

Thomas Graham Jr., *Remarks on America: The Founders' Vision*, Louisville, KY: Butler Books, 201, book signing at the home of Edward T. Miller in Washington, DC on April 3, 2018.

Thank you Terry for hosting this wonderful gathering and thank you Kathleen for your introduction and inspired comments.

I was taught as a boy, being raised in a political family, that ours is NOT a nation built on a particular ethnic group, culture or religion; it is a country built on ideals, laws and principles.

"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men (and women) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments were instituted among men..." This is what government is supposed to be doing, its fundamental obligation to its citizens. Believing and supporting this is what it takes to be an American.

As a student I heard JFK say at his Inaugural, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." I spent many years in the US government with these principles in mind.

What this land of immigrants, this nation of principles is all about was captured well by our first president: on April 18th, 1783 in announcing the victorious end of the Revolutionary War, George Washington said about his soldiers, "Happy, thrice happy shall they be pronounced hereafter . . . in erecting this stupendous fabrick of Freedom...on the broad basis of independency and establishing an Asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions."

But recently our country's ideals, principles and Liberties as conceived by our Founders, as well as our laws, have come under threat. For example,

- a senior official of our government has declared our criminal justice system to be a "joke" and a "laughing stock";
- that same senior official said in a speech not long ago that anyone who does not clap/applaud his speeches is guilty of treason (a well-known tactic of Joseph Stalin); and
- Senator McCain said last year, "there is a growing inability, and even an unwillingness, to separate truths from lies in a sort of post-truth society, and authoritarianism is being romanticized as 'our moral equivalent'";

These are dangerous times; what our Founders said about these same issues is important.

### **On honesty in government, speaking of politicians and government officials**

John Adams: "Facts are stubborn things [one cannot] "alter the state of facts and evidence;

Benjamin Franklin: "'An empty bag cannot stand upright" and " Tricks and Treachery are the Practice of Fools, that have not Wit enough to be honest."

Thomas Jefferson: "There is no vice so mean, so pitiful, so contemptible as he who permits himself to tell a lie once, finds it much easier to do it a second time and third time, 'til at length it becomes habitual."

### **On foreign influence**

Alexander Hamilton: "These most deadly adversaries of Republican government naturally have been expected to make their approaches from more than one quarter, but chiefly from the desire in foreign powers to gain an improper ascendant in our councils. How could they better gratify this than by raising a Creature of their own to the chief magistracy of the Union?"

### **On our Liberties being threatened**

John Adams: "Be not intimidated... nor suffer yourself to be wheedled out of your Liberties."

Sam Adams, cousin of John, Leader of the Boston Tea Party, co-founder of the Sons of Liberty, signer of the Declaration of Independence and subsequently Governor of Massachusetts: "If ever the Time should come, when vain & aspiring Men shall possess the highest Seats in Government, our Country will stand in Need of its most experienced Patriots to prevent its Ruin.... The liberties of our Country, the freedom of our civil Constitution are worth defending at all hazards: And it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. . . ."

These experienced patriots are us and many like us across this great country. These issues are the focus of this book. No doubt that the gentlemen and lady quoted therein would feel right at home with the politics of today.

A final note: We have entered a new age of strongmen it would seem, akin to the 1930s: Xi, Putin, Erdogan, Orbán, the Saudi Crown Prince, etc. We don't have Franklin Roosevelt or Ronald Reagan to protect us. Who will stand up for Liberty and Freedom in the new age of the strong man? Our Founders certainly did.