



BY EDWARD H. CRANE

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## Message from the President What We Have Here Is a Failure to Communicate

One of the classic examples of the failure of politicians to communicate with the citizenry is found in a video of Romanian tyrant Nicolae Ceausescu, giving what turned out to be his last speech to the teeming masses gathered in a square in Bucharest.

Oblivious to the mood of the people, Ceausescu is at his bombastic, self-important best until he realizes that the chants from the crowd below are not praise, but something rather to the contrary. The look on his face is, as they say in the MasterCard commercials, priceless.

America is a democratic republic, complete with an excellent Constitution that politicians still feel compelled to acknowledge, if not take seriously. So, the growing communications gap between the average American and the average politician, while worrisome, is not irreparable. Solving it should be a high priority for all involved.

The communication problem involves the accelerating realization on the part of many Americans that the essence of America, namely, a respect for the dignity of the individual, which inherently involves the government leaving the individual alone, has been pretty much forgotten by the politicians in Washington, D.C., the state capitals, and city councils around the nation. Which explains why public employees now make on average 30 percent more than their private sector counterparts—and 70 percent more in benefits. The political class seems to believe they have carte blanche to do as they please. They turn a deaf ear to increasingly vocal expressions of frustration by the American people.

Take, for example, a town hall meeting in Washington state last summer in which a young Marine veteran said to six-term Rep. Brian Baird, “Now I heard you say tonight about educating our children, indoctrinating our children, whatever you want to call it.” The congressman denied wanting to indoctrinate, but the young father simply responded, “Stay away from my kids.” Virtually all of the 400 or so people in the hall rose as one in loud applause. It was a Ceausescu moment. The congressman had no clue the people of his district weren’t interested in the federal government concerning itself with the education of their children.

The politicians simply do not get it. The Declaration of Independence says governments are created to secure our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In other words, to leave us the hell alone. That is what makes for American exception-

alism, despite President Obama’s claim that all nations are exceptional. No, they are not, not in the way America is.

As I write these words, across my desk comes a press release from Bloomberg telling me that 18-term Rep. Henry Waxman wants Congress to ban the use of smokeless tobacco in Major League Baseball dugouts. This is part of our communications problem. Read my lips, Henry: It is none of Congress’s business if baseball players want to use smokeless tobacco (or any other kind of weed, for that matter). And this is the encouraging thing about the Tea Party movement. It is made up of average Americans who are sick to death of politicians regulating, taxing, controlling, and limiting individual choice.

This bipartisan communications problem is also exemplified by a joint press conference held just before the start of the lamentable 111th Congress by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. Said Reid, “Sen. McConnell and I believe . . . that we are going to work in a bipartisan basis . . . to solve the problems of the American people.” Whoa! See how simple the communications problem is? They think we sent them to Congress to solve our problems when we actually sent them there to see to it that we are left alone to solve our own problems.

Add to that the fact that many, if not most, of our problems have been created by Congress in the first place and we have the basis for a healthy peaceful revolution. Some 85 percent of Americans like their healthcare, so Congress shoves a government-mandated system down our throats. Taxes are way too burdensome, so Congress is contemplating a value-added tax to add to our burden. We spend billions of dollars on wars in the Middle East for no rational reason. Climate change proves to be a wildly exaggerated issue, yet Congress still plans on raising taxes on energy to solve this non-existent problem. The list is long, and the frustration grows daily.

Talk about a failure to communicate. According to a recent Pew Research Center Poll, 78 percent of Americans don’t trust the federal government. As Ronald Reagan famously put it, “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: ‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help.’”