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Series: Hamilton Jordan's Confidential Files

Folder: Speech, President's 7/15/79

Container: 37

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Speech, President's 7/15/79, Container 37

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Memo	<p>Mem to the President, 5 pp. (original and 1 copy) Re: 7/10/79 Speech <i>open 11/29/90</i></p>	7/31/79	S

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Carter Presidential Papers, Staff Offices, Chief of Staff, (Jordan), Confidential File
 Speech, President's 7/10/79

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Staff archivists have determined that Hamilton Jordan's office staff transferred these materials to Susan Clough, the President's secretary, sometime near the end of the administration. In June 1986, they were subsequently transferred to the Jimmy Carter Library by the Office of Jimmy Carter. The folder titles appear to have been created by Hamilton Jordan.

EYES ONLY

JULY 3, 1979

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER

FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ*

I feel strongly and know that you agree that the single most important thing for you to do over the next few days is to relax and prepare for your Thursday night speech.

I plan to give you after the speech Thursday the "recovery plan" that I worked on while you were at the summit. It is not massive - it is relatively brief and straightforward and is the product of much thinking and planning that I have done over the past couple of weeks.

It is much more important that we move on energy first. A White House shakeup should not be seen as the response of the Administration to our energy problems. Following the energy speech, the changes that

I am recommending will contribute to the feeling that you are toughening up and tightening up the White House and the Administration. We don't need to hype any of these things up - the American people need to see action and change, not rhetoric.

After reviewing my memo and recommendations, we can spend some time (possibly on the return flight from Kentucky) talking about the things that I have outlined. We tentatively have a Cabinet meeting scheduled at the Residence for either Monday or Tuesday night. This would be the time for you to give them a pep talk. tell them what you expect from them in the future, and inform them of the various changes.

I hope this tentative schedule suits your own sense of timing. Basically, it is first to get out front on the energy issue and follow up with the changes that we will make here.

7/3/79

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EYES ONLY

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER
FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ*
RE: THURSDAY NIGHT SPEECH

I thought that I would be doing you a disservice if I did not alert you to the fact that there is some soulsearching and second-guessing about the wisdom of your Thursday night speech. Pat Caddell is the "ring-leader" of those who think that it might be a mistake.

After hearing the subsequent discussions and talking to various persons, I am thoroughly convinced that the Thursday night speech of the type we discussed is highly desirable and very necessary.

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for Preservation Purposes**

Let me make several points:

1. You are perceived by the American people as having been out of the country for most of the past month working on issues and problems that are not "their" priorities right now.
2. Unfair as it may seem, the Tokyo Summit which was a significant energy victory for our country and the Western democracies was viewed by people here at home as being irrelevant to the problems faced by the people here at home. One network had interviews with people in gaslines asking about your trip to Tokyo. The typical response was, "what in the hell is Carter doing in Japan and Korea when all the problems are here at home?" Another person said that it didn't make any difference where their President was as he was helpless to deal with the problem anyway.
3. I believe that it would have been a considerable mistake for you to have waited too long before saying something to the American people about energy after having been out of the country for most of the month when the problem finally seemed to penetrate the consciousness of the American people. Certainly we will be saying once again some of the same things that you have said many times before to the American people. The difference will be that in the past your warnings of dire consequences were made in an irrelevant atmosphere when people were not concerned about energy. When you say them today, they will be said in a relevant atmosphere when people are finally focused on the problem.
4. Phil Wise called me yesterday from Florida. He has taken a week's vacation and has been traveling around the state seeing our friends. Phil said some very pertinent things. Phil said that the gravity of the

problem had begun to sink in, that people were beginning to realize that the problem might be both serious and permanent, and that they were mostly confused by conflicting forecasts about the future. But most of all, Phil reports, the people that he has been meeting with (even those that are mad at us) want to hear from their President. They want the facts and even the unvarnished truth. And even though they are cynical and mad, there is still the feeling in the country that you will tell them the truth.

5. I believe that the American people would like to feel that you understand and can identify with their own frustrations and fears. That is the reason that I feel strongly that a long delay in addressing the American people will only contribute to the psychological panic in the country and further damage us politically.

Without presuming to speak for Pat Caddel, let me attempt to state his concerns. Pat continues to argue that we need first to make our "America is going to hell speech" to grab the attention of the American people and then to focus their attention on the energy problems. Pat argues that in the present atmosphere people are so alienated from you and turned off that we will have great difficulty getting their attention. He thinks that your attacking the larger and more abstract problem should come before you address the country on energy.

Pat is right that we are not in an ideal posture at the present time to rally the American people. We are low in the polls and a lot of people have turned us off and given up on us. But we cannot not speak out and not attempt to lead just because people may not listen to us and may not follow. We have no choice but to try. The energy problem symbolizes all of the problems that face our society: During a time of crisis can a democracy that is increasingly pluralistic, politically fragmented and dispirited about its future be united to face a problem that is a challenge to its economic and political greatness? I would argue that the energy problem is the perfect "hook" on which to make the other points about the crisis of spirit which face our people. I think we were all nervous and searching for a way previously for you to make a speech such as Pat suggested and make it relevant and have it taken seriously by the American people. The energy crisis makes it relevant.

I never get involved in speechwriting, but I would like to make several points about the tone of your speech Thursday:

1. "I wish that I could stand before you tonight and assure you that everything is going to be a lot better, but I can't. The energy crisis that I have talked with you about on _____ occasions is now with us and will not just go away."
2. "We have a long-term problem which we must all work now to solve for the sake of our children and future generations. In the short term, we have a real and genuine shortage which you and I working together must manage without disrupting the economic and social fabric of our country."
3. Some reference should be made to July the 4th and our country's independence which has been fought for and reaffirmed on battlefields all over the world. That we are fighting now for our economic independence and until we win it back, our lives and future will be shaped and controlled by people and circumstances that we cannot control or even influence.
4. While holding out hope for the future and pointing to the light at the end of the tunnel, you should avoid statements that sound too optimistic. In fact, in all future statements, we should err on the side of caution, pessimism or "we are not sure - there are too many variables".

Finally, I have no illusions that this speech will solve all of our problems. It will probably be panned by the media for lacking enough substance. But, if in the present atmosphere, you can finally focus the attention of the American people on the root causes for the problem and point to the way out, you will have established a foundation on which we can build in the weeks and months ahead. The speech is badly needed.

Don't admit
you've failed
Amer. people - not
for all confidence

Many w/ specific
energy program
so specific

Good analysis of problem -
but no solution

D R A F T / 7 - 2 - 7 9

Two central of Americans
not the motto

Need personal
sympathy w/
their problems
of coping

Three years ago tonight -- on July 15, 1976 -- I accepted

the nomination of my party to run for President of the United States. I promised you a President who's not isolated from the people, but who feels your pain and shares your dreams and takes his strength and his wisdom and his courage from you. During the past three years, I have spoken to you on countless occasions. I have talked about many national concerns -- the energy crisis; reorganizing the government; our Nation's economy and issues of peace and war.

But over those last three years, the subjects of the speeches, the talks and the press conference topics have become increasingly narrow. The words have come to be almost always about what they call in Washington "the issues." Gradually, almost imperceptibly, you have heard more and more about what the government is or should be doing -- and less and less about our hopes, our dreams and our vision of the future.

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Government actions and legislation are important.

That's why I made sure that we took the necessary steps to try and put my campaign promises into law. We have had, at best, mixed success. But I have come to realize in the recent months and weeks that all the legislation in the world can't fix what's wrong with America.

So I will speak to you tonight about a subject even more serious than energy, inflation or the strategic arms limitation treaty.

Instead, I want to talk to you about the fundamental threat to the survival of American democracy.

I do not mean our political and civil liberties. They endure. Indeed they flourish. And I do not refer to the outward strength of America, a Nation that is tonight at peace everywhere in the world; with an economy, a freedom and a military might that is the envy of all.

The threat that I see is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that

strikes at the very heart, soul, and spirit of our national will. This crisis we can see in the dwindling belief in a significant meaning to our lives; the decline in unity of purpose for our Nation. The erosion of our confidence in the future is destroying the social and political fabric of our America.

The confidence we have always had as a people is not simply some romantic dream, or a proverb plucked from a dusty book used on the Fourth of July. It is the idea which has founded and defined our existence and progress as a Nation. Confidence in the future has justified, explained and supported everything else -- public institutions and private enterprise, our own families and our very Constitution.

Confidence has defined our course as a Nation and forged
the links between generations. We have always believed in
something called progress; a faith that the days of our children
would be better than our own. Our people have lost that
faith -- not only in government itself, but in their own ability

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as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of
our democracy.

As a people, we knew our past and were proud of it. The progress we had made part of the living history of America. We believed we were part of a great movement of humanity called democracy, involved in the search for freedom -- and that belief strengthened us in our purpose. But just as we are losing our confidence in the future, we are also closing the door on our past.

An attack on the country

A Nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close knit communities and supported by a faith in God has become a people that worships leisure, mobility and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what a man does, rather by what he can amass.

But we have discovered that acquiring and consuming do not satisfy our longings for meaning. We have learned that incredible success in producing material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives without purpose.

Rather than a generation that builds for the future, we
have become the "me generation" -- "me first, me last and me
always." We have come to believe we deserve an easy life.

The symptoms of crisis are all around us. And I do not mean long lines at the gas pump.

Two-thirds of our people called to the polls do not vote.
Millions of young people do not even bother to register.

Personal borrowing has reached astronomical proportions,
as if we intend to spend every dollar and satisfy every impulse today, before it is too late.

Productivity growth has almost halted. Never have so many worked so long to do so little. We have begun to steal from the future to satisfy the craving of the present.

Charity declines as self-interest rises. The old grow lonely, set aside by society.

Deepseated uncertainties plague us, as alienation moves from a word of sophistication to a description of human condition.

The number of Americans with faith in the enduring values
of the institutions of our society has declined to a shocking
low.

How did we come to where we are?

By an exhausting route, marked by assassination, war,
unrest and deceit.

First, we believed that we were a Nation of the ballot, not
the bullet -- until the tragic murders of John F. Kennedy,
Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and others.

We were taught to believe that our cause was just and our
armies invincible -- only to suffer the agony of Vietnam.

We respected the Presidency as a place of honor, until
Watergate filled the front pages and the television screen.

We saw our currency as strong and our economy as stable.

We thought that persistent inflation was a disease inflicted
upon countries far away, and that the Dollar was the unalterable
symbol of strength.

We were comfortable in the knowledge that our resources had no limit -- until we learned for the first time that we are dependent on other nations for resources like oil. And this is a crisis that abides with us today.

We were taught that we were the masters of our destiny and that history was something that happened to other people in other times. Now we have discovered that we are not immune to history -- that it can happen here.

We are a country trying desperately to find out what to do -- turning increasingly inward as we fail to find answers.

Yet we have never truly addressed the need for change. The healing of America's wounds has been discussed at length, but has never occurred. Our government continues to operate as if the passage of one more bill -- the establishment of one more well-motivated program -- will solve the problems of America.

Each day brings us news of another complicated government scheme, proposed by some political figure or another with little

sense of how it would work -- and no sense of whether it would work -- and no sense of whether it would succeed.

The American people are looking to their government for honest answers -- not false claims, not evasiveness, not politics as usual -- but for clear leadership. What they often see in Washington and elsewhere is a system of government which seems incapable of action. They see a Congress twisted and pulled in every direction by hundreds of well-financed and powerful special interests. They see every extreme position imaginable defended to the last breath, almost, to the last vote, by one unyielding powerful group or another. They often see a balanced and fair approach that demands sacrifice, a little sacrifice from everyone, abandoned like an orphan without support and without friends. Often they see paralysis, stagnation, and drift.

We debate the issues as if the shocks and turbulence of this decade and the last had never come to pass.

We have always valued common purpose over self-interest.
We have sought strength through agreement, not confrontation.

The lack of faith and confidence which threatens our
democracy is little understood by our government. The gap
between our citizens and their leaders may never have been so
wide.

Americans are looking for calm and rational discussions
of the ambiguous and complicated questions that confront us.
Instead, they find the seat of their national government
isolated from the mainstream of our country's life; beset
with bickering among groups motivated by self-interest alone.

A people seeking participation and yearning to be heard
have found a Federal Government that is a self-perpetuating
empire. Our citizens are searching for a definition of the
future. They are met with a government whose horizons are
measured by the next election.

Comfortable in its own assumptions, concerned with its
own priorities, the Government of the United States has become
increasingly irrelevant to its people.

Our people are asking that the shouting stop and the healing begin. They look to their government for leadership, and they see that we have failed.

We failed to comprehend that a people losing their vision would turn to their government for sight.

And I have failed. Not because I have failed to tackle the issues that come only to my desk -- the problems only the President can solve. Indeed, on many fronts we have had important successes.

Three weeks ago I sent a message to the Congress that completes action on every legislative promise in this campaign book. But the one promise I have failed to keep is not in this book -- it is the promise I made in my acceptance speech and a hundred times during my campaign -- the promise to describe for you and carry forward the vision of this Nation that I hold in my heart.

My good and old friend, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, reminded me the other day that I was elected to lead the entire

Nation. "Too often," he said, "you've spent your time leading only the government."

He was right. I have too often forgotten that simple fact.

I shall not forget that fact again.

One thing that I have not done is to pretend there are simple answers to the complex questions of today. I have never promised a free lunch -- because there isn't any.

But the people's lack of confidence in their government does not stem from our failure to find quick answers to tough problems. They know there are no easy answers. What they have a right to expect, however, is that they be told the truth.

Unless the problems which confront us are fully and honestly exposed to public scrutiny, then the people are deprived of that right to an informed judgment of their own which is as essential to democracy as the right to vote. And all too often, on the big issues, that obligation is not discharged. People are given -- not the complicated and

ambiguous truth -- but oversimplifications, distortions and
even outright lies.

by whom? when?
 by us?

It is distortion, deception, and the proclamation of hopes as realities and illusions as facts which are destroying the confidence of America. And that lack of confidence can make failure inevitable. For Presidents and Congresses don't solve problems by themselves. People solve them; not with detailed answers, but by expressing their interests, exerting their power and working with common purpose within the society toward universal goals.

Without a faith in the ability of our citizens to shape their future, there can be no shared national purpose, no sense of a common effort in pursuit of common objectives.

I regard the erosion of that faith in our future as the most dangerous of the many perils which confront America.

This is not a message of comfort. This is not a message of reassurance. But it is the truth, and it is a warning.

I asked for this time with you tonight because I wanted to speak to you about our Nation in a time of crisis. I have sounded the warning in the harshest of terms -- terms not often used by national leaders in talking to their citizens.

But it is important to understand that I do not speak from hopelessness or despair. I have described the crisis and sounded the warning because our future will equal the promise of the past only if we heed the warning and change our course.

We are coming out of years of a national nightmare. And like all bad dreams, it has been filled with shadowy dread and nameless fears. Only the dawn of reality -- only the truth -- can give us the confidence to move ahead.

We must understand the truth, because we cannot change what we do not understand. But if we grasp the nature of the crisis we can move the Nation forward.

I know the strength of America. I have a deep and abiding faith in the compassion and wisdom of our people and the enduring values of our institutions. We are not like plants

without roots. We are the heirs of generations who survived changes and challenges even more awesome and powerful than those that now buffet us.

The seasons have turned to centuries. We recall the glories of the patriots and the triumphs of building America. But we need not look back two hundred years to find our heroes. Our models can be ourselves. We are the people who shaped a new society during the great Depression. We are the people who fought world wars and preserved a vision of peace for the world. We are the people who dedicated our society to the goals of brotherhood and equality and achieved a social revolution fulfilling a martyr's dream.

These were not random, scattered events. They were instead consistent examples of what can be accomplished by a united, purposeful people. Our history is filled with such examples -- demonstrations of what a motivated Nation, striving and living for what is right, can achieve for itself and for others.

We are still such a Nation. We have within us the same strengths and greatness of those who came before us. It is our task to commit ourselves to a renaissance of America -- a rebirth of the American spirit.

We must not break faith with those who came before us. They and their courage brought us to this crossroad in our history. And the path we should choose is clear.

One path is that of unrestrained self interest. Down that road lies the illusion of freedom -- an illusion that ends in conflict, chaos and ultimately tyranny.

All the traditions of our past -- all the lessons of our heritage -- point the other way, to the road of common purpose. Those who tread that road will do so in strength and confidence. They will walk to freedom.

And they will walk with purpose if they understand our goals.

First, we must restore our confidence and sense of the future. Somehow we have lost it -- all else pales beside the need for its return.

We can regenerate our Nation. God and history are not done with us yet.

The skeptic says, "I will believe in the new America when I see it." The patriot says, "When we believe it, we will see it."

too difficult to
Second, we must vitalize our values. We must return to the honorable concepts of work as pride -- not as a means to money -- to a belief and a belonging to something greater than the self -- whether it be religion or community -- family or national service. The "me" generation should become the "we" generation -- united in spirit; reborn in vitality; willing to save for a future of responsibility.

We have been living on the moral capital of our religious traditions, but we have failed to replace it with a consensus of moral and spiritual values for today. Our Nation was founded on moral and ethical principles -- on human dignity and human rights, the expectation of good and the condemnation of wrong. We ignore these basic fundamentals at our peril.

Third, we must regenerate our sense of national purpose --
our belief that we are involved in something greater than ourselves, that we are building a Nation for the centuries ahead.

An intelligent and informed people, willing and able to participate in the affairs of their nation, can restore pride to patriotism.

Our government will have something to do with meeting all these goals, but government cannot restore our faith by itself. In fact, unless we dramatically change our government and the way it works, our efforts to rekindle confidence and faith in the future will be seriously impaired.

We must make the government relevant and break the stranglehold of bureaucracy. We must end the Special Interest State, so that the views of all our people and the interests of all Americans are considered first. We must cut through the isolation of our Capital city, and bring the fresh air of America to
Washington, D.C.

10/6/11

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I know the need for boldness and freshness in our approaches to the future. And I will be coming to you in the next months with proposals, actions and plans. Some will involve the government -- many will not.

We will need to reshape the voluntary associations of America, to tap the wellspring of philanthropy for the needs of our country.

We will require new ways to set the priorities of our society -- rational solutions to the competing demands that result from conflicting laws.

We will be challenged with economic situations -- abroad and at home -- that will strain the capacity of our talents and our skills.

Most important, we must deal with all these issues with candor, frankness and honesty. We must never forget that our citizens are not afraid of the truth -- they have just gotten used to not hearing it.

Let me begin by stating four of the most important facts
right now -- in as straightforward a fashion as I know how.

First: We do not have enough oil and gasoline available
now to allow us to live the way we would like to -- with
adequate oil for heating and sufficient gasoline to permit
unlimited driving at prices less than a dollar a gallon. We
are dependent on foreign oil, and its availability and its
price are beyond our control. Alternative energy sources and
our own ingenuity are the only routes to the future. That is
the truth.

Second: There are no simple ways to control inflation or
prevent recession, and the old ways no longer work. The best
we can hope for in the near term is a modest increase in unemploy-
ment and a slowing of the inflation rate. For the long term,
we will need to take bold new steps, that may involve painful
but necessary choices. That is fact.

Third: We cannot accomplish all the things we want to do
at the same time. We must set priorities for Federal spending
and for government regulation. That is reality.

Fourth: The Federal government must stop acting as if
it is the sole repository of wisdom and action.

We must decide what it is that government can and should do -- and then go ahead and do it. We must also decide where the government should not be involved -- and take decisive steps to remove the heavy burden of bureaucracy from our economy and society.

It is time to change the way Washington does business. That is one of the key ingredients in our survival.

Within the next few days, I will propose specific solutions --
tough and long range in nature -- to the serious energy shortage
in our Nation. My proposals will require restraint and discipline and a greater sense of national purpose and unity than we have seen to date. Their success or failure will be a test of our willingness to accept the truth and join together. The program will be built on the premise that common purpose can prevail over selfish interests. It will be based on the need to break down the barriers to innovation and release the technological genius

of Americans. It will rest on the cornerstone of self reliance -- a belief that the government must do only those things which government can do best, and that we must make sure that government does those things well. If we fail, it will be because our premises were wrong, and we will deserve to be judged harshly for our failure.

A government cannot do for its people what the people will not do for themselves. But we will succeed -- we will not fail -- if we remember the principles that speak to us across the generations. The undying American faith has been that problems can be solved and difficulties overcome. That faith sustained the America of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt as they sought the answers to problems even deeper and more dangerous than our own.

That is why they succeeded; why America emerged from conflict and distress.

We ignore the realities of human faith and desire at our peril, for they are forces more powerful than all of the calculations of economists or battle plans of generals. Our strength is in our spirit. If we neglect this, we may empty our treasuries and put forth the wonders of our science, but we act in vain.

Is this idealism? Yes, it is. And we should not be ashamed of it. A people without ideals is a Nation without purpose or direction.

Our purpose and our destiny are described in two phrases that each of us carries with him every day. Both of them are inscribed on a simple dollar bill.

The first is one that we all know: "In God We Trust." And that has been a guiding beacon for Americans -- that there is a God, and that he shows us the way.

The second phrase is less well known. It speaks to our role on earth, and was written by the poet Virgil: "Novus Ordo Seclorum" -- "a new order for the ages."

These two faiths -- one religious, the other secular -- produce the confidence in the future that is uniquely ours. Robert Kennedy offered his vision shortly before his terrible death, in words that reflect that confidence and faith:

"Our futures may lie beyond our vision, but they are not completely beyond our control. It is the shaping impulse of America that neither fate nor nature nor the irresistible tides of history, but the work of our own hands, matched to reason and principle, will determine our destiny. There is pride in that, even arrogance, but there is also experience and truth. In any event, it is the only way that we, as Americans, can live."

To: RSC
FBI
739

EYES ONLY

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3. Some reference should be made to July the 4th and our country's independence which has been fought for and reaffirmed on battlefields all over the world. That we are fighting now for our economic independence and until we win it back, our lives and future will be shaped and controlled by people and circumstances that we cannot control or even influence.
4. While holding out hope for the future and pointing to the light at the end of the tunnel, you should avoid statements that sound too optimistic. In fact, in all future statements, we should err on the side of caution, pessimism or "we are not sure - there are too many variable".

Finally, I have no illusions that this speech will solve all of our problems. It will probably be panned by the media for lacking enough substance. But, if in the present atmosphere, you can finally focus the attention of the American people on the root causes for the problem and point to the way out, you will have established a foundation on which we can build in the weeks and months ahead. The speech is badly needed.