

Government and the Critical Intelligence

AN ADDRESS BY

President Lyndon B. Johnson

AND REMARKS BY

Eugene R. Black and Robert D. Calkins



MARKING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Remarks by Eugene R. Black

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

THE PRESENCE of such a distinguished audience here tonight says more than ever I can of the important place which Brookings now occupies on the Washington scene.

Throughout the academic world, of course, the importance of Brookings is well established. It is taken for granted that in Washington Brookings is the place to go to plant the seed of an idea and to find out if that idea will be fertilized or suffocated in the rarefied atmosphere of Washington politics.

And throughout the government here in Washington, the importance of Brookings is well understood. Not long after Bob Calkins came to Brookings fourteen years ago, there was an exciting takeoff at Brookings into self-sustained growth. And, of course, the pilot who engineered that takeoff was Bob Calkins himself.

It is not just that Brookings' endowment has increased almost fivefold in the past fourteen years to its present level of \$31 million; it is not just that Brookings' operating budget has also increased five times or that twenty-five studies a year are now being published against only about five a year before Bob came. What Bob Calkins has really done is to give wings to the Brookings ideal and to make out of Brookings a national intellectual center which promises a continuity of excellence in research and analysis in the next fifty years to match the fondest hopes of those who kept faith in the often difficult first fifty years.

The appointment of Kermit Gordon as Vice President is just the most recent example of how continuity of excellence has been built into Brookings. Scholar, Director of the Budget

Bureau, top economic advisor to the President—Kermit Gordon personifies the Brookings objective of bringing to bear on the affairs of government the most important of what the social sciences have to offer. That Mr. Gordon should have come to Brookings at the peak of his career—at forty-nine or the same age at which Mr. Calkins arrived fourteen years ago—is to me a good example of how the continuity of excellence has been built into this unique organization.

But I am here to praise Bob Calkins, not to bury him. I am here to introduce the man who has built an outstanding staff of economists and who has mobilized leading scholars across this land into a pioneering study of government finance—a study which has already proved that when it comes to taxes and public expenditures at the federal, state, and local levels, officials will be using Brookings' findings and recommendations as a basic reference point for action for years to come.

I am here to introduce the man who has developed a program of governmental studies which has already made major contributions to the improvement of public administration and a program of foreign policy studies which is making significant explorations of the problems of economic, social, and political development in the underdeveloped nations.

I am here to introduce the man who has established an Advanced Study Program which each year brings 1,200 prominent leaders of government, business, and labor together to be disciplined by each other's experience and by discussion of relevant research on public issues.

An educator, who believes that illuminating all the choices is the fundamental purpose of research; an executive, who believes in encouraging excellence rather than just commanding it; a mediator between the trade unions of academic life and the managers of public affairs; a man who loves facts dispassionately and people compassionately—I give you Robert D. Calkins.

Remarks by Robert D. Calkins

PRESIDENT OF THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WE ARE ASSEMBLED here tonight not merely to celebrate an important anniversary in the life of the Brookings Institution. This gathering has the larger purpose of paying tribute to the men and women who, by their active participation or friendly interest over the past half century, have made Brookings what it is today and have given it the potential for still greater service to the American people in years to come. We are pleased that so many of those who have contributed to the Institution's accomplishments are here this evening; we regret that many more could not be present.

Our genial Chairman has been excessively generous in referring to my role in this endeavor. To correct the record, let me diffuse that warm glow of appreciation to those who have really done the work.

The President of Brookings does have some responsibility for creating a favorable environment, for finding the means, for setting the standards, for developing a program, and for selecting the key personnel. But if he is successful in selecting the right staff, he retains little more control over the burgeoning activities than a cowboy does over a stampeding herd.

There are two weapons, however, which the President always has. One is a shortage of funds and the other is the Board of Trustees. The first provides what the bankers call "fiscal discipline." The second reminds him that if he hasn't got the funds and can't get them, he can't spend them. Many of our foundation friends believe that research and education are best conducted close to the margin of starvation. That would seem to account for the hungry look and

insatiable appetite of scholars for more grants. But I have discovered what may be called "Calkins' law." It is that regardless of the funds available, the needs for research will always exceed them. While we at Brookings have often had generous help, we have also had abundant austerity, which, with expanding demands, has forced us to practice fiscal discipline and subdue the exuberant programs of the staff.

Brookings has survived and grown as most institutions in this country have grown—slowly, haltingly, and uncertainly, as it struggled to achieve its purposes. The Institution would never have survived several critical periods had it not been for the superb and dedicated management of Harold Moulton, my predecessor, and for the understanding help of major foundations. Dr. Moulton not only directed the affairs of the Institution through many difficult times, but he was one of the most productive members of the research staff.

It is not my purpose here to review the history of the Institution. That story has been well told by Charles Saunders in a fifty-year history published today.

Tonight we are here to enjoy a family reunion, and my role is to acknowledge our indebtedness to the different branches of the family.

The presence of the Trustees here reflects the interest and leadership they have always given to the affairs of Brookings. The Board is a cross-section of the leadership of this country. Among the Trustees over the past fifty years have been two Presidents of the United States; three Supreme Court Justices; three Secretaries of State, and nine other Cabinet officers; Ambassadors, Senators, Congressmen; heads of major national corporations; and the presidents of eighteen colleges and universities.

The Trustees take an exceptionally active interest in the affairs of the Institution. They pass on each new project, enforce standards of independence, objectivity, and relevance,

and shape the major policies of the organization. Even when they turn us down, they do it with a gentle touch that leaves no scars. To them, I wish to express the gratitude and admiration of the officers and staff.

The presence of Mr. Raymond Fosdick here tonight and his election as an Honorary Trustee after 35 years of absence from the Brookings Board is for all of us a most welcome re-association. He is the sole surviving member of the group who organized the Institute for Government Research and the only living member of the initial Board of the Brookings Institution. What was called a retirement for him eighteen years ago has been a busy and productive period in which he has published at least seven books and is currently at work on another on the League of Nations and the United Nations. We salute him and praise the foresight which he and his colleagues had in sensing the need for an institution such as Brookings. We wish him many more productive years during this renewed association with the Institution he helped to found.

The current and former members of the Brookings staff who are here tonight represent the intellectual leadership which Brookings has provided throughout the years. They are social scientists with a deep concern for public problems and for the use of the social sciences to improve public understanding and policy. They seek to inform and assist the executive and legislative branches of government and the American public by clarifying economic, governmental, and international issues and by exploring policy alternatives. It is through their efforts that Brookings attains such stature and influence as it enjoys. I will not ask these present and former staff members to rise, but I do wish to acknowledge our great indebtedness to them.

The first of the three constituent organizations that became part of the consolidated Brookings Institution was the Insti-

tute for Government Research. It made notable contributions to the improvement of federal personnel administration, the development of a civil service retirement system, and other advancements in government administration. One of its major concerns was the establishment of a federal budgeting system. This was achieved with the adoption of the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921. The Institute for Government Research lent staff to General Charles G. Dawes to set up the initial procedures. Forty-four years later we were able to enjoy a reverse flow of lend lease when Kermit Gordon and William Capron from the Bureau of the Budget came to Brookings. But it was at a price, for in the exchange we, and the University of Maryland, lost Charles Schultze to the Bureau as its new Director.

The Institute of Economics, the second antecedent of the Brookings Institution, influenced the readjustment of international debt policies through its studies of reparations and war debts in the 1920's. It later conducted important research in the fields of agricultural policy, income distribution, social security, and other labor and welfare problems. Representing the early staff of these two Institutes, we are pleased to have present Dr. Edwin G. Nourse. Dr. Nourse joined the senior staff of the Institute of Economics in 1923, became its director in 1929, and served as Vice President of the Institution for three years before he left in 1946 to become the first Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. May I ask Dr. Nourse to stand.

The third antecedent institution was the Robert Brookings Graduate School, which was an early pioneer in the field of education for the public service. During its short life from 1924 to about 1930, it awarded Doctor of Philosophy degrees to seventy-four persons whose later contributions to public life and scholarship stand as a remarkable tribute to Mr. Brookings' concept of the School. I should like to ask all

recipients of the Brookings Ph.D. who were able to be with us tonight to rise for a moment.

Another important branch of the Brookings Institution family are the Fellows. Since the 1920's a large number of Research Fellows from the leading graduate schools of the country have spent a year or more at Brookings for the study of public policy issues from the vantage point of Washington. This program was interrupted by the war but reinstituted in the mid-1950's.

Two other fellowship programs have been added in recent years. Each year several senior federal officials come to Brookings as Federal Executive Fellows to do research on problems of interest to their agencies. Also, a number of promising business and labor executives are chosen each year as Public Affairs Fellows for a five-month program involving orientation seminars and a working experience in government agencies.

These several fellowship programs are designed to interest young scholars in policy research, to encourage federal officials to study in depth and without distraction problems with which they have been confronted, and to give coming business and labor leaders an opportunity to enlarge their experience and insight into the operations of the federal government. These programs have been richly rewarding. I should like to ask all past or present Research Fellows, Federal Executive Fellows, and Public Affairs Fellows to stand and be recognized.

These newer fellowship programs are part of a broader educational effort which the Institution launched in 1957 to bring knowledge more effectively to the aid of decision makers. For executives in government, business, and labor, a series of seminars and conferences were begun to provide a deeper understanding and broader perspective on the operations of government and the shaping of public policy. This

program has enlisted the support and cooperation of many of the most distinguished leaders in these fields. Of all the new programs Brookings has started, the Advanced Study Program promises, in this period of expanding knowledge and social change, to be one of the most useful and effective. In shaping it, we have had the invaluable guidance of Advisory Committees from government, business and labor. I should like to ask the members of these three Committees to stand.

A large measure of the Institution's effectiveness over the years has been attributable to its presence in Washington, and more particularly to the long-standing relationships of mutual respect and confidence between Brookings and the agencies of government. No acknowledgments would be complete without expressing our high respect and gratitude to the countless civil servants and other public officials, members of Congress, and congressional staffs with whom we have worked over the years and who have encouraged and aided the efforts of the Institution.

Nor do we forget the countless university scholars who have come to Brookings on leave as Guest Scholars or on Brookings assignments, or who have worked overtime for Brookings on their own campuses. They have been an invaluable resource, supplementing the staff of the Institution and advancing its purposes.

Let me finally pay tribute to the philanthropic foundations, whose support and faith in the importance of the Institution have assured the strength and effectiveness which Brookings can claim today. With us tonight are representatives of most of the major foundations. Without their help the Institution could not have survived the financial strains of past decades or be prepared as it is today for a period of greater service in the years to come.

This gathering in itself symbolizes the close relationships between Brookings and the government, the academic com-

munity, and leaders in private life. Because of these relationships, the Institution has been able to play a unique role in the growing use of research and the application of specialized knowledge to the problems of our society.

Our findings have not always been accepted, and they have not always met with public approval. We have not tried to play the part of Congress in proposing workable compromises. We have sought to offer critical analyses of the issues and alternatives, and to encourage a more informed dialogue in the process of policy formulation.

When George Bernard Shaw was asked what he was doing to help win the war, he replied, "I am the culture you are trying to save." Brookings would be more modest in expressing its position. But it has become an essential element in the American culture.

Everyone in the Brookings family gathered here tonight recognizes the growing dependence on specialized knowledge and the need to mobilize that knowledge to assist the American people and their decision makers. In the conduct of public affairs, vastly more reliance is placed on such research and analysis today than there was even a generation ago. The need will be far greater in the years ahead. It is our hope that Brookings may make an ever-increasing contribution during its next fifty years. Tonight we express our indebtedness to those who have brought us this far in the last half-century.



Mr. Black (top left), Mr. Fosdick (top right), and Mr. Calkins and President Johnson at the Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner, Statler Hilton Hotel, Washington, D. C., September 29, 1966.

Reni News Photo Service

Government and the Critical Intelligence

AN ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

HALF A CENTURY AGO nine men from business, law, and banking met to chart a course for an Institute for Government Research here in Washington, D. C. Their goals were beyond reproach, but also unlikely to propel other men to the barricades. They sought, in their words,

Knowledge of the best methods of administrative organization to be obtained by means of thorough scientific study, so that it may be possible to conduct governmental activities with maximum effectiveness and minimum waste.

This must have seemed rather a colorless ideal, however worthy. Yet two decades later, in the late thirties, a newspaper had this to say about what had become the Brookings Institution:

Brookings publications cause something of a stir in the world. Newspapers print summaries of them on their front pages. Economists, editorial writers, and some politicians cite them much as Fundamentalist preachers draw upon Holy Writ. Although the emotional appeal of these books is nil, their statements have caused many highly placed or otherwise prominent persons to yell bloody murder.

So the men who studied the federal system from Brookings' window had already stimulated, if not torchlight parades, a great deal of soul-searching by the administrators of that system.

They did not accomplish this by calling for the overthrow of the government. That is certainly one way to get attention, but it is not the best way to bring about desirable change.

The men of Brookings did it by analysis, by painstaking research, by objective writing, by an imagination that ques-

tioned the "going" way of doing things, and then they proposed alternatives.

Because their subject was public policy—the transportation system, the economy, election law, the civil service, labor-management practices—they touched the concerns of every citizen in the land. Sometimes they prescribed an unpopular medicine for government officials, and the patient rejected it with a cry of outrage. Brookings reported that the NRA was badly administered and could only surely fail. Then General Johnson—General Hugh Johnson—who ran the agency, said:

Before anybody asks that crowd for a prescription he must write his own diagnosis. It is one of the most sanctimonious and pontifical rackets in the country.

Yet in field after field, reports and studies that emerged from Brookings did bring about substantial changes in law and in practice. It was often a case of concentrated brain-power applied to national problems where ignorance, confusion, vested interests, or apathy had ruled before. Sometimes the Brookings study won the day; sometimes it only opened the way for other ideas and policies; but always it changed the temperature in the cosmos of Washington.

Now, in 1966, after fifty years of telling the government what to do, you are more than a private institution on Massachusetts Avenue. You are a national institution, so important to, at least, the Executive Branch—and, I think, the Congress, and the country—that if you did not exist we would have to ask someone to create you.

Of course you are not alone now. Other institutions, many of them specialized, have come into being since the Second World War. Some of them are supported by the government itself, in an effort to find better answers to problems of national security in the nuclear age. More, many more, have appeared on university campuses, sponsoring research in such

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subjects as mental health, African affairs, urban renewal, in a hundred or more fields where scholars had heretofore never ventured.

This has not happened just because wealthy benefactors needed monuments to their generosity. It has happened because the enormous complexity of modern living demanded something better than a visceral, emotional response. And as one who has examined a thousand new ideas from the universities and research centers of America in the past thirty-four months, I can testify that in fact we got something better.

There is hardly an aspect of the Great Society's program that has not been molded, or re-molded, or in some way influenced by the communities of scholars and thinkers. The flow of ideas continues because the problems continue. Some ideas are good enough to stimulate whole departments of government into fresh appraisals of their programs. Some are ingenious; some are impractical; some are both. But without the tide of new proposals that periodically sweeps into this city, the climate of our government would be very arid indeed.

There has been another, and equally welcome, development during the last few years. A number of those who helped to create the new programs decided, after they had been created, to follow their children down here to Washington. So men like John Gardner, and Bob Wood, and Charlie Haar, came down to look after the education program—and what we hope may be the demonstration cities program. If the old bromide still had currency—that intellectuals are absent-minded, unable to keep with the harsh practicalities of administration—these men, and many like them, should have dispelled it.

So we have seen, in our time, two aspects of intellectual power brought to bear on our nation's problems: the power to create, to discover and propose new remedies for what ails

us; and the power to administer complex programs in a rational way.

But there is a third aspect of intellectual power that our country urgently needs tonight, and in my judgment it is being supplied sparingly. It is less glamorous than the power to create new ideas; it is less visible and less publicized than the power to administer new programs. But it is not a bit less critical to the success or failure that we may make in the years that are ahead of us.

This is the power to evaluate. It is the power to find the marrow of the problem, the power to define it as acutely as it can be defined. It is the power to say, about public policies or private choices, "This works. But this does not. This costs more than we can afford, or this costs more than it is worth. This is worth more than it costs. This will probably give us an acceptable result. But this will complicate the problem and make it impossible for us to solve."

Of all these powers, that of the critical faculty, I think, is most deeply associated with the intellectual. All his training, all his intelligence, all his experience, tells him to beware of easy answers—to shun the merely clever, as he does the emotional generality. He does not accept, in his laboratory or seminar, the notion that the best way to solve a problem is to walk away from it, or to flood it with a sea of dollars, or to smother it with an emotional slogan. Should he adopt a different set of critical standards when the problem is city slums or foreign policy, than when it is a question of biology or historical research?

I think obviously not. The methods which have worked so well in advancing man's knowledge of himself and his universe are exactly the methods which can show us the way toward better public policies—a distrust of simple answers to very complex problems, and always healthy respect for the facts, a conscientious effort to submerge bias and prejudice, and a refusal to stretch the conclusions beyond the evidence.

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What I am saying is that the critical faculty ought constantly to challenge the accepted wisdom—whether liberal or conservative wisdom, whether private or governmental wisdom, the wisdom of the street or the newspaper office or the lecture hall. It ought to be concerned at least as much with analyzing the terrific complexity of modern problems, as it is with devising sweeping new strategies for social advances. It ought to be as dissatisfied with what is known about the critical problems of today, as it is with the bureaucrats and politicians who try to solve them. The critical faculty, in short, ought to be critical—to be precise, to be sharp, and to be piercing.

If this seems less exhilarating to some than striking out for new horizons, I can only say that to me it does not. I can, for instance, imagine no more exciting breakthrough in human knowledge than one that still eludes us: understanding the real dynamics of urban life.

This is such a mixture of physical, financial, and psychological questions as to confound the best minds in the nation. Overcrowded streets and housing; unemployment; inadequate schools; transportation systems that confound problems instead of relieving them; air and water pollution; blight and ugliness; rising crime and delinquency; tax structures that impose the heaviest burdens on the governments least able to bear those burdens; racial tensions; and so on down a list that is already too familiar to all of you.

What impact are we having on these problems with our education program? What is our new poverty program doing about it? Is our manpower redevelopment and training program serving its proper function? How much can we expect rent supplements to achieve in really producing more and better low-cost housing for our poor? What is our highway program doing to alleviate the snarl of traffic, and what are its effects on the city and its people?

All of these are part of a much larger question: What do

we want our cities to be, and how can we achieve what we want?

We need not delay action in the cities until Brookings and its sister institutions have given us a definitive answer to that question. In fact, I have not delayed. We have put into being many programs of assistance to the cities, programs that only three years ago were but theories and propositions. When governments are faced with great public dilemmas, they must shape their programs with the greatest wisdom that they possess, but governments must act. They cannot wait to act until all that is tentative and hypothetical can be established as firmly as a law of mathematics.

But how well are these programs faring? How great is the gap between their promise and the city's reality? How should they be changed, and how can the gap be narrowed?

The answers are vital because the needs of the city demand that all the resources we can devote to them must find their mark. Our aim must be good, and for that we need guidance and discriminate judgment as well as exhortation.

That judgment is exactly what those to whom God has given a good mind, and to whom circumstances have given a good education, are called upon to provide.

Their judgment may be wrong, and they must live with that knowledge as other men do who have been chosen by their fellow citizens to exercise the powers of government.

Their judgment may be right and still not be accepted in the political arena or the editorial room. That is a risk that they all take along with everyone else.

But they must provide it; it is an obligation of responsible intellect, no less than the obligation to produce fresh ideas, or to serve the nation faithfully and diligently in its time of need. It was two centuries ago that Burke wrote:

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes

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of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind. [If I may interpolate, the polls reflect that the condition still exists, I think.]

Such complaints and humors have existed in all times; yet as all times have not been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself in distinguishing that complaint which only characterizes the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distempers of our own air and season.

He might have added that, once the distinction is made, intellectual responsibility requires a man to suggest how those distempers might be remedied; if called upon, to practice the remedy himself; and always to observe, with a candid and critical eye, the results that flow from that judgment.

I think you have sought to fulfill this responsibility here at Brookings. In doing so, you have contributed immeasurably to prudent government and consequently I think to the well-being of your fellow citizens in America.

But please do not rest on fifty years of public service well done. I have observed the operations for thirty-five years, since Dr. Spurgeon Bell¹ was associated here for a brief time, one of my mother's early sweethearts. And since one of my later friends, Mr. Kermit Gordon, came over here, I have tried to follow your words.

As one whose understanding you have enriched throughout his entire public life, I should like to call on you tonight to help us light America's way in the turbulence of tomorrow, as you have done with such great integrity in the turbulent and trying days of the past. I do not think that Brookings will fail us either.

Thank you for letting me come and be with you.

¹ Spurgeon Bell's study *Productivity, Wages, and National Income* was published by Brookings in 1940.

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