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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN

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The dilemma now confronting the American people in our national search for leadership, for a new sense of direction, for fresh integrity in a time of national peril, is illustrated by two strikingly opposite situations.

Astronaut Alan B. Shepard's successful flight into space did more than capture the imagination of our people. It was more than a superb scientific achievement. Its importance was not restricted to the evidence it showed that the U. S. space program is well advanced. It was all these things, but more.

The American people greeted Commander Shepard with such unrestrained applause, I believe, because he and his achievement represented a concrete case of "doing something for your country". Here was an instance of real sacrifice, of total dedication to an important objective, of unselfish concern for the country's welfare. Here was dramatic evidence that an individual American could accomplish much for his country, that everything worthwhile is not the product of huge and impersonal organizations.

Perhaps for the first time since President Kennedy uttered his famous inaugural plea, "ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country," and thereby aroused the hopes and aspirations for service of so many of our people, Commander Shepard's flight gave meaning to the words. It reminded each of us that we, personally, are responsible for our country's future.

Depressing evidence

On the opposite end of the scale, the revelations of deliberate work slowdowns and wildcat strikes at certain missile bases and the details of the price-rigging conspiracy in the electrical industry provided depressing evidence that there are always those who place selfish gain over the common good.

Despite the fact that these were isolated instances, the country suffered both directly and through the consequent weakening of public confidence in labor and industry at a time when these bulwarks of our strength are most essential. According to the best authority, labor's abuses seriously delayed our man-in-space and missile programs and added hundreds of millions of dollars to their costs. Similarly, management's abuses constituted a long-term violation of the law and, very likely, added greatly to the prices paid by government and industry for electrical equipment.

Here, truly, was the reverse of Commander Shepard's attitude toward his country. Here, flagrantly, were people asking not what they could do for their country but what they could get away with from their country.

A more hopeful aspect to the situation, however, has been the universal and vigorous condemnation of both instances by the people generally and by the responsible majority of labor and management. The two cases have focused

renewed attention on fundamental questions of private and public ethics and of the obligation which is incumbent on all of us to advance the public interest.

Improvement needed

The president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, for instance, denounced "unauthorized, irresponsible and unjustified strikes at missile bases." He told Congress that workers at these sites should be men "who can be expected to remain on the job," and he pledged that his 18 affiliated unions would use their full power to prevent further disruption of the missile program.

Likewise, Henry Ford II warned his fellow business leaders not to ignore the serious implications of industry's moral lapse. He urged business to exert leadership in serving the country's needs and in avoiding unethical as well as illegal activities. For America, he said, the 1960's will be the "most critical and far-reaching ten years in the history of the world."

The American people as a whole, I believe, understand this challenge clearly. This is why they have applauded Commander Shepard's exploit so enthusiastically. This is why they have voiced their outrage at labor and industry misdeeds. The awareness of how much depends on our country's performance in the months and years ahead accounts, too, for our new preoccupation with leadership. People do not expect Government to make all our decisions for us, but they do have a right to expect information and guidance and a clearer picture of the alternatives from which we must choose our course of action.

Unprecedented interest

Never in my experience has this citizen concern with the government been so great. We see it here in the huge crowds who have visited Washington this spring to call on their representatives, to watch government in action, to sense at first hand the movement and energy of a great nation as it strives to protect freedom.

It is evident, too, in the unprecedented volume of mail which has flooded my own office and those of my colleagues in the House and Senate. Both in the volume of correspondence and in the scope of the questions they ask and the views they express, our people are saying how deeply they care, how much they want to help.

We cannot all be Commander Shepards. But there is more than enough for all of us to do. While we look to the National Government for leadership on the big issues of war and peace, scientific development and free world cooperation, we are faced with daily opportunities to improve local education, to strengthen labor-management harmony, to contribute to better racial and religious relations, to fight discrimination and injustice.

As a great American newspaper recently commented, "The truth is that the United States can be strong only if our free society is strong and our free society can be strong only if those who enjoy its freedom are willing to act for the common good."