

FROM THE OFFICE OF SENATOR JACOB K. JAVITS OF NEW YORK

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The following is an address by Senator Javits prepared for delivery tonight at 8:15 PM at Brown University, Sayles Hall, Providence, Rhode Island, in an appearance on the campus sponsored by the University's Faunce House Board of Governors.

THE NEW POLITICS AND THE MOTIVATION CRISIS:
CAN THE SILENT MAJORITY LIVE WITH THE NEW LEFT IN AMERICA?

Our democratic institutions are in graver danger today than in any period in our nation's history. We are faced with the danger of tyrannies both from the violent left and the reactionary right. The rhetoric is becoming increasingly simplistic and inflammatory.

What is bringing about this condition, I believe, more than, or at least equal to, any other factor is the persistence of our involvement in Vietnam -- with the danger now of permanent extension of the conflict into Cambodia -- a matter of life and death for the young. The confrontations in our country have tended, therefore, to become more impassioned and more dangerous.

And, as the rhetoric has heated up, so have the related actions of both the violent left and the reactionary right.

Arson, vandalism and assault have become commonplace on some of our nation's campuses. Things have become so bad that it is often no longer possible to tell whether a campus incident in its ultimate violent manifestations results from a student riot or a police "bust." Surely, one provokes the other and even more dangerous, the overall impact is to cause a severe reaction in the surrounding communities -- usually expressed in the form of hostility toward the campus as a whole.

Often, the original legitimate purpose of the protest -- against our involvement in Vietnam, or to try to make our colleges and universities more responsive to the needs of their students or to the ills of the society around them -- is lost to the public in the turmoil of the protest itself.

While campus unrest and the growing incidence of bombings, snipings and other outrages of the violent left pose a grave national problem, there is another, and at least equal, danger -- the growing threat of repression, not only of "demonstrations," but of all forms of expression and dissent traditionally protected by the Bill of Rights.

There have been, of course, other periods in our history when war or domestic turmoil have resulted in restrictions or threatened restrictions on our basic constitutional liberties, dating back to the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1789, and including the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus during the Civil War, the repression of "anarchists" after World War I, the strong-arm tactics of the industrial barons during the major labor disputes of the early years of this century and the latter-day witch hunts of Senator Joseph McCarthy allegedly to unearth Communists in the mid 1950's.

But now there seems to be the threat of a more insidious form of repression in our land, touched off by the growing threat of violence on the radical left, but for the first time tolerated, if not actually condoned, at the highest level of our Federal government. The words and actions of some of our national leaders do not, as in the past, seek to calm the fears, heal the factions, restore our national morale or instill renewed confidence in our destiny and in our institutions. Instead, the rhetoric tends to foment and to divide. And there is, as yet, no visible leadership at the very top to restrain these short-sighted counsels of despair. The overall impression is that the national leadership is, at best, unclear as

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to what its rhetoric means and where it seeks to take us; and, at worst, an all-too-willing party to the rupture of relations between groups and generations.

Is it possible, for example, to fathom the Federal stop-go positions on school desegregation?

Who is the so-called "silent majority," which so much of this rhetoric is directed to? It may very well be an imaginary group of Americans conjured out of thin air to be the stalking horse of a radical trend to the right simply because, by its very definition, it cannot talk back between elections.

This repressive, intolerant trend in our nation is a mutation of traditional American conservatism under the stresses of the Vietnam war, domestic violence and fear. It is a trend that should be viewed with great alarm by our national leaders. Most regrettably, they have not yet reacted in this way.

Another example of unfortunate divisiveness is the much-discussed "Southern Strategy." It does not seem to be so much aimed at reuniting the South with the rest of the nation as at cutting off the cultural, economic and communications centers of the Northeast from the rest of the nation. Regardless of what it is called, it is a strategy to divide for political conquest, rather than to bring the American people together for the common destiny.

So too, the recent attacks on the mass media, the Supreme Court and even on the United States Senate -- and I do not object, of course, to honest criticism -- are couched in terms to turn people against one another, to sow suspicions among the people, to feed on their fears and, by clear implication, to lay claim to our national leaders as being the sole source of credibility, virtue and patriotism in the land! This is hardly the spirit in which our country was built and has prospered.

But still, what do we see increasingly each day? Vast computerized files maintained by the Army on those civilians considered politically radical and therefore potentially dangerous; the imposition of bizarre restrictions on the Constitutional right to demonstrate peaceably, even in front of the White House; a wide-ranging conspiracy law capable of prosecutions to stifle those who organize protests, the wider use of wiretaps, informers, undercover agents, and subpoenas to probe the sources of information of the press. And, in the name of keeping pace with modern problems of crime, we are asked to give power over the individual to the Federal government and those who operate it, like no-knock search and seizures and preventive detention, which in a climate of intolerance can be very dangerous to our precious freedoms.

Is this, then, the best way to deal with dissent among the young, the poor and the black? Is it the way toward an answer to the grave problems facing us today -- of our ill-advised continued involvement in Vietnam, of our imbalance of national priorities tipped in favor of excessive military spending and against the agonizing needs of the poor, the blacks and the hard-pressed Middle Americans? Is it not rather a diversion from the problems of war and poverty?

Not only is all this dangerous, but it is bad politics as well. Americans are always grumbling about the courts, the press, the Congress and the intellectuals. But at the same time there is a singularly American love and respect for our institutions and our rights. Americans, I feel, want to see these institutions and rights upheld by leaders who are prepared to take the risks to lead and not the presumably safe political route of following the consensus of what is momentarily popular.

Yes, the American people are basically conservative in ideology -- about 60 percent of them voted either for Nixon or Wallace in 1968 -- but they have proven themselves in the overwhelming majority time and time again ready to support a

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progressive who can cross party, sectional and economic lines to appeal to their better instincts.

If repression is not the answer, how then do you deal with the new left, even excluding those outrageous ones who seem to be beyond the reach of normal communication -- who, as Kingman Brewster said, "seem to be slipping into private self-destruction?" How can the youthful energy of the new left, and the new politics it espouses, be harnessed to the work of reforming existing institutions with reason, with humanity and without violence?

There are student radicals today -- I call them violent radicals -- some with a great popular following on campus, who declare that our society is defunct, its establishment corrupt, its institutions stultifying and worthy only of being destroyed to make way for the utopian society of tomorrow. These violent radicals look on the progressive efforts of recent years -- the civil rights acts, the voting rights acts, the education acts, medicare and medicaid, the war on poverty and hunger, the war on pollution, the establishment of a floor under welfare assistance -- as a great collective sham that accomplished none of its goals and served instead as a conspiracy to keep the American people powerless in a relation to a government-corporate establishment.

Thus, in addition to the danger on the right, we must consider the dangerous refusal of the violent radicals on the left to participate in the maintenance and viability of the only society permissive enough to let them function -- and of their dangerously naive assumption that this society will live and prosper notwithstanding the violent radical's every effort to destroy it. And what about the clear and open invitation to repression and tyranny these radicals are courting and which can engulf us all by its irresponsibility and its destructiveness?

The terrible fallacy in all this is that these would-be leaders are seeking to carve out yet another establishment -- their own monopoly on radicalism. To be radical, they say, you have to be young, angry and violent. Violence -- not evolution -- is the only true radicalism, they insist, and all the past struggles to gain more responsive, more humane institutions and a broader-based society are seen by them only as a hoax on the people.

I submit that this is myopia aggravated by a bad case of depression. Who can lay complete claim to radicalism, for is not radicalism simply a commitment to rebuild society? Are we to ignore the radical -- though far from complete -- extension of job, housing and educational opportunities to black Americans, made possible by recent decisions of the Supreme Court and acts of Congress? Are we to ignore the radical -- though far from complete -- enfranchisement of black Americans and the resultant election of some hundreds of black officials by lawful nonviolent means? Are we to ignore the radical -- though still far from complete -- extension of basic health services to the aged and the poor. Are we to ignore the radical -- though still far from complete -- manpower training and welfare underpinning for the hard-core unemployed?

In two decades this nation's governmental and institutional structures have undergone sweeping, radical change -- as they did before in the decade of the 30's. Admittedly these successes have been limited, and they have been fraught with frustrations, with inflation and bedeviled by war. But they should be viewed as a start -- an example to what this nation is capable of accomplishing. They should not be viewed -- as today's violent radicals who would have us do, as the end -- the final and unsuccessful effort to reform a corrupt society incapable of reform.

I do not believe we are witnessing the fall of the USA, but I do see the grave danger of its decline if we fail to recognize the crisis we face and find the way to deal with it.

And that crisis is one of the erosion of motivation and the paralysis of decision. We have, I feel, begun to run out of time;

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our social fabric is being torn; our unity of purpose is being fragmented; our faith in our destiny as a nation to be just, beneficent and a force for peace and liberty is being badly shaken; we are bedeviled by social -- as well as criminal -- violence and even our national leaders too often speak in words of deviousness. We may well be standing on the brink of social upheaval and constitutional disaster.

Violence as a catalyst for change and repression as a response to violence must end. If ever there was a need for national dialogue, for dispassionate consideration of the tough questions facing our nation, that time is now.

Then what are these tough questions -- of national morality and governmental effectiveness -- that we must face? How do we come up with the answers before it is too late?

If a white seeks to pass on his only possession of value, his craft, to his son within a closed union -- and if a black power advocate seeks such a job without regard to training or ability but urging a racial quota, are they bigots?

How do you desegregate schools in areas that are becoming increasingly black, as whites flee to the non-black suburbs and their all-white public schools? How do you reconcile the integration of white schools with quality education? How do you pursue the fight to save our physical environment without diverting vitally needed efforts and funds to redeem our social environment?

How do you change the thinking of many Middle Americans who view high taxes as the result of misspent welfare, rather than ill-conceived war?

How do you reconcile the trial of the Chicago 7 -- or of the Black Panthers -- with society's stake in a government of laws, not men?

How do you reconcile the hard process of learning at schools and colleges with student autonomy and community relations?

How do you reconcile our traditional civil liberties with the measures needed to abate an epidemic of crime?

Is the nation's stake in freedom everywhere worth fighting for in war anywhere?

These are tough questions and their resolution may require major changes in our government and society. Our challenge is how to bring Middle America and radical America together to effect these changes.

The key to resolving the issue between them is the legitimacy of government in the eyes of each, and the way to establish that legitimacy is to show each that he can do something about changing the government in any aspect.

I believe there are four ways to these objectives:

1. To end our involvement in the Vietnam war which has done more to divide this country and exacerbate its people than any other event -- equalled only perhaps by racial segregation -- since the Civil War.

2. To encourage political action both by Middle Americans and Radical Americans. Electoral reform and the 18-year-old-vote are most important in this regard, as are also Congressional reforms.

3. To encourage much greater democracy in American business and in trade unions. Public participation in these vast leverage organizations can be a major factor in the reform of our society.

4. To evolve new machinery in government for establishing and keeping up-to-date national goals and priorities.

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For the essence of our form of government is the fact that radical changes can be made within its framework. For example; Amendments to the Constitution can change our government from a representative democracy -- the republican form -- to a parliamentary -- or any other -- form; and astounding as it may seem, the basic rights of the individual under the first ten amendments to the Constitution -- the Bill of Rights -- can be taken away or changed.

Other major revolutionary changes can be made by law alone, or by treaty. For example: The U.S. could withdraw from membership in the United Nations, from all regional security organizations like NATO and OAS, and from mutual defense and security treaties of which we have a considerable network; indeed, we could literally lock ourselves into fortress USA. Similarly the U.S. could relinquish all atomic weapons, even unilaterally, as well as chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

I am sure you understand that I am not making recommendations that these things be done, but I offer them to you with the thought that there is no legal barrier to achieving the most radical changes in our government and society -- unanimity is not required, only the necessity to persuade an adequate number of Americans.

I suggest these considerations also, because to restore motivation for national success to young Americans, there must be a complete review of our national goals and aspirations. All possible changes must be considered, no matter how radical. We cannot take anything for granted: that is what I define as the new politics and that is the broad outlook we must have if our nation is to survive with the same basic liberties, if not the same institutions.

The beauty of the American system is its ability to evolve; and there is room within it for young radicals to work. Pluralism is still alive and its life-giving force, perhaps, is the very powerlessness which many of our youth feel in relation to our all-powerful institutions. It is the same powerlessness that the Middle American feels when he confronts these same institutions. Out of his reaction of grudgingly accepting these institutions and out of the radical reaction of seeking drastic change -- faster than suits the Middle American, slower than suits the new left -- but meaningful change all the same.

I feel that much of the equilibrium of our pluralistic society will be restored as soon as the nation stops forcing its young men to fight in a war so many feel to be unjust. We are on the path -- or we were until last Thursday -- at too slow a pace to suit me, a tragically slow pace in terms of the depletion of our most precious national treasure -- but on that path nevertheless. At the present troop withdrawal rate, it could take two to three years. It could, but it won't if the youth of this nation act effectively. The Moratorium Committee may be dead, but the issue is still very much alive, awaiting only a new way to be presented -- for example as a basic test of candidates in this fall's Congressional elections for whom you will work, rather than in the past form of mass demonstrations.

In the meantime, nothing I have said rules out dissent or debate -- only the violence and repression that have fast become the unwelcome substitutes for the free exchange of ideas. I think there is a trend in the direction I have suggested -- a classical trend -- already on our campuses and elsewhere. Just as something of an unwritten code on the acceptable level of violence in labor disputes has been adopted by labor and management, so I feel that such an informal code may gradually be adopted by both sides in campus and other civil disorders. It is only by means of such accommodation that the rule of law, not of men, will prevail in this, our momentarily weary but always great nation.

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