

Inauguration Day
January 1973
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Houston, Texas

AN INAUGURATION IS A BEGINNING, AND IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE VIETNAM

WAR HAS ENDED, THEN WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE BEGINNING OF PEACE.

GRATEFUL BUT NOT JOYFUL. FOR THE CEASE-FIRE HAS COME NOT BECAUSE OUR GOVERNMENT IS WISE OR MERCIFUL, BUT BECAUSE IT HAS NO OTHER CHOICE.

A MONTH AGO THE UNITED STATES WAS BOMBING HANOI WITH A FURY GREATER THAN THE GERMANS BOMBED LONDON. BUT IT BECAME APPARENT THAT AFTER 10 YEARS OF KILLING AND LIES, THE CONGRESS HAS HAD ENOUGH OF THE WAR.

THE PEOPLE HAVE HAD ENOUGH. OUR ALLIES AND THE WORLD HAVE HAD ENOUGH.

OBVIOUSLY, AMERICANS ARE NOT CELEBRATING THIS AS A NATIONAL

VICTORY. WE ARE TOO EXHAUSTED. IN 10 YEARS WE HAVE PASSED FROM ^{man of us} ~~undefeated~~ CONFUSION TO OUTRAGE TO NUMBNESS. AND WE ^{can only hope} KNOW THAT THE END OF THIS

WAR MAY ~~NOT EVEN~~ BE THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM. FOR PRESIDENT NIXON.

~~HAS RESISTED PEACE AT EVERY TURN. FOUR YEARS AGO HE ANNOUNCED~~

~~HIS "SECRET PLAN" TO END THE WAR -- A PLAN SO SECRET THAT EVEN HE DIDN'T~~

KNOW WHAT IT WAS. HE PROMPTLY EXPANDED THE WAR INTO CAMBODIA AND

LAOS; AND WHEN THAT ONLY DUPLICATED PREVIOUS FOLLIES, HE DECIDED TO BOMB OUR OPPONENTS INTO SUBMISSION. THE BOMBS HE HAS DROPPED IN VIETNAM EQUAL FIVE HIROSHIMAS A MONTH. IN FOUR YEARS 20,000 MORE AMERICAN TROOPS HAVE DIED. OVER ONE MILLION MORE ASIANS HAVE BEEN KILLED OR WOUNDED. SIX MILLION PEASANTS HAVE BECOME REFUGEES BECAUSE OF AMERICAN MILITARY OPERATIONS.

THE RESULT OF ALL THIS BLOODLETTING IS NOW BEFORE US, AND IT IS CALLED "PEACE WITH HONOR." IT IS APPARENTLY THE KIND OF COMPROMISE WE MIGHT HAVE GAINED YEARS AGO IF WE HAD NOT PURSUED THE PHANTOM OF OF TOTAL VICTORY. THE GREATEST IRONY IS THAT THIS COM PROMISE,

[WHICH WAS SOUGHT SO DISHONORABLY] WILL NOT EVEN GUARANTEE PEACE.

THE TERMS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY DISCUSSED WILL DO NOTHING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS THAT CAUSED THE WAR IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT WILL REMAIN AN UNPOPULAR DICTATORSHIP. THE COMMUNIST GUERILLAS WILL REMAIN IN PLACE AND ARMED. THE ORIGINAL SOCIAL IN-EQUALITIES WHICH DIVIDED THE VIETNAMESE WILL REMAIN, AND THE STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE.

SO VERY PROBABLY THIS CEASE-FIRE WILL NOT BE PEACE, ONLY ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT IN A CIVIL WAR THAT HAS LASTED 30 YEARS. "PEACE WTH

HONOR" MEANS ONLY ONE THING: THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
FAILED IN VIETNAM, BUT WAS TOO PROUD OR TOO BLIND TO ADMIT FAILURE,
AND SO PROLONGED THE WAR RUTHLESSLY UNTIL IT FOUND A WAY TO SAVE
FACE. RARELY IN HISTORY HAVE SO MANY HUMAN BEINGS SUFFERED FOR
THE SAKE OF A GOVERNMENT'S PRIDE. [OF COURSE, EVEN MORE PEOPLE MAY
DIE, FOR THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT ADMITTED THE MISTAKEN
FOLLY THAT ORIGINALLY GOT US INTO THIS QUAGMIRE. NOR HAS NIXON
RENOUNCED OUR "RIGHT" TO INTERVENE IN A CIVIL WAR IN A SMALL, POOR
COUNTRY 8,000 MILES AWAY.]

SO I AM AFRAID THAT WE MAY NOT BE CELEBRATING THE INAUGURATION
OF PEACE. I AM AFRAID THAT OUR SOCIETY IS STILL CONTROLLED BY THE
[POLITICIANS] THE BELIEFS, AND THE INTERESTS THAT EMBROILED US IN WAR.

FOR SOME OF US VIETNAM HAS BEEN A KIND OF HISTORICAL ESCALATOR,
^{by the} RAISING US TO ^{changing} HIGHER AND HIGHER LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING. YEARS AGO
WE THOUGHT THE WAR WAS SOMEHOW AN ACCIDENT. THEN WE BLAMED CERTAIN
LEADERS. NOW WE SUSPECT THAT THE CAUSES OF THIS WAR ARE ROOTED IN
OUR SOCIETY ITSELF.

THE UNITED STATES NOW STATIONS ALMOST ONE MILLION TROOPS IN
OVER 2,000 OVERSEAS BASES AND INSTALLATIONS. SINCE 1945, WE HAVE

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CONDUCTED A MAJOR MILITARY CAMPAIGN OR A PARAMILITARY CIA OPERATION IN A FORMER COLONIAL OR DEPENDENT COUNTRY ON AN AVERAGE OF ONCE EVERY 18 MONTHS--IN GREECE, IRAN, GUATAMALA, INDONESIA, LEBANON, LAOS, CUBA, THE CONGO, BRITISH GUIANA, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND OF COURSE, VIETMAN. ONCE, WE COULD BLAME ALL OF THIS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY; BUT SINCE NIXON BEGAN DRINKING CHAMPAGNE IN MOSCOW AND PEKING, THAT EXPLANATION ISN'T QUITE AS AWE-INSPIRING AS IT USED TO BE. NO, WE HAVE HAD TO LOOK HARDER, AND WE HAVE COME TO SOME DIFFICULT CONCLUSIONS: IT SEEMS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT CAN ALSO LIE TO ITS OWN PEOPLE. IT SEEMS THAT AMERICAN POLICY, LIKE THAT OF OTHER NATIONS, IS OFTEN IMMORAL, DANGEROUS, AND IGNOBLE.

WE HAVE LOST OUR INNOCENCE ABOUT OURSELVES. I CAN THINK OF ONLY TWO PREVIOUS PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATIONS SO FILLED WITH DOUBT AND UNCERTAINTY AS TODAY'S. ONE WAS LINCOLN'S IN THE MIDST OF THE CIVIL WAR, THE OTHER WAS FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S IN 1932. IN BOTH CASES THE STATUS-QUO HAD DISINTEGRATED, THE SYSTEM HAD BROKEN DOWN, AND THE PEOPLE WERE BITTER AND DIVIDED. AMERICA SURVIVED THOSE CRISES-- LARGELY BECAUSE THE TWO PRESIDENTS CANDIDLY ADMITTED THAT THE TIMES DEMANDED NEW AND RADICAL MEASURES. IN CERTAIN WAYS THEIR DELIMMAS

WERE NOT UNLIKE OURS' TODAY.

LINCOLN'S GREAT PROBLEM WAS MORAL. SLAVERY WAS ^AFUNDAMENTAL HYPOCRACY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. IT LAY AT THE HEART OF THE REPUBLIC AND POISONED RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES AND MEN. LINCOLN FOUGHT THE WAR TO PRESERVE THE UNION, BUT BY 1864 HE KNEW THE NATION COULD NOT BE RECONCILED OR ENDURE "HALF-SLAVE AND HALF-FREE." IT MAY TAKE GENERATIONS TO SOLVE OUR RACIAL PROBLEMS, BUT THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION WAS THE FIRST, ESSENTIAL BLOW AGAINST THE TYRANNY OF COLOR.

WELL, I THINK WE MIGHT PROFIT BY LINCOLN'S MORAL HONESTY TODAY, FOR IN OUR WORLD THERE IS A BASIC CONTRADICTION BETWEEN AMERICAN IDEALS AND PRACTICE. WE CANNOT REMAIN A FREE REPUBLIC AT HOME AND AN ARROGANT EMPIRE ABROAD. IN VIETNAM OUR FOREIGN POLICY WAS A LICENSE TO KILL. VILLAGES WERE DELIBERATELY DESTROYED, CROPS POISONED, PROVINCES DEPOPULATED, CITIES BOMBED TO RUBBLE, OPPOSITION LEADERS IMPRISONED OR ASSASSINATED. THERE IS NO DOUBT OF THESE THINGS. THE PENTAGON PAPERS REVEAL THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY AWARE OF THEM, EVEN PLANNED THEM. *who in afteradown will admit them-* BUT NO ONE, LEAST OF ALL PRESIDENT NIXON, WILL ADMIT THEM. RATHER, WE HAVE BEEN SYSTEMATICLY LIED TO. WE WERE TOLD WE FOUGHT

FOR FREEDOM, THOUGH SOUTH VIETNAM WAS A DICTATORSHIP. WE WERE TOLD WE FOUGHT TO CONTAIN THE CHINESE, THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT KNEW THE CHINESE HAD NO CONTROL OVER THE VIET CONG. WE WERE TOLD WE WERE NOT BOMBING, WHEN IN FACT WE WERE.

THE LIES WERE ENDLESS. THE TERRIBLE LESSON OF THE PENTAGON PAPERS IS THAT GOVERNMENT PLANNERS DELIBERATELY DECEIVED THE PEOPLE, PRESS AND CONGRESS. WE INTERVENED IN VIETNAM, NOT BECAUSE OUR SECURITY WAS IN PERIL, BUT BECAUSE IN THE ARROGANCE OF OUR POWER WE GAVE OURSELVES THE RIGHT TO USE FORCE AT ANYTIME, ANYWHERE--NO MATTER HOW SLIGHT OUR INTERESTS MIGHT BE.

SOMEHOW WE MUST REGAIN SOME SENSE OF LAW AND PROPORTION. OTHERWISE WE CAN ONLY COLLIDE WITH OTHER NATIONS AGAIN AND AGAIN--RISKING WORLD WAR BY USING SAVAGE AND UNLIMITED MEANS TO GAIN UNNEEDED AND UNWORTHY ENDS.

BUT EVEN MORE THAN HONEST^y, WE REQUIRE BASIC REFORMS IN OUR POLITICS AND SOCIETY. ^{Social} REAL REFORM--LIKE HONESTY--IS APPARENTLY AN ALIEN CONCEPT TO THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION. (JUST AS HE PRETENDS THAT ALL GOVERNMENT POWER IS JUST AND PERFECT,) SO THE ^{HE} ~~GOVERNMENT~~ DENIES THE NEED FOR

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FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL CHANGE.) YET OUR SOCIETY IS IN TERRIBLE DANGER
FROM SOCIAL UNREST AND DISTRUST, DECAYING CITIES AND POISONED LAND-
SCAPES, PERSISTENT POVERTY AND DECLINING HEALTH STANDARDS. ONE
REASON FOR THIS IS THAT IN THE PAST GENERATION WE SPENT OVER ONE AND
A HALF TRILLION DOLLARS ON WAR, AND OVER \$150 BILLION ON VIETNAM
ALONE. [EVERY UNNECESSARY DOLLAR IN THE WAR BUDGET WAS STOLEN FROM
US AND OUR CHILDREN.)

AGAIN, OUR PRESENT ADMINISTRATION MIGHT PROFIT FROM PAST EXAMPLE.
IN 1932, IN THE DEPTHS OF THE DEPRESSION, FDR FACED THE COUNTRY. HE
DID NOT SALUTE OLD MYTHS. HE TOLD THE TRUTH: THE COUNTRY WAS IN
BAD SHAPE, THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM HAD FAILED, DRASTIC ACTION WAS NEEDED,
IN 1973 I THINK ^{a for thought} ANY HONEST PRESIDENT ^{would} SHOULD TELL THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE THAT TO AVOID WAR, ~~WE~~ WE MUST REFORM ~~OUR~~ OUR OWN SOCIETY. FOR
THERE ARE ENORMOUSLY POWERFUL FORCES WHICH PUSH US CONSTANTLY TOWARD
MILITARISM. IN A WAY, THE RISK OF WAR IS A PRODUCT OF OUR SYSTEM
ITSELF.

THERE EXISTS IN AMERICA TODAY A SORT OF UNHOLY ALLIANCE BETWEEN
PATRIOTISM AND PROFITS, HUGE, INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS INFLUENCE

GOVERNMENT POLICY, AND THEIR INTERESTS ARE TOO OFTEN ADOPTED BY THE ^{office holders} POLITICIANS THEY SUBSIDIZE. OUR ECONOMY IS ADDICTED TO THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. THIRTY-SIX PERCENT OF ALL DURABLE INDUSTRIAL GOODS ARE PURCHASED FOR MILITARY OR MILITARY RELATED PURPOSES. ALMOST TEN PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S LABOR FORCE WORKS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. BUSINESSMEN AND LABOR UNIONS ALIKE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THAT THEIR LIVLIHOODS DEPEND ON THE WAR MACHINE. UNIVERSITIES ARE HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED BY PENTAGON CONTRACTS, AND WHOLE SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS ARE HIRED TO INVENT NEW WAYS OF PERSUADING SOUTHEAST ASIAN PEASANTS NOT TO VOTE SOCIALIST.

I THINK THAT THIS PERMANENT WARFARE ECONOMY IS DESTROYING THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC. WE MAY BECOME A PERMANENT WARFARE STATE. THERE ARE SIMPLY TOO MANY INTERERESTS CONTINUOUSLY JUSTIFYING NEW WEAPONS, NEW VIOLENCE, NEW INTERVENTIONS. OUR INSTITUTIONS ARE BEING CORRUPTED AT THE ROOTS; AND IN PURSUIT OF POWER WE ARE LOSING OUR OWN FREEDOM.

HAVING EXPERIMENTED WITH SPYING IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE ^{present} NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS BEGUN SPYING ON ITS OWN POLITICAL OPPONENTS AT

HOME. ^{Perhaps} HAVING LEARNED THE ADVANTAGES OF CENSORSHIP FROM GENERAL THIEU, OUR OWN GOVERNMENT SYSTEMATICALLY UNDERMINES THE INTEGRITY AND FREEDOM OF THE AMERICAN PRESS. SINCE IT HAS GROWN CALLOUS IN ACTING IMMORALLY ABROAD, THE WHITE HOUSE ABUSES ITS AUTHORITY WITH INCREASING VIGOR AT HOME.

TODAY PRESIDENT NIXON AND VICE PRESIDENT AGNEW HAVE MADE DISSENT SOMETHING VERY CLOSE TO TREASON. ^{BUT DISSENT CONTINUES} IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE AMERICAN CHARACTER THAT SO MANY CITIZENS HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO SPEAK AGAINST THEIR OWN NATION'S POLICY. AFTER ALL, ^{By & large} THEIR CRITICISMS COME NOT FROM A HATRED OF AMERICA, BUT FROM A PROFOUND LOVE.] THEY MARCH AND SPEAK AND RISK THEIR REPUTATIONS AGAINST THE WAR BECAUSE OF A DEEP CONVICTION THAT THEIR NATION, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, DESERVES HONOR AND DECENCY IN ITS GOVERNMENT. AND THEY HAVE BEEN GREATER PATRIOTS THAN ALL THE GENERALS AND ADMIRALS COMBINED, FOR THEY KNOW THAT AMERICANS OWE THEIR FINAL OBEDIENCE NOT TO THEIR RULERS, BUT TO THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES THOSE RULERS ARE EXPECTED TO DEFEND. ■ LAW IS LARGER THAN GOVERNMENTS, AND IN THEIR HEARTS I THINK THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT.

IN FOUR YEARS OUR COUNTRY WILL BE TWO CENTURIES OLD, AND ANOTHER

We know to day that the
 PRESIDENT WILL BE INAUGURATED. WE DO NOT KNOW WHO IT WILL BE, BUT WE
 of leaving the rhetoric aside we do not see have
 KNOW WHAT THAT PRESIDENT MUST DO. AND WE KNOW WHAT WE MUST DO TO
 not seen

ASSURE OURSELVES OF A GOVERNMENT OF RESPECT. WE MUST NEVER BE SILENT,
 AND NEVER STILL. WE ARE ALL TERRIBLY TIRED. WE HAVE FOUGHT AND LOST
 SO OFTEN BEFORE, BUT WE SHALL RETURN TO THE STRUGGLE AGAIN; AND IF
 WE ARE BEATEN, WE SHALL RETURN AGAIN AFTER THAT. IN THE END TRUTH
 WILL OUTLAST THE LIES, AND WE SHALL HAVE PLAYED OUR PART IN THE
 CONTINUING DRAMA THAT BEGAN IN 1776.

IT WAS SAID This morning
 a time to recommit our nation
 to the ideals of liberty and peace.
 And a sad commentary on
 our times that we could not
 find ^{that recommitment} it in the chronicles. This
 morning & that is why we are here.