

Morris K. Udall -- Selected Speeches:

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**Banquet Address
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I'd like to talk to you all, tonight, about whatever is going on in the world today. Before I get on to my remarks, if there are any members of the Air Force football team here, I was in Tucson last fall when you came down for Homecoming, and for what you did to our record, thanks a lot!

There is this great football story about the coach who was down to his last quarterback -- the other two had been hurt it seems -- and he put this third guy in. He didn't have much faith in him, and he said, "Kid, it's first and 5 on our own 5 and we're in trouble. Just go in there and call play 22E twice and then punt. No changes no matter what happens." The kid said, "OK, 22E twice and punt, no changes." He went in and called 22E and the other team apparently wasn't ready for it and the damn thing gained 45 yards -- first and 10 on the 50. The kid called it again; the other team was demoralized; went all the way to the 3 -- first and goal on the 3. They went in the huddle; the kid called a punt. They came out; the ball went sailing out of the stadium; the kid trotted back to the bench. The coach said, "Kid, in the name of God, what was going through your mind, standing there, first and goal on the 3, and calling a punt?" And the kid said, "Coach, to be perfectly honest, what was going through my mind was that this team has the most stupid coach in the history of football."

Well, I hope that will not be said about your program chairman when we're through tonight, because I don't have much of a speech.

I don't have a speechwriter, which brings up another one of my favorite stories about this politician who was going nowhere. He only had two attributes: One, he looked good like a candidate should -- long silver hair and strong jaw -- and second, the poor quality of his oratory. So he hired a bright young man, a graduate of some political science factory. This kid wrote speeches that had wit and punch and philosophy and quotations from Thucydides and Aristotle and Spiro Agnew and all the great thinkers. The man rose very quickly and became governor and then senator. He was in great demand as a speech maker and the halls were filled. After a couple of years of this, the kid went to him and said, "Senator, I've been with you a long time. I've worked hard. I think I have something to do with your success and I'd like a raise." And the Senator said, "Well, you've tried hard. You've been of some help, but actually I think I would have gone about as far on my own. We're paying you \$300 a month and I think that's enough." The young man departed very unhappy and that night he met the Senator at the auditorium and handed him the speech he had written. The Senator, as usual, hadn't seen the speech (but he read them beautifully). The Senator strode to the podium to thunderous applause. He opened the folder, and began to read.

On the first page it said, "My friends, I have come here tonight with a message of hope. I have come tonight to tell you that this nation can solve its problems." And the audience was still. He turned the page, and it said, "I've come here tonight to tell you that we can settle the war in the Mideast, end the oil shortage, build schools, hospitals and highways for the people of this country." He turned the page and said, "I've come tonight to tell

you that we can do this while increasing federal spending, decreasing federal taxes, balancing the federal budget and paying off the national debt." There was a stillness in the audience and he thought, "Damn, this was going to be good, one of my best speeches." He turned the page and read on, "My friends, I come tonight not to speak in glib generalities, I shall deal in specifics. For I have devised a 10 point program which at target completion date will lead to the results outlined above." And there was a hush in the hall; you could have dropped a pin. He said, "I propose to unveil this 10 point program here, and I propose to unveil it now. The first point in my 10 point program is -- " and he turned the page. There was nothing written there. In big red letters down at the bottom was penned, "All right, Big Shot, you're on your own."

Well, as I say, I don't have a speechwriter. I'm on my own. I made some notes on the backs of old envelopes coming out here in an Air Force plane today. Hell, it worked at Gettysburg -- it might go tonight.

But seriously, I am concerned, as I'm sure you are, about the Presidency and about our country. I think no subject could be more appropriate for this seminar, this assembly in which you are looking at this very serious question. Americans are concerned as never before, and I hope that we will act. I'm afraid sometimes Americans over-react. But the problem is we have serious problems with our government institutions and with the Presidency. Our most prized possession, self-government, is in some trouble, and part of it is a lack of faith and confidence in each other and in our institutions. You know, I'm a Democrat, but if you ask "What was the leading phrase that came out of those years in the 60s?" I'd have to say "credibility gap." And what this means, in language that's cleaned up of the politeness, is that your government lies to you.

It's a genuine belief that your government lies to you. I appeared at a high school program in Arizona a couple of weeks ago and I asked, "How many of you believe that your President has substantially told you all he knows about the Watergate situation?" and I asked them to raise their hands. No hands. They laughed at me.

It was kind of funny and yet it was kind of sad. In 1972, 45 percent of the American people -- the adults -- didn't show up to vote in the presidential election. A lot of these are people that our system shuts out because of antiquated registration requirements. But increasingly, we're seeing the sophisticated, educated, turned-off non-voter who's bugging out of the system, and if we get too much of that, we are really in serious trouble. We laugh about the President's credibility. But Gallup did a poll to establish an index of trust covering 20 occupations. Five years ago, we were 18th from the top as members of Congress. Now we fall below used-car dealers -- we're 20th on a list of 20 occupations.

So I think it's important that we ask ourselves, in this troubled year, what went wrong and where are we going. Specifically, let's focus on the Presidency, because that's the office in the land in which so much can go right, and -- as we have found in recent years -- so much can go wrong.

A little perspective in history might be interesting -- was it always thus? Was the President always the one most powerful man in America? I think, as many of you know, that Woodrow Wilson made a great contribution to scholarly literature with a book in the 1870s -- a hundred years ago -- called *Congressional Government*. His thesis was that the Presidency was a weak and hollow shell and the power in the country was in the Congress, and that this was wrong.

We have a system in this country which is a unique system -- a system of divided powers. If you hired some guy from Harvard Business School or someplace and said, "Design a government system that's efficient," about the last kind of system that he would give you is one of divided powers. He would stress centralized control and management, and yet, the Founding Fathers deliberately chose another model. They were from the countries where kings and tyrants had started wars and had given scant attention to the liberties of people. They deliberately designed a system in which power was not centralized, but was fragmented all over the place, into three different branches. It seemed kind of crazy at the time, but for 200 years now it's worked fairly well with some ups and downs. You know, Dr. Emmet Hughes once said in one of his books, "The executive, the legislative and judicial branches of government were given mandates to fight fairly and openly and forever." And so they have. It's kind of crazy. It's kind of illogical, and yet, somehow, it works.

It reminds me of the old story that Alben Barkley of Kentucky used to tell about the kid that was hitchhiking in moonshine country in Kentucky late one night, and an old moonshiner came by in a pickup truck and gave the kid a ride. They bounced along a little ways and the old moonshiner said, "Son, there's a jug under the seat.

Get it out." The kid took it out, and the old man said, "Have a drink." And the boy said, "No, thank you, sir, wouldn't really care to. Thank you very much." The old man pulled a gun out of his pocket and said, "Have a drink." And the kid said, "Under the circumstances, don't mind if I do." And he took the top off and lifted up the jug and he thought his teeth were coming loose and his esophagus was on fire and it had burned through the wall of his stomach. He gasped and put the top back on the bottle and the old man handed him the gun and said, "Now you hold the gun on me, and I'll take a drink." Well, you know, the American system kind of works best when we in the Congress hold a gun on the President and he holds one on us.

But, this system we started 200 years ago has changed over the years. We tend to forget that it was not always thus -- we did not always have powerful Presidents and a relatively weak Congress. If one had gone to Washington 50 years ago, the city in which I spend so much of my time ("sigh" as they say in Charlie Brown) and had asked a cab driver or a bartender, the oracles of wisdom in most major cities, "Show me the five most powerful men in town," they would have shown you Warren Harding or Calvin Coolidge somewhere in the first 10, maybe. But they would have said, "See the Speaker of the House, Nicholas Longworth, or see some of the great barons in the Senate." Because in the period after the Civil War, up until the 1920s, it was not Presidents who dominated things, it was the powerful leaders of the Congress who played that role.

Well, what changed it? I think it was three really shattering events in our nation's history back-to-back that really brought about the situation in which we find ourselves today. You know, we're worried about seven percent unemployment today. I remember, as a kid, when we had 33 percent unemployment. One out of every three people couldn't find a job. Factory capacity was 50 percent idle. And along came Franklin Roosevelt and he wanted power and people said, "Give him power." There were Congressmen who made a career of bragging about how fast they could rubber stamp Franklin Roosevelt's proposals. And we were just recovering from that in the 1930s, when along came World War II. Hitler, Tojo, Mussolini were trying to take over the world and people said, "Support the President. Give him airplanes, give him whatever he wants." And so the Presidency and its power were greatly enhanced. Then after that we've had 20 or 25 years of cold war in which it was felt that great foreign powers were trying to undo us, that there was a conspiracy afoot and that we had to put the power in the President. The result of all of this was a Congress that didn't make policy anymore, that didn't act, that instead reacted. One of the most powerful men in Congress in these last two decades was a man who was there in a position of power for 25 years, and his foreign policy consisted of three words: "Support the President." He never had an individual idea, a separate idea. We somehow developed the idea that it was unpatriotic to question the President on foreign policy.

Lincoln could have done it -- and did -- a hundred years ago. He was a Congressman during the Mexican War and made some speeches against it while the war was going on. I think this hang-up about the all-powerful Presidency and politics stops at the water's edge, that this idea that you couldn't question a President on foreign policy led us in part into the quagmire of Vietnam. Yet we have seen in my lifetime, in modern time, this crazy phenomenon of increasing concentration of power in the executive.

Every President in my time has come to the White House, and President Nixon was no exception, saying, "Oh, we're going to cut down this White House bureaucracy, put power in the Cabinet, get the best men and delegate to them." President Nixon's speech introducing his cabinet in 1969 was one of the best speeches of that time. He, too, promised men of independence, men who would differ with him, and so on. Despite all these speeches, when each President left the White House, the White House establishment was larger, and more and more power was concentrated there. You know, I saw some statistics not too long ago. Henry Kissinger, when he was first in the White House directing the national security apparatus, had a little tiny chunk of the White House operation. When he left, he had bureaus and Asian desks and specialists. His little chunk of the White House staff, in terms of bodies, was a larger staff than Franklin Roosevelt had for everything -- for the whole White House operation, including cooks and butlers and gardeners and all the rest -- during World War II!

I think it's now clear that one of the lessons of Watergate is that it's not in the best interest of this nation to concentrate power in the President, in his own executive staff and in the White House. It's necessary to have an arrangement that enlists the confidence of people in their government. This whole idea that's developed in modern times, that the President knows best, that he has the information, and that somehow he's possessed of infallible judgment, has led us into a lot of mistakes in modern time. I remember talking to John Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs and he said that one of the things that he'd learned was to distrust the experts, to not simply

accept what the experts have said. And while I'm not for knocking Presidents and I think we ought to support our Presidents, we ought not to blindly follow Presidents. Our system wasn't designed that way.

Old Harold Ickes, back in the 1940s said once, "Presidents are neither absolute monarchs nor descendants of the sun goddess." And I remember a Senator when Lyndon Johnson was in the White House saying, "You know, he was one of us and we knew he was human and he made mistakes. He moved 16 blocks down there and all of a sudden, he's infallible. You can't talk to him." We didn't intend to create in the Presidency an office of imperial power. The President is the first citizen of a democracy, temporarily in that office.

Vic Gold, who was in the Nixon administration with Vice President Agnew, talks of the exaltation of the Presidency -- this mystique of the lonely man in the Oval Office. And yet, no one thrust this office upon these men. They're human beings. They're sweating politicians who have been graced in large part by the office and not vice versa. They're not pressed into office involuntarily. I remember Richard Nixon and George McGovern and a lot of others desperately charging around this country asking that that office be thrust upon them. Vic Gold said, "For all of these reasons, I for one found that this syndrome of, 'he's really doing us a favor,' a little bit grating and pretentious." One commentator who was at a White House dinner a couple of years ago said that this exaltation of the President had reached a peak at a state dinner. Instead of the President mingling with guests the way Presidents used to, here was all the military, resplendent in uniforms. The Marine Band would play, "Hail to the Chief," and down the stairs in lock step would come the President. Guests, rather than mingling, would march stately into the East Room where a receiving line would be established, and so forth and so on.

This kind of attitude -- and I'm not suggesting disrespect for the President or his office -- this kind of attitude leads to a lot of other difficulties. Because you see, if the President is all-powerful and all-wise and infallible, then you must protect him and further his programs at all costs. Burglary to carry out the President's program is patriotism. Destroying material evidence becomes a duty. And if he's all-powerful, the President of the United States (you have to bow your head when you even utter the words), then he ought to be able to start a war when he wants to and not have to go to the Congress the way the Founding Fathers intended. He need not get the consent of the people who have to go and face the voters in Tombstone, Arizona, in the hot summer every two years, and of the people who are going to pay the taxes for that war. I represent a half a million people. And they send their sons to war and pay taxes and nobody asks me, "Should we have a major land war in Asia?" I was among the last to be consulted about whether we should end that war on any specific terms. It isn't important that I'm slighted, but it is important that the scheme of the Founding Fathers was to put that war power in the hands of the elected representatives closest to the people. It is important that the people have some input into that decision. I saw a figure the other day that the Vietnam War's eventual costs, for the veterans and all the rest, would be something in the order of 5 or 6 *hundred* billion dollars. Yet, for all practical purposes, that war was started in a manner the Constitution did not intend. Right or wrong, I set aside the question for now.

So, while I think that Watergate was a result in many ways of this idea of the imperial Presidency, it's a symptom of a deeper malaise, the loss of confidence in ourselves and our government, which I mentioned earlier. This idea of the imperial President has all kinds of consequences. They send waves out all through the government. Let me touch on just a couple of them. You know, if your President is not a human being who's in that office by the grace of God and the votes of the people for four years, if he is the President of the United States who can do no wrong, then the career civil service, which plays such an important role in Britain and used to in our country, has got to get in line. Civil service was supposed to give us independent continuity in government agencies, and a means to get away from the spoils system. Well, you know, one of the greatest of our civil service functions was the production of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index. For the last 20 years, they have announced every month what happened to cause inflation of the Consumer Price Index. This was the work of top economists and independents, and they had been thorns in the side of every President. Kennedy and Johnson would say, "Oh, everything's lovely, and we got unemployment under control," and the next day, the Bureau would issue statistics showing it wasn't so at all, that things were getting worse. This was a frustrating thing to Presidents. But along came President Nixon. His administration was giving us the old soft soap about how inflation was under control and unemployment was lovely, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics contradicted it. Ehrlichman and Haldeman said, "Just a minute, you've got to get on the team here. These statistics are not supporting our program." They fired some of the top economists in the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the message was very clear throughout the government -- you'd better get in line.

Another example of this same kind of result of imperial Presidency is the destruction of the power and the role of the Cabinet. You know, the coveted positions in Washington today are not in the Cabinet necessarily. They carry the title of Assistant to the President. You know, the idea was that Cabinet members were the chief men in the Administration. In all earlier times, Cabinet members were large men of national reputations who had their own following, who could say to a President, "You're wrong. You're making a mistake. I don't agree;" who could give and take and give the President the kind of cold discussion that he might need. In the Kennedy and Johnson years, and this was true with Eisenhower and in earlier times, the Cabinet members tended to stay on throughout the Administration. There were three of the Johnson-Kennedy people who stayed the full eight years. Well, we're a little over five years into the Nixon eight years -- if that's what it turns out to be, and I express no opinion on that point at this time -- and we've had four Attorneys General, four Treasury Secretaries, three Defense Secretaries, three Secretaries of Commerce, three of HEW, two of State, two of Interior, two of Agriculture. James Reston, in his column in the *New York Times* which I was reading coming out here today, said, "This makes Mr. Nixon the most prolific cabinetmaker since Chippendale." Commenting on George Shultz who left yesterday, Reston said, "It's hard to avoid wondering how different the history of the Administration might have been if the President had really kept his promise to keep his Cabinet as a committee of advisors and to listen to their private doubts and to their private counsel."

Another example of this exalted Presidency is this crazy thing called "executive privilege." Sure, it has a place. Sure, there's an area of privacy. The President has no right to come up and paw through my papers and ask my secretary why I voted no instead of yes on some bill yesterday. I have no right to go to the Supreme Court and cross-examine the Judge's clerk. There's an area of privacy. But we have seen in these last few years -- and it started under President Johnson -- all kinds of people claiming "executive privilege." The idea of the Cabinet system was that the President doesn't have to tell you about what advice he got, but his principal advisors and policymakers, cabinet members, do have to come up to Congress and testify. They can't claim "executive privilege." But now, we've had all kinds of faceless third-level White House people making policy, calling up to say the President wants so and so, or the White House announced today such and such. And yet when the Congress, exercising its function of check and balance, wants to call them up and ask them what's going on, they say, "Oh, executive privilege." Attorney General Kleindeinst carried that to extreme when he said in testimony a couple of years ago that there was no limit to executive privilege. It applied to everybody in the executive branch. If you're Postmaster of Muleshoe, Texas, on vacation at the beach in Galveston, and you witness a murder, "executive privilege." You're a member of the executive branch and you can't be questioned.

Well, I have painted a kind of a dismal picture, I suppose, of what's wrong. Let me talk now about some solutions and maybe some nonsolutions that occur to me, as one who has watched this process for most of my adult life. Americans are tinkers. We tend to favor mechanical solutions. We think that if something's wrong, maybe we can fix it if we rearrange the furniture, amend the Constitution or something. So in a time of trouble like this we are always kicking around panaceas. One of them is this idea of the six year single term for Presidents that a man as bright and respected as Mike Mansfield advocates. I think it's really clearly wrong. Mike's very sound usually, but I think this is simply preposterous. The 22nd amendment to limit Presidents to eight years was really wrong too. But you know, the Mansfield idea sounds so good on the surface: "Let's not have our Presidents concerned with these petty political matters, let's give them six years to do what's right for the country."

Well, I scorn the idea, I protest the idea that we need a nonpolitical President or a nonpolitical governor or a nonpolitical Senate or House. Some of the best things that Richard Nixon had done in these last few years were done precisely because he was under the gun and had to face the voters in 1972 and had to violate some of the old speeches he's made about relations with Russia and China. Clark Clifford, who'd been Defense Secretary in the Johnson Administration said, "A President immunized from political considerations is a President who need not listen to people, respond to majority sentiment, or pay attention to views that may be diverse or at variance with his own." You know, Arthur Schlesinger said on the same thought, "The idea of a President above politicians, above politics, is hostile to the genius of democracy." We tend to put our politicians down. We kid a lot about them. I was down in Carolina the other day making a speech and I told them a story about this politician who went to a little town and he said, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, them's my views, and if you don't like them, well, then I'll change them." And, you know, everybody laughs. But politicians are brokers. Politicians, when they're functioning right, keep the system together. They lead the militants, they say, "Slow down, we can't go quite that fast," and they say to the old mossbacks, "Come on. You've got to move up."

Society's got to move on and make progress." And so, you know, there's a grain of truth in this story that we laugh at.

One of my earliest memories is of a Senator from Arizona, old Henry Ashers, who was the Everett Dirksen of his day. He never used two 1-syllable words if five 4-syllable words would perform the same function. And in the 1930s, Roosevelt didn't like the Supreme Court decisions, so he decided, "Well, we'll pack the court. We have nine Justices, I'll increase the court to 15 and get some decisions I like." Ashers introduced the bill, as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and he got so much heat from home that he turned around and led the fight against his own bill -- which prompted that old crack about "Have you seen the light?" He said, "No, but I've felt the heat." Ashers had the sense of humor that you have to have in politics. He would tell a story about that. He said he got a telegram from a lady in Phoenix, who said, "Thank God for your courageous stand on the Supreme Court bill." And he wired back "Which one? Which courageous stand?"

Well, my friends, we need to get balance, we need to get back in this troubled time to the idea of the Founding Fathers, because it was sound. And one of the things we ought to do is to strengthen the Congress. We got back our war powers. If there is any one power which is intended to lie in the Congress, and not in the Presidency, it is the power to send kids off to war. We had to pass this war powers bill last fall over the President's veto. And we finally have the war power back where it belongs. We have to restore the Cabinet to its place of authority in our system, and to insist that Presidents put in their Cabinets big men of national reputations, who will not be afraid to say "no" to the President, as I have heard Cabinet members say in my presence. I remember one who said, "Jack, you're crazy as hell," when the President had proposed a program. You need people who can talk to Presidents that way. As all the Nixon Cabinet people have come and gone, we have seen most of them slink away from Washington full of doubts and recriminations. I think Walter Hickel, Secretary of Interior, was the only one who had what I consider the courage to crash a little crockery around, to leave in a loud way, and let some people know that he disagreed.

Another thing we ought to do is to get some justice back at the Department of Justice. You know, the Attorney General of the United States, the number one law enforcement official of this country, kind of ties the thin fabric that holds us together. This belief we've always had that justice was fair, that you weren't going to be prosecuted or your income tax returns audited because you belong to the wrong political party, must be restored. Up until recent years, Presidents have always had Attorneys General who were men of stature in the law -- judges, Presidents of the Bar, men who could say "no" to a President. Starting about 15 years ago with Eisenhower, Herbert Brownell, his campaign manager, was made Attorney General. And I loved Bobby Kennedy and I fought battles with him and I cried when he died. But he was the President's brother and his campaign manager, and we'd have been better off if the man who appoints judges and decides whether indictments are going to be brought had not been the President's campaign manager. So we had John Mitchell in this Administration. We need to get back to the tradition that the Attorney General is a man of stature, a lawyer of outstanding qualifications. The President's got a right to have someone in that office who shared his general philosophy and is favorable to his programs. But one of the first priorities of the Department of Justice ought to be justice, and we've gotten away from that idea.

Another dangerous idea, a nonsolution, is the idea we frequently debate about enlarging the Cabinet. There are always more proposals to add more Cabinet departments. John Ehrlichman was wrong on a lot of things, but he was right on something. He was trying to get the super Cabinet members. The military learned something a long time ago that you also learn in business very quickly, a fundamental principle of human affairs -- that one man cannot supervise on a daily basis more than three or four or five other men. If you get 20 vice presidents, pretty soon you've got vice presidents looking after other vice presidents. We've had a Cabinet which has been too large for some time, and I think that's one of the reasons for the loss of influence in the Cabinet. Sometime, if you have time, you ought to try Udall's quiz. Sit down and write down the names of the Cabinet departments and the people who now head them. Most of you -- and you're sophisticated political scientists -- can't do it. I flunked the test myself -- how many Cabinet members are there, and who are they?

Another lesson is that we've got to get the President out of isolation. We've got to get the President talking to people and we've got to restore humility to the Presidency. Thomas Jefferson took office, took the oath, the Inaugural, walked back to his boarding house, and the table was full, and he waited his turn at the dinner table. Today, you have whatever you want to eat and helicopters and Air Force planes, and the band plays wherever you arrive.

Even 25 years ago, 30 years ago, Harry Truman went to Eisenhower's Inaugural, then drove to Union Station, shook hands with the Secret Service and said goodbye, and he and Bess Truman and Margaret got on the train and went back to Missouri. Today, we have recently seen the Vice President convicted of a crime, and six months later a Secret Service detail of 20 was taking him out to play golf in California.

I think this mystique of the President being above us all has gone too far. We need Presidents who are humans. We've got to protect them, of course, in this day of violence. But we need Presidents who are humans, who recognize this, who can laugh at themselves and their troubles. We need Presidents who mix with people. We need Presidents who get a range of advice. I'm always a little suspicious of people who can't laugh at themselves, who don't have a sense of humor. Presidents used to go to the gridiron show where everybody pokes fun at them and it's not always pleasant. But their presence there said something: I'm a human being; I'm temporarily the President; I can take a joke; it's all part of the system; and so on. And as I say, we need Presidents who have diversions. I'd rather see someone who played a little poker or climbed a mountain or backpacked or hit a golf ball or had some diversions once in a while, than these kinds of intense 18-hour-a-day Presidents we've had in modern times. And I think the troubles we're in right now stand in very large part because we had a President who surrounded himself with a palace guard and there was no way that mayors and governors and Congressmen and ordinary citizens had any access.

I sat in a gas line a couple of weeks ago in Washington. I understand you don't have them out here, but it's a great experience; you all ought to have them. I was there an hour and a half, and I got to the Capitol late for a committee meeting and other Congressman had the same experience and he said, "You know, I'm so goddamn mad, if the election were today, I'd vote against myself." I think we'd be better off if we had a little bit of this in the Presidency. The President needs contact with ordinary people. We all do. I get out in the hot sun and campaign and go to high schools and supermarkets and talk to people. I remember old Sam Rayburn, the speaker from Texas. In the early days of the Kennedy Administration, someone said, "Man, isn't it fantastic, all of these great brains and intellects that the President has surrounded himself with? Sorenson and McNamara and Galbraith and Schlesinger; fantastic brainpower," and Rayburn said, "Yeah, this may be true, but I'd feel a lot better if a couple of these guys would run for sheriff." And there's some truth in that comment.

I don't want to leave the impression that we don't need respect and reverence for Presidents and the office. We need it. In fact, I think one of the reasons this country holds together is because of the fact that we have respected our Presidents. You go to many countries in the world and the first impulse of a citizen is to knock the President and chew him up and get rid of him. All I'm saying is that we need an end to the extremes of reverence and unquestioning acceptance of presidential decisions that have led us into this trouble. I'm not for a weak President; I'm for a strong President. But I'm for a strong Congress too, to counter the President, to carry out this traditional function of check and balance. We need congressional reform, the fight that some of us have been involved in with the war powers, budget reform on-the-record voting, with open committee sessions and all the rest. What will make the Presidency work is a strong Congress and a strong court system in this system of balance, balance for the President and balance for the other branches.

I warned against tinkering with the machinery of the government too much. I told a little press conference earlier that I was going to disregard my advice and suggest one change that we ought to make as a result of our experience in recent years. You know, right now, we have no middle remedy. We're stuck with two extreme remedies. One is to impeach the President, an action that many Americans shrink back from as a kind of a drastic and divisive remedy, and the other extreme is to do nothing for the next two and a half years and have a crippled President who isn't believed by the vast majority of his fellow citizens. Well, some of us have introduced an amendment which suggests that we ought to have a middle ground. We have a couple of dozen cosponsors on this constitutional amendment. We say this; "If at any time, two-thirds -- not 51 percent, not 60 percent -- but if two-thirds of the House and of the Senate vote no confidence in the President, you then have another election in 90 days. He can run, or his party can nominate Gerry Ford or someone else if you're in that kind of a situation. But in 90 days, you have it over with." It's not the same as the parliamentary system, a vote of confidence, where if you lose by one vote, off it goes. There's something to be said for the stability of the four year term. There are a lot of Congressmen not ready to vote for impeachment. But there's a clear majority, and I think two-thirds, who would perhaps vote on a resolution that said we have no confidence and we want a new election.

Well, let me conclude with just one final thought. As I have said, not all the changes we need are structural or mechanical. These aren't the answers most of the time. What we need to do is to reassert and rebuild this spirit of stability and strength that makes our system work. We need a rebuilding of our national spirit. The Soviet Constitution or the Constitution of South Vietnam reads just as well as ours does. The cold words are just as good and just as noble. But its the spirit of our system -- the spirit -- that keeps it together. You know, there's no statute or anything in the Constitution that says the night you beat me in an election, I've got to call up and congratulate you, when I'd rather go out and get drunk or cry a little bit with a big towel. But we do that. We cheer for the opposing team after they've mopped us up on the football field. You stand up for the judge or the commanding officer when he comes in the room, not because you agree with the judge's last four decisions. They may have been the most rotten decisions in the history of the country. But you stand up because of your respect for the office. All of these little rituals that we have in America are a way of saying that what holds us together, what unites us as a country, is much more important than the political things that may divide us. A long time ago, one of my favorite judges, Judge Learned Hand, put that truth in these words. He said, "I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitution, upon laws, upon courts. These are false hopes. Liberty," he said, "lies in the hearts of men and women. And when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it."

Since I started on a light note, let me end with my favorite political story which I heard Hubert Humphrey tell on Jack Kennedy in his presence. It was the showdown in the 1960 presidential primary -- West Virginia, Appalachia, poverty. The Humphrey people were saying and advertising that Kennedy was a millionaire's son who had never done a day's work in his life. Kennedy was at the mine one morning shaking hands early. The old miner came out and said, "Just a minute, Senator. Is it true you're a millionaire's son and never done a day's work in your life?" And Jack Kennedy, whose one great redeeming virtue was a sense of humor, said "Well, yes, I guess it is." And the old miner slapped him on the back and said, "That's all right, mister, let me tell you something. You haven't missed a damn thing."

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