

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS ALUMNI

Washington, D. C.

May 14, 1976

I am very pleased to be with you today.

As White House Fellows, you have gained first-hand an understanding of the problems of national government. This has been not only a rewarding personal experience but one which is of great importance to the Nation.

In a day when the individual feels increasingly remote from the centers of power of decision making, you, through your experiences can help others understand and participate in the process by which the Nation is governed.

Despite the very real achievements we celebrate this year, the list of problems on the public agenda is long and a matter of urgent concern. Too many of our people are out of work. Too many are hungry and inadequately housed. Too many of our cities and states are near default. And, worst of all, public confidence in our political institutions is at low ebb.

The real question underlying the anti-government campaign is whether and how the interests of the people can best be served. The balance between the executive and the Congress has a great impact on the ability of this government and this country to deal with the critical issues which face us today.

As an individual who has viewed our Nation from both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, I'd like to talk about what needs to be done to restore this balance.

People have real needs that must be met and problems to be solved. To do so means that critical matters of public policy must pass through the normal channels of legislative-executive cooperation.

Differences are inevitable in our system. The test lies in how we deal with these differences.

The challenge that leaders of this nation face is to avoid the looming obstacles of partisan and institutional differences and forge a partnership based on shared needs in the national interest.

Although modern history increasingly has placed more power in the hands of chiefs of state and presidents who can exercise "positive government," there is nothing in our Constitution that requires Congressional passivity.

Presidential initiative and leadership are sound and constitutionally appropriate. The Executive Branch, however, must be more willing to acknowledge Congressional attitudes and policy priorities.

No useful purpose is served when an Administration complains that Congress should stay out of various issues. Nor is a useful purpose served by dealing with the Congress only when it is time for the hard sell.

If the Congress had more confidence that its views were respected, there would be less need for Congress to enact what the President terms "restrictive legislation."

The American people are demanding greater accountability from their government officials and the programs they manage. No area of foreign or domestic policy should be exempt from this concern.

Of all our government institutions, Congress ought to reflect the views, the sentiments, and the priorities of the American people.

Congressional power is people power. There is no doubt that the 535 men and women who sit in the House and the Senate are closer to their constituents and more responsive to their wishes on a day-to-day basis than the office of the President or Federal agencies -- simply because constant attention to the views and needs of constituents is a primary requirement for any Congressman to be re-elected.

For a number of years, circumstances have been such to cause Congress to acquiesce and to surrender many of its responsibilities. In recent years, however, Congress has begun to restore the "checks and balances" built into our democracy by the Constitution.

-- the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 created various mechanisms to make the legislative process more efficient and to better inform the Members of Congress of important legislation, budget information and program analysis;

-- the War Powers Resolution reiterated the constitutional authority of Congress to declare war;

-- the Budget Control and Impoundment Act provides a mechanism to allow Congress to examine and determine spending priorities and coordinate spending with incoming revenue; and

-- bills and rules change, popularly known as, Sunshine Legislation, have opened virtually all committee work to public scrutiny.

But further changes are needed. A 20th century Congress cannot be content with employing 18th and 19th century techniques.

First, the Congress has a responsibility to end the fragmentation of its committee and subcommittee system. For example, during the 93rd Congress, over 1800 bills and resolutions dealing with food, agriculture and nutrition were introduced. But less than half of this legislation was referred to either the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry or the House Committee on Agriculture. The same is true of legislation dealing with energy, monetary policy, health, and a number of other important issues. Not only are administration officials forced to sit before numerous committees to explain their policies, but it is downright difficult sometimes to get things done.

Second, the Congress must be willing to exercise a legitimate oversight function of Executive Branch policies and programs. Billions of dollars are spent without adequate legislative supervision and follow-up. This issue is at the heart of public skepticism with governmental programs.

Third, Congress must equip itself with the staff and facilities to fulfill its constitutional role as a co-equal branch of government. Without adequate staff, the ability to be a source of alternative policies is hindered.

Legislation I have proposed authorizes the Congress to review the initiatives, priorities and the shortcomings of the session in a manner similar to the State of the Union address of the President.

Congress has continually suffered from the absence of legal counsel to represent it in court proceedings. An Office of Congressional Counsel would change that.

The quality of Congressional information has a direct bearing on the decisions we make. Innovative measures coordinated by an Office of Congressional Communications would make Congress a better informed body.

Fourth, the Congress must take forceful legislative action to develop policy-making processes that can move the Federal Government out of what is often viewed today as "crisis management." We have no long-range planning in this government, and this has been most clearly shown in Administration efforts to address simultaneous problems of recession, unemployment and inflation.

Above all, we need to recognize that Washington does not have all the answers. There is solid experience and competence as well as grass roots knowledge in our state capitols, in our academic establishment, and throughout the private business sector.

We need to establish a better working relationship between the 50 Governors and the President.

We need to nurture a cooperative relationship between State and Federal legislators to explore, research and recommend solutions to problems of mutual concern -- food, energy, jobs, housing development, health.

We need to restore the people's confidence in government by encouraging their participation, showing them that it understands their problems and makes an honest and compassionate effort to help solve them.

I do not accept the conventional assessment that Americans are ready to support a radical dismantling of governmental institutions and programs designed to achieve a higher level of justice and well-being among our citizens.

The people are not necessarily asking for something new and revolutionary. They are seeking a return to fundamentals, to standards that are basic and even old fashioned. People want honesty and integrity in public life. They want decency and fair play. They want to be trusted so that they can trust their government.

One of the great moral political leaders of our time was Adlai Stevenson. He reminded us of the requirements of self-government when he said that democracy is not self-executing. Critical thinkers and thinking critics must be given the opportunity to come together to see new facts in the light of old principles, and to evaluate old principles in the light of new facts, by deliberation, debate, and dialogue.

The necessity of our Government to be run in a spirit of partnership and cooperation, and not in a continuing condition of confrontation, has never been more important.

The future begins now.

There is much to be done.

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Tom Johnson

Edue of Public Man

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

MAY 14, 1976

- Ed Image
- Barbara Courier
Bell
- Tim With

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY.

AS WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS, YOU HAVE GAINED FIRST-HAND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. THIS HAS BEEN NOT ONLY A REWARDING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE BUT ONE WHICH IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE NATION.

IN A DAY WHEN THE INDIVIDUAL FEELS INCREASINGLY REMOTE FROM THE CENTERS OF POWER OF DECISION MAKING, YOU, THROUGH YOUR EXPERIENCES CAN HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND AND PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE NATION IS GOVERNED.

DESPITE THE VERY REAL ACHIEVEMENTS WE CELEBRATE THIS YEAR, THE LIST OF PROBLEMS ON THE PUBLIC AGENDA IS LONG AND A MATTER OF URGENT CONCERN. TOO MANY OF OUR PEOPLE ARE OUT OF WORK. TOO MANY ARE HUNGRY AND INADEQUATELY HOUSED.

TOO MANY OF OUR CITIES AND STATES ARE NEAR DEFAULT. AND,
WORST OF ALL, PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS
IS AT LOW EBB.

THE REAL QUESTION UNDERLYING THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN
IS WHETHER AND HOW THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE CAN BEST BE
SERVED. THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND THE CONGRESS
HAS A GREAT IMPACT ON THE ABILITY OF THIS GOVERNMENT AND THIS
COUNTRY TO DEAL WITH THE CRITICAL ISSUES WHICH FACE US TODAY.

(X) AS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS VIEWED OUR NATION FROM BOTH ENDS
OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO
BE DONE TO RESTORE THIS BALANCE.

PEOPLE HAVE REAL NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET AND PROBLEMS
TO BE SOLVED.

TO DO SO MEANS THAT CRITICAL MATTERS OF PUBLIC POLICY MUST PASS
THROUGH THE NORMAL CHANNELS OF LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE COOPERATION.

DIFFERENCES ARE INEVITABLE IN OUR SYSTEM. THE TEST LIES
IN HOW WE DEAL WITH THESE DIFFERENCES.

THE CHALLENGE THAT LEADERS OF THIS NATION FACE IS TO
AVOID THE LOOMING OBSTACLES OF PARTISAN AND INSTITUTIONAL
DIFFERENCES AND FORGE A PARTNERSHIP BASED ON SHARED NEEDS
IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

ALTHOUGH MODERN HISTORY INCREASINGLY HAS PLACED MORE
POWER IN THE HANDS OF CHIEFS OF STATE AND PRESIDENTS WHO
CAN EXERCISE "POSITIVE GOVERNMENT", THERE IS NOTHING IN OUR
CONSTITUTION THAT REQUIRES CONGRESSIONAL PASSIVITY.

Strong

PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE AND LEADERSHIP ARE SOUND AND
CONSTITUTIONALLY APPROPRIATE. / THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, HOWEVER,
MUST BE MORE WILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES
AND POLICY PRIORITIES.

But

NO USEFUL PURPOSE IS SERVED WHEN AN ADMINISTRATION
COMPLAINS THAT CONGRESS SHOULD STAY OUT OF VARIOUS ISSUES.

/ NOR IS A USEFUL PURPOSE SERVED BY DEALING WITH THE CONGRESS
ONLY WHEN IT IS TIME FOR THE HARD SELL.

*Human
Relations*

/ IF THE CONGRESS HAD MORE CONFIDENCE THAT ITS VIEWS WERE
RESPECTED, THERE WOULD BE LESS NEED FOR CONGRESS TO ENACT
WHAT THE PRESIDENT TERMS "RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION."

/ THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY
FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THE PROGRAMS THEY MANAGE.

*Common
Aware*

NO AREA OF FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC POLICY SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM
THIS CONCERN.

OF ALL OUR GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, CONGRESS OUGHT TO
(MOST DIRECTLY)
REFLECT THE VIEWS, THE SENTIMENTS, AND THE PRIORITIES OF THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE.

CONGRESSIONAL POWER IS PEOPLE POWER. THERE IS NO DOUBT
THAT THE 535 MEN AND WOMEN WHO SIT IN THE HOUSE AND THE
SENATE ARE CLOSER TO THEIR CONSTITUTENTS AND MORE RESPONSIVE
TO THEIR WISHES ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS THAN THE OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT OR FEDERAL AGENCIES -- SIMPLY BECAUSE CONSTANT
ATTENTION TO THE VIEWS AND NEEDS OF CONSTITUENTS IS A PRIMARY
REQUIREMENT FOR ANY CONGRESSMAN TO BE RE-ELECTED.

L FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE BEEN SUCH TO CAUSE CONGRESS TO ACQUIESCE AND TO SURRENDER MANY OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, CONGRESS HAS BEGUN TO RESTORE THE "CHECKS AND BALANCES" BUILT INTO OUR DEMOCRACY BY THE CONSTITUTION.

L -- THE LEGISLATIVE REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1970 CREATED VARIOUS MECHANISMS TO MAKE THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS MORE EFFICIENT AND TO BETTER INFORM THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OF IMPORTANT LEGISLATION, BUDGET INFORMATION AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS;

L -- THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION REITERATED THE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY OF CONGRESS TO DECLARE WAR;

L -- THE BUDGET CONTROL AND IMPOUNDMENT ACT PROVIDES A MECHANISM TO ALLOW CONGRESS TO EXAMINE AND DETERMINE SPENDING PRIORITIES AND COORDINATE SPENDING WITH INCOMING REVENUE; AND

-- BILLS AND RULES CHANGES, POPULARLY KNOWN AS, SUNSHINE
LEGISLATION, HAVE OPENED VIRTUALLY ALL COMMITTEE WORK TO PUBLIC
SCRUTINY.

└ BUT FURTHER CHANGES ARE NEEDED. A 20TH CENTURY CONGRESS
CANNOT BE CONTENT WITH EMPLOYING 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY TECHNIQUES.

└ FIRST, THE CONGRESS HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO END THE
FRAGMENTATION OF ITS COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE SYSTEM. FOR
EXAMPLE, DURING THE 93RD CONGRESS, OVER 1800 BILLS AND
RESOLUTIONS DEALING WITH FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION WERE
INTRODUCED.) BUT LESS THAN HALF OF THIS LEGISLATION WAS REFERRED
TO EITHER THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY OR
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.) THE SAME IS TRUE OF LEGISLATION
DEALING WITH ENERGY, MONETARY POLICY, HEALTH, AND A NUMBER OF
OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES.

NOT ONLY ARE ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS FORCED TO SIT BEFORE

NUMEROUS COMMITTEES TO EXPLAIN THEIR POLICIES, BUT IT IS DOWNRIGHT

DIFFICULT SOMETIMES TO GET THINGS DONE.

26 SECOND, THE CONGRESS MUST BE WILLING TO EXERCISE A LEGITIMATE

OVERSIGHT FUNCTION OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH POLICIES AND PROGRAMS.

BILLIONS OF DOLLARS ARE SPENT WITHOUT ADEQUATE LEGISLATIVE

SUPERVISION AND FOLLOW-UP. THIS ISSUE IS AT THE HEART OF

PUBLIC SKEPTICISM WITH GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS.

30 THIRD, CONGRESS MUST EQUIP ITSELF WITH THE STAFF AND

FACILITIES TO FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE AS A CO-EQUAL

BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT. WITHOUT ADEQUATE STAFF, THE ABILITY TO

BE A SOURCE OF ALTERNATIVE POLICIES IS HINDERED.

LEGISLATION I HAVE PROPOSED AUTHORIZES THE CONGRESS TO
REVIEW THE INITIATIVES, PRIORITIES AND THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE
SESSION IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS
OF THE PRESIDENT.

④ CONGRESS HAS CONTINUALLY SUFFERED FROM THE ABSENCE OF LEGAL
COUNSEL TO REPRESENT IT IN COURT PROCEEDINGS. AN OFFICE OF
CONGRESSIONAL COUNSEL WOULD CHANGE THAT.

THE QUALITY OF CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION HAS A DIRECT BEARING
ON THE DECISIONS WE MAKE. INNOVATIVE MEASURES COORDINATED BY AN
OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS WOULD MAKE CONGRESS A
BETTER INFORMED BODY.

④ FOURTH, THE CONGRESS MUST TAKE FORCEFUL LEGISLATIVE ACTION TO
DEVELOP POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES THAT CAN MOVE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
OUT OF WHAT IS OFTEN VIEWED TODAY AS "CRISIS MANAGEMENT."

WE HAVE NO LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN THIS GOVERNMENT, AND THIS HAS
BEEN MOST CLEARLY SHOWN IN ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO ADDRESS
SIMULTANEOUS PROBLEMS OF RECESSION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION.

ABOVE ALL, WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT WASHINGTON DOES NOT
HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS. THERE IS SOLID EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCE AS
WELL AS GRASS ROOTS KNOWLEDGE IN OUR STATE CAPITOLS, IN OUR ACADEMIC
ESTABLISHMENT, AND THROUGHOUT THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR.

WE NEED TO ESTABLISH A BETTER WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE 50 GOVERNORS AND THE PRESIDENT. *Ed. Council*

WE NEED TO NURTURE A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE
AND FEDERAL LEGISLATORS TO EXPLORE, RESEARCH AND RECOMMEND
SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL CONCERN -- FOOD, ENERGY, JOBS,
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH.

WE NEED TO RESTORE THE PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT
BY ENCOURAGING THEIR PARTICIPATION, SHOWING THEM THAT IT
UNDERSTANDS THEIR PROBLEMS AND MAKES AN HONEST AND COMPASSIONATE
EFFORT TO HELP SOLVE THEM,

I DO NOT ACCEPT THE CONVENTIONAL ASSESSMENT THAT AMERICANS
ARE READY TO SUPPORT A RADICAL DISMANTLING OF GOVERNMENTAL
INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER LEVEL
OF JUSTICE AND WELL-BEING AMONG OUR CITIZENS.

THE PEOPLE ARE NOT NECESSARILY ASKING FOR SOMETHING NEW AND
REVOLUTIONARY. THEY ARE SEEKING A RETURN TO FUNDAMENTALS, TO
STANDARDS THAT ARE BASIC AND EVEN OLD FASHIONED. PEOPLE WANT
HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE. THEY WANT DECENCY AND
FAIR PLAY. THEY WANT TO BE TRUSTED SO THAT THEY CAN TRUST THEIR
GOVERNMENT.

ONE OF THE GREAT MORAL POLITICAL LEADERS OF OUR TIME WAS
ADLAI STEVENSON. HE REMINDED US OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF SELF-
GOVERNMENT WHEN HE SAID THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT SELF-EXECUTING.

CRITICAL THINKERS AND THINKING CRITICS MUST BE GIVEN THE
OPPORTUNITY TO COME TOGETHER TO SEE NEW FACTS IN THE LIGHT
OF OLD PRINCIPLES, AND TO EVALUATE OLD PRINCIPLES IN THE
LIGHT OF NEW FACTS, BY DELIBERATION, DEBATE, AND DIALOGUE.

THE NECESSITY OF OUR GOVERNMENT TO BE RUN IN A SPIRIT OF
PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION, AND NOT IN A CONTINUING CONDITION
OF CONFRONTATION, HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT.

THE FUTURE BEGINS NOW.

THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE.



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