

Chronological: Community College Annual Trustees Convention, Sheraton Waikiki

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SPEECH - OCTOBER 8, 1980

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN MY PRESENTATION TODAY BY
SHARING WITH YOU A NUMBER OF ~~TRENDS~~ **EVENTS** AND STATISTICS
OF RECENT YEARS, WHICH WHEN PUT TOGETHER IN A GLOBAL
FRAME OF REFERENCE, RELATE DIRECTLY TO YOUR COLLECTIVE
RESPONSIBILITY.

ON AUGUST 7, 1964, THE UNITED STATES SENATE, BY
A VOTE OF 83 TO 2, ADOPTED THE TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION,
WHICH ESSENTIALLY DECLARED WAR AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM.
IN DOING SO, WE LITERALLY COMMITTED THE LIVES OF
MILLIONS UPON MILLIONS OF YOUNG AMERICAN MEN AND
WOMEN AND UNTOLD BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO WAGE A WAR
THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM OUR CONTINENTAL SHORES.

TO MY KNOWLEDGE, AT THAT TIME THERE WERE NO UNIVERSITIES,
COLLEGES, OR COMMUNITY COLLEGES THAT OFFERED THEIR
STUDENTS FORMAL COURSES ON VIETNAMESE HISTORY, CULTURE,
AND LANGUAGE. THE SITUATION HAD NOT CHANGED MUCH BY
MARCH 1973 WHEN WE MOVED OUR LAST TROOPS OUT, AFTER
LOSING 46,572 MEN, 4,632 PLANES, DROPPING TONS OF
EXPLOSIVES, AND AT AN ESTIMATED COST TO OUR NATION OF
\$140 BILLION. IT WAS TRULY A DEVASTATING WAR -- THE
EFFECTS OF WHICH WE STILL FEEL TODAY. OF THE TOTAL
540,150 VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS RECEIVING COMPENSATION
FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES LAST YEAR, 96,430 --
NEARLY 18 PERCENT -- WERE BEING COMPENSATED FOR
PSYCHIATRIC/NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

ALMOST 39,000 OF THESE VETERANS ARE LABELED PSYCHOTIC;
20,400 HAVE PSYCHONEUROTIC CONDITIONS.

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1979, WHEN THE SO-CALLED IRANIAN
"STUDENTS" OCCUPIED OUR EMBASSY IN TEHRAN AND TOOK 100
HOSTAGES -- 52 OF WHOM ARE STILL SOMEWHERE IN IRAN --
WE ONLY HAD ONE PERSON IN THE SPECIAL STATE DEPARTMENT
TASK FORCE WHO COULD SPEAK FARSI. IN THE SPECIAL NAVAL
TASK FORCE THAT LATER GATHERED NEAR THE PERSIAN GULF,
THERE WAS ONE MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD FARSI.

TODAY, ONLY 15 PERCENT OF OUR AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, AND THAT FIGURE IS
DECLINING. ONLY ONE OUT OF 20 PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
STUDY FRENCH OR GERMAN BEYOND THE SECOND YEAR...BUT NOT
CHINESE OR RUSSIAN.

ACCORDING TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 32,000 U.S. STUDENTS STUDYING RUSSIAN AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL. YET, IN THE SOVIET UNION, IT IS A REQUIREMENT TO STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE FROM THE FIFTH GRADE ON AND ENGLISH IS ONE OF THE TWO MOST POPULAR LANGUAGES STUDIED. IN FACT, THERE ARE MORE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN THE SOVIET UNION THAN THERE ARE STUDENTS STUDYING RUSSIAN IN THE UNITED STATES.

ONE FURTHER STATISTIC, THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES LAST YEAR REPORTED THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST 10,000 ENGLISH-SPEAKING JAPANESE BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES,

YET WE HAVE FEWER THAN 900 AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS IN JAPAN AND ONLY A HANDFUL OF THESE HAVE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF JAPANESE.

WHEN I ASKED THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO ESTIMATE HOW MANY AMERICANS TODAY ARE LEARNING FARSI, THEY DID NOT HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA. THEY HAD ESTIMATES OF HOW MANY FOREIGNERS WERE LEARNING ENGLISH HERE, BUT NOT THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT QUESTION. IN FACT, THEY DOUBTED IF ANYONE WAS STUDYING FARSI, ON OTHER THAN A PURELY CASUAL BASIS.

I COULD GO ON AND ON CITING MORE STATISTICS, BUT I DID THIS TO DEMONSTRATE TO YOU THAT IN OUR 200-YEAR HISTORY,

WE HAVE TENACIOUSLY HUNG ON TO OUR RATHER
SHORTSIGHTED AND EXTREMELY NARROW VIEW THAT WE CAN
LEARN NOTHING FROM THOSE WHO ARE NOT FROM EUROPE.
WE HAVE CLUNG TO OUR EUROPEAN HERITAGE, RESISTING
OR DENYING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN FROM "OUTSIDERS",
FOREIGNERS, OR "BARBARIANS". AT THE SAME TIME, WE
HAVE CLAIMED FOR OURSELVES THE LEADERSHIP ROLE IN
THIS WORLD.

WE, AS AMERICANS, KNEW ALMOST NOTHING ABOUT
VIETNAM, ITS LANGUAGE, ITS PEOPLE, ITS HISTORY, OR
ITS CULTURE. YET, WE TOOK IT UPON OURSELVES TO IMPOSE
OUR WILL UPON THEM, OR AT LEAST WE TRIED TO.

THE SHAH OF IRAN SPENT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS -- \$14 BILLION --
PURCHASING OUR GOODS AND ARMS; YET AT THE SAME TIME
OF HIS OVERTHROW IN 1979, WE FOUND AVAILABLE ONLY ONE
PERSON IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT WHO COULD SPEAK FARSI TO
SERVE IN THE IRANIAN TASK FORCE.

I FOUND MYSELF POSSESSING MORE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT
AFGHANISTAN THAN MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES IN THE UNITED
STATES SENATE, NOT BECAUSE I MAJORED IN MID-EAST STUDIES,
BUT BECAUSE A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE INVASION BY THE
SOVIETS, I HAPPENED TO HAVE READ JAMES MICHENER'S
CARAVANS. I WAS AN EXPERT IN THE EYES OF SOME OF MY
COLLEAGUES -- BECAUSE I LEARNED HOW TO PRONOUNCE KABUL
FROM MICHENER'S DELIGHTFUL NOVEL.

WE WERE SOON INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
THAT COULD MEAN LIFE OR DEATH FOR SOME OF OUR CITIZENS
AND DETERMINE THE FATE OF HUMANITY. YET, ON WHAT BASIS
WOULD WE BE MAKING THESE GRAVE DECISIONS? HOW MUCH
DO ANY OF US REALLY KNOW ABOUT AFGHAN CULTURE, HISTORY
AND WAY OF THINKING?

WHY YOU ASK, DO I BRING THESE MATTERS UP TODAY?
THE REASON IS QUITE SIMPLE: BECAUSE OUR EDUCATIONAL
SYSTEM, LIKE MANY OTHER SEGMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY,
HAS BECOME COST-CONSCIOUS. I COMMEND YOU FOR THIS
POSTURE. WE SHOULD ALL BE COST-CONSCIOUS. BUT IN
THE PROCESS OF OUR PRIORITY MAKING, WE HAVE SOMEHOW
DIVIDED MATTERS UP INTO THE "PRACTICAL" VERSUS THE
"NON-PRACTICAL",

THE "NECESSARY" VERSUS THE "UNNECESSARY." AND AS A RESULT, WE HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT THOSE COURSES THAT WOULD ASSIST OUR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN INCREASING THEIR INCOME-EARNING CAPACITY SHOULD BE GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY.

ACCORDINGLY, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE CHOICE BETWEEN OFFERING ADVANCED ACCOUNTING OR CONFUCIANISM. GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN THE HISTORY OF THE ASHANTI NATION VERSUS SOME COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE, THE COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE WOULD LIKELY PREVAIL. SIMILARLY, GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN BIOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF ISLAM, BIOLOGY PREVAILS.

AS ONE WHO IS INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN THE
WORKINGS OF THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, I
CAN UNDERSTAND THIS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. BUT
ALSO, AS A CONCERNED CITIZEN, I AM BEGINNING TO
CONJURE UP A PICTURE OF AMERICA FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW
THAT I DON'T ESPECIALLY LIKE. IT SAYS, "COLOR
ME DULL GRAY."

WE WILL BE A NATION OF MEN AND WOMEN KNOWLEDGEABLE
IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTER SCIENCES, BUT
GENERALLY LACKING IN APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS, HISTORY,
MUSIC, LANGUAGES, OR LITERATURE. I CAN SEE AMERICA
WITH MORE DOCTORS AND SCIENTISTS, BUT BECOMING
INCREASINGLY ISOLATIONIST IN THE PROCESS.

HOWEVER, YOU ARE IN POSITIONS TO ADD BRIGHTNESS
AND COLOR TO THIS PICTURE -- TO THE LIVES OF OUR
CITIZENS. YOU, IN ESTABLISHING YOUR PRIORITIES, CAN
PROVIDE A HEALTHIER APPRECIATION OF PEOPLE WHO LOOK
AND THINK AND EVEN SMELL DIFFERENTLY FROM US. AND,
IN THE PROCESS, YOU WILL BE HELPING OUR NATION LEARN
MORE ABOUT OUR INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORS, IN THE RICH
TAPESTRY OF CULTURES AND BELIEFS THAT COMPRISE THE
WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY. PERHAPS AMERICANS WILL LEARN
THAT OUR THIRD WORLD NEIGHBORS ARE VERY IMPORTANT
TO OUR EVERYDAY LIVES.

ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO, A VERY, VERY IMPORTANT SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED -- A COMPREHENSIVE ONE TO DETERMINE THE STRATEGIC NEEDS OF THE UNITED STATES. WHAT DO WE NEED TO SURVIVE? WE LISTED DOWN A HUNDRED ITEMS THAT ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN THE LIFESTYLE THAT WE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO. ONE ITEM IS MANGANESE. YOU HAVE GOT TO HAVE MANGANESE TO PRODUCE STEEL. WITHOUT STEEL WE COULD NOT CONSTRUCT THIS BUILDING. WE REQUIRE MANGANESE, CHROME, COBALT, PLATINUM, TITANIUM, BAUXITE, OIL, AND SO ON.

THE EXPERTS KNEW THIS BUT MANY OF US WHO
ARE IN THE POLICY-MAKING AREA WERE QUITE SURPRISED
TO NOTE THAT OF THE HUNDRED ITEMS, WE WERE ABLE
TO PROVIDE OURSELVES WITH ONLY FIFTEEN OF THEM. 85
PERCENT OF THE GOODS THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR OUR
WELL-BEING HAVE TO BE IMPORTED.

I MENTIONED BAUXITE, THE RAW MATERIAL FOR
ALUMINUM. WITHOUT ALUMINUM OUR MASSIVE AUTOMOBILE
INDUSTRY IN DETROIT WOULD, SIMPLY STATED, BE OUT OF
WORK WITHIN TWO WEEKS BECAUSE THEY WON'T BE ABLE
TO MANUFACTURE CARS. WHERE DO YOU FIND BAUXITE? NOT
IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

IN FACT, THE LARGEST DEPOSIT IS FOUND IN THE
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. ON THE ISLAND OF KAUAI, A SMALL
ISLAND, A LOVELY ISLAND, AND THIS DEPOSIT IS
UNDER THE MAIN CITY. I DOUBT IF THE HAWAIIANS
ARE GOING TO DIG UP THAT CITY FOR BAUXITE. BUT
EVEN IF IT WAS MINED, IT WOULD STILL NOT BE
ENOUGH. MUCH OF IT COMES FROM PLACES, LIKE JAMAICA,
WHERE YOU HAVE LEFTIST GOVERNMENTS. IF WE
ATTEMPTED TO IGNORE THAT NATION, JAMAICA COULD TURN
RIGHT AROUND AND SAY "O.K., UNCLE SAM, IF THAT IS
THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT IT, WE WON'T SELL YOU THE
BAUXITE. WE'LL SELL IT ELSEWHERE BECAUSE THERE
IS A HUGE MARKET FOR BAUXITE".

YES, I THINK IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW ABOUT THE EUROPEAN RENAISSANCE. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO LEARN ABOUT THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. BUT, I ALSO THINK IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT FOR US TO LEARN ABOUT MUHAMMAD, CONFUCIUS AND BUDDHA. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR US TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH THOSE "GOD FORSAKEN" COUNTRIES THAT WE VERY SELDOM THINK ABOUT, BECAUSE OUR VERY FUTURE IS TIED TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE NATIONS, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT.