

**REMARKS OF DR. JOHN BRADEMAS
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I'm delighted to have the opportunity to visit Guatemala and to take part in this conference sponsored by Transparency International.

I have since having met Peter Eigen, Fritz Heimann and Nancy Zucker Boswell greatly admired them and their dedication to the cause of combating corruption in international business transactions, and I count it a privilege to serve on the US and International Advisory Councils of TI.

Indeed, I had the privilege of speaking at TI conferences in Lima, Peru in 1997, and Durban, South Africa in 1999.

Let me here say a few words about another reason, in addition to our conference, I am pleased for the first time to visit Guatemala.

Years ago, as a schoolboy in South Bend, Indiana, I read a book about the Maya, was fascinated, decided I would pursue a career as an archaeologist studying Mayan culture, began learning Spanish and at the age of 17, hitchhiked with a classmate to Mexico where we spent a month. Then as a Harvard undergraduate, I worked one summer on today what we would describe as a Peace Corps project, with several other university men, in the State of Puebla, Mexico. We worked in Aztec villages named Xalacapan and Xapexpan and lived in the town of Zacapoaxtla. It was a utopian experience.

Indeed, I wrote my senior honors thesis on the Sinarquistas, a right-wing peasant movement important in Mexico in the 1930s and early '40s.

After Harvard, I studied for three years at Oxford where I wrote my doctoral dissertation on the anarcho-syndicalist movement, from the mid-1920s through the first year of the Spanish Civil War, 1936. Although I studied anarchism, I did not practice it! For six months, after returning to my hometown in Indiana, I became the nominee of the Democratic Party for election to the United States House of Representatives. Just old enough under the Constitution to run, I lost my first race with 49.5 percent of the total vote. Knowing I would run a second time, two years later, I spent a year on the staff of Adlai E. Stevenson in his second presidential campaign. Both Stevenson and I ran a second time, in 1956, and both of us again lost. But I still thought I could win, and in my third campaign, I was first elected to Congress and ten times re-elected.

In Congress I was particularly active, on the Education Committee, in writing legislation to support schools, colleges and universities; early childhood programs; measures to support the arts and the humanities, libraries and museums; and to assist children, the elderly, the disabled.

Defeated in 1980 in Ronald Reagan's landslide victory over President Carter, I was shortly thereafter invited to become president of New York University, the largest private university in the United States. As president of NYU, as we call it, I gave particular attention to encouraging the study of other countries and other cultures.

In 1983 I awarded an honorary degree to His Majesty, King Juan Carlos I of Spain, and created a professorship in his name under which we have brought eminent scholars of modern Spain to lecture.

In 1997, in the presence of Their Majesties, the King, and Queen Sofia, and the then First Lady of the United States, now Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, I dedicated the King Juan Carlos I of Spain

Center, which has been active for nearly ten years now. Only last week, for example, the Center conducted a program on “The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Spain”. We have also established at the Center, with a grant from Citgo, the US affiliate of Venezuelan Petroleum, a cátedra, in the name of Andrés Bello, for Latin American Studies.

So against this background of my interest since childhood in the Spanish-speaking world, and in Mayan culture, you will understand why I am so pleased to come to a country so rich in the sites of Mayan civilization.

But my assignment today is to talk about the issue of corruption, with particular attention to the United States and the following question:

Is the Congress of the United States working for the public interest or for private interests?

Only last week, in Washington, D.C., I joined Nancy Boswell and Frank Vogl of Transparency International for discussion of this question. We met under the banner of CED, the Committee for Economic Development, a group of some 200 business executives and a few university presidents, of whom I am one. We met only two days after our Congressional elections in the United States.

As you know, President Bush, a Republican, saw his party suffer a great defeat, with Democrats winning majorities in both the Senate and House of Representatives. Without question, the most important reason for the defeat of the Republicans was the war in Iraq and the unpopularity of Bush.

But the war in Iraq was not the only cause of Republican losses. Another reason was corruption.

According to a poll taken for the television network, CNN, in which voters were asked what issues swayed them when they went

to the polls, the war in Iraq was listed as “extremely important” or “very important” by 68 percent of those polled.

Yet here are the answers to the question: “In your vote for the U.S. House of Representatives, how important were corruption and scandals in government?”

The answers: “extremely important”, 41%; “very important”, 33%; “somewhat important”, 18%.

Why such answers?

I note, to illustrate, that the front page of a popular American journal, Rolling Stone, read recently, “Most corrupt Congress ever”, with articles concerning charges of bribery against several Republican Congressmen, some of whom are already out of Congress.

Democrats campaigned against what they described as “a culture of corruption”.

The lobbyist, Jack Abramoff, was very much in the news for his dealings with Republican Congressmen. Then came the scandal of Republican Congressman Mark Foley of Florida and his inappropriate, sexually explicit e-mails to teenage male pages in the House of Representatives. Republican leaders of the House, it was alleged, suppressed warnings about Foley’s actions.

Again, former House Majority Leader, Tom DeLay of Texas, who practiced a strategy of pressing lobbyists for campaign money and insisted that if lobbyists wanted access to Republican Congressmen, the lobbyists must also be loyal Republicans, resigned in disgrace.

Other Republicans tainted by their actions are already out of Congress. Here I think of Robert W. Ney of Ohio and Randy “Duke” Cunningham of California

It is not surprising that a recent book entitled, The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get it Back on Track, by two eminent scholars of Congress, Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, has drawn so much attention.

I believe the most useful way for me to communicate my own concern and that of the business and academic leaders of the United States who have been engaged in the project of the Committee for Economic Development, described as “Making Washington Work”, is to give you this account of the work of the CED Committee, of which I am a member, responsible for drafting our report on this subject. We hope to communicate our findings before long. Frank Vogl and Nancy Boswell are participating in this effort.

I add that among those who have been contributing to our deliberations are both Tom Mann and Norm Ornstein who will themselves tomorrow be releasing a statement calling for reform in the way Congress operates, a statement under the sponsorship of The Reform Institute. The Mann-Ornstein report will be entitled, *“Restoring Order: Practical Solutions to Congressional Dysfunction”*.

I also believe it significant that the next Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, has already announced her intention to press for reforms in the procedures of the House of Representatives, reforms that are in harmony with the recommendations of our CED “Washington Making Work” project and of the Mann-Ornstein proposals.

Here let me quickly review with you the major ingredients of the forthcoming report, “Making Washington Work”, of the Committee for Economic Development.

First, we expressed concern about the alarming rise in lobbying in the United States, with a sharp increase in the number of registered lobbyists, from over 16,000 in the year 2000 to over twice that many last year. Lobbyists, the registered ones, spent over \$2 billion

annually on activities they report but probably several times more in other forms of lobbying. The impact of lobbying activities is, by one measure, demonstrated in their capacity to win significant Federal appropriations or tax benefits for their clients.

So our CED group will focus on developing new rules with respect to the role of lobbyists in Washington, D.C., particularly as they deal with Members of Congress.

A second concern has to do with ethical misbehavior on the part of some Members of Congress and those who deal with them as lobbyists, constituents or others and the failure of Congress effectively to police its Members and itself as an institution.

Has the time come for Congress to have an independent Office of Public Integrity, that is to say independent of Congress itself?

A third concern, one that may not be so obvious to outsiders, has to do with the procedures of the Congress of the United States. Increasingly, for example, there have been in recent years efforts on the part of the Republican majority, especially in the House of Representatives, to deny the minority an opportunity to debate fully a piece of legislation or even to offer amendments on the floor of the House.

Here I note Nancy Pelosi's pledge to be Speaker of the whole House and to ensure that the Republicans will have a voice.

That we have seen a sharp decline in cooperation across party lines in writing legislation and a corresponding increase in the polarization of Congress are the most obvious concerns here.

Washington, D.C. is a far more partisan city than when I served on Capitol Hill.

Another issue that has commanded considerable public attention is what we in the United States call "earmarks" on the part

of Congress, that is to say, writing into legislation specific appropriations for particular projects, authorizations of programs or tax advantages. The number of earmarks has expanded enormously in the last decade, from some 3,000, worth nearly \$20 billion in 1996, to nearly 13,000 last year, estimated to be worth \$64 billion, and this figure applies only to appropriations bills.

So reforms in the process of earmarking are also on the CED agenda.

We come to another issue, known as redistricting abuse.

You may know that under the United States Constitution, the legislatures of the several states have the authority, and responsibility, after a decennial census – normally – to rewrite the boundaries of Districts for Members of the United States House of Representatives, depending on population changes in the state. What has happened, however, is that state legislatures have written the boundaries of congressional Districts within their states – that is to say, whenever political alignments in the state legislature make such action possible – to protect incumbent U.S. Representatives of their own party.

This practice of questionable redistricting distorts the genuinely democratic process.

Of course, another important issue in our congressional campaigns is money. How is it raised and how is it spent?

Campaigns for Congress have become increasingly expensive, particularly because of the rise of television. Are there ways to reduce the cost of campaigning? Do we need to impose more restrictions on how contributions to congressional campaigns are made? Should we find new sources of money that are easier to access, more transparent and that will reduce the role of lobbyists?

These then are some of the issues that our CED group has been discussing. I am pleased to say that on the CED Steering Committee, acting on behalf of subcommittee of the Trustees of the Committee for Economic Development, we have been studying these issues and will continue to do so.

You will not, in light of what I have said, be surprised to hear me say that my principal project now is the establishment, at NYU, of a Center for the Study of Congress, of Congress as a policy-making institution.

I remind you that in our separation-of-powers constitutional system, when it comes to making national policy, Congress, unlike the House of Commons, for example, in the British parliamentary system, counts!

If a Senator or Representative knows what he or she is doing, and if the configuration of political forces makes action possible, that Senator or Representative can, without picking up the telephone to call the White House, write the laws of the land.

Yet with 100 Senators and 435 Representatives and, normally, no strict party discipline, Congress is not an easy institution to understand, even for informed persons.

So what we have done at New York University is establish a Center to which we have invited Senators and Representatives, current and former, Democrats and Republicans – this is not a partisan initiative – cabinet officers; congressional staffers; journalists; students and scholars to discuss the processes, the ways by which our national legislature influences and shapes policy, as well as significant issues of public policy.

The purpose of the Center is to encourage the exchange of ideas among scholars and policymakers, thereby promoting the creation and dissemination of knowledge and public understanding of what is, after all, the First Branch of Government.

The Center is, as I have said, wholly bipartisan, and I have been gratified by the acceptance by several distinguished Senators and Representatives, current and former, of my invitation to serve on an Advisory Council to the Center even as I appreciate the agreement of a number of the nation's leading academic authorities on Congress to serve on this Council.

I perhaps should have observed at the outset of these remarks that I was for several years chairman of the board of an organization known as the National Endowment for Democracy, an organization financed by the Federal Government but operating as a non-governmental organization, to make grants to groups in countries that either do not enjoy democracy or are struggling to achieve it. I know that some grants have been made here in Guatemala. I cite a couple of recent examples.

A grant was made to *Comités de Desarrollo Campesino*, the Committee for the Development of Small Farmers, for the purpose of promoting greater citizen participation in local development by strengthening capacity of young rural leaders to represent its members before the government.

Another grant was made to the MesoAmerican Center for Sustainable Human Rights Action, to enable grassroots human rights organizations to train community youth in leadership, democracy and human rights.

Let me conclude these observations.

I suppose, given the analysis I've offered you today – I may be speaking somewhat sardonically – some may fairly ask, "Is the United States of America ready for democracy?"

Let us hope that the coming two years demonstrate that we are!

