

A

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT TO THE INITIAL MEETING

OF THE

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

TO THE

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

FEBRUARY 3, 1965

There is no assignment I have received from the President that gives me more satisfaction than this one -- the honorary chairmanship of this Advisory Council. I know most of the members of this Council. I know of the many great services you have already rendered your country. But I dare say that you have never been recruited for a more important and more rewarding duty than the present one.

You -- and I -- have been assigned the task of helping Sargent Shriver and the great team he has already pulled together to fight a war -- the kind of war we can wage with joy and with hope -- and a war which can be won without anybody losing.

I said "a war which can be won." The President believes  
*Sarge Shriver*  
it can be won. I believe it can be won. Sarge Shriver believes  
it can be won. That belief is based upon the conviction that we  
have the resources required for winning: economic, technological,  
educational, psychological. But, this does not mean that we are  
certain of the specific weapons and the specific tools that are  
needed to win the biggest battles for the largest numbers. We are  
not sure we have established the right priorities, chosen the right  
targets, or aimed the right guns.

We are going to make some mistakes in this program. The  
only way to avoid some mistakes is to do nothing, or to follow only  
*old* tried and tested techniques. But that just won't do for us. So  
we are going to move ahead, <sup>*and*</sup> test programs which have been devised by  
thoughtful and knowledgeable people. And we are going to put our  
faith in thousands of people throughout hundreds of American  
communities, so that they can be free to develop the best possible  
programs for those communities.

But we are not going to operate just on confidence and hope. I am particularly pleased at Mr. Shriver's intentions to develop a comprehensive program of evaluation, investigation, and audit. He will be telling you about it. We intend to innovate, to experiment -- but we don't intend to stick with unsuccessful programs one day longer than is justified.

This Advisory Council will be a key part of this evaluation process. And I mean "evaluation" in the most basic, comprehensive sense. We will look to you for frank talk and fresh ideas. We will need not only your thoughts about existing programs -- but your suggestions for the next battles which must be waged.

In this connection, I want to stress that the programs contained in the Economic Opportunity Act -- the Act which created this Council -- are not the only parts of the war against poverty. The war is being waged on numerous fronts, and your views on all of them will be welcomed. As you know, the President's education message

is directed primarily at the poor. His health message is similarly  
oriented. The Appalachian program is on its way to enactment.

There will be action on social security, on unemployment insurance,  
on minimum wages, on regional development, and many other matters.

As you may know, the President has asked me to take on another  
area -- coordination of our government's far-flung civil rights  
activities. Actually, I consider the poverty and the civil rights  
assignments part of one objective -- the opening up of real opportunities  
for all of our people. Civil Rights victories as such will be  
meaningless unless we give people the education and the jobs and the  
housing that will permit them to have genuinely equal opportunities.  
All of you in this Council have served the cause of equal rights; now  
you can help obtain equal opportunities for the victims of discrimination.

One final word. Each of you is serving on this committee as  
an individual, an individual selected because of a distinguished record  
of service. But you <sup>also</sup> ~~do~~ represent major segments of American life.

It is our hope that service on this Council will encourage you to do as much as possible to bring the private groups of our community into active service in this war. They have already responded splendidly -- but we cannot be satisfied with anything less than total mobilization.

You can help us get this.

The President deeply appreciates your service on this Council.

I look forward to this challenging assignment with you.

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