

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ASSOCIATED PRESS BROADCASTERS

Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Today I want to talk to you about a highly important but very poorly defined issue. And I want to focus on the role of the press in reporting this issue.

The issue is "Big Government." It has been continually reported that this issue is a matter of widespread public concern. But the real problem is that the words have no precise meaning, no actual definition in the public mind.

In fact, "Big Government" is one of those expressions which conveys a feeling more than a meaning. And to the extent that it does so, it confuses the public understanding of the issues.

The press has a special responsibility toward the English language. It has to keep it precise. And there is a good reason for that: when our language is unclear, our thoughts become unclear, and barriers are erected across the path of responsible action addressed to the real issues.

Let me give you an example. In the 1950's, there was a feeling that the Soviets posed some sort of nameless but genuine threat to our way of life. Because of that feeling, there arose words and phrases like "subversive" and "un-American."

Those expressions gained great popularity and developed a force of their own in the public mind. But the trouble was that no one had a clear idea what the words were intended to mean. And the more they were used, the more that sensible communication was abused, the more confused the public became.

That condition persisted until an intelligent and courageous man named Edward R. Murrow stood up and said that things had gone far enough -- that our words had lost their sense, that there were not "communists" and "subversives" under every window sill.

Nor was that the last time that America suffered from meaningless language. Anyone who listened to the news during the past decade remembers the so-called "protective reaction" strikes in the Vietnam war, or the social polarization with opposing groups calling each other "hippies" or "fascists." No one can forget how we agonized over the "permissiveness" of our society -- whatever that meant -- or how Ron Ziegler became the butt of many a newsroom joke by saying that one of Mr. Nixon's statements had been "rendered inoperative."

This year is no different. There is another feeling abroad in the land which troubles the American people. It is the feeling that after Vietnam, after Watergate, and particularly after the terrible mismanagement of the economy and the drastic decline in family income, there is something fundamentally wrong with our government.

Although none of those things has any necessary relation to the size of government, the expression which has arisen to convey that feeling is "Big Government."

It has become so popular that one can scarcely turn on the radio or television without hearing another indictment of "Big Government," another charge that "Big Government" is responsible for some outrage or another perpetrated on an unsuspecting public.

But what do we really mean when we use the expression? Do we actually know what we're talking about? Does the term "Big Government" mean the same thing to any two reporters -- or any two candidates, or any two citizens?

I don't think so. And our confusion becomes clear when we try to define the expression.

If we use it to mean that the actual number of Federal employees has grown beyond acceptable bounds, then we simply are wrong.

The number of persons employed by the Federal government is scarcely larger than it was in the late 1940's. And our population has grown a good deal since then.

How many of you know how many people actually work for the government?

I'll tell you. As of September of last year, the Federal government employed some 1,174,961 persons, not counting Postal Service employees and blue-collar workers.

That's it: One million people. That's your bureaucracy, including the secretaries and the file clerks and the office assistants. Less than one half of one percent of our population is responsible for administering our thousands of laws, handling the hundreds of thousands of requests and complaints, regulating the thousands of businesses. It is their job to see to it that the nation's health services, agriculture, foreign affairs, defense, highways, sea coasts, criminal systems, transportation, housing and education are kept in working order for the other 214 million.

Apparently that is not what we mean when we talk about "Big Government."

Maybe what we mean is that the Federal government is taking more of our wealth than ever before.

But that simply isn't so. The numbers are larger, to be sure -- but so is our economy. In fact, the Federal budget is almost exactly the same percentage of our Gross National Product as it was when Mr. Eisenhower was President.

Admittedly, public welfare spending has increased over the past ten years. But it has risen at a total cost of only six percent of our Gross National Product over the decade -- a very modest price tag for the remarkable social gains we made in that period. Moreover, the increases in budgeting for social programs began to drop sometime ago.

Or maybe what we mean when we talk about "Big Government" is that there are unwanted and wasteful Federal programs which ought to be eliminated.

Yes, Congress is taking serious action to provide for in-depth evaluations of all Federal programs -- reforming or terminating programs where necessary. But poll after poll has shown that, although the American people are unhappy about "Big Government," very often when specific programs are mentioned, the public is wholeheartedly in support of them.

Last November, the Joint Economic Committee held hearings to find out how the American people felt about their government and their economy. A number of professional pollsters testified, and their evidence was unanimous: Americans overwhelmingly favor a Federal job program, a system of national care and health insurance, and increased aid to the elderly.

And although some Presidential candidates may tell you that the public is disenchanted with big government and its social welfare programs, the people say otherwise. The pollsters told us that, of those people who favor cuts in government spending, the vast majority want the cuts in defense spending, foreign military aid and the space program -- none of which is associated in the public mind with "Big Government."

So here we have a surprising and puzzling contradiction in the minds of the American people: They are overwhelmingly in favor of those government programs which directly touch their lives and those of the people around them -- and yet they are unhappy with "Big Government."

In other words, they disapprove of the whole, but they approve of the sum of its parts.

How did we get in this situation? How did this contradiction arise?

I think it came about for three reasons. First, the public is disappointed and disillusioned -- and for good reason. In the last three years alone, American workers have taken a 5 1/2 percent cut in the real value of their take-home pay, forcing their purchasing power back to 1965 levels and wiping out any progress which they had hoped to make. At the same time, they were watching their friends and family thrust into unemployment.

As a result, and with no one else to blame, they have justifiably accused the government -- and government has proven unwilling or unable to act. When that happens, resentment builds.

Second, people don't perceive a difference among the various levels and kinds of government.

When they are unhappy with their property tax, or angry because they have to wait in a long line for license plates, or mad at their school system for one reason or another, they blame "Big Government."

The fact that the federal government may have little or nothing to do with their legitimate complaints does not keep them from criticizing it anyway -- because it all seems to be part of the same machinery, the same conglomerate of telephones, typewriters and paperwork. All too readily, we overlook the fact that the only real growth in the size and complexity of government has taken place at the state and local level.

Third and finally, this is an election year. And some politicians, knowing that Watergate is still on our minds, have sensed resentment in our people, and would like to exploit it. So they have launched a campaign to condemn the workings and impugn the motives of so-called "Big Government."

The press picked up that indictment of the system -- and in doing so they made "Big Government" a big issue. There is nothing wrong with that. That is what the free press is supposed to do -- to get the story to the public and promote their understanding of the issues.

But I want to suggest that in covering that story, the press has not been careful to restrict the use of this catch-all term "Big Government," or to find out what it might mean in context.

And I find that rather strange. Because if a candidate had made a specific allegation that, say, the Department of Agriculture wasn't doing its job, the press would never have carried that allegation by itself.

It would have asked precisely how, and if possible who and where, and why they were not doing the job. The press would have sought out the facts behind the allegation and decided whether or not the charge was justified. It would have assembled figures, conducted interviews, and made objective decisions based on hard evidence. And the results would have become part of the story.

Yet, when candidates charge that all of government is at fault -- that "Big Government" has become a monster and made life intolerable -- too many members of the press have made virtually no effort to verify the charge or to get the facts straight.

Of course, much of that is understandable. The press has limited research facilities, and most print and electronic journalists work under severe deadline pressures.

In those conditions, it is not surprising that a story of limited length simply cannot afford the space for a detailed discussion of the effectiveness of the federal government.

But that need not mean that we neglect the issue.

So, I think the news men and women -- who are, after all, members of America's most influential educational institutions, the press -- should force the candidates to tell them what they mean when they talk about "Big Government."

When they say they will do away with "Big Government," they should be asked how they intend to get us a little government which conceivably can serve the needs of 215 million people in the most complex society on earth.

And when they say that we have a bloated bureaucracy, then we should ask them where it is located, how it is bloated, exactly who should be removed from office, and how they expect to get the job done with less than current payrolls. And what plans do they have for government employees who suddenly would find themselves without jobs.

And when they say that "Big Government" must be replaced by state and local government, then they should be asked how the State of Nebraska is supposed to map out and implement a national plan to restore health to our economy. Or how the City of Cincinnati is supposed to set national standards for clean air and water. Or how Westchester County, New York, is supposed to regulate our giant corporations and ensure the safety of our consumers. Or how Greater Los Angeles is supposed to develop the taxing power to reach vast concentrations of wealth which extend over state -- and even national -- borders.

And when we are through asking those questions, we should ask them how state and local government is supposed to do all these things without becoming the dreadful "Big Government" which we were trying to avoid in the first place. Or how state and local government -- which already are stretched to the limits -- are supposed to take on those responsibilities without massive increases in the tax rate.

When the press asks those questions -- and the public has the chance to see what the "Big Government" argument is all about -- then at least we will know what we mean by the words we use.

And we may find that there really is something terribly wrong with "Big Government," and that serious, drastic changes ought to be made.

Certainly, we need not defend blindly everything that government has done in the past 40 years.

I don't know anyone who denies that mistakes have been made or that expectations have exceeded government's ability to deliver results.

And there is a special obligation on those of us who believe in strong, positive government to understand and correct these shortcomings.

I have no doubt whatsoever that those needed improvements can be made.

But the American people want a government which is substantial and active enough to provide them the services they pay for, and strong enough to assure their rights as citizens and protect their needs as consumers.

It would be a very grave error to assume that Americans have permanently washed their hands of a strong and active national government. What they are seeking is a government that demonstrates a new competence, a new sense of fairness and a new concern for individuals.

When Americans again encounter that kind of responsiveness, I predict that the people's trust and confidence in government will again become a dominant fact of our political life.

Most critics of government have overlooked the continuing faith that Americans place in our constitutional system. Despite the failures and disappointments of recent years, there has been no popular outcry for wholesale constitutional reform or for junking our democratic system.

The underpinnings of American democracy are sound. The people have not abandoned hope. And they understand clearly that our society could never survive without an active and strong central government.

What the people are demanding today, and what it is the duty of elected leaders to provide, is a government that works, one that is competent, one that is fair, and one that cares about the problems of individual citizens.

This will require imagination and perseverance. But, above all, it will require the leadership of a President who believes that government can again be a vital force for justice and opportunity in America -- a true steward and guardian of the public interest.

Working with Congress and with our state and local governments, such a President -- if he really cares -- can gradually turn our national government around, away from petty efforts at political empire-building, and toward government's only legitimate function: Serving the people.

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✓ John Salishewsky
✓ Curtis Beckman

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ASSOCIATED PRESS BROADCASTERS

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

JUNE 4, 1976

Larry Gzivak to be honored
Robert E. Enson Award
for distinguished service
to Broadcasting.

TODAY I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT A HIGHLY IMPORTANT BUT
VERY POORLY DEFINED ISSUE. AND I WANT TO FOCUS ON THE ROLE
OF THE ^{media} ~~PRESS~~ IN REPORTING THIS ISSUE.

THE ISSUE IS "BIG GOVERNMENT." IT HAS BEEN CONTINUALLY
REPORTED THAT THIS ISSUE IS A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD PUBLIC
CONCERN. BUT THE REAL PROBLEM IS THAT THE WORDS HAVE NO
PRECISE MEANING, NO ACTUAL DEFINITION IN THE PUBLIC MIND.

IN FACT, "BIG GOVERNMENT" IS ONE OF THOSE EXPRESSIONS WHICH
CONVEYS A FEELING MORE THAN A MEANING, AND TO THE EXTENT THAT
IT DOES SO, IT CONFUSES THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES.

THE PRESS HAS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE. IT HAS TO KEEP IT PRECISE.

AND THERE IS A GOOD REASON FOR THAT: WHEN OUR LANGUAGE IS

UNCLEAR, OUR THOUGHTS BECOME UNCLEAR, AND BARRIERS ARE ERECTED

ACROSS THE PATH OF RESPONSIBLE ACTION ADDRESSED TO THE REAL

ISSUES.

↳ LET ME GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE. IN THE 1950'S, THERE WAS A
FEELING THAT THE SOVIETS POSED SOME SORT OF NAMELESS BUT GENUINE
THREAT TO OUR WAY OF LIFE. ↳ BECAUSE OF THAT FEELING, THERE AROSE
WORDS AND PHRASES LIKE "SUBVERSIVE" AND "UN-AMERICAN."

↳ THOSE EXPRESSIONS GAINED GREAT POPULARITY AND DEVELOPED
A FORCE OF THEIR OWN IN THE PUBLIC MIND. ↳ BUT THE TROUBLE WAS

THAT NO ONE HAD A CLEAR IDEA WHAT THE WORDS WERE INTENDED TO

MEAN. ↳ AND THE MORE THEY WERE USED, ^{and} THE MORE THAT SENSIBLE

COMMUNICATION WAS ABUSED, THE MORE CONFUSED THE PUBLIC BECAME. °

↳ THAT CONDITION PERSISTED UNTIL AN INTELLIGENT AND COURAGEOUS
MAN NAMED EDWARD R. MURROW STOOD UP AND SAID THAT THINGS HAD GONE
FAR ENOUGH -- THAT OUR WORDS HAD LOST THEIR SENSE, THAT THERE
WERE NOT "COMMUNISTS" AND "SUBVERSIVES" UNDER EVERY WINDOW SILL.

↳ NOR WAS THAT THE LAST TIME THAT AMERICA SUFFERED FROM
MEANINGLESS LANGUAGE. ↳ ANYONE WHO LISTENED TO THE NEWS DURING
THE PAST DECADE REMEMBERS THE SO-CALLED "PROTECTIVE REACTION"
STRIKES IN THE VIETNAM WAR, OR THE SOCIAL POLARIZATION WITH
OPPOSING GROUPS CALLING EACH OTHER "HIPPIES" OR "FASCISTS."

↳ NO ONE CAN FORGET HOW WE AGONIZED OVER THE "PERMISSIVENESS"
OF OUR SOCIETY -- WHATEVER THAT MEANT -- OR HOW RON ZIEGLER
BECAME THE BUTT OF MANY A NEWSROOM JOKE BY SAYING THAT ONE
OF MR. NIXON'S STATEMENTS HAD BEEN "RENDERED INOPERATIVE."

L THIS YEAR IS NO DIFFERENT. L THERE IS ANOTHER FEELING ABROAD
IN THE LAND WHICH TROUBLES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE L IT IS THE
FEELING THAT AFTER VIETNAM, AFTER WATERGATE, AND PARTICULARLY
AFTER THE TERRIBLE MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY AND THE DRASTIC
DECLINE IN FAMILY INCOME, THERE IS SOMETHING FUNDAMENTALLY
WRONG WITH OUR GOVERNMENT.

L ALTHOUGH NONE OF THOSE THINGS HAS ANY NECESSARY RELATION TO
THE SIZE OF GOVERNMENT, THE EXPRESSION WHICH HAS ARISEN TO
CONVEY THAT FEELING IS "BIG GOVERNMENT."

L IT HAS BECOME SO POPULAR THAT ONE CAN SCARCELY TURN ON THE
RADIO OR TELEVISION WITHOUT HEARING ANOTHER INDICTMENT OF "BIG
GOVERNMENT," ANOTHER CHARGE THAT "BIG GOVERNMENT" IS RESPONSIBLE
FOR SOME OUTRAGE OR ANOTHER PERPETRATED ON AN UNSUSPECTING
PUBLIC.

L BUT WHAT DO WE REALLY MEAN WHEN WE USE THE EXPRESSION? DO WE
ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT? DOES THE TERM "BIG
GOVERNMENT" MEAN THE SAME THING TO ANY TWO REPORTERS -- OR
ANY TWO CANDIDATES, OR ANY TWO CITIZENS?

L I DON'T THINK SO. L AND OUR CONFUSION BECOMES ^{evident} ~~clear~~ WHEN
WE TRY TO DEFINE THE EXPRESSION.

IF WE USE IT TO MEAN THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
HAS GROWN BEYOND ACCEPTABLE BOUNDS, THEN WE SIMPLY ARE WRONG.

L THE NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
IS SCARCELY LARGER THAN IT WAS IN THE ^{1950's} ~~LATE 1940's~~. AND OUR
POPULATION HAS GROWN A GOOD DEAL SINCE THEN.

L HOW MANY OF ^{us know} ~~you know~~ HOW MANY PEOPLE ACTUALLY WORK FOR
THE GOVERNMENT?

I'LL TELL YOU. AS OF SEPTEMBER OF LAST YEAR, THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED SOME 1,174,961 PERSONS, NOT COUNTING

POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES AND BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS.

a little over
L THAT'S IT: ONE MILLION PEOPLE. THAT'S YOUR BUREAUCRACY,

INCLUDING THE SECRETARIES AND THE FILE CLERKS AND THE OFFICE

ASSISTANTS L LESS THAN ONE HALF OF ONE PERCENT OF OUR POPULATION

IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING OUR THOUSANDS OF LAWS,

HANDLING THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS,

REGULATING THE THOUSANDS OF *enterprises/* ~~BUSINESSES~~. IT IS THEIR JOB TO

SEE TO IT THAT THE NATION'S HEALTH SERVICES, *Scientific & Technical activities* AGRICULTURE, FOREIGN

Forests & Public lands AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, HIGHWAYS, SEA COASTS, CRIMINAL SYSTEMS, ~~Forests~~,

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND EDUCATION ARE KEPT IN WORKING ORDER

FOR THE OTHER 214 MILLION.

L APPARENTLY THAT IS NOT WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT "BIG GOVERNMENT."

L MAYBE WHAT WE MEAN IS THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS TAKING MORE OF OUR WEALTH THAN EVER BEFORE.

L BUT THAT SIMPLY ISN'T SO. L THE NUMBERS ARE LARGER, TO BE SURE -- BUT SO IS OUR ECONOMY. L IN FACT, THE FEDERAL BUDGET IS ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF OUR GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT AS IT WAS WHEN MR. EISENHOWER WAS PRESIDENT.

L ADMITTEDLY, PUBLIC WELFARE SPENDING HAS INCREASED OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS. L BUT IT HAS RISEN AT A TOTAL COST OF ONLY SIX PERCENT OF OUR GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OVER THE DECADE -- A VERY MODEST PRICE TAG FOR THE REMARKABLE SOCIAL GAINS WE MADE IN THAT PERIOD. L MOREOVER, THE INCREASES IN BUDGETING FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS BEGAN TO DROP SOMETIME AGO.

L OR MAYBE WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT "BIG GOVERNMENT"

IS THAT THERE ARE UNWANTED AND WASTEFUL FEDERAL PROGRAMS

WHICH OUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED.

— Well here we
maybe on solid ground

L YES, CONGRESS IS TAKING SERIOUS ACTION TO PROVIDE FOR IN-DEPTH

EVALUATIONS OF ALL FEDERAL PROGRAMS -- REFORMING OR TERMINATING

PROGRAMS WHERE NECESSARY. BUT POLL AFTER POLL HAS SHOWN THAT,

ALTHOUGH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT "BIG GOVERNMENT,"

VERY OFTEN WHEN SPECIFIC PROGRAMS ARE MENTIONED, THE PUBLIC

IS WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN SUPPORT OF THEM.

L LAST NOVEMBER, THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE HELD HEARINGS TO

FIND OUT HOW THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FELT ABOUT THEIR GOVERNMENT

AND THEIR ECONOMY.

A NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL POLLSTERS TESTIFIED, AND THEIR EVIDENCE WAS UNANIMOUS: AMERICANS OVERWHELMINGLY FAVOR

A FEDERAL JOB PROGRAM, A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL CARE AND
HEALTH INSURANCE, AND INCREASED AID TO THE ELDERLY,

ADDITIONAL AID TO THE HANDICAPPED AND TO EDUCATION.

AND ALTHOUGH SOME PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES MAY TELL
YOU THAT THE PUBLIC IS DISENCHANTED WITH BIG GOVERNMENT

AND ITS SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS, THE PEOPLE SAY OTHERWISE.

THE POLLSTERS TOLD US THAT, OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO FAVOR
CUTS IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING, THE VAST MAJORITY WANT THE

CUTS IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING, THE VAST MAJORITY WANT

THE CUTS IN DEFENSE SPENDING, FOREIGN MILITARY AID AND

THE SPACE PROGRAM -- NONE OF WHICH IS ASSOCIATED IN

THE PUBLIC MIND WITH "BIG GOVERNMENT".

SO HERE WE HAVE A SURPRISING AND PUZZLING CONTRADICTION
IN THE MINDS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE:

THE ARE OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR OF THOSE GOVERNMENT
PROGRAMS WHICH DIRECTLY TOUCH THEIR LIVES AND THOSE OF
THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM -- AND YET THEY ARE UNHAPPY WITH
"BIG GOVERNMENT."

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY DISAPPROVE OF THE WHOLE, BUT
THEY APPROVE OF THE SUM OF ITS PARTS.

HOW DID WE GET IN THIS SITUATION? HOW DID THIS
CONTRADICTION ARISE?

THREE REASONS

I THINK IT CAME ABOUT FOR THREE REASONS. FIRST, THE
PUBLIC IS DISAPPOINTED AND DISILLUSIONED -- AND FOR GOOD
REASONS.

THERE IS THE DISILLUSIONMENT CAUSED BY THE TRAGIC
WAR IN VIETNAM. THIS WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE SHAMEFUL
AND FRIGHTENING ABUSE OF POLITICAL POWER AND THE
CORRUPTION OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM KNOWN AS WATERGATE;

THEN THE EXPOSE OF SCANDAL AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST
IN CONGRESS -- ALL FURTHER EXACERBATED ~~OR~~ INTENSIFIED BY
CORPORATE PAYOFFS AND CRIME, THESE THINGS ALONE COULD
HAVE DESTROYED GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE -- BUT
ADD TO THIS THE INFLATION AND RECESSION OF THE LAST
3 YEARS. AMERICAN WORKERS HAVE TAKEN A 5 1/2 PERCENT CUT
IN THE REAL VALUE OF THEIR TAKE-HOME PAY, FORCING THEIR
PURCHASING POWER BACK TO 1965 LEVELS AND WIPING OUT ANY
PROGRESS WHICH THEY HAD HOPED TO MAKE. AT THE SAME TIME,
THEY WERE WATCHING THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ^{being} PUSHED INTO
UNEMPLOYMENT.

L AS A RESULT, AND WITH NO ONE ELSE TO BLAME, THEY HAVE
JUSTIFIABLY ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT -- AND GOVERNMENT HAS PROVEN
UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO ACT. L WHEN THAT HAPPENS, RESENTMENT BUILDS.

24 SECOND, PEOPLE DON'T PERCEIVE A DIFFERENCE AMONG THE
VARIOUS LEVELS AND KINDS OF GOVERNMENT.

L WHEN THEY ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR PROPERTY TAX, OR ANGRY
BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO WAIT IN A LONG LINE FOR LICENSE PLATES, OR
MAD AT THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, THEY
BLAME "BIG GOVERNMENT."

L THE FACT THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE LITTLE OR
NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS DOES NOT KEEP THEM
FROM CRITICIZING IT ~~ANYWAY~~ -- BECAUSE IT ALL SEEMS TO BE PART OF
THE SAME MACHINERY, THE SAME CONGLOMERATE OF TELEPHONES, TYPEWRITERS
AND PAPERWORK.

ALL TOO READILY, WE OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT THE ONLY REAL GROWTH
IN THE SIZE ~~AND COMPLEXITY~~ OF GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE AT THE
STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL.

THIRD AND FINALLY, THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR. AND SOME
POLITICIANS, KNOWING THAT WATERGATE IS STILL ON OUR MINDS,
HAVE SENSED RESENTMENT IN OUR PEOPLE, AND WOULD LIKE TO EXPLOIT
IT. SO THEY HAVE LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO CONDEMN THE WORKINGS
AND IMPUGN THE MOTIVES OF SO-CALLED "BIG GOVERNMENT."

THE PRESS PICKED UP THAT INDICTMENT OF THE SYSTEM -- AND
IN DOING SO THEY MADE "BIG GOVERNMENT" A BIG ISSUE. THERE IS
NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT. THAT IS WHAT THE FREE PRESS IS
SUPPOSED TO DO -- TO GET THE STORY TO THE PUBLIC AND PROMOTE
THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES.

↳ BUT I WANT TO SUGGEST THAT IN COVERING THAT STORY, THE PRESS HAS NOT BEEN CAREFUL TO RESTRICT THE USE OF THIS CATCH-ALL TERM

"BIG GOVERNMENT," OR TO FIND OUT WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN IN CONTEXT.

↳ AND I FIND THAT RATHER STRANGE ↳ BECAUSE IF A CANDIDATE HAD MADE A SPECIFIC ALLEGATION THAT, SAY, THE DEPARTMENT OF

AGRICULTURE WASN'T DOING ITS JOB, THE PRESS WOULD NEVER HAVE CARRIED THAT ALLEGATION BY ITSELF.

↳ IT WOULD HAVE ASKED PRECISELY HOW, AND IF POSSIBLE WHO AND WHERE, AND WHY THEY WERE NOT DOING THE JOB. ↳ THE PRESS WOULD HAVE SOUGHT OUT THE FACTS BEHIND THE ALLEGATION AND DECIDED WHETHER OR

NOT THE CHARGE WAS JUSTIFIED ↳ IT WOULD HAVE ASSEMBLED FIGURES, CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS, AND MADE OBJECTIVE DECISIONS BASED ON HARD EVIDENCE ↳ AND THE RESULTS WOULD HAVE BECOME PART OF THE STORY.

↳ YET, WHEN CANDIDATES CHARGE THAT ALL OF GOVERNMENT IS AT
FAULT -- THAT "BIG GOVERNMENT" HAS BECOME A MONSTER AND MADE
LIFE INTOLERABLE -- TOO MANY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS HAVE MADE
VIRTUALLY NO EFFORT TO VERIFY THE CHARGE OR TO GET THE FACTS
STRAIGHT.

↳ OF COURSE, MUCH OF THAT IS UNDERSTANDABLE. ↳ THE PRESS HAS
LIMITED RESEARCH FACILITIES, AND MOST PRINT AND ELECTRONIC
JOURNALISTS WORK UNDER SEVERE DEADLINE PRESSURES.

↳ IN THOSE CONDITIONS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT A STORY OF
LIMITED LENGTH SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD THE SPACE FOR A DETAILED
DISCUSSION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

↳ BUT THAT NEED NOT MEAN THAT WE NEGLECT THE ISSUE.

L So, I THINK THE NEWS MEN AND WOMEN -- WHO ARE, AFTER ALL,
MEMBERS OF AMERICA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS,
the media
THE PRESS -- SHOULD FORCE THE CANDIDATES TO TELL THEM WHAT THEY

MEAN WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT "BIG GOVERNMENT *and what they*
intend to do about it!"

L WHEN THEY SAY THEY WILL DO AWAY WITH "BIG GOVERNMENT,"

THEY SHOULD BE ASKED HOW THEY INTEND TO GET US A LITTLE

GOVERNMENT WHICH CONCEIVABLY CAN SERVE THE NEEDS OF 215 MILLION

PEOPLE IN THE MOST COMPLEX SOCIETY ON EARTH?

L AND WHEN THEY SAY THAT WE HAVE A BLOATED BUREAUCRACY, THEN WE

SHOULD ASK THEM WHERE IT IS LOCATED, HOW IT IS BLOATED, EXACTLY

WHO SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE, AND HOW THEY EXPECT TO GET THE

JOB DONE WITH LESS THAN CURRENT PAYROLLS? AND WHAT PLANS DO THEY

HAVE FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHO SUDDENLY WOULD FIND THEMSELVES

WITHOUT JOBS?

L AND WHEN THEY SAY THAT "BIG GOVERNMENT" MUST BE REPLACED BY
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THEN THEY SHOULD BE ASKED HOW THE STATE
OF NEBRASKA IS SUPPOSED TO MAP OUT AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL PLAN
TO RESTORE HEALTH TO OUR ECONOMY? L OR HOW THE CITY OF CINCINNATI
IS SUPPOSED TO SET NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CLEAN AIR AND WATER?

L OR HOW WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK, IS SUPPOSED TO REGULATE OUR
GIANT CORPORATIONS AND ENSURE THE SAFETY OF OUR CONSUMERS? OR
HOW GREATER LOS ANGELES IS SUPPOSED TO DEVELOP THE TAXING POWER
TO REACH VAST CONCENTRATIONS OF WEALTH WHICH EXTEND OVER STATE --
AND EVEN NATIONAL -- BORDERS?

L AND WHEN WE ARE THROUGH ASKING THOSE QUESTIONS, WE SHOULD ASK
THEM HOW STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS SUPPOSED TO DO ALL THESE
THINGS WITHOUT BECOMING THE DREADFUL "BIG GOVERNMENT" WHICH WE WERE
TRYING TO AVOID IN THE FIRST PLACE?

(177)
Furthermore in the last 15 years
Government, by the expressed
will of ^{the} elected representatives has
taken comprehensive action in
a number of critically important
areas.

Consumer Protection - Drugs, Fabrics,
automobiles, Toys - etc

- Medical Research + Health Care

- Space Science + Engineering

- Nutrition - Occupational Safety

- and Environmental protection -

All of these actions by Government
are a response to public demand
and a new sense of awareness
by the citizen electorate.

OR HOW STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT -- WHICH ALREADY ARE STRETCHED TO THE LIMITS -- ARE SUPPOSED TO TAKE ON THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT MASSIVE INCREASES IN THE TAX RATE?

WHEN THE PRESS ASKS THOSE QUESTIONS -- AND THE PUBLIC HAS THE CHANCE TO SEE WHAT THE "BIG GOVERNMENT" ARGUMENT IS ALL ABOUT -- THEN AT LEAST WE WILL KNOW WHAT WE MEAN BY THE WORDS WE USE.

AND WE MAY FIND THAT THERE REALLY IS SOMETHING TERRIBLY WRONG WITH "BIG GOVERNMENT," AND THAT SERIOUS, DRASTIC CHANGES OUGHT TO BE MADE.

CERTAINLY, WE NEED NOT DEFEND BLINDLY EVERYTHING THAT GOVERNMENT HAS DONE IN THE PAST 40 YEARS.

I DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHO DENIES THAT MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE OR THAT EXPECTATIONS HAVE EXCEEDED GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO DELIVER RESULTS.

L FURTHERMORE, IN THE LAST 15 YEARS, GOVERNMENT
BY THE EXPRESSED WILL OF THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES,
HAS TAKEN COMPREHENSIVE ACTION IN A NUMBER OF CRITICALLY
IMPORTANT AREAS --

L-- CONSUMER PROTECTION -- DRUGS, FABRICS, AUTOMOBILES,
TOYS.

L-- MEDICAL RESEARCH AND HEALTH CARE

L-- SPACE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

L-- NUTRITION

L-- OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

-- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

ALL OF THESE ACTIONS BY GOVERNMENT ARE A RESPONSE
TO PUBLIC DEMAND AND A NEW SENSE OF AWARENESS BY THE
CITIZEN ELECTORATE.

AND THERE IS A SPECIAL OBLIGATION ON THOSE OF US
WHO BELIEVE IN STRONG, POSITIVE GOVERNMENT TO UNDERSTAND
AND CORRECT THE SHORTCOMINGS THAT BECOME EVIDENT.

L I HAVE NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER THAT THOSE NEEDED
IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE. AND, SOME VERY BASIC CHANGES
HAVE BEEN MADE -- FOR EXAMPLE:

L THE WAR POWER ACT, PLACING LIMITATIONS ON THE
EXERCISE OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS TO COMMIT AMERICAN ARMED
FORCES TO COMBAT WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF CONGRESS.

(1) L THE CREATION OF AN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE BY THE
SENATE TO SUPERVISE, MONITOR AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE
LEGISLATIVE CONTROLS OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF INTELLIGENCE
AGENCIES. FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.

(2) L THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE IN THE AREA OF FOREIGN
POLICY INCLUDING A SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE
FORMULATION OF FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND GIVING
CONGRESS GREATER OVERSIGHT ON THE EXECUTION OF POLICY.

(3) THE BUDGET CONTROL ACT -- WHERE CONGRESS CAREFULLY
ASSESSES ALL OF ITS PROGRAMS -- ESTIMATING COSTS AND
OUTLAYS AND DISCIPLINING ITSELF TO ADHERENCE TO BUDGET
PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

(4) THE OPEN MEETING ACT - SUNSHINE LAW - REQUIRING
ALL COMMITTEE MEETINGS TO BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS
BY ROLL CALL VOTE MEMBERS PLACE THEMSELVES ON RECORD FOR
A CLOSED SESSION.

(5) LEGISLATION IS NOW ON THE SENATE CALENDAR REQUIRING
ALL FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO BE RE-EXAMINED FROM ZERO POINT
IF THEY ARE TO BE CONTINUED -- A COMPLETE EXHAUSTIVE
REVIEW THAT WILL NECESSITATE RE-ENACTMENT OF AUTHORIZATION
AND APPROPRIATION IF THE PROGRAMS ARE TO CONTINUE.

(6) AND FINALLY, THE CREATION OF A MODERN COMPUTERIZED
LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM.

L BUT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS
SUBSTANTIAL AND ACTIVE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THEM THE SERVICES
THEY PAY FOR, AND STRONG ENOUGH TO ASSURE THEIR RIGHTS
AS CITIZENS AND PROTECT THEIR NEEDS AS CONSUMERS.

IT WOULD BE A VERY GRAVE ERROR TO ASSUME THAT AMERICANS HAVE PERMANENTLY WASHED THEIR HANDS OF A STRONG AND ACTIVE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. WHAT THEY ARE SEEKING IS A GOVERNMENT THAT DEMONSTRATES A NEW COMPETENCE, A NEW SENSE OF FAIRNESS AND A NEW CONCERN FOR INDIVIDUALS.

WHEN AMERICANS AGAIN ENCOUNTER THAT KIND OF RESPONSIVENESS, I PREDICT THAT THE PEOPLE'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT WILL AGAIN BECOME A DOMINANT FACT OF OUR POLITICAL LIFE.

MOST CRITICS OF GOVERNMENT HAVE OVERLOOKED THE CONTINUING FAITH THAT AMERICANS PLACE IN OUR CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. DESPITE THE FAILURES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS OF RECENT YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN NO POPULAR OUTCRY FOR WHOLESAL CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM OR FOR JUNKING OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM OR INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES.

L THE UNDERPINNINGS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY ARE
SOUND. L THE PEOPLE HAVE NOT ABANDONED HOPE. L AND THEY
UNDERSTAND CLEARLY THAT OUR SOCIETY COULD NEVER SURVIVE
WITHOUT AN ACTIVE AND STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. and
L SUCH A GOVERNMENT IS NOT BEYOND OUR REACH OR
CAPABILITY. L BUT, IT WILL REQUIRE A MUCH CLOSER AND EFFECTIVE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, AND A
NEW CONCEPT OF THE PRESIDENCY. L OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM
IS A FEDERAL SYSTEM - A DELINEATION OF POWERS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON
AND STATE GOVERNMENT. L THERE MUST BE COMMUNICATION --
A WORKING PARTNERSHIP -- PARTICULARLY AT THE EXECUTIVE
LEVEL WHERE BUDGET POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, ADMINISTRATION
AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION ARE CENTERED. THEREFORE, I
PROPOSE:

(1) REGIONAL COUNCILS -- CONSISTING OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF STATE GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL AGENCIES
UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF A PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEE --

DESIGNED TO COORDINATE AND EVALUATE ON A CONTINUING
BASIS ALL FEDERAL - STATE COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS.

(2) A FEDERAL COUNCIL -- A SUPER CABINET --
THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNORS, MEETING SEVERAL TIMES
EACH YEAR -- CONSULTING ON THE ADEQUACY AND EFFICIENCY
OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS -- BRINGING THE GOVERNORS INTO
THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS -- SEEKING THEIR ADVICE,
THEIR PRIORITIES,

WHAT THE PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING TODAY, AND WHAT IT IS THE DUTY
OF ELECTED LEADERS TO PROVIDE, IS A GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS, ONE
THAT IS COMPETENT, ONE THAT IS FAIR, AND ONE THAT CARES ABOUT
THE PROBLEMS OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS.

L THIS WILL REQUIRE IMAGINATION AND PERSEVERANCE. BUT, ABOVE
ALL, IT WILL REQUIRE THE LEADERSHIP OF A PRESIDENT WHO BELIEVES
THAT GOVERNMENT CAN AGAIN BE A VITAL FORCE FOR JUSTICE AND
OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA -- A TRUE STEWARD AND GUARDIAN OF THE
PUBLIC INTEREST.

h WORKING WITH CONGRESS AND WITH OUR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS,
SUCH A PRESIDENT -- IF HE REALLY CARES -- CAN GRADUALLY TURN OUR
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AROUND, AWAY FROM PETTY EFFORTS AT POLITICAL
EMPIRE-BUILDING, AND TOWARD GOVERNMENT'S ONLY LEGITIMATE FUNCTION:
SERVING THE PEOPLE.



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