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Greetings:

During the past month, I had occasion to cross the continent twice. To New York and Massachusetts and back, and then to Washington - at the time of the Robert Kennedy funeral - with a stop in Denver on the return flight.

To a traveller in a Jetliner on a clear day, the activity on earth seems antlike. I alternated between watching from over 30,000 feet up and reading a small book "The United States in 1800". Published by Cornell University Press, it consists of the opening six chapters of the monumental nine-volume study of the Jefferson and Madison administrations entitled "The History of the United States" written by Henry Adams in 1889-1891.

"Physical and economical conditions" are dealt with in the first chapter. We are told that the census of 1800 gave our population as 5,308,583 persons, of whom almost a fifth were negro slaves. The British Isles then had upward of 15 million people and the French Republic more than 27,000,000. Quoting further - "Even after two centuries of struggle the land was still untamed; forest covered every portion, except here and there a strip of cultivated soil; the minerals lay undisturbed in their rocky beds, and more than two-thirds of the people clung to the seaboard within fifty miles of tidewater, where alone the wants of civilized life could be supplied."

Consider the immense accomplishments in the less than 200 years since our birth as a nation - opening the great expanse from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We have overcome great natural obstacles, political and economic blunderings, and the frailties and blindnesses that afflict the human character.

Today, we number over 200,000,000, coming from more than 100 nations. We are the most amazing experiment in world history. We stand in 1968 like no people has stood, committed to a fuller life for all men, spurring a revolution of rising expectations. We have made errors and we admit them, but they do not deter us in our determination to achieve a world based on abundance for all.

What then of the confusion of raucous and doubting voices that assail the essential integrity of the American people. True, the series of assassinations culminating in the tragedy death of Robert Kennedy has been shattering. Yet must all America be considered sick, brutal, violent for the aberrations of a few killers? Every nation will number among its people some murderers, racists, beasts, crackpots, idiots, etc. But by and large, we are a great people. And we rank favorably with any nation of the present or past in our ideals, achievements and efforts for humanity.

Our policy in Vietnam has been a disastrous error. We have set back the cause of peace and the peaceful settlement of international disputes and problems. We have alienated many of our friends around the world. If the gravity of this error did not impress itself on the Administration, it is implicit in the sense of misgiving that led to the huge popular support for Senator Eugene J. McCarthy when he challenged the Johnson policy on Vietnam. It brought Robert Kennedy into the presidential race on substantially the same issue. It now remains to be seen if the American people will have the opportunity to vote for Senator McCarthy as one who represents the hope of furthering America's basic ideals. Or will he be shut out by a delegate assemblage committed to the frustrations of political machines.

To know the true character of America is not to be confused by the inordinate emphasis on violence. Consider the 75,000,000 and more men and women who daily, peacefully, perform the jobs that make this great country function. Observe the millions in schools, colleges, universities gaining the education to prepare them to meet the challenge of the tasks ahead.

If one listens for the voices of the American people, he hears the constant query of why there is not a cease fire. Let the killing be stopped, and then let the negotiators go on for as long as they need. As fitting as it was to have the flag at half mast and a day of mourning for Senator Kennedy, why not continue the same every day to remind us of the brave young men who are being killed in war-torn Vietnam.

Americans want to get on with the job of producing record abundance to rid us of hunger and poverty. They view with misgiving as inflation and climbing interest rates exact a cruel toll from our purchasing power and raise the cost of financing essential needs.

As a people, we have accepted a heavy burden of taxation, not equitably administered, for federal, state and local government in the hope that it would bring a fuller life for all our people. We have been patient with error and confusion and ineptitude. We recognize that the road ahead is an uncharted one, and there can be blundering and exasperation. But essentially, as a people we want to move toward abundance and a fuller life for all. Let no man doubt that this is the great ultimate goal of America, and the unwavering purpose of our national existence.

-- Joseph Zashin

On a personal note, our visit to Washington was to attend the wedding of our son, Elliot, to Polly McAboy of McLean, Virginia. The ceremony was performed on Saturday night, June 8th, by Rabbi Laslo Berkowitz and was attended by the two families and friends. It was followed by a reception at the home of the parents of the bride.

It was sad that this happy event had to coincide with the funeral of Robert Kennedy. It has been said that John F. Kennedy used to turn to the Book of Ecclesiastes, particularly that portion in Chapter III, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die", etc., etc., etc.

On occasion, it doesn't seem as though it is the time, or the time for one happening will overlap with the time for another but who is Man to understand the odd and puzzling quirks of time. We toured the Capitol and saw the great outpouring of people at Arlington Cemetery. We passed Resurrection City in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. We saw the monuments to Washington and to Jefferson, and we had the feeling that time could only be on the side of the realization of the great American Dream. So be it.