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THE POLITICS OF WEALTH AND STEALTH

Mr. STEVENSON, Mr. President, no public figure, no matter what his party, can be happy when charges of political dishonesty, and the evidence of it, are in the air.

When the clouds of suspicion and mistrust gather over Washington, their shadows spread not only over one man or one party or one institution; they darken the entire political landscape.

Those clouds, Mr. President, now hang over Washington; over the White House; over the public and political conduct of President Nixon and his highest appointees.

At first the clouds were no bigger than a man's hand: a hint of fat political contributions unreported; a wheedling letter from a White House aide, on White House stationery, to his brother's business clients.

But in 4 years those clouds have darkened into thunderheads. They hang so thickly now that no one can ignore them; no rain dance of unpersuasive denials can dispel them; no huffing and puffing from campaign headquarters can blow them away.

Only truth—not empty denials—can dispel suspicion. Only candor—not bombast—can clear away the doubts.

But in the absence of forthright explanation, what shall the people conclude about the dealings of Mr. Nixon and his party?

Five men invade a national political headquarters. They are caught carrying the tools of burglary and espionage. With them, incredibly, two men are indicted who have held positions of trust and responsibility in the White House. Their generous bankroll is traced to a secret treasury gathered by the President's highest fundraiser—a former Cabinet officer.

Yet we are asked to believe that these men operated with no authority but their own; that large sums of money slipped magically into their hands from Mr. Stans' remarkable safe. We are asked to believe that the accused men had no connection with the highest officials of the Republican campaign; in short, that those in charge of the rake-in had nothing to do with the break-in. We are asked to believe that the fruits of the burglars' labors—the photographs and transcribed conversations—were for their own entertainment, not for the eyes

of high Republican officials.

A political war chest estimated at \$10 million is solicited—not openly from the public, but secretly from corporations and businessmen who need the Government's good will. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are routed through secret bank accounts in Mexico; delivered in suitcases on private planes; stashed clandestinely in office safes.

Yet we are asked to believe that there is nothing unusual in all of this: That those frenzied efforts at concealment are designed, not to keep anything from the public, but merely to protect friends of the Republican Party from bothersome charities and fundraisers.

The American people are blandly asked once again, to believe the unbelievable. And Mr. Stans' office safe emerges as the most fabulous piggy bank since the sheriff of Tammany Hall and his little tin box.

A lobbyist's memorandum comes to light: Its unguarded language strongly indicates that, in the Washington of Nixon and Mitchell and Kleindienst, antitrust settlements can be had for a price. A chain of evidence emerges which gives weight to those suspicions: A White House aide, we learn, has intervened in the proceedings; a series of secret conferences has taken place between corporate officers and the highest officials of the Justice Department. Stories are told, then retracted and changed to obscure great inconsistencies; the remaining evidence is fed into a shredder.

Yet we are asked to believe that the author of the memorandum, a trusted employee of the corporation, was simply doing a bit of creative writing; that she is somehow unstable and unreliable; that her memo contained mistakes; and finally, that it was never written. We are asked to believe that the White House aide's extraordinary involvement was only an effort to be helpful; that the secret meetings were not negotiations, but mere philosophical discussions.

We are asked, in short, to believe the unbelievable.

In early summer, American farmers sell their wheat harvests at low per-bushel prices—not knowing, because they are not told, that Soviet wheat purchases will send wheat prices up. The Agriculture Department knows; it has negotiated the wheat deals. And the giant grain exporters seem to know: They buy up wheat at the lower prices in hopes of

profits later.

Later we learn that Clarence Palmby, the Agriculture Department official most responsible for the Soviet grain deal, is now vice president of Continental Grain. That his successor, Carroll Brunthaver, comes from Cook Industries, another grain trader. That another Agriculture Department figure in the grain negotiations, Clifford Pulvermacher, has been hired by the Bunge Corp., a big grain trader. And finally, that the White House special representative for trade negotiations has close ties to Cargill, another big trader.

The revolving doors between the Nixon administration and the big corporate traders are well oiled, wide open and whirling, it appears. But the American farmer and the public are left outside.

Yet we are asked to believe that it is all coincidence.

Perhaps.

But such coincidences, piled one atop the other, grow too heavy for mere faith to bear. Never, at least since Teapot Dome, have so many, so high, denied so much, so often—so unconvincingly.

There are, for example, repeated charges—and a sizable body of evidence—suggesting that the President's assistant, Mr. Peter Flanigan, has used his position to feather his nest: To see that his own investment house is selected as underwriter of \$250 million in postal bonds; to obtain a Treasury waiver which would create a windfall for his Barracuda Tanker Corp.

There are recurring charges—persuasive ones, in my judgment—that the Nixon administration deals extraordinarily generously and gently with corporations whose presidents and chairmen are political friends and contributors. There are indications that Mr. Kleindienst suppressed antitrust suits against the Warner-Lambert Corp.; indications that the Price Commission made rulings specifically favorable to the Combined Insurance Co. of Chicago.

The first company is headed by Elmer Bobst, Mr. Nixon's "adopted father." The second is headed by W. Clement Stone, a friend of Mr. Nixon's whose political contributions total at least half a million dollars.

Mr. Kleindienst has admitted receiving a bribe offer from one Robert Carson which he failed to report at the time. According to his later testimony, Mr. Kleindienst—the highest legal officer in the land, presumably a competent attorney

ney—"did not recognize" the offer as a bribe.

In another scandal involving highly placed administration friends, Mr. Kleindienst first whitewashed, then ignored the dereliction of a U.S. attorney in San Diego; a failure of responsibility which Mr. Kleindienst later conceded was a shocking breach of the public trust. The offending U.S. attorney, Harry Steward, went undisciplined.

The National Steel Corp. of Pittsburgh merges with the Granite City Steel Co., of Granite City, Ill. The merger presents a classic case in antitrust law: the merger of the Nation's fourth and 11th largest steelmakers, direct competitors, greatly reducing competition in the industry.

A complaint is signed and presented to the Attorney General, Mr. Mitchell. But he refuses to prosecute.

Again, Mr. McLaren of the Antitrust Division presses his case; again Mr. Mitchell refuses to act, choosing instead to bend the law to permit the merger.

A director of National Steel is Gilbert W. Humphrey, a large Republican contributor.

His father is George Humphrey, another large contributor whose Hanna Mining Co. owned more than half the stock of National Steel and has long-term contracts with Granite City Steel.

TRUST-BUSTING—OR TRUST-BUILDING?

The collapse of the Sharpstown State Bank of Texas—part of the corporate empire of Frank W. Sharp—sets off a major scandal implying flagrant violations of Federal law. But the central figure in the case, Frank W. Sharp, is granted the privilege of pleading guilty to lesser charges in return for his testimony implicating leading opposition party officeholders in Texas. In short, the big fish was tossed back in favor of some minnows.

Who, at the time of the investigation, headed the Justice Department's Criminal Division? A Texan named Will Wilson—a former attorney for Frank Sharp. Mr. Wilson, it developed, had received a \$30,000 loan from Mr. Sharp's interests while in the Justice Department—and almost \$300,000 between 1964 and 1968.

After this interesting coincidence, Mr. Wilson finally resigned—but only when another investigation threatened to embarrass the administration.

It would be unfair, Mr. President, to infer that every charge is true simply because it has been made. Most of the suggestions of wrongdoing in this administration await—or have escaped—real investigation.

And that is just the point. The Nixon administration, whatever its reasons, bitterly resists the inquiry these charges warrant.

What are the tactics of Mr. Nixon's administration when faced with damaging allegations?

First. A pained, embarrassed silence. Second. Denials, without explanations.

Third. False and trivial counter-accusations, like those advanced recently when Republican fund-raising efforts came under suspicion.

Fourth. An expensive, smooth, and clever public relations barrage which separates the President from the workaday machinations of his party and his administration. He becomes, in the popular mind, a remote, olympian figure,

separated from all human contact, not to mention contact with wrongdoers.

Fifth. And finally, Mr. President, there is the magical technique of self-investigation. The administration proudly announces that it has investigated itself and found itself pure! It is a puzzling technique. It is something like appointing Polly Adler to the Vice Commission.

The administration's tactics, whatever else they may achieve, do not inspire confidence in the integrity of our highest Government officials.

And what is at stake when charges of corruption fly—more than the survival or prestige of one party or set of politicians—is the confidence of our citizens: their faith and trust.

In no administration in recent memory have charges been so thick: charges of wrongdoing; of omissions; of catering to special interests. And surely not in recent memory have the explanations been so pallid; the efforts to confuse and obscure so frantic.

The people are left to conclude what they will. And they will conclude that Mr. Nixon's administration, because it will not permit an impartial investigation of the charges against it, has a great deal to hide.

They are left to conclude that government of the people, by the people, for the people, has given way, in Mr. Nixon's Washington, to the politics of wealth and stealth.

And they are left to conclude that the era of the New Deal and the era of the Fair Deal have given way to Mr. Nixon's era: the era of the deal.

There is another word for all this, Mr. President: It is "corruption."

I speak not only of the corruption which inevitably ensues when money changers invade the temples of government. That form of corruption is as familiar as Teapot Dome. It is, ultimately, a matter for the courts.

There are other forms of political corruption which are more subtle but equally insidious.

One is the invasion of every public enterprise by partisan politics.

We have witnessed, in the past 4 years, the transmutation of the Department of Justice into a branch of campaign headquarters.

The Secretaries of State and Defense have hit the campaign trail; they routinely issue partisan political pronouncements—a new and dismal twist.

Government statistics about jobs and crime are manipulated shamelessly for maximum political mileage.

The very celebration of our Nation's bicentennial has been invaded by partisan hacks and corporate fast-buck artists.

This sort of perversion—this corruption—may build temporary majorities. But it destroys the enduring faith of the people in their institutions.

A second form of corruption invades our politics when high officials subvert the public interest in the name of private interests.

Mr. STEVENSON. Mr. President, it is not necessary that men be evil to betray the public trust. They betray it when they are blind, after too many years in the dim light of corporate boardrooms, to distinctions between what is good for the country and what is good for them alone. This is the corruption known as favoritism to the rich—as corporate

welfarism.

It is best expressed, I think, in a letter sent last spring by one of Mr. Stans' lieutenants to wealthy Republican contributors:

I can't emphasize too strongly, that the protection of your stake and my stake is precisely what is at stake here.

His language was not a model of literary excellence. But they knew what he meant.

A third and final corruption is the corruption of arrogance: the corruption which infects our politics when our highest leaders simply will not speak forthrightly to the people.

Again and again, Mr. Nixon has invoked the doctrine of executive privilege to frustrate congressional investigations.

He has refused, with an imperious disdain unprecedented in the White House, to meet the press and submit to their questions. His tactic against the free press has been to ignore them from the top and intimidate them from below.

The President speaks, when he speaks at all to the people, from the security of a television studio, or with the help of scriptwriters, stage managers, and makeup men.

We have come to expect a certain amount of artifice in our politics. But when stagecraft becomes the principal means of encounter between the President and the people, the result is not lively public discourse, but a series of Presidential monologues.

Thus Government becomes, not a relationship between a leader and his people, but a performance between actor and audience. Leadership becomes a gesture of artifice, not truth; the President's acts seem more the posturing of royalty than the earnest efforts of a public servant accountable to the people.

And that, Mr. President, is the final corruption: indifference to the people.

Take all the scandals of yesteryear; pile them block on block, and you cannot equal it. Find enough old Deepfreezes to chill the Sahara; enough vicuna coats to warm the polar icecap; enough Persian rugs to dazzle a sultan—and still you cannot match that final betrayal of the people's trust. The greatest scandal—the ultimate corruption—is an arrogant refusal to answer the questions of the people.

I suspect the administration's response to my remarks will be angry rejoinders and counter accusations. They would do better to ponder the meaning of one of their greatest heroes.

Abraham Lincoln said:

I must keep some consciousness of being somewhere near right. I must keep some standards of principle fixed within myself.

Mr. Nixon and his political committee would do well to reflect upon those words. If they do not, they may soon have to replace, as obsolete and inappropriate, the symbol of their party: That great, sturdy, and honest beast, the elephant.

What new device will serve to symbolize the new Republican party?

One good possibility might be the ferret, whose stock in trade is secret maneuvering.

Some might propose the squid, which sets up a screen of ink to frustrate its pursuers.

And, finally, some might suggest the image of Maurice Stans—carrying a suitcase and wearing a sombrero.