

Delivered at MMA - Castro

Notes for Governor's Conference

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Candidates for Governor...

We now enter upon the history of a period rich in disaster, gloomy with war, rent by sedition and savage in its very hours of peace....

Galba 75 AD

In political and military terms our situation resembles the world at the start of the 18th Century when the Grand Alliance under Marlborough waged Queen Anne's War against the domination of Europe by France.

That difficult time did not have hanging over it the shadow of nuclear weapons, but it did live in a great power confrontation like that between the Free World and the Soviet Union. It is remarkable that this confrontation was foreseen by Alexis de Toqueville in 1835. He wrote:

"There are at the present time two great nations in the world which started from different points, but seem to tend toward the same end. I allude to the Russians and the Americans. ...The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems

marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

De Toqueville would not have been surprised that the heads of these two governments are meeting in November in a conference which all the world awaits in mingled hope and fear.

On the eve of the conference Americans are confronted by many estimates of the Soviet Union that are contradictory.

There is the view of Solzhenitsyn that Communism is "irredeemable, that there are no 'better' variants of it, that it is incapable of growing kinder, that it cannot survive without using terror, that to exist on the same planet with it is impossible...that it will spread, cancer-like over the globe, to destroy mankind, or mankind will have to rid itself of it..."

There is the geopolitical view of Zbigniew Brzezinski that Russia always has been an expansionist State, centered in a land mass without geographic barriers and influenced to seek its defense in expansion.

Arkady N. Shevchenko in his recent book Breaking With Moscow quotes Andrei Gromyko as saying the great weakness of the West is that it "does not understand our final goals."

American-Russian relations have not always been hostile. Thomas Jefferson thought the Emperor Alexander's Russia was "the most cordially friendly to the United States of any power on earth." But by the Monroe Administration, the American Secretary of State was warning Russia, which had established a colony north of San Francisco, that any further colonization on this continent by any European power would be unacceptable to us. By 1853 there was alarm in this country over the Quintuple

Alliance of European despots, of plotting recovery of lost colonies in the Western Hemisphere. Henry Winter Davis, one time chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the House, in 1853 wrote a book urging the United States to join with Great Britain against the dictatorship of Russia which he said was "devoted to the ruin of all free governments." He said the Russians had designs on Afghanistan. And he warned they could stir "feeble and factious" neighbors of the United States who he said are prey to civil wars "to harrass and endanger us."

But during the Civil War, the Emperor Alexander, to show Russian sympathy for the North sent a fleet to New York where it remained from October 1863 to April 1864. (An interesting footnote to history is that Rimsky-Korsakov, a Russian Navy lieutenant who collaborated with Moussorgsky in writing Boris Gudinov, was on board.)

In addition, the Russians persuaded us to buy Alaska, during the Lincoln Administration.

There was a long gap in Russian/American relations after Russia left the war in World War I, that was ended by U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union in the first administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but FDR had occasion to remind the country of the nature of the Russian state. He told a youth congress in February 1940 that: "The Soviet Union is run by a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world."

But World War II brought about a collaboration with the Soviet Union that only subsequently turned from from trust to terror, in the words of the historian Herbert Feis. That terror

has been immeasurably increased by the threat of nuclear war. The power of nuclear weapons has steadily increased. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki wrought utter destruction over a three square mile area; our Minute Man II and the Soviet's new weapons, SS 18 and SS 19, have a destruct area of 72 square miles. The U.S. led in nuclear power but as of July 1983, the Soviet Union equalled or exceeded U.S. nuclear weaponry: the U.S. had 1,045 ICBMs, the Soviet Union 1,398; the Soviet Union had 941 submarine launched missiles, the U.S. 568; in total delivery vehicles, the U.S. had 1,884 the Soviet Union 2,714; the U.S. had 7,297 warheads, over all, the Soviet Union 7,700. The throw weight of Soviet nuclear weapons was 11.8 million pounds to the U.S. 4.4 million pounds.

The two nations face each other like scorpions in a bottle; each with enough nuclear weapons to wipe out the other. American military experts since 1963, have felt the country could live with a limit of 500 strategic weapons. President Johnson at the Glassboro conference with Kosygin in 1967 proposed a freeze at 500 weapons and the Soviet Union did not demure; but the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 sidetracked the negotiations. Nitze has stated the American goal since: "...to shift the deterrent balance from one which is based primarily on the punitive threat of devastating nuclear retaliation to one in which nuclear arms are greatly reduced by both sides and non nuclear defenses play a greater and greater role."

Both sides approach the November meeting with expressions of a wish to reduce nuclear arms. But the ideological abyss between them and the military gulf that divides them is deep

and wide. Any realist would have to admit that the hope for some such logical event as the mutual renunciation of nuclear arms is not very bright. The policy of Mutual Assured Destruction has to be credited with giving us 40 years of a kind of peace. But it is a policy that rests upon a morally unacceptable proposition under which each nation is holding hostage the civilian population of the other. There must be a more civilized alternative to that intolerable technological barbarism.

Maine cannot escape from the terrible anxiety that this crisis casts over all of the world; but we do have our own problems that we cannot abandon while we sit and wring our hands. And these are the problems with which you who are gathered here must deal as best you can. We are going to hear a lot about those problems in the months ahead; and much of it will be in the vernacular of partisan politics. You are fortunate to have this cabinet conference at a time when these problems can be faced without raising the decibels of discussion.

In retrospect, I think it can be said that Maine has adjusted to a tide in domestic history that has been diminishing the federal role in social and economic problems and increasing the role of state and local government. That tide seems likely to continue. Future state administrations will have to deal with a heavy agenda of policy decisions, not likely to be easily dealt with.

Government, in my opinion, will be expected to meet public requirements far in excess of any presently known source of funds. Neither the tax resource of the State or of local governments are going to be equal to the demands made upon government agencies for all kinds of private assistance and support.

In the past few months, I believe there has begun to emerge in the country a shift of emphasis from dealing with the consequences of wrong economic policy, wrong health policies, wrong social policies, wrong life styles to dealing more emphatically with some of the situations responsible for the demands made on government.

I find an illustration of my conjectural point in John Cairn's article in the Scientific American this week. He puts deaths due to cancer at 400,000 a year. He writes that there are places in the country where the death rate is half the national average. It must be possible to alter that rate by different customs, practises, and life-styles. He estimates that cigarettes cause 100,000 deaths a year. What if we could cut all cancer deaths by behavioural solutions? What effect that would have on the ruinous costs of hospital care. And cancer is not the only burden on society that is falling increasingly on governments and the people.

The welfare state always has involved a little mentioned threat to individual freedom and discretion. A man of the 18th or 19th Century might have plausibly argued that it was his own business if he had a life style that damaged his health and his ability to support himself; he can hardly make that arguement if his government must bear the burden of his neglect, his abuse, or his recklessness.

Or take our scandalous casualties on the highways. More and more of them are due to sheer human frailty; fewer and fewer to mecahnical failure or highway hazards. Some think deaths could be cut 50 percent (from 50,000 a year) if all motorists

buckled up. That modification of behaviour alone would not only save lives but would save millions and millions of dollars in health care and other welfare benefits. The governor tried unsuccessfully to work on that problem.

Or take the abuse of alcohol and drugs. That is causing deaths on the highway and a burden on all health agencies at a price of billions of dollars annually.

Highway deaths are not alcohol's only contribution to society's problems. Justices of our Maine courts have told me that they estimate more than a half of all criminal offences are alcohol related. We had a try at sumptuary legislation like the Eighteenth Amendment and there is no sentiment for repeating it; but there must be something that can be done. (We might, as Governor Brennan has suggested, get out of the liquor business, and stop endowing the traffic with the sanction of the state.)

Government in this country cannot without an intolerable sacrifice of democracy pursue a national program like that of China which is bluntly limiting each family to one child. But we ought to be able to discourage to some degree the people who usher into the world numbers of children they cannot care for or support. (There is a behavioural problem, too, with AIDS, now assuming epidemic proportions in some parts of the country.)

We have a host of aid programs - food stamps, direct relief, fuel assistance, rental assistance, housing subsidies, etc. - all aimed at trying to preserve a minimum standard of living for many citizens. Governor Brennan has been among those who

have repeatedly pointed out that the best solution for many of the problems of the poor lies in jobs. This, too, is partly a behavioural problem that government can influence through training for jobs, and stimulus to industry, and, in the end it would cost less than treating the symptoms of unemployment or poor employment.

Maine's secretary of agriculture has been struggling manfully with some behaviour problems in agriculture. He foresees a time when Maine's 3,000 full time farming units are cut down to 1,000 while the number of part-time farmers rises to 5,000. Government will have to assume a tremendous role in such an adjustment, and the role could better and more economically be in the area of behaviour modification than the policies of subsidizing uneconomic agriculture. Perhaps the giving up on commercial agriculture. We must be sorry about that, but the whole country has been shifting from family farms to large scale commercial operations. And Maine has been altering its agricultural expectations from the time it became a state. The Waldos, Knoxes, Cobbs, Ashburtons, and other land promoters initially approached the Maine lands as farming lands, but Colonel Black quickly saw that the state's future was in its forests. The family farm is still a national ideal but the number of farms is still declining. I spent my youth worrying over farm policy, lobbying for the McNary-Haugen Bill, and thinking about the Agricultural Adjustment Act. But who knows how to prevent the cyclical disasters of commercial farming? How can you prevent the boom and bust in agriculture with farm land rising with output and high prices to levels that cannot be

sustained and with credit extended until interest cannot be paid or the debt retired. It is a riddle. Another behavioural riddle. Maybe when Stewart Smith has time to think about it down at Tufts, he will dig up an answer. Someone else will be worrying about the problem in Maine.

Maine, it seems to me, has been put on the right course by the Brennan Administration, terms of attitudes toward the economic infrastructure of the state. This is a better road to full employment and decent living standards than any amount of subsidies to individuals. The improvement of ports, railroads, highways, and other economic necessities for enterprise will benefit future generations. The passage of the transportation bond issue will give Maine at least a chance to save railway freight transportation Down East.

Maine government is going to have to make many hard choices in the years ahead. Sometimes it will have to choose policies that disappoint large segments of the population. That is a hard thing for elected government officials to do. The Big A proposal presents a choice of options that is bound to disappoint many people, either way. I happen to believe the LURC has made the right choice - that saving 400,000 barrels of oil is a major achievement, that preserving thousands of jobs is a good idea, that cutting down on acid rain and the hothouse effect by switching to hydro electric power is a good policy generally and a good one at Millinocket.

Another area of hard choices is in the field of law enforcement. There is an astonishing increase in the incidence of child abuse and wife abuse. Here is another behavioural problem.

Could we do more to educate, influence and train parents and married couples in schools and elsewhere instead of trying to deal with social failures by police and courts and jails? The impression grows that the formal court procedures are inadequate to deal with these family problems. A system that can require small children to appear in court again and again to prosecute offenders has a fatal weakness. There must be a better way. I hope Maine will find it first.

Maine's government still has to solve two problems of nuclear waste disposal. It is taking a stab at finding a method of storing low-level waste, but I am not sure it will succeed. I am not wholly confident of the forthcoming referendum results. I hope I will not reveal any disrespect for simple majorities. (It is an article of democratic faith that majorities are right.) I hope I may voice reservations about the wisdom of majorities in all cases. (I would not submit to the notion that 2 and 2 are 6 even if an overwhelming majority embraced that conclusion.) And whatever the majority decides in November, it may not solve the problem. Down the road somewhere, Maine (and other states) also will have to face up to the problems of storing high level radioactive waste.

Democratic societies have a tendency to get excited about some problem and then fan away at it in a fine frenzy for months until they pass a law that addresses the situation. Then the community wipes its hands, says with relief, "Well, we've solved that problem," and turns to other issues. I hope that will

not be the case with the problems of education. Some changes have been made, but they do not assure that from now on the educational system will function well without further attention. Until we are turning out high school graduates who can read (and who do read) and who can write, we will not have solved the problem.

The citizens of Maine's towns have made progress in dealing with the pollution of our streams, lakes and ponds. Now the towns are struggling with the problems of solid waste disposal and with the difficult task of finding places to put septic tank sludge and sewage plant sludge. An earlier notion that it could be safely spread on crop land has been abandoned. Wearied and worried officials must wonder if we didn't tear down the privy too soon. It seems to have been the least expensive and most satisfactory way of dealing with human waste. Like a lot of other social problems, this one seems to have been aggravated by concentration, collection, consolidating and centralizing.

Maine's economic outlook suggests many problems with which future governments are going to have to deal. There is a continuing disparity between income in Maine and in other states; although the disparity is diminishing, the income level is sixth in the New England states. The rate of unemployment in Maine, however, continues below the national level of unemployment. The effective buying power of median households in Maine did rise 11.8 percent from 1983 to 1984 and the figure has continued to gain in 1985. Dr. John Coupe's study of income patterns in Maine and New England is encouraging. His index of Maine's

economy, with a figure of 100 for 1972, stood 136.7 at his figure for the first quarter of this year.

There are long term problems for the pulp and paper companies, arising from competition of foreign markets, and the impact of the spruce budworm on forest resources. Manufacturing industries like the shoe industries face acute difficulties. The potato industry is in deep trouble. But Maine has dealt with economic crisis better than most of the states. Generally, it has handled economic problems without undue expansion of government personnel or reckless enlargement of government programs. It is going to be difficult to meet the increasing demands for state government intervention out of existing tax resources.