ROBERT FRANCIS KENNEDY

Our Resolve Is Higher Than the Mountains



Kacabenggala Editions

Publisher Note

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Sedara Sedara

My avowed purpose in coming to Indonesia is to obtain a better understanding of the people of your nation: your hopes; your difficulties and your aspirations; and at the same time to try to give to the leaders and people of your nation a more intimate glimpse of the United States; what we stand for; what problems we face; what progress we are making; what our hopes are for the future of our own country, and of the world.

The exchange of such knowledge is most necessary with respect to nations such as ours; for our understanding of your institutions, your culture story and your traditions is still far from what it should be. And even from my short visit to your country I know there are misconceptions here about mine.

Mutual understanding between us is more essential today then ever before. For daily we are faced with the paradox that, while the world is growing smaller, its problems are becoming larger and more complex.

Neither your nation nor mine can retreat within its own boundaries and seek a destiny merely for itself. In truth the world is now a seamless web from which no nation, large or small, young or old, can disassociate itself.

Every attitude and every action of every nation can affect the welfare and security of every other nation around the globe.

It may be that the younger men and women of our genera-

tion sense this world seamlessness with more certainty than their elders. We were born in the aftermath of World War I and thus came upon a stage of turmoil and disorder. At that a decade later; as the depression of the thirties cast its dark shadow over the world, we learned that there was no such thing as economic isolation.

But the beginnings of hope that began to glimmer in that dark era shortly afterwards were rudely snuffed out by World War Two.

And now today our generation—yours and mine—faces post war problems which were not of our making but which certainly are to be our responsibility.

This is not to say that we have discarded or are ready to discard the wisdom of age and its experience. We have great respect and admiration for world leaders such as Nehru and Adenauer, both of whom have outdistanced the three score and ten that the prophet said was given to us.

Still the younger men and women will have to live longer with these difficult problems. We will have to replenish year after year in every field—in government, in politics, in business, in the sciences and in the arts—the inevitable attrition that attends living. The great challenges of these years that face us, the responsibilities that now must be met—responsibilities not only to ourselves and our own nation—but the world—provide greater incentives and greater opportunities than ever for the younger people of the world. And I am sure that this is a challenge we happily accept. For with the need for new formulas, the restraints of the

past are less. Today President Kennedy follows in that tradition. And so in the United States our present government is witness not merely to the initiative of its youngest elected President but to a new generation determined to deal resolutely with the nation's problems and unafraid to depart; when necessary, from the precedents of the past.

It seems to me that as we face the future, Indonesia and the United States are bound by many common bonds.

You are an old country with an ancient culture, but you are a young democracy. We are the youngest of countries but the oldest democracy—the oldest in the world.

Both of our nations must deal in great distances since our respective coastlines extend for some 3,000 miles—ours trom the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific and yours from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean.

Our peoples are the sons of forefathers from many different lands and of different languages, yet each has united into a common cause, a single tongue, and each lives under one flag. My country began as 13 states; yours as 13 provinces.

Your national symbol is the Garuda; ours is the Eagle; your motto is (Been-Eekeh Toongaul. Eeka) Unity Through Diversity; ours is E Pluribus Unum, Out of Many, One.

Both our nations were born in revolution.

Both fought to break the chains of colonialism.

We in America, and even in more modern times there are many limitations since the days of Franklin Roosevelt, have

enunciated as our aim the establishment of four basic freedoms: freedom of speech and expression; freedom of every person to worship God in his own way; freedom from want; freedom from fear.

Your President Sukarno has sought to establish in Indonesia your Pahntjah Seelah or Five Pillars: belief in God, Nationalism, Internationalism, Democracy and Social Justice.

And so the peoples of both our nations are dedicated to independence and to justice and to world peace.

Like you, we have the same problems of accepting the best of the new ideas and still retaining the best of the old, our traditions as a nation focused from the beginning on the freedom and the dignity of the individual. This is why a hundred and eighty five years ago we fought and shed our blood to rid ourselves from oppression.

This is what Thomas Jefferson phrased so forcefully in the Declaration of Independence as the obligation of government to insure to every man the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

This is what President Kennedy was talking about in his Inaugural Address when he said:

"The same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."

Let me tell you something of modern day America and what

we stand for.

Freedom possesses many meanings. It speaks not merely in terms of political and religious liberty but also in terms of economic and social progress. Over the years the concept has been an expanding one.

In the United States today freedom speaks out for expanding industrialization, increases in productivity, the better distribution of the rewards of labor, a decent return on investment.

It speaks in terms of laws to prevent monopoly by business, corruption by labor leaders, to prevent stock and bond frauds in investments, to grant a $1.25 an hour minimum wage for workers.

The last few decades in America have seen the rise of unemployment compensation, social security, pension funds to aid the elderly, medical assistance, and a variety of other benefits that make impossible the concept of an economic society, such as we were threatened with in the last century by the uncontrolled rise of industrialism, in which the rich got richer and the poor got poorer.

Our society then, still loyal today to its original revolutionary concept of the importance of the individual, sees its goals in the United States in service to mankind in ways never imagined years ago. It reaches out to protect us in our old age; it provides our youth with an ever better education; it bans child labor and starvation wages; it protects our savings in the banks; and more and more it reaches out

to newer and greater frontiers that will provide spiritually and economically a richer life.

This is not the society condemned some one hundred years ago as an era of brutal capitalism based on laissez faire. This is not the society whose evils Marx thought were beyond the cure of democracy. It is not an economy that tolerates long hours, low wages, child labor and the bitter hatred between capital and labor that was the core of Marx's Manifesto—a Manifesto that even the Communists now recognize as being economically inaccurate and historically unsound. Indeed, this democratic society boasts of its abolition of these evils and cries out against ideologies of government that demand the suppression of freedom of worship, freedom of speech, and call for the complete domination and subservience of the individual to the needs of the state as determined by a select few.

Instead the free society rests on the belief that the state exists for the benefit of man; man is not an instrument of the state. The state is not a ruling class; it reflects the desires of its people.

It does violence to this concept, for example, to make it unpatriotic for a distinguished author to accept the Nobel Award because his picture of the society did not coincide point by point with that of the government. I can, for example, understand the Chinese wall. It was built as a defense against marsuders. But a wall, such as we have in Berlin, to prevent people from seeking freedom is almost beyond comprehension. A society which is required to shoot down

women and children to keep them within its borders admits its own failures and defeat. True, with us the machinery of government may err at times. We make mistakes in handling our problems. We still have tremendous difficulties such as in the field of civil rights and unemployment. The important thing is that as a nation and as a people we strive and fight to make progress to maintain the dignity and the independence of the individual.

In the United States maintenance of law and order, respect for fundamental human rights, and a govenment responsive to public opinion form the foundations of a society based on freedom. In the United States we have a federal system and this creates some problems and difficulties in our efforts to make progress. There are areas of action where the states are dominant and the Federal. Government is powerless. There are other areas which the states cannot invade. The political. destinies of states are never all controlled by the same political party, and their polltical outlook can differ state by state from that of the National Administration. This makes for problems and difficulties in realizing certain national goals. In civil rights matters, our Federal Government has a direct responsibility to combat discrimination in voting but can move against discrimination in transportation only when the Interstate Transportation System is involved. The Federal Government can intervene directly in school desegregation cases only at the direction ot the Federal courts.

Thus, constitutional barriers can impede efforts at the national level. However, our achievements in steadily decreas-

ing discrimination have been significant. Furthermore, the conscience ot America has been deeply stirred. In the states and in society as a whole progress is plainly apparent. We in the Nation's Capital will encourage this with all the resources that we possess.

The exploration and conquest of new frontiers is the challenge offered today under President Kennedy, and, as the President observed recently, our efforts to reach the moon are in the tradition of the first democratic administration which in 1804 sent the explorers Lewis and Clark across a trackless continent to find a land route to the Pacific Ocean.

I cannot leave this theme of our historic dedication to the freedom of the individual without commenting on its relationship to our international outlook. It is not we who insist upon other nations accepting our image or our philosophy. Even given aims similar to ours, the machinery we have devised to achieve them may be inappropriate in another culture or another historic setting. Indeed, except by example, democratic ideas are almost incapable of export. To be vital and effective such ideas must be indigenous, developed by the experience of tears and toil rather than as a gift from some outside source. The seed of liberty lies instinctively in the hearts of all men for as Thomas Jefferson said: "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time."

But from there it must be nurtured and developed. And that task must be performed by the people themselves. And in that development we do not condemn others for their differences in economic and political structures. Certainly, we

understand that newer nations have not had time, even if they so wished, to build institutions relying primarily on private enterprise as we have done. Our railroads, airlines, our communications systems, our industries, were not created overnight. These enterprise developed as a result of private initiative at a time when life was far simpler than it is now. We thus had time to permit their slow growth. In many of the newer nations, government appears to be the only mechanism capable of performing these feats within a reasonable length of time. This we can understand and appreciate. In your country you have a saying: Line Lahdahng, Line Belahlahng, Line Loobook, Line Eekahn. "Another Field, Another Grasshopper, Another Pond, Another Fish."

Or, in the other words, each country has its own customs and habits.

But the important thing is that, regardless of our differences we all hold firmly to the belief that the just and prosperous society which your President and ours have set as our country's aims is possible of achievement. History has proved that a prosperous society, bringing decent living standards, education and adequate, medical care to all its citizens—not to a favored few—is made more nearly possible by men who remain dedicated to the principles of freedom than by those who are bound by a totalitarian system or an economic and political manifesto drafted a century ago as a solution for conditions which scarcely exist today.

Let me add a few words as to our attitude towards the rise

of nationalism and the corresponding ebb of colonialism.

On September 25, 1961, in an address to the United Nations, President Kennedy put the position of the United States and his Administration quite clearly when he said: "My nation was once a colony—and we know what colonialism means: The exploitation and subjugation ot the weak by the powerful, of the many by the few, of the governed who have given no consent to be governed, whatever their continent, their class, or their color." And so I can say to you here today that we have no desire to impose our conception of the role other nations should be allowed to assume. But I also say quite frankly that we have no intention of permitting any other nation to impose its system on other nations of the world.

Nationalism historically to us has always meant freedom. We, as a nation, were born with that concept. We understand, that the throes of becoming a nation may be severe even after the grant of independence. We in the United States should know, for the blood of our manhood was tragically spilled in 1776 when we gained independence and again one hundred years ago to maintain us as a nation and as a free nation.

We recognize that the transition of so many peoples from dependencies to nations is not easy. At best it is difficult to fashion overnight the necessary system and structure of government.

The release of vast territories of this world from a system whose purchase was frequently to further the economic in-

terests of the acquiring power with little or no interest in the people of the dependency has caused and is causing a monumental upheaval around the globe.

Fortunately, there has been a growing recognition of this fact. Vast areas of the world in recent years have not been forced to resort to violent measures to attain their political and economic independence. We can all take pride in this and trust that this tremendous revision of world systems and the equally tremendous shift in the balance of world power will also take place by an appeal to reason rather than by resort to force.

For the accomplishment of freedom also is a story of restraint and responsibility.

And it will take both restraint and responsibility in an atmosphere of freedom if the young men and women of this generation—who are the wave and the hope of the future—are to win the struggle against the common enemies of mankind: Tyranny, Poverty, Disease and War.

But as you say in your country: Rendah Goonoon Tinggi Hah Rah'Pan, Our Resolve is Higher Than The Mountains.

Clearly the road ahead holds difficulties and discomforts and even dissapointments for all of us. But whatever the problems I hope you will join with me in pledging our best efforts to promoting and protecting the ideals for which our independent nations stand: Loyalty to truth; loyalty to freedom as a basic human value; a dedication to peace and justice; and above all else, to keep in our hearts and minds the

tolerance of mutual trust for one another." Terima Kasih."