



THE PUBLIC REPORT



Do We Lack Energy or Will?

by James B. Lambert

Americans are stricken with a "crisis of confidence," cites our president. He says that our infection is deeply rooted, and that it is a "fundamental threat to American Democracy." President Carter diagnoses: "Too many of us now tend to worship self indulgence and consumption." How do we respond to these strong words? Shall we weigh our evidence in ourselves or confidences in Mr. Carter as our leader?

We have had a "crisis in confidence" in our leadership since at least the sixty's. We have easily blamed screwball henchmen who tote an assassin's weapon which kills, or subdues the public appearance of the living. Is it more a crisis of leadership, or fellowship -- or is it fellowship, Mr. Carter -- that infects our nation? Our philosophy--each to his own--is and has been so accepting, so devastating, that it is a wonder that our nation, or world, has sustained our proliferating indulgence.

Are we at a turning point? Is there yet a place to turn? Yes, we must mobilize. We need an army to stave off a threat as grave as World War II. We need an army directed by a chief and his generals. We must be implemented as soldiers

to flesh out the substance of decay. What will precipitate our forthright attack upon the crisis of energized will? Are we up to the task? Do we recognize that the enemy is us?

We saw Jack and Bob Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King slain in our living rooms. Men who towered, toppled before us. The living babble of Chappaquiddick and speak of survival. Still, Allende dared, cared, and found that hemispheres make little difference. The CIA was there protecting our self interest. Who should dare when to dare is to die? A spirit of fear understandably drives the leaders into hiding to a Camp David or less reckoned refuge.

Yet, "bold and forceful" President Carter returns and televises his message. He explained our predicament and delineated pointed proposals. He listed his shortcomings and defined our own. He courageously asked that we vest him with our support and sacrifice.

We must root out our selfishness, or factional interests. Truckers must empathize with farmers, the sunbelt with the cold-belt, the rural dweller with the city dweller, the coffee drinker with the Brazilian. Sitting Bull, in Chicago with



Bill Cody's Wild West Show, was truly impressed at the ingenuity and wealth of the white man. But surveying the poor there, he was equally impressed that the white man didn't know how to use his genius or spend his money.

Inflation threatens Americans. It has already impoverished the poorly oiled developing countries. Do we care that a single jeep exported to Brazil cost 7 bags of coffee beans 25 years ago, now costs 45

bags today? Countries overseas are hiking their prices; oil is just the beginning.

If we don't correct our myopia, it will be done for us, and harshly. Nervy President Carter enjoys prayer luncheons with Latin American leaders. He believes that we must share one another's burdens. Our compassion may replace our consumption and fill our cup if not our gastank.

We would do well to follow the tradition of the Northwest Coast Indian's potlatch. Outdo

each other in giving. Mr. Carter is concerned that "human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns." What we must do is give of ourselves.

We are at a turning point; we are over a barrel. Our demands and OPEC put us there. We can be thankful that we have been encouraged to examine who we are and what we want to be. The developing world has perceived our gluttony for decades. Our President exhorts us similarly today.

We need turn to ourselves, the only place to start. A power struggle is within us. As Eldridge Cleaver's "Soul On Ice" comes afire, so we need an esprit de corps to replace our spirit of fear.

The "do-line" of NORAD is flashing warning--Defend North America. Our logisticians and commander in chief need plan our attack so that we prevail, so that we have courage and direction.

A recent Harris poll tells of people--would-be soldiers--that want strength and guidance. They want wage and price control. They aren't confident in themselves; they want regulations. The confidence in themselves will increase as they perceive a curb in their appetites, a new freedom under authority, a new destination.

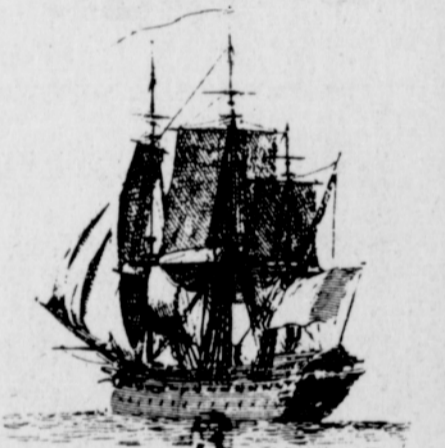
We have a long journey ahead of us. Like geese, we must fly with a singleness of direction; each able to see where he is going; each able to rest in the wind-swath of his fellows while a leader buffets the resistance ahead. Mr.

Carter believes that Jesus Christ leads--is--the way. May we console our leaders and not ruffle them as they rotate in and out of the head position.

We must go to war with our crisis. What pearl in the harbor will firm our resolve? It may not matter so much what "it" is, as that it be generally and fairly discomfiting. Leadership and we must understand its utility, pull together, and stabilize each other with mutual concern.

What might we give up with negotiation and ginding arbitration? Fifty-five percent of our oil is consumed by transportation. Eighty-five percent of that mount is consumed by the auto. We might close gas stations Friday through Sunday to move the recreation fleet from the "freeways," rapidly develop mass transit systems for commuters, move work closer to home, ration all energy consumption until body heat keeps our living space warm. These examples could help us to share a smile, ideas, and a growing sense of oneness. We'd probably get fewer colds.

Our lead gander must beckon us to leave familiar ground; and Christ, may his cunning and wit save us from the shotgun in a blind.



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