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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

MAY 9, 1974

*Donna
Johnson*

┌

PRESIDENT FITE, MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, STUDENTS AND
GUESTS, I DEEPLY APPRECIATE YOUR INVITATION TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY.

IT IS A PLEASURE TO GET OUT OF THE SUPER-HEATED ATMOSPHERE
OF WASHINGTON TO THE COOLER CLIMATE OF A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS.

IN WASHINGTON, WE TEND TO RIVET OUR ATTENTION ON EACH
DAY'S SENSATION, ^{or} ₁ WHATEVER THAT MAY BE.



WE SOMETIMES NEGLECT THE MORE BASIC MATTERS OF LIFE,
WHICH YOU EXPLORE DAILY. AND, IN WASHINGTON, WE OFTEN SEEM TO
CONCENTRATE OUR FOCUS ON THE TWIGS AND LEAVES OF OUR MANY PROBLEMS.
HERE YOU ARE ABLE TO TAKE A MORE OBJECTIVE LOOK AT THE WHOLE FOREST,
SOMETIMES PERCEIVING VITAL RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE OUR SHORT-RANGE
FOCUS.



I FIND IT REFRESHING AND STIMULATING TO COME TO THIS CAMPUS---
ESPECIALLY BECAUSE YOUR UNIVERSITY IS SO CLOSE TO THE RICH LAND
WITHOUT WHICH NONE OF US COULD EXIST. AS I LOOKED AT FIELD AFTER
FIELD PASSING BENEATH OUR PLANE THIS MORNING, READY FOR THE NEW
GROWTH SO ESSENTIAL TO MUCH OF THE WORLD, I COULDN'T HELP BUT THINK
THAT YOU HERE AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ARE CLOSER TO THE HEART
OF THE THINGS THAT REALLY COUNT THAN ARE THOSE IN THE GOVERNMENTAL
OFFICES IN WASHINGTON.



THE PROMISE OF RENEWAL AND GROWTH WHICH EACH SPRING CALLS
FORTH SEEMS PARTICULARLY STRONG HERE, AS EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
NEARS THE END OF ITS DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR.

IN HUMAN LIVES, A 75TH BIRTHDAY USUALLY BRINGS MORE
THOUGHTS OF THE PAST THAN OF THE FUTURE. BUT IN YOUR UNIVERSITY'S
LIFE, THE FIRST 75 YEARS HAVE BEEN MERELY THE PROLOGUE --- JUST THE
START OF A CONTINUING RICH CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF
PERSONS. AND THE MAIN THOUGHTS ARE OF THE FUTURE, RATHER THAN OF THAT
IMPRESSIVE GROWTH WHICH HAS BEEN THE HISTORY OF THE PAST 75 YEARS.



THE BEST IS YET TO COME. YOUR PAST SHOWS THAT. WHAT IMPRESSES ME
THE MOST IN THE HISTORY OF EASTERN ILLINOIS' GROWTH IS NOT SO MUCH
THE MANY-FOLD INCREASE IN STUDENTS, NOR THE GROWTH OF THE PHYSICAL
ATTRIBUTES OF THE CAMPUS, BUT THE BROADENING OF THE INTELLECTUAL
CHALLENGES OFFERED HERE. *by this fine institution of higher learning,*

THE ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR ARE ONLY AN INDICATION OF WHAT THE
FUTURE HAS TO OFFER. IN THE WORDS OF THE CURRENT *radio + T.V.* COMMERCIAL, "YOU'VE
COME A LONG WAY, BABY, BUT YOU'VE STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO."



IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THAT IS TRUE OF OUR NATION TODAY.

a Long way from 13 poor struggling colonies. A million people + a new Constitution etc

NEARING OUR 200TH ANNIVERSARY, WE'VE COME A LONG WAY. BUT WE STILL

despite 211 million / Free World leadership

HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO, AND THE EVENTS OF THE RECENT YEARS HAVE

SHOWN US SOME OF THE GREAT PROBLEMS THAT WE -- YOU HERE, AND THOSE

OF US IN GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER -- HAVE TO OVERCOME. THE

PROBLEMS ARE LARGE AND SERIOUS: ENERGY SHORTAGES, AIR AND WATER

POLLUTION, INFLATION, AND WORLD TURMOIL.



I'D LIKE TO TALK WITH YOU FOR A BIT ABOUT THE PROBLEM
I CONSIDER PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS OF ALL. CERTAINLY IT IS A
PROBLEM THAT DESERVES OUR MAJOR ATTENTION.

I DISLIKE LABELS, BUT I THINK YOU COULD LABEL THIS A
CRISIS IN CONFIDENCE.

THERE HAS BEEN AN EROSION OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT WHICH I BELIEVE HAS REACHED CRISIS PROPORTIONS.



THE PUBLIC OPINION POLLS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT THIS SPRING
IN REPORTING WHAT ONE POLLSTER CALLED THE LOWEST CONFIDENCE RATING
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED IN ALL THE YEARS SUCH POLLS HAVE
BEEN MADE.

LESS THAN A THIRD OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE EXPRESSED APPROVAL
OF THE PRESIDENT. EVEN FEWER, ONLY ABOUT ONE-FOURTH OF OUR NATION,
EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF OUR CONGRESS.

*The score-card on the
Supreme Ct is probably not much better.*

TO ME THAT IS A GRAVE SITUATION.



IF MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF OUR POPULATION DISAPPROVE OF
THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, WE RISK SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THAT GOVERNMENT
AND TO THE INSTITUTIONS OF FREEDOM WHICH IT IS DESIGNED TO SECURE.
IF SUCH A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE PREVAILS, THERE CANNOT HELP BUT BE
EROSION IN THE FREEDOMS WE HAVE TREASURED. A FREE GOVERNMENT WORKS
ONLY AS LONG AS ITS CITIZENS MAKE IT WORK. IF THEY GIVE UP, IT IS
EASY FOR DEMAGOGUES AND DICTATORS TO MOVE IN.



THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE SEEN A NUMBER OF EVENTS WHICH
HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A FEELING OF DISTRUST AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE.

BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE MAIN CAUSE HAS BEEN A
CONTINUOUS SERIES OF REVELATIONS AND REPORTS OF CORRUPTION,
MALFEASANCE AND WRONGDOING IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT---NOT THE
LEAST OF WHICH IS THE SORRY MESS WHICH CARRIES THE LABEL OF WATERGATE.



WE HAVE SEEN CHARGE AND COUNTER-CHARGE, INDICTMENTS,
CONFESSIONS, CONVICTIONS AND RESIGNATIONS, INVOLVING SOME OF THE
HIGHEST OFFICES.

THESE HAVE BEEN HAMMER-BLOWS TO THE CONFIDENCE THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE PLACED IN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

MUCH REMAINS UNTESTED AND UNPROVED. BUT WHAT HAS TAKEN
PLACE UP TO NOW HAS CREATED A DIMINISHED CONFIDENCE IN OUR PUBLIC
OFFICIALS, BASIC DISTRUST OF THEIR MOTIVES.



AND WHILE IT MAY BE EASY TO DELETE CHARACTERIZATION FROM THE PRINTED PAGE, WE CANNOT DELETE CHARACTERIZATION FROM PEOPLES' MINDS WITH A WAVE OF THE HAND.

THAT IS WHY I AM SPEAKING FRANKLY ON THE SUBJECT, PERHAPS MORE SO THAN SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES MIGHT WISH. BUT I THINK THE MATTER IS SO VITAL THAT IT MUST BE DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC--BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS. AND IT MUST BE DISCUSSED THOROUGHLY.



THE LEGAL, JUDICIAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES ALREADY
IN OPERATION WILL SETTLE THE GUILT OR INNOCENCE OF THOSE INVOLVED
IN THE CHARGES OF CORRUPTION, DISHONESTY OR VIOLATIONS OF LAW.

THERE WILL BE SOME PLUSES FROM THE VERY OPERATION OF THIS
CLEANSING PROCESS--A RECOGNITION THAT OUR SYSTEM CAN DETECT AND
DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH THOSE WHO HAVE DONE IT HARM OR VIOLATED ITS
LAWS, A RECOGNITION THAT THE LAW APPLIES TO HOLDERS OF HIGH OFFICE
AS WELL AS TO THE CITIZEN WHO ELECTS THE OFFICE HOLDER.



IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR INSTITUTIONS THAT
WE CAN OPENLY DEBATE THE LEGAL AND MORAL FITNESS OF OUR COUNTRY'S
HIGHEST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN AN ORDERLY WAY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK
OF THE CONSTITUTION. THERE ARE NO RIOTS. THERE ARE NO REPRISALS OR
REPRESSIONS.



WHERE ELSE IN THIS WORLD WOULD THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF
A NATION DECIDE TO MAKE PUBLIC THE MOST INTIMATE PERSONAL CONVERSATIONS
WITH HIS STAFF? AND DO SO AT THE URGING OF THE OPPOSITION?

SO, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT OUR COUNTRY CAN COME THROUGH
THIS ORDEAL WITH ITS STRENGTH STILL SOLID.

BUT I FEEL THAT LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS TO
VIOLATIONS OF LAW ARE ONLY A PARTIAL ANSWER TO THE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE
AMONG OUR CITIZENS.

I THINK WE NEED TO DO MORE---MUCH MORE TO RESTORE THE
FEELING OF TRUST IN OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.



WE MUST INSURE THAT THIS STAIN OF CORRUPTION, WHICH HAS
SPREAD SO WIDELY, DOES NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO SPREAD AGAIN.

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT TRUTH IS THE GLUE THAT HOLDS
GOVERNMENT TOGETHER.

I FIRMLY BELIEVE WE NEED TO USE MORE OF THAT GLUE AS
REGARDS OUR PUBLIC OFFICES.



I FIRMLY BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO PUT MORE TRUTH IN
POLITICS---THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR PERSONS IN POLITICAL LIFE
TO FACE THE TRUTH AND TO SPEAK THE TRUTH.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR PERSONS IN POLITICAL LIFE TO AVOID
THE PRAGMATIC DODGE WHICH SEEKS TO OBSCURE THE TRUTH.

I SAY THIS IN FULL RECOGNITION THAT TRUTH IS NOT ALWAYS
PLEASANT. INDEED IT CAN BE BRUTAL. BUT IT IS NECESSARY TO COMBAT
SUSPICION AND DOUBT.



WE HAVE HAD AN EXAMPLE OF BRUTALITY OF DISCLOSURE IN
RECENT DAYS -- DISCLOSURE OF INTIMATE PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN
THE PRESIDENT AND HIS STAFF. SOME HAVE FOUND THESE FRANK CONVERSATIONS
DISTASTEFUL IN PART. THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF ACKNOWLEDGES THEY COULD
BE EMBARRASSING.

BUT DISCLOSURE WAS ESSENTIAL IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH.

AND I BELIEVE THOSE DOCUMENTS, PAINFUL AS THEY MAY BE, WILL
HELP ESTABLISH THE TRUTH.



I HOLD WITH PATRICK HENRY, WHO ONE HUNDRED NINETY NINE YEARS AGO TOLD A GROUP OF COLONISTS: "WE ARE APT TO SHUT OUR EYES AGAINST A PAINFUL TRUTH...FOR MY PART, WHATEVER ANGUISH OF SPIRIT IT MAY COST, I AM WILLING TO KNOW THE WHOLE TRUTH."

TRUTH IN POLITICS REQUIRES MORE THAN A PLEDGE OF HONEST STATEMENTS FROM POLITICIANS.

IT REQUIRES AN INTEREST -- A DEMAND FOR THE TRUTH FROM THE CITIZENS WHO ELECT THE POLITICIANS.



YOU AS VOTERS MUST INSIST THAT CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE AND
OFFICE HOLDERS SPEAK THE TRUTH. AND YOU MUST CALL THEM TO ACCOUNT
WHEN YOU FEEL THEY DO NOT.

IF ENOUGH VOTERS DEMAND AN ACCOUNTING -- A TRUTHFUL
ACCOUNTING -- THEY WILL GET IT. ONE THING EVERY ELECTED OFFICE
HOLDER MUST DO IS PAY ATTENTION TO THE VOTER. IF HE FAILS TO LISTEN,
HE WON'T BE AN OFFICE HOLDER FOR VERY LONG.



AND IN THE PROCESS OF DEMANDING TRUTH IN POLITICS, YOU THE STUDENTS SHOULD BE LEADING THE CAUSE. YOU HERE AT EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, AND YOUR BROTHER AND SISTER STUDENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, HAVE A GREAT CAPACITY FOR IDEALISM AND ENTHUSIASM --- IDEALISM AND ENTHUSIASM WHICH CAN HELP RE-SHAPE OUR LIVES.



WE IN GOVERNMENT NEED YOUR HELP RIGHT NOW, NOT IN SOME
REMOTE FUTURE A GENERATION AHEAD. WE NEED YOUR STRONG CONFIDENCE.
WE NEED YOUR FRESH IDEAS. RIGHT NOW.

WE IN GOVERNMENT KNOW YOU ARE CAPABLE. I HAVE TWO SONS
IN COLLEGE NOW, AND TWO TEENAGERS WHO'LL SOON BE THERE. I KNOW THEY
ARE FAR MORE PREPARED TO COPE WITH THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD THAN
I WAS AT THEIR AGE --- FAR MORE PREPARED INTELLECTUALLY, FAR MORE
PREPARED EMOTIONALLY, FAR MORE AWARE MORALLY.



THERE IS NO DOUBT YOU HAVE THE ABILITY.

THERE IS ONLY THE QUESTION OF WHETHER YOU WILL USE IT. THE
FORMULA IS SIMPLE. JUST GET INVOLVED.

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY. GET INVOLVED WITH
A POLITICAL PARTY. GET TOGETHER WITH THOSE WHO FEEL AS YOU DO.
ORGANIZE AND WORK FOR THE TRUTH. AND YOU'LL BE ASTOUNDED AT THE
THINGS YOU CAN GET DONE.



THE FRESH ATMOSPHERE YOU POUR INTO OUR MURKY POLITICAL SYSTEM IS LIKE A CLEAN NORTH WIND ON A FALL DAY, BRINGING THE CLEANNESS AND FRESHNESS OF TRUTH SO ACHINGLY NEEDED NOW.

ENGLAND'S LORD ACTON, WHO WARNED US THAT "POWER TENDS TO CORRUPT AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY," ALSO KNEW THE VALUE OF TRUTH. LORD ACTON WROTE: "TRUTH IS THE ONLY MERIT THAT GIVES DIGNITY AND WORTH TO HISTORY."



I CALL UPON YOU TO BRING NEW DIGNITY AND WORTH TO OUR LAND
SO THAT WE -- WITH A NEW SPIRIT OF PURPOSE -- CAN DEAL WITH THOSE
OTHER NEEDS WE HAVE STARTED TO MEET, NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY, CLEANER
AIR AND WATER, AND THAT MOST ELUSIVE GOAL -- A PEACEFUL AND
COOPERATIVE WORLD.

GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS ARE POSSIBLE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE --
IN YOUR FUTURE. LET US ALL, TOGETHER, REACH THOSE ACHIEVEMENTS IN
THE LIGHT OF TRUTH.





REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD
~~9:30 A.M., THURSDAY~~, MAY 9, 1974, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY AT 9:30 A.M. THURSDAY

President Fite, members of the faculty, students and guests, I deeply appreciate your invitation to speak ^{to you} today.

It is a pleasure to get out of the super-heated atmosphere of Washington to the cooler climate of a University campus.

In Washington, we tend to rivet our attention on each day's sensation, whatever that may be.

We sometimes neglect the more basic matters of life, which you explore daily. And, in Washington, we often seem to concentrate our focus on the twigs and leaves of our many problems. ~~Here~~ here you are able to take a more objective look at the whole forest, sometimes perceiving vital relationships outside our short-range focus.

I find it refreshing and stimulating to come to this campus — especially because your university is so close to the rich land without which none of us could exist. As I looked at field after field passing beneath our plane this morning, ready for the new growth so essential to much of the world, I couldn't help but think that you here at Eastern Illinois University are closer to the heart of the things that really count than are those in the governmental offices in Washington.

The promise of renewal and growth which each spring calls forth seems particularly strong here as Eastern Illinois University nears the end of its Diamond Jubilee Year.



In human lives, a 75th birthday usually ~~means for~~ ^{brings} more thoughts of the past than of the future. But in your University's life, the first 75 years have been merely the prologue — ~~just~~ the start of a continuing rich contribution to the lives of thousands of persons. And the main thoughts are of the future, rather than of that impressive growth which has been the history of the past 75 years. The best is yet to come. Your past shows that. What impresses me most in ~~the~~ ^{the} history of Eastern Illinois' growth is not so much the many-fold increase in students, nor the growth of the physical attributes of the campus, but the broadening of the intellectual challenges offered here.

~~The~~ ⁼ achievements so far are only an indication of what the future has to offer. In the ~~present~~ ^{words} grammar of the ~~present~~ ^{current} commercial, ["]you've come a long way baby, ["] but you've still got a long way to go.

In a very real sense, that is true of our nation today. Nearing our 200th anniversary, ["]we've come a long way. But we still have a long way to go. And the events of the recent years have shown us some of the great problems that we -- you here, and those of us in government working together -- have to overcome. ^{problems} They are large and serious: energy shortages, air and water pollution, inflation, and world turmoil.

~~I'd~~ I'd like to talk with you for a bit about the ~~one~~ ^{problem} I consider perhaps the most serious of all. Certainly ^{it is} a problem that deserves our major attention.

I dislike labels, ["]But I think you could label this a crisis in confidence.



There has been an erosion of confidence in our federal government which I believe has reached crisis proportions.

The public opinion polls have been consistent this spring in reporting what one pollster called the lowest confidence rating the federal government had received in all the years such polls have been made.

Less than a third of the American people expressed approval of the President. Even fewer, only about one-fourth of our nation, expressed approval of our Congress.

To me that is a grave situation.

If more than two-thirds of our population disapprove of their own government, we risk serious damage to that government and to

the institutions of freedom which ~~have helped build it. The longer~~ *it is designed to secure* such a negative attitude prevails, ~~the easier it becomes~~ *there cannot help but be*

erosion in the freedoms we have treasured. ~~It is~~ *A* free government works only ~~as~~ *as* long as its citizens make it work. If they give up, it is ~~easy~~ *easy* for demagogues and dictators to move in.

The past few ~~years~~ *years* have seen a number of events which have contributed to ~~the~~ *a* feeling of distrust and ~~the~~ lack of confidence.

But it seems clear that the main ~~problem~~ *cause* has been ~~the~~ *a continuous* series of ~~reports~~ *revelations and* of corruption, malfeasance and wrong ~~doing~~ *doing in* ~~at a number of levels of~~ *the* federal government.

Not the least of which ~~is~~ *is* the sorry mess which carries the label of Watergate.

We have seen charge and counter-charge, indictments, *confessions,* convictions and resignations, ~~some~~ involving some of the highest



offices.

These have been hammer-blows to the confidence the American people have placed in their government.

much remains untested and unproved
~~There could be more.~~ But what has taken place up to now has created a diminished confidence in our public officials, ~~basic~~ basic distrust of their motives.

And while it may be easy to delete characterization from the printed page, we cannot delete characterization from peoples' minds with a wave of the hand.

~~We have to take strong action.~~

That is why I am speaking frankly on the subject, ~~Perhaps~~ more so than some of my colleagues might wish. But I think the matter is so vital that it must be discussed in public--by public officials. And it must be discussed thoroughly.

The legal, judicial and constitutional processes already in operation will settle the guilt or innocence of those involved in the charges of corruption, dishonesty or violations of law.

~~There~~ There will be some pluses from the very operation of this cleansing process ~~—~~ recognition that our system can detect and deal adequately with those who have done it harm or violated its laws, ~~—~~ recognition that the law applies to holders of high office as well as to the citizen who elects the office holder.

INSERT

~~But that is only a partial answer.~~

~~I think we need more. Much more.~~

We must insure that this stain of corruption which has

INSERT PAGE FOUR



It is a tribute to the strength of our institutions that we can openly debate the legal and moral fitness of our country's highest ~~government~~ government officials

IN AN ORDERLY WAY

~~is~~ within the framework of the Constitution, ~~There are no~~ There are no riots. There are no reprisals or repression_s. ~~No~~

Where ~~else~~ in this world would the chief executive of ~~a nation~~ ~~decide to make public the most intimate personal conversations with his staff?~~ And do so at the ~~urging~~ urging of the opposition?

So, I firmly believe that our ~~country can~~ country can come through this ordeal, WITH ITS STRENGTH STILL SOLID,

But I feel that ~~the~~ legal and constitutional solutions to ~~the~~ violations of ~~law~~ law are only a partial answer to the crisis of confidence among our ~~citizens~~ citizens.

I think we need to do more---much more to ~~restore the feeling~~ of trust in our ~~the~~ federal government.



spread so widely, does not have a chance to spread again.

I firmly believe that truth is the glue that holds government together.

I firmly believe we need to ~~apply~~ ^{use} more of that glue ~~to~~ ^{as regards} our public ~~in~~ ^{office} offices.

I firmly believe it is time to put more truth in politics —

That the time has come for persons in political life to face the truth and to speak the truth.

The time has come for persons in political life to avoid the pragmatic ~~which~~ ^{dodge} which seeks to obscure the truth.

I say this in full recognition that truth is not always pleasant. Indeed it can be brutal. But it is necessary to combat suspicion and doubt.

We have had an example of brutality of disclosure in recent days — Disclosure of intimate private conversations between the President and his staff. ^{Here} Some have found ~~the~~ ^{use} frank conversations distasteful in part. The President himself acknowledges ~~they~~ ^{they} could be embarrassing.

But disclosure was essential in the search for truth.

And I believe those documents, painful as they may be, will help establish the truth.

I hold with Patrick Henry, ^g who one hundred ninety nine years ago told a group of colonists: "We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth... For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth."

Truth in politics requires more than a pledge of honest



statements from politicians.

It requires an interest -- a demand for the truth from the citizens who elect the politicians.

You as voters must insist that candidates for office and office holders speak the truth. And you must call them to account when you feel they do not.

If enough voters demand an accounting-- a truthful accounting -- they will get it. One thing every elected office holder must do is pay attention to the voter. If he fails to listen, he won't be an office holder for very long.

And in the process of demanding truth in politics, you the students should be leading the cause. You here at Eastern Illinois University, and your brother and sister students across the country, have a great capacity for idealism and enthusiasm. ~~I~~ Idealism and enthusiasm which can help re-shape our lives.

We in government need your help right now, ~~Not~~ in some remote future a generation ahead. We need your strong confidence. ~~We~~ We need your fresh ideas. Right now.

We in government know you are capable. I have two sons in college now, and two teenagers who'll soon be there. I know they are far more prepared to cope with the challenge of the world, than I was at their age -- ~~far~~ more prepared intellectually, ~~far~~ more prepared emotionally, ~~far~~ more aware morally.

There is no doubt you have the ability.

There is only the question of whether you will use it. The formula is simple. Just get involved.

Get involved in your local community. Get involved with a political party. Get together with those who feel ~~as~~^{as} you do. Organize and work for the truth. And you'll be astounded at the things you can get done.

~~The~~ The fresh atmosphere you'll pour into our murky political system ~~is~~^{is} like a clean north wind on a fall day, bringing the cleanness and freshness ~~of~~^{of} truth so achingly needed now. } Just
As
I
said
before

England's Lord Acton, ~~I~~^I who warned us that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," also knew the value of truth. Lord Acton wrote: ~~I~~^I "Truth is the only merit that gives dignity and worth to history."

I call upon you to bring new dignity and worth to our land /
so that we -- with a new spirit of purpose -- can deal with those other ~~problems which~~^{needs} we have started to ~~solve~~^{meet}, New sources of energy, cleaner air and water, and that most elusive goal -- a peaceful and cooperative world.

Great achievements are possible in the very near future —
/ In your future. Let us all, together, reach those achievements in the light of truth.



LAST COPY

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The achievements so far are only an indication of what the future has to offer. In the words of the current commercial, "You've come a long way baby, but you've still got a long way to go."

(more)

In a very real sense, that is true of our nation today. Nearing our 200th anniversary, we've come a long way. But we still have a long way to go. And the events of the recent years have shown us some of the great problems that we -- you here, and those of us in government working together -- have to overcome. The problems are large and serious: energy shortages, air and water pollution, inflation, and world turmoil.

I'd like to talk with you for a bit about the problem I consider perhaps the most serious of all. Certainly it is a problem that deserves our major attention.

I dislike labels, but I think you could label this a crisis in confidence.

There has been an erosion of confidence in our Federal Government which I believe has reached crisis proportions.

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To me that is a grave situation.

If more than two-thirds of our population disapprove of their own government, we risk serious damage to that government and to the institutions of freedom which it is designed to secure. If such a negative attitude prevails, there cannot help but be erosion in the freedoms we have treasured. A free government works only as long as its citizens make it work. If they give up, it is easy for demagogues and dictators to move in.

The past few years have seen a number of events which have contributed to a feeling of distrust and lack of confidence.

But it seems clear that the main cause has been a continuous series of revelations and reports of corruption, malfeasance and wrongdoing in the Federal Government -- not the least of which is the sorry mess which carries the label of Watergate.

We have seen charge and counter-charge, indictments, confessions, convictions and resignations, involving some of the highest offices.

These have been hammer-blows to the confidence the American people have placed in their government.

Much remains untested and unproved. But what has taken place up to now has created a diminished confidence in our public officials; basic distrust of their motives.

(more)

And while it may be easy to delete characterization from the printed page, we cannot delete characterization from peoples' minds with a wave of the hand.

That is why I am speaking frankly on the subject, perhaps more so than some of my colleagues might wish. But I think the matter is so vital that it must be discussed in public -- by public officials. And it must be discussed thoroughly.

The legal, judicial and constitutional processes already in operation will settle the guilt or innocence of those involved in the charges of corruption, dishonesty or violations of law.

There will be some pluses from the very operation of this cleansing process -- a recognition that the law applies to holders of high office as well as to the citizen who elects the office holder.

It is a tribute to the strength of our institutions that we can openly debate the legal and moral fitness of our country's highest government officials in an orderly way within the framework of the Constitution. There are no riots. There are no reprisals or repressions.

Where else in this world would the chief executive of a nation decide to make public the most intimate personal conversations with his staff? And do so at the urging of the opposition?

So, I firmly believe that our country can come through this ordeal with its strength still solid.

But I feel that legal and constitutional solutions to violations of law are only a partial answer to the crisis of confidence among our citizens.

I think we need to do more -- much more to restore the feeling of trust in our Federal Government.

We must insure that this stain of corruption which has spread so widely, does not have a chance to spread again.

I firmly believe that truth is the glue that holds government together.

I firmly believe we need to use more of that glue as regards our public offices.

I firmly believe it is time to put more truth in politics -- that the time has come for persons in political life to face the truth and to speak the truth.

The time has come for persons in political life to avoid the pragmatic dodge which seeks to obscure the truth.

I say this in full recognition that truth is not always pleasant. Indeed it can be brutal. But it is necessary to combat suspicion and doubt.

We have had an example of brutality of disclosure in recent days -- disclosure of intimate private conversations between the President and his staff.

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Some have found these frank conversations distasteful in part. The President himself acknowledges they could be embarrassing.

But disclosure was essential in the search for truth.

And I believe those documents, painful as they may be, will help establish the truth.

I hold with Patrick Henry, who one hundred ninety nine years ago told a group of colonists: "We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth...For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth."

Truth in politics requires more than a pledge of honest statements from politicians.

It requires an interest — a demand for the truth from the citizens who elect the politicians.

You as voters must insist that candidates for office and office holders speak the truth. And you must call them to account when you feel they do not.

If enough voters demand an accounting — a truthful accounting — they will get it. One thing every elected office holder must do is pay attention to the voter. If he fails to listen, he won't be an office holder for very long.

And in the process of demanding truth in politics, you the students should be leading the cause. You here at Eastern Illinois University, and your brother and sister students across the country, have a great capacity for idealism and enthusiasm — idealism and enthusiasm which can help re-shape our lives.

We in government need your help right now, not in some remote future a generation ahead. We need your strong confidence. We need your fresh ideas. Right now.

We in government know you are capable. I have two sons in college now, and two teenagers who'll soon be there. I know they are far more prepared to cope with the challenge of the world than I was at their age -- far more prepared intellectually, far more prepared emotionally, far more aware morally.

There is no doubt you have the ability.

There is only the question of whether you will use it. The formula is simple. Just get involved.

Get involved in your local community. Get involved with a political party. Get together with those who feel as you do. Organize and work for the truth. And you'll be astounded at the things you can get done.

The fresh atmosphere you pour into our murky political system is like a clean north wind on a fall day, bringing the cleanness and freshness of truth so achingly needed now.

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England's Lord Acton, who warned us that "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," also knew the value of truth. Lord Acton wrote: "truth is the only merit that gives dignity and worth to history."

I call upon you to bring new dignity and worth to our land so that we -- with a new spirit of purpose -- can deal with those other needs we have started to meet, new sources of energy, cleaner air and water, and that most elusive goal -- a peaceful and cooperative world.

Great achievements are possible in the very near future -- in your future. Let us all, together, reach those achievements in the light of truth.

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