

NOVEMBER 3, 2009

UNITED NATIONS OBSERVANCE ON ADLAI E. STEVENSON II  
ADLAI E. STEVENSON III

AT THE UN HE PREFERRED TO BE ADDRESSED AS GOVERNOR, MY FATHER SAID, BECAUSE IF ADDRESSED AS "AMBASSADOR" A HUNDRED HEADS WOULD TURN.

HIS ROOTS RAN DEEP IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS - TO A GREAT GRAND FATHER WHO WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S POLITICAL SPONSOR AND PATRON. LINCOLN WAS AN INSPIRATION.

BUT THE GUV, AS HE WAS KNOWN TO FRIENDS, WAS ALSO A PRODUCT OF PRINCETON, WORLD WAR I AND WOODROW WILSON'S INTERNATIONALISM.

AS A STUDENT IN EUROPE AND YOUNG CORRESPONDENT IN RUSSIA HE HAD SEEN THE RAVAGES OF WAR. FROM BOYHOOD HE WAS A PERIPATETIC STUDENT OF THE WORLD - ON THE GROUND - EXPLORING ITS MONUMENTS AND RUINS, ITS MARKETS AND FAVELAS. HE ONCE SAID HE WISHED HE COULD FIND A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB THAT HIS DEVOTED FRIEND AND SUPPORTER, ELEANOR ROOSEVELT HAD NOT CLIMBED FIRST.

HE SAW WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC AND ITALIAN PENINSULA, ITS AFTERMATH FROM ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE EGG HEAD WAS A REALIST - A HARD BOILED EGG HEAD, A REALISTIC REALIST - HIS PERSPECTIVE FROM NO IVORY TOWER OF ARM CHAIR STRATEGISTS AND PUBLICISTS, LET ALONE LOBBIES WHICH NOW INFECT U.S. POLICY, ESPECIALLY IN A CONGRESS WHICH BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE CONGRESS IN WHICH I SERVED..

HE WAS AN ARCHITECT OF THE UN AT SAN FRANCISCO IN 1945. WE LIVED IN WAR TORN LONDON LATER THAT YEAR WHERE HE REPRESENTED THE US ON THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE UN. GREAT MEN GATHERED EXCITEDLY AT OUR LITTLE HOME IN THE EVENINGS (WE HAD ACCESS TO THE US COMMISSARY - EGGS) TO DISCUSS THEIR PLANS FOR A WORLD ORDER BASED ON LAW, COOPERATION, DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD FINALLY END WAR FOR ALL TIME. LESTER PEARSON WAS THERE. JAN MASYRYK, GLADWYN JEB, HENRI SPAAK WERE THERE. AND ANDREI

GROMYKO. A YOUNG SIR BRIAN UQUHARDT WAS THERE. MANY YEARS LATER AFTER HE HAD SERVED AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL, SIR BRIAN SAID ADLAI II WAS SUCH A GREAT DIPLOMAT, HE COULD MAKE ANDREI GROMYKO LAUGH. MANY MORE YEARS LATER IN FOREIGN SECRETARY GROMYKO'S KREMLIN LAIR, I FAILED THE TEST, PROTESTING THE SOVIET UNION'S MILITARIZATION OF OUTER SPACE. NOW IT AND CHINA ARE THE PROTESTERS.

IN HIS CAMPAIGNS FOR PRESIDENT AND AS TITULAR LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY THE GOV LAID THE PROGRAMMATIC FOUNDATION FOR THE NEW FRONTIER AND GREAT SOCIETY, SUPPORTED THE UN AND EFFORTS TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THE "HAVES AND THE HAVE NOTS" IN THE WORLD AND BEGAN THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS PROCESS WITH HIS PROPOSAL FOR CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE ATMOSPHERE.

THE YEARS WHICH FOLLOWED AT THE UN SHORTENED HIS LIFE. HE GROANED THAT DIPLOMACY CONSISTED OF EQUAL PARTS OF PROTOCOL, ALCOHOL AND GERITOL. HE TOOK THE SOCIAL AND REPRESENTATIONAL OBLIGATIONS OF HOST AMBASSADOR SERIOUSLY, BUT THAT WAS THE LEAST OF IT.

HE COULD NOT GET A HEARING IN THE WHITE HOUSE FOR SECRETARY GENERAL U THANT'S PROPOSAL FOR A DIPLOMATIC RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH EAST ASIA.

HE WAS FED ERRONEOUS INFORMATION ABOUT THE BAY OF PIGS INCIDENT AND FEARED ITS DISCLOSURE WOULD DISCREDIT HIM. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION WAS DISCREDITED INSTEAD.

HE IS REMEMBERED FOR HIS PRESENTATION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL DURING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS. BUT HE WAS VILIFIED FOR PROPOSING A DIPLOMATIC ALTERNATIVE TO WAR - TRADING OBSOLETE U.S. BASES IN TURKEY FOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM CUBA. THAT'S THE DEAL THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION STRUCK - BUT INSISTED ON ITS SECRECY. KHRUSCHEV WAS HUMILIATED - AND SUCCEEDED BY A CABAL FROM WHICH BREZHNEV THE HARD LINER EMERGED - AND COLD WAR ESCALATED.

IT'S EASIER TO WAGE WAR THAN MAKE PEACE, AND HE WAS A PEACEMAKER. HE WAS PLANNING TO QUIETLY RESIGN AT THE END OF

1965 BECAUSE HE DID NOT SUPPORT POLICIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HE WAS FORCED TO ADVOCATE. BUT HE DIED FIRST - A FEW BLOCKS FROM OUR LITTLE HOME IN LONDON 20 YEARS EARLIER, STILL SERVING THE UNITED NATIONS.

HE SAW THE WORLD FROM WITHIN THE WORLD. HE COULD SEE HIS COUNTRY FROM OUTSIDE IT. HE DID NOT LECTURE OTHER COUNTRIES. THEIR LEADERS SOUGHT HIM OUT - AND LISTENED. HE WAS WELCOMED THE WORLD OVER AS A VOICE OF THE WORLD FROM WITHIN AMERICA. SO MUCH SO THAT JOHN FOSTER DULLES INSISTED ON MAKING HIM AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE UNITED STATES AS HIS EXPLORATIONS CONTINUED.

IN A DYNAMIC, INTERCONNECTED NUCLEAR WORLD THE EFFICIENCIES OF ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE MOUNT WITH THE INEFFICIENCIES OF CONVENTIONAL WARFARE. HIS FRAGILE SPACE SHIP EARTH 'S RESERVES OF AIR, WATER AND SOIL ARE MORE VULNERABLE. THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS FAMILY OF AGENCIES BECOME MORE VITAL - AND STRETCHED.

AMERICA'S COARSE POLITICS TODAY BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE POLITICS WE EXPERIENCED OVER FIVE GENERATIONS. I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO RECORD IT - WITH LESSONS FROM THE PAST - IN THE BLACK BOOK - NAMED FOR A FAMILY POLITICAL ARCHIVE WHICH BEGINS WITH LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS AND ENDS IN MODERN CHINA.

IT'S EASIER TO WAGE WAR THAN MAKE PEACE, AS PREMIER CLEMENCEAU ACKNOWLEDGED. BUT THE GUV WOULD BE ENCOURAGED. IN THE LIFE CYCLE OF NATIONS, CHINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES RISE AND BECOME A LARGER PART OF THE MULTILATERALISM ONCE LED BY THE US. AND ILLINOIS HAS PRODUCED A PRESIDENT WHO REFLECTS SOMETHING OF A WORLD VIEW AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO MULTILATERALISM AND THE UN - TO DIPLOMACY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR.

IN THE BLACK BOOK, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE SAVED.