

Desk to NY

REMARKS OF  
ROBERT E. GRADY  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS TO GOVERNOR KEAN  
TO THE  
GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL IN PUBLIC ISSUES  
MONMOUTH COLLEGE  
WEST LONG BRANCH, NEW JERSEY

JULY 8, 1985

THANK YOU, JIM.

YOU'RE GRACIOUS TO INVITE SOMEONE WHO'S SPENT HIS WHOLE  
WORKING LIFE IN GOVERNMENT COME TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOME OF  
THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING NEW JERSEY.

NOT EVERYONE HAS SUCH A CHARITABLE VIEW OF GOVERNMENT  
AS TO BELIEVE THAT IT CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS.

IT'S LIKE THE STORY OF THE OLD CHAPLAIN OF THE SENATE.  
WHEN HE WAS ASKED IF HE PRAYED FOR THE SENATORS, HE SAID:  
"NO, I PRAY FOR THE COUNTRY."

SERIOUSLY, I HAVE SPENT MY WHOLE WORKING LIFE -- OR  
WHAT LITTLE THERE HAS BEEN SO FAR -- AND SOME OF MY LIFE  
BEFORE THAT IN AND AROUND POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT, SO I HOPE  
THAT I CAN BRING AT LEAST THAT PERSPECTIVE TO TONIGHT'S  
DISCUSSION.

JIM AND CHERYL KEEN HAVE ASKED ME TO TALK ABOUT "NEW  
JERSEY AS A WHOLE" -- WHICH IS A SLIGHTLY UNWIELDY TOPIC BUT  
ONE THAT MAY BE RELEVANT WHEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW  
GOVERNMENT APPROACHES PROBLEMS, AND HOW IT SUCCEEDS OR FAILS  
IN SOLVING THEM.

I'VE SEEN GOVERNMENT FROM ESSENTIALLY THREE LEVELS.

MY FIRST JOB WHEN I GOT OUT OF COLLEGE WAS IN THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT -- IN THE U.S. CONGRESS TO BE EXACT,  
WORKING FOR MILLICENT FENWICK.

FROM THE FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE, NEW JERSEY IS EASILY SEEN  
AS A WHOLE -- IN FACT, IT'S ONE OF FIFTY WHOLES, 50 STATES,  
EACH WITH ITS OWN CONCERNS AND INTERESTS.

IN A SENSE, NEW JERSEY IS ONE OF 50 ENTITIES MAKING  
COMPETING CLAIMS TO THE LIMITED RESOURCES OF THE FEDERAL  
GOVERNMENT. SOME OF THOSE CLAIMS ARE MORE LEGITIMATE --  
OTHERS LESS -- THE TRICK FOR OUR CONGRESSMEN, OR SO THEY  
SEEM TO THINK, IS TO MAKE THOSE CLAIMS HEARD AND TO MAKE  
GOOD ON AS MANY OF THEM AS POSSIBLE FOR THE FOLKS BACK HOME.

THIS NOTION OF "COMPETING CLAIMS" IS A GOOD ONE, I THINK. I FIRST SAW IT SET FORTH IN THE FAMOUS ARTICLE IN THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY IN WHICH OMB DIRECTOR DAVID STOCKMAN SAID ALL THOSE THINGS ABOUT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST BUDGET THAT GOT HIM IN SO MUCH TROUBLE.

BUT THE FUNDAMENTAL MODEL HE SETS OUT -- THAT THE JOB OF THOSE GUIDING THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND TAX POLICY IS TO SORT OUT STRONGER OR MORE LEGITIMATE CLAIMS FROM WEAKER OR LESS LEGITIMATE CLAIMS -- IS A VALID ONE. THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD WORK. THE PROBLEM, STOCKMAN RIGHTLY SAYS, IS THAT THE STRONGEST CLAIMS DON'T ALWAYS WIN OUT.

THIS FEDERAL VIEW OF NEW JERSEY HAS ANOTHER PROBLEM -- ONE WHICH IS PERHAPS MORE FUNDAMENTAL AND STRUCTURAL. CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS ARE, MOST OF THE TIME, IN WASHINGTON.

THEY DON'T ALWAYS HAVE THEIR EARS TO THE GROUND, AND  
THEY DON'T HAVE THEIR HANDS ON THE CONTROLS.

IN WASHINGTON, IT'S MUCH HARDER TO HAVE A SENSE OF HOW  
THE GRANDOISE SCHEMES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ARE ACTUALLY  
WORKING. SO INSTEAD, CONGRESSMEN FOCUS ON HOW MUCH THEY CAN  
SEND HOME. THEY TYPICALLY WORRY ABOUT HOW MUCH NEW JERSEY  
GETS OUT OF THE FORMULA FOR SOME FEDERAL PROGRAM -- NOT  
ALWAYS ABOUT THE SOUNDNESS OF THE PROGRAM IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THEY WORRY ABOUT HOW MANY NEW JERSEY BOYS ARE GOING TO  
BE SENT ABROAD IN A CONFLICT -- AND NOT NECESSARILY ENOUGH  
ABOUT THE WISDOM OF THE CONFLICT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THAT MAKES SENSE FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, AN INDIVIDUAL  
CONGRESSMAN OR SENATOR IS PROBABLY NOT BIG ENOUGH TO AFFECT  
THE BIG PICTURE -- TO REDESIGN THE PROGRAM OR STOP THE  
CONFLICT -- HIMSELF OR HERSELF.

SECONDLY, CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS ARE OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON -- OUR OMBUDSMEN TO THE LARGE, IMPERSONAL, AND SOMETIMES CONFUSING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. SO THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT OUR INTERESTS.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT, IN THAT ENVIRONMENT, WITH THOSE CONSTRAINTS, TO CONCEPTUALIZE PROBLEMS IN THEIR ENTIRETY. INSTEAD, TOO MANY CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS -- ALTHOUGH CERTAINLY NOT ALL -- ARE REDUCED TO SO MUCH BEAN COUNTING TO MAKE SURE THAT THOSE AT HOME GET THEIR FAIR SHARE.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS A DIFFERENT SET OF CONCERNS. I'VE BEEN PRETTY CLOSE TO IT -- MY FATHER WAS A TWO-TERM COUNCILMAN AND MAYOR, AND MANY OF MY FRIENDS HAVE HELD LOCAL OFFICE. AT OUR HOUSE, IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL TO GET A CALL -- SOMETIMES LATE AT NIGHT -- ABOUT LEAVES NOT BEING PICKED UP, OR ABOUT SOMEONE'S TEENAGER BEING PICKED UP BY THE POLICE.

THE CONCERNS, RIGHTLY, ARE MORE IMMEDIATE, MORE  
PAROCHIAL: ROADS, GARBAGE, SEWERS, TRAFFIC.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AND THEIR DAY  
TO DAY CONCERNS. THEY GET INTO SOME BIGGER ISSUES -- SUCH  
AS BUILDING SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS OR NEW POST OFFICES --  
BUT, BY AND LARGE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DON'T -- NOR SHOULD  
THEY -- WORRY ABOUT THE PROBLEMS IN THE TOWN NEXT DOOR OR  
THE CITY 20 MILES AWAY.

THEY DO WORRY ABOUT THE STATE GOVERNMENT OR THE U.S.  
GOVERNMENT TO THE EXTENT THEY NEED MONEY FOR BIG PROJECTS OR  
WHEN THEY'RE BOTHERED BY THE MANY AND SOMETIMES ONEROUS  
REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS THAT GOVERN THEM.

SO, OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS NO SENSE OF NEW JERSEY AS A  
WHOLE IN THE CITY AND TOWN HALLS AROUND THE STATE. THERE IS  
A SENSE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE -- IN MY TOWN, IN MY BACKYARD.

THE SENSE OF NEW JERSEY AS A WHOLE CLEARLY RESTS, IN  
TERMS OF GOVERNMENT, IN TRENTON -- WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE WHERE I WORK -- IN THE  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, AS OPPOSED, SAY, TO THE OFFICES OF  
INDIVIDUAL LEGISLATORS.

IN OUR STATE, AND IN MOST, THE GOVERNOR HAS -- OR  
SHOULD HAVE -- A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY ABOUT THE STATE.

WHEN THINGS HAPPEN, IN CAPE MAY OR IN JERSEY CITY, GOOD  
OR BAD, THE GOVERNOR IS BLAMED OR CONGRATULATED. BUT HE  
MUST WORRY ABOUT IT.

I SEE THIS EVERY DAY IN TOM KEAN. IF THERE IS A WATER  
SHORTAGE OR A PRISON CRISIS, ASBESTOS IN OUR SCHOOLS OR  
CRIME IN OUR CITIES, IT IS OUR JOB -- HIS JOB -- TO FIX IT.



AND IF THE STATE DOES WELL, IF ITS ECONOMY BOOMS OR ITS SCHOOLS IMPROVE, IF ATTRACTS A NEW COMPANY OR UNVEILS A NEW PROGRAM, IT'S HIS TO CROW ABOUT.

IN A WAY, THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR A GOVERNOR IS LIKE THAT OF A PARENT. TOM KEAN, SOMETIMES, FEELS LIKE THE FATHER OF THIS WHOLE STATE. HE SHOULDERS THE ANXIETY WHEN IT FAILS, AND THE PRIDE WHEN IT SUCCEEDS.

FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT -- AND BY EXTENSION FROM MINE -- IT IS VERY EASY TO SEE THE STATE AS A WHOLE.

I EVEN SEE MAPS OF THE STATE DANCING IN MY HEAD SOMETIMES.

FOR ME, THERE IS A VERY REAL CONNECTION BETWEEN BEACH EROSION IN CAPE MAY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW JOBS IN JERSEY CITY.

THEY ARE ALL PART OF THE CALCULUS OF BUILDING A BETTER STATE -- OF THE WAY WE IN NEW JERSEY LIVE AND WORK.

I SUPPOSE THAT I HAVE A PARTICULARLY UNIQUE SENSE OF THIS "WHOLE" OF NEW JERSEY, BECAUSE PART OF MY JOB EACH YEAR IS TO REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE STATE -- TO WRITE THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE, OR, AS IT IS COMMONLY CALLED, THE "STATE OF THE STATE."

IN THAT MESSAGE, WHICH IS REQUIRED BY THE STATE CONSTITUTION, THE GOVERNOR REPORTS ON VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF THE STATE'S CONDITION, FROM ITS ECONOMY TO ITS SCHOOLS TO ITS AUTO INSURANCE RATES.

IF YOU INSPECT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MESSAGE, AND I HOPE YOU WILL, THREE THINGS EMERGE:

THE FIRST IS THAT NEW JERSEY IS DOING QUITE WELL RIGHT NOW --- BETTER, IN FACT, THAN IT HAS BEEN DOING IN QUITE A LONG TIME.

IN THE 1970'S, WE LAGGED BEHIND OTHER STATES IN MANY AREAS. TODAY, WE'VE SPRUNG AHEAD.

OUR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, WHICH WAS ALMOST 10% JUST THREE YEARS AGO, IS NOW ONLY 4.7% -- ONE OF THE VERY LOWEST IN THE NORTHEAST.

OUR SCHOOL TEST SCORES ARE GOING UP. OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP IS MORE ADVANCED THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER STATE. OUR CRIME RATE IS DROPPING FASTER THAN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. AND WE HAVE MODEL PROGRAMS IN EVERYTHING FROM STOPPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO IMPROVING OUR STATE COLLEGES.

IN A WORD, THERE IS A NEW PRIDE IN NEW JERSEY. AND  
THIS GOVERNOR IS VERY PROUD HIMSELF OF HAVING HELPED  
ESTABLISH IT.

A SECOND THING THAT IS CLEAR IS THAT SO MANY OF THE  
ISSUES BEFORE THE STATE ARE RELATED. THE ISSUE OF HOUSING  
-- HOW TO PROVIDE LOW INCOME HOUSING IN DEVELOPING AREAS --  
IS RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF THE ENVIRONMENT -- HOW TO  
PRESERVE FARMLAND.

THE ISSUE OF JOBS IN THE CITIES IS RELATED TO THE ISSUE  
OF CRIME IN THE CITIES.

I COULD GO ON AND ON. BUT IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU CANNOT  
SOLVE PROBLEMS IN ISOLATION. THAT IS THE CHALLENGE OF  
GOVERNING -- TO SEE ALL THE PROBLEMS BEFORE YOU AND CHOOSE  
THE COURSE OF ACTION THAT SOOTHES AS MANY AS POSSIBLE  
WITHOUT EXACERBATING OTHERS.

OR, AS BISMARCK ONCE SAID, POLITICS IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE.

THE THIRD, AND PERHAPS IRONIC FACT, IS WHAT A DIVERSE STATE WE LIVE IN.

IN FACT, I WOULD SUBMIT THAT NO LAND MASS OF COMPARABLE SIZE IN THE ENTIRE WORLD IS AS DIVERSE AS THAT OF NEW JERSEY.

AND YET, FROM THE GOVERNOR'S CHAIR, ONE SEES THIS SENSE OF UNITY -- AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE, AS I SAID, THERE IS A SENSE OF PRIDE.

HOW IS IT THAT NEW JERSEY PRIDE CAN GROW AMONG AS DIFFERENT CHARACTERS AS CRANBERRY GROWERS IN BURLINGTON COUNTY AND CITY DWELLERS IN PATERSON.

I THINK I HAVE AN ANSWER. IT'S THAT THE DIVERSE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE UP OUR STATE LITERALLY FORM OUR STATE GOVERNMENT.

TEDDY ROOSEVELT ONCE SAID: "THE GOVERNMENT IS US; WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT YOU AND I."

IN OTHER WORDS, A GROUP OF PEOPLE LITERALLY THROWN TOGETHER BY CIRCUMSTANCE AND HISTORY CAN MAKE IT WORK -- IN A DEMOCRACY.

THAT, IN FACT, IS THE STRENGTH OF A DEMOCRACY -- IT DRAWS ON THE PEOPLE --- AND HOPEFULLY, ALL THE PEOPLE.

THAT'S WHY -- DESPITE OUR PROBLEMS -- YOU DON'T HAVE BRUTAL REPRESSION LIKE THAT OF THE SIKHS IN INDIA, THE TAMILS IN SRI LANKA, THE BAHIAS IN IRAN, THE BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

IN THIS DEMOCRACY, WE'VE DRAWN ON OUR DIVERSITY TO  
CREATE A STRONG SENSE OF STATE PRIDE -- AND THE COUNTRY HAS  
DONE THE SAME TO BUILD A STRONG NATIONAL PRIDE.

OF COURSE, THE QUESTION REMAINS: HOW IS IT THAT THESE  
INSTITUTIONS -- THESE UNITS OF ORGANIZATION -- COME TO  
DEFINE OUR IDENTITY. AND IS IT, IN FACT, THE BEST WAY TO  
DEFINE OUR POLITICAL AND SOMETIMES CULTURAL IDENTITY.

THAT'S AN INTERESTING QUESTION, PERHAPS ONE THAT YOU  
SHOULD TAKE UP IN YOUR INTEGRATIVE SEMINARS TOMMORROW.

WE KNOW THE HISTORY OF HOW POLITICAL BOUNDARIES CAME TO  
BE. OF HOW STATE GOVERNMENTS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AND  
NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS WERE FORMED.

BUT ARE THESE THE BEST FORMS OF ORGANIZATION?

WHAT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT?

IS STATE PRIDE A GOOD THING? IT CERTAINLY SEEMS SO IN  
NEW JERSEY. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE DESTRUCTIVE SIDE OF  
PROVINCIAL OR NATIONAL PRIDE -- THE KIND THAT CAUSES, SAY,  
LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO GO TO WAR AS AN OUTGROWTH OF  
FIGHTS AT SOCCER GAMES.



AND, IN THAT THESE GOVERNMENTS EXIST, WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT HERE BEST ABLE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.

I'M PERHAPS NOW BIASED, BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT STATE GOVERNMENTS ARE EMERGING AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE UNITS. THIS IS A PROCESS THAT OCCURS OVER TIME -- AS THEY BECOME MORE PROFESSIONAL, AS THEY ARE GIVEN MORE RESPONSIB(ILITY.

DWIGHT EISENHOWER SAID: "OUR BEST PROTECTOIN AGAINST BIGGER GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON IS BETTER GOVERNMENT IN THE STATES."

THAT WAS IN 1954. THIRTY YEARS LATER, RONALD REAGAN ACTED ON THAT BELIEF -- AND LITERALLY SOUGHT TO TRANSFER ALOT OF POWER -- AND RESPONSIBILITY TO THE STATES.

AND THAT AGAIN RAISES SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS: ARE  
THE STATES UP TO THE JOB?

IF SO, THEN WHY IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TRYING TO DO  
SO MUCH -- AND TAXING SO MUCH TO GET IT ACCOMPLISHED.

WHAT ABOUT A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT IS ONLY  
RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY?

OBVIOUSLY, WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM THAT.

BUT IN ASKING ABOUT THE TOPIC OF NEW JERSEY AS A WHOLE,  
YOU BEG THE QUESTION -- WHAT ABOUT EACH STATE AS A WHOLE,  
WHAT ABOUT AMERICA AS A WHOLE, WHAT ABOUT THE WORLD AS A  
WHOLE?

NEW JERSEY AS A WHOLE IS DOING QUITE WELL ---  
RELATIVELY.

WHAT I ASK YOU TO THINK ABOUT IS HOW YOU CAN HELP NEW  
JERSEY -- AND THE WORLD -- DO A LITTLE BIT BETTER.

THANK YOU.