



Suite 412
400 North Capitol Street, N.W.
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The following are excerpted quotes from an interview with Sen. Gary Hart (D-CO), taped June 17, 1986 and aired on July 4, 1986 as part of C-SPAN's Independence Day programming. C-SPAN will air the interview on July 4th at 8:30 am ET, 5:00 pm ET, 8:30 pm ET, and on July 5 at 2:00 am ET.

On presenting new ideas in a modern presidential campaign:

"It's a great challenge because as you well know all the forces and pressures in modern day America are to condense messages, whether it's in commercial advertising or television news. I was told recently that on one of the major networks that the sound bite - the talking head - the person making a statement in a news story has now been reduced to something like an average of 8 to 12 seconds. So even in a news broadcast all pressures are for condensation.

"I've found that most of the problems confronting this country are what I would call structural, institutional. The tax structure has to be reformed. We have to reindustrialize our manufacturing base. We have to rebuild the transportation systems of this country. We have to reform our military institutions. The specifics of those almost never fit on to a bumper strip or in an 8-to-12 second sound bite. So I've found in my experience in 1984 that that was the largest challenge. The biggest challenge was to somehow take what are fairly complex, but understandable proposals and ideas and reduce them down to a few words. President Reagan has been, and the people around him have been brilliant at that. I don't think their ideas are all that profound, but that's what they've done is to reduce the answers to what I think are complex problems down to a few very simple words. I think that, unfortunately, is going to be the burden of those who run for national office from here on and for the foreseeable future."

On proposed National Voluntary Service:

"I have proposed a national voluntary service where young people can give some time in their life to domestic causes or international causes, such as the peace corps, to help people out. I think young people today are as idealistic as my generation was, but they need a challenge and that challenge probably has to be fairly specific. Here are the needs of the society. Here are the needs of the world. Why not take out six months, a year, eighteen months, two years and get involved in some of these efforts to improve our society or improve world conditions."

More on the national voluntary service:

"I've developed it pretty clearly in my own mind. What I would like to do is stimulate a broader debate on the question. Congressman Bob Torricelli of New Jersey and I have introduced legislation to create a commission to study -- not as a means of dismissing the issue, but as a means of focusing attention on it -- how a national service system might be set up. First voluntary, then if we ever did get to the point, as we may in the 1990s, of a military draft -- how some form of mandatory national service might be instituted as a substitute for the draft. I'd like to see some debate on that. I think there are some problems with it. It's going to cost a good deal of money. There will be constitutional resistance probably, but it's time to at least kick the idea around and find out what its merits and flaws are."

On changes television in the Senate has caused to that body:

"I haven't seen behavior changes. I've seen a few quirky performances over there that I can't quite understand. But I think those are anomalies and I don't think they are going to be typical."

On the new lights installed in the chamber to facilitate television in the Senate:

"I don't like them. The atmosphere is spoiled. Now it's much more of a set, if you will; you have much more the notion of being on a stage. I think that has changed the atmosphere certainly."

On the idea of televising the Senate:

"I think it was inevitable and I don't think it's particularly worthwhile to go back and debate it. It was going to happen. Technology caught up with history and so we didn't have much choice. I hope it doesn't change behavior. I hope senators behave as senators and not actors or show business people and, in time, kind of forget the cameras are there. It's a little difficult with the lights. It is a clash. The minute you walk in the door you realize you're in a different atmosphere than you used to be, so that begins to change things. But I would hope that over time you'd forget those cameras were up there and everyone would go forward."

On voting "yea" to keep television in the Senate:

"I suppose [I would], but not with a great deal of enthusiasm."

On his new fictional book:

"A spy thriller. It has to do with arms control negotiations in Geneva between the United States and Russia. But also there's a little romance in it. It's also about government. Both our government and the Soviet government. It's meant to operate on several different levels."

On his plans for January of 1987 when he leaves the Senate:

"[I plan to] earn a living somehow. I've had some -- happily, I've had some inquiries from law firms, from universities and from businesses about what I could do after January of 1987. I will go back to Colorado to live. So whatever I do will have to have some Colorado connection with it, but I haven't finally made a decision yet."

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