR IS ANY MAN SO PERFECT THAT HE CAN COMPETENTLY DIRECT THE

AFFAIRS OF EACH ONE OF TWO HUNDRED MILLION PERSONS,

WE CANNOT MAINTAIN FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR OUR CITIZENS, IF EACH CITIZEN DOES NOT VOLUNTARILY ADHERE TO A CODE OF VIRTUE. THE MOST THAT ANY FREE SOCIETY CAN DO IS TO TAKE CARE OF A FEW EXCEPTIONS, BECAUSE THE COERCION NEEDED FOR PERFECT SECURITY AND PERFECT EQUALITY IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH FREEDOM.

BUT WE ALL KNOW THAT FEWER AND FEWER AMERICANS ARE PREPARED TO DEFEND THE VIRTUES THAT MAKE FREEDOM POSSIBLE. BOTH THE MORAL SOCIAL RELATIVISTS AND THE PROMOTERS OF ETHICS BASED UPON ANARCHIC SELF-INTEREST WOULD DENY THAT OUR TRADITIONS HAVE ANY INTRINSIC VALUE TO WHICH MAN MUST ADJUST HIMSELF. FOR AT LEAST TWO GENERATIONS, MANY, BUT NOT ALL TEACHERS, WRITERS, EVEN PREACHERS AND MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, HAVE BEEN BROADCASTING THE VIEW THAT MAN HAS NO OBLIGATIONS OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF, EXCEPT THOSE WHICH SOCIAL PLANNERS THRUST UPON HIM.

THE RESULT IS THAT TODAY EVEN OUR SO-CALLED LEADERS AND POLITICIANS, IN THEIR CONSTANT BID FOR VOTES AND POPULARITY, FEVERISHLY ADVOCATE A PLATFORM IN WHICH RESTRAINTS UPON CHARACTER ARE ABOLISHED. DUTY, RESPONSIBILITY, HARD WORK, PRUDENCE, FORESIGHT, SACRIFICE, FRUGALITY, AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF IMMEDIATE PLEASURES NEVER APPEAR IN THE POLITICAL RHETORIC OF TODAY. SELF-GRATIFICATION AND SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT ARE WHERE THE VOTES ARE, ESPECIALLY WHEN BOTH ARE ACCOMPLISHED AT SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPENSE.

BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT CHARACTER IS CREATED ONLY THROUGH STRUGGLE AND SELF-DISCIPLINE, AND THAT VIRTUE IS NOURISHED ONLY THROUGH PRACTICE. FOR THEIR PAINS, THE POLITICIANS REALIZE TODAY THAT THEY ARE AMONG THE GROUPS MOST DESPISED AMONG THE PEOPLE--A REACTION BASED UPON THEIR FEAR THAT THE POLITICIANS MIGHT JUST BE MIRROR-IMAGES OF THEMSELVES. OUR PRAGMATIC POLITICIANS MAY BE LOST, BUT

THERE IS STILL AN INNER RESERVE OF STRENGTH TO BE  
TAPPED AMONG THE PEOPLE.

WITH ALL OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WITH ALL OF OUR  
WEALTH, WITH ALL OF OUR TECHNOLOGY, WE CANNOT FULFILL  
OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE WITHOUT A FIRM CONVICTION THAT OUR  
CAUSE IS MERITORIOUS. WE MUST BELIEVE THAT WE DESERVE  
TO WIN--OR MORE SPECIFICALLY, THAT WE, AS INDIVIDUALS,  
HAVE THE MORAL STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO DO WHAT IS  
NECESSARY TO WIN.

THUS LEADERSHIP GOES BEYOND MERE COMPETENCE.  
LEADERSHIP IS SOMETHING THAT CALLS FORTH THE SOUL IN MAN,  
THAT CALLS HIM TO EXERT HIS ABILITIES BEYOND THE LEVEL OF  
COMPROMISE AND BEYOND THE ADJUSTMENT OF COMPETING VALUES.  
IF YOUR VALUES ARE BASED UPON SHIFTING RELATIONSHIPS OR  
UPON MERE SELF-INTEREST, YOU INSTINCTIVELY FEEL THAT ONE  
CAUSE IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER, OR THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS AS  
MUCH RIGHT TO WIN AS YOU DO. SO YOU INSTINCTIVELY HEDGE.

YOU PULL BACK, YOU CONCEDE SMALL-POINTS, BECAUSE SMALL POINTS ARE NEGOTIABLE. BUT SOON YOU ARE CONCEDED LARGE POINTS, AND ULTIMATELY YOU ARE WILDLY DEALING NOT FOR VICTORY, BUT FOR TIME.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, TIME IS NOT ON OUR SIDE. THE ONLY THING THAT IS ON OUR SIDE IS OUR INNER STRENGTH, AN INNER STRENGTH THAT THE MAJORITY OF AMERICAN LEADERSHIP HAS FAILED TO TAP. FOR ONLY IF THE SPIRITUAL STRENGTH CAN BE MOBILIZED WILL OUR MATERIAL RESOURCES BE DEPLOYED FOR VICTORY.

THAT IS WHY THE ISSUE TODAY IS LEADERSHIP. COMPETENCE IS A COMPROMISE, AND AT THIS LATE HOUR IN HISTORY COMPROMISE IS A CONFESSION OF FAILURE.

IT WAS JUST A YEAR AGO THAT I STOOD BEFORE THIS AUDIENCE AND ARGUED THAT CONSERVATIVES MUST TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE A CHOICE IN THE 1976 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT I THINK THAT

CONSERVATIVES, AS OF THIS MOMENT, WILL HAVE SUCH A CHOICE. MY PERSONAL CHOICE, AS IS WELL KNOWN, IS THE CHOICE OF MANY OF YOU HERE TONIGHT. HE IS GOVERNOR RONALD REAGAN.

IT IS MY DECLARED INTENTION TO WORK DILIGENTLY FOR HIS NOMINATION BY THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION, AND I AM CONVINCED THAT THE CONVENTION, AS WELL AS MILLIONS OF OTHER AMERICANS, WILL FIND IN HIM THE QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP THAT THIS NATION NEEDS,

INDEED, GOVERNOR REAGAN IS NOT THE ONLY CHOICE FOR CONSERVATIVES IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION. BUT I BELIEVE THAT HE IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL ACTION AT THE PRESENT TIME. LEADERSHIP IS THE ISSUE OF THE HOUR, AND I LOOK TO GOVERNOR REAGAN TO LEAD US BACK TO CONFIDENCE IN OUR TRADITIONS AND OUR STRENGTH.

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