



Department of Justice

ADDRESS

OF

THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

THE ALFALFA CLUB

OF

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1979
THE CAPITAL HILTON
WASHINGTON, D.C.

President Connally, Senator Goldwater, Chief Justice Berger, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Alfalfians, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I thank Senator Symington for his warm remarks. This is a patriotic group and I know of no greater patriot than Senator Symington.

Now as I begin my remarks, I would like to advise that arrangements have been made for simultaneous translation.

It is a great honor to be the nominee of the Alfalfa Party for President of the United States. As you know, I have said repeatedly -- and have told President Carter -- that I would resign my position as Attorney General before 1980, because I did not want to be Attorney General during the political season. I trust the full meaning of that statement will become clear to him tonight.

Our policy will be to win. As Churchill said:

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets . . ." And, according to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was present when Churchill made his famous statement, Churchill put his hand over the microphone and added for the platform guests, "and we will hit them over the heads with beer bottles, which is all we have really got."

We will paraphrase Churchill's great statement. Our motto will be to wage obfuscation. We will wage obfuscation on the beaches and on the landing fields and in the political arena of America. And when all else fails and we can no longer obfuscate, we will tell the truth to the extent that we know it.

One of the first things we will do is abandon the policy, said to have been used by the present Administration, of "Why not the best?" We will abandon that policy as having been proven totally unworkable.

We will abandon the present Administration's concept of three State Departments.

We will opt for only one State Department, in which we will have an American Desk. That action will be the moral equivalent of a negative income tax.

We will make negativism positive. We will list our estranged states and announce Ambassadors to each of them. North Carolina is estranged. We will carry the state by announcing that we will not send Joe Califano as their Ambassador. We will threaten Alaska with Cecil Andrus, send Ray Marshall to negotiate, then back off and thereby carry Alaska.

We pledge to cut defense spending by eliminating the ownership of armament. We will lease all tanks,

artillery, and jet fighters, indeed all aircraft as well as missiles, from Hertz and Avis. Since we would have nothing to sell, there is added advantage of no arms sale issues having to be faced by the Congress.

Our policy of obfuscation will work well in the diplomatic area. Secretary Vance is not adept at obfuscation and will not fit into the new approach. We will consider replacing him with last year's unsuccessful nominee, Henry Kissinger, one of the great masters of obfuscation.

However, Henry may be somewhat out of touch. We sat together at one of the World Series games in Yankee Stadium last fall and when I recently asked him about whether the Israelis should withdraw from the West Bank, he asked "which bank and how much?"

We will wage our campaign on the theory of capturing the votes of new ethnic groups. Such groups will not be hard to find; for example, all private club members, the dissident women, those who are not affiliated with that organization known as NOW; and to all males who have not found an ethnic home. We will be the party which appeals to the disenchanteds, the irreligious, (the millions who have not been born again.)

We will let it be known that the Alfalfa Party has been in existence for more than 75 years, and that during

that entire period it has never accomplished anything, has never stood for anything, except good spirit, food, spirits and fellowship. The weary will know that rest is in sight; inactivism in government is just over the horizon.

Now, I have suffered greatly throughout my life by virtue of being left-handed, and I call on all left-handed people to rise up and join me in doing something about this national problem which has been allowed to languish for too long.

We will call ourselves "leftists" and will fight "rightism" wherever it exists. We will protest chauvinist rightists. We will object to insulting, degrading phrases like "strong right arm" and "civil right," and insist on neutral terms like "strong side arm" and "civil left-right." To those who say might makes right, I say might makes left.

Certain wrongs committed by the present Administration must be righted or lefted. One, the President has been reluctant to appoint people from Georgia. We all will offer jobs to the other 25 percent of the people in Georgia who have not had or been offered a job in the present Administration.

I will work for a constitutional amendment to provide a six year term of office for The Presidency. While not in agreement, President Carter does value the right of free speech

and dissent, however, and told me yesterday that I could advocate a six year term as often as I like as Attorney General, if I would just substitute for the words 'six year term' the word "tangerine." So you might hear me proclaim, we must work for a "tangerine" in order to avoid a "banana."

President Carter is my friend. He is a man of great courage. His entire career epitomizes courage. On his desk sits Harry Truman's great plaque -- "The Buck Stops Here." It was this courageous, steely-eyed, determined President who turned to his aide and said, "Hamilton, you fire Bella."

As President, I pledge to you, I would personally fire Bella, or at least offer to make her Bob Strauss' other deputy.

Perhaps the best reason for electing me President over Jimmy Carter is the fact I don't have a brother.

As all of you know, President Carter's brother was quoted in a recent magazine interview as having said that Charles Kirbo, the President's trusted advisor, was "about the dumbest bastard" he had ever seen. I told Kirbo that in Russia that statement would have gotten Billy a twenty year prison sentence. Two years for insulting a high state advisor and 18 years for revealing a state secret.

Our administration will be marked by victories on a regular basis. We will take as a cue the immortal words of Senator Aiken when he advised that the way to get out of Vietnam was to declare victory and leave. We will declare victories monthly, selecting whatever program seems to be the greatest problem at hand. For example, we will have no problem at all with the administration of HEW and with the welfare laws. We will simply place Senator Moynihan in office as Secretary and declare victory.

That failing, and as an object lesson, we will begin to dismantle the government by moving HEW to Des Moines, Iowa; Energy to Houston, its rightful home; Labor to the North Wing of the White House, the AFL-CIO Headquarters at 815 16th Street, N.W., and the Special Ambassador for Trade Negotiations to Tip O'Neill's office.

We will make peace with the media by the policy of reward. The soft under-belly of the media is its desire not to be known as being close to any government official. We will take advantage of this weakness by selecting someone in the media on a monthly basis as a favorite of the White House.

This form of blackmail or news-mail will produce startling results. The media may avoid this terrible fate by being nice to the President.

In addition, we will threaten the media with introducing the comment period in the Congress, such as is practiced by our British and Commonwealth Nation friends. This means that the Executive Department would be reporting to the Congress, rather than to the media as is now the case.

I pledge to meet with members of the media at least once a week which is certainly better than the present twice a month plan. Instead of their interviewing me, I will interview them about the latest rumors, gossip, and intrigue leaked to them by the Cabinet and White House staff and solicit their insights and advice.

We will reduce unemployment by creating as many special prosecutors as may be desired by the media or by the leaders of the parties out of power. This will lighten the load for the Department of Justice and the Attorney General, create something on the order of a Roman circus for the populace.

I must say that I have some doubt about having an Attorney General in my administration. He might become too independent. Besides, a good Attorney General is hard to find.

The new chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee would have to be considered. President Carter has him very much in mind for some office at the present time. In fact, he asked me the other day if I

thought Senator Kennedy would accept an appointment to the Supreme Court. I replied that I did not believe he would want to give up being co-president. The President said that Senator Kennedy could feel free to return to elective politics after six or seven years. Vice President Mondale chimed in that Senator Kennedy would make such a superb justice he should stay even longer -- at least 14 years.

Every campaign should include an economic policy. We will offer an amendment to the Constitution. It will be that all federal spending be underwritten by tax exempt revenue certificates, much like municipal bonds. In fact, I know of the recent availability of a recognized expert in the field.

Importantly, the country will return to the breakfast table. We will even have a national breakfast. It will consist of rooster pepper sausage, hot biscuits and butter and mayhaw jelly, but no grits. Grits must go. Grits are the symbol of oppression in the South in a time following the war of Northern Aggression.

We will recognize the true values in our current society. The snail darter will become our new national fish.

The American people are hungry for leadership of the kind to which they can relate. They desire, in

the language of our Nation's youth, to be in sync. We will explain that state of being by distributing the Farmers' Almanac as campaign literature and by pledging to relate the principal activities of the Presidency to various phases of the moon.

Now for a moment in a serious vein. I remember my fellow Georgian Dean Rusk saying that he ended every speech by saying something good and positive about America. I have tried to follow that rule in the more than 90 speeches I've made in 31 states and the District in the last two years as Attorney General.

There is no doubt that all of us, though we occasionally differ on questions of policy, do so in a good faith furtherance of our government and Constitution. We disagree without being disagreeable.

Although President Carter is not with us tonight, and he sends his regrets, we do honor the Presidency. We likewise honor the Congress and note that many members of the newly convened 96th Congress are here. We honor the courts and note the presence of the Chief Justice and members of the Supreme Court.

The tendency today is that the American people do not heap praise on their public servants. They expect us to do well. It is only when we falter that we hear from the people. Indeed, they sometimes confuse our system

of checks and balances with fits and starts, but we must never change, by one jot or tittle, the checks and balances which our founding fathers gave to us.

I am honored to call myself an Alfalfian.

I am proud to be a Southerner. But the greatest of all is to be an American.