

TRANSCRIPT OF

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE HUBERT H.

HUMPHREY, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE

UNITED STATES, DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMM.
MEETING, APR 20, 1964

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you, John.

May I first express a note of congratulations and a commendation and thanks to Margaret Price and to all of the members of her Committee, and of course, of the entire Democratic National Committee, for this splendid conference that you are just completing. I don't know of any conference that we have had in Washington of Democrats that has been more enthusiastically received and more fully attended and more deeply appreciated by participants as well as observers than the Conference on the Route to Victory in 1966 of our Democratic Party.

Besides that, I enjoyed being with them. It was great fun.

I feel today as if there is very little that one can add to your deliberations or to your discussions. And so I would like to do two things, first, to make a statement to you about some of my concerns relating to our Party, the state of the Nation, and then to open this meeting up for a few moments to questions. I must get back to the Senate to preside, because we have a very important vote. And when we have important votes we sometimes have procedural issues that are raised. And it is rather important that the Vice President be there to preside on those occasions, at least he likes to feel that it is important on those occasions.

I have had the opportunity of scanning through some of the statements and addresses that have been given to the Democratic National Committee, reports by our National Chairman, and by our National Vice Chairman, and by others. I was in the back of the room when our good and dear friend Governor Lawrence reported to you on the progress of the resolution adopted at the Democratic convention relating to the composition of our party structure for the 1968 Convention. I want to not only endorse that resolution in its full meaning, but I want to say that the future progress of this Party depends upon the full implementation, the complete implementation of that resolution, which requires a political Party, the Democratic Party, to be a Party that belongs to all of the people, and not just some of the people, but a fully integrated party.

(Applause)

This party of ours is an instrument for public good. A political party does not belong to its officers, it belongs to the Nation and it belongs to the people. When our government was established, according to our history there was no intention of having political parties, but to design an instrument of human activity such as the government, and to presume that there would not be a coalition, so to speak, or a collection of persons that had similar points of view was, I think, to have ignored the facts of life.

Early in our country these two parties that we have today had their beginning, the Republican Party under the banner of the

Federalists, and the Democratic Party under the banner of the Jeffersonian Democrats. And that has been a continuity of history and a continuity of purpose in these two parties.

So I repeat, the Party is an instrument of social, economic and political progress. It is incomprehensible that a government such as ours could exist without effective political parties.

Therefore, we have to keep these parties of ours clean. We have to keep them representative of the people. And we must keep them responsive to human need.

And one characteristic of the Democratic Party which has always impressed me, and which I think impresses the voters most of all, is that we do try to keep up to date, we do try to keep our Party structure, our Party platform, our Party instruments or institutions and procedures relative to the times in which we live, and indeed, if I may add, even a projection to the future. That is what this Democratic Party is all about.

Now, the elctions are going to soon be upon us, important primary elections, and then general elections in 1966. I read John Bailey's remarks about the history of the off-year elections. As I said to the ladies the other night, it is good to read history, but it is better to make our own. And the Chapter of History that we need to make is to maintain the gains that we had in that 1964 landslide victory, and not only to maintain those gains, but there is not any reason at all that you should not pick up seats. And I think that is the way you ought to be

thinking.

(Applause)

Now, I say this because we have a record, and we have a good one. We have a record of social progress and international responsibility. We have a record of prudence in government. And we have a record of sound administration.

The struggle in Vietnam has overshadowed the domestic record. But I think it is your duty and your privilege as leaders of this Party to put this entire record in proper perspective. We cannot be strong overseas without a strong America at home. We cannot be an America that leads overseas in areas of the world where there is distress and poverty unless we are capable by precept and example of doing something about those same conditions at home. The War on Poverty here is related to the War on Poverty in India, just to make a comparison. Our efforts here to have a full society of first-class, No. 1 Americans, full citizenship for all Americans, is related to having a world in which there is freedom of elections, and in which people have a free choice.

I said to a group of young people this morning that the promise of America was stated in the words of the great poet and the great author who said in substance, Every man his chance, every man his chance to make the most out of his life, to do with his life the best that he can do. And it is the duty of the government to try to enhance that great opportunity that every human being ought to have, the opportunity of every man his chance to

make something out of his life.

This in a real sense is what we mean by self-determination self-determination at home and abroad self-determination, just as we seek to have a diversity of peoples in our own country in a social economic structure -- and you remember those words of the Late President Kennedy, that we seek to make the world safe for diversity, which is a play on the great and immortal words of Woodrow Wilson, to make the world safe for democracy, both statements meaning the same. We believe in individualism, we not only believe in the individualism of individuals, but we believe in the individual states making their own contribution to the total national well-being and welfare. We believe that individual nation states, and yet we believe in the interdependent international communities. And as we believe in self-determination in the home, the right of the people to make something out of their lives, and the duty of government to be a partner in that great endeavor, so we believe overseas in the right of people to have self-determination. That is why we are in Vietnam. And that is why we are in Berlin. And that is why we are every place. And that is why your government spends hundreds of millions, yes, billions of dollars for national security, not only for ourselves, but for others.

And why do I say not only for ourselves but for others? Because what we do for others we do for ourselves, and in a sense what we do for ourselves we do for others. There is a great

interdependence. And there is a constant, consistent thread or theme of government and philosophy of government in both domestic and international affairs in this Administration, and in this country. I think that President Johnson has understood this as few other men, because he has been the architect of so much legislation that has contributed to the basic strength of this country. Essentially a builder, he is a man of peace. And because he is a builder here at home, he understands the building abroad. And he is a man of peace in international relations.

But we know that there are oftentimes hard decisions to make here at home. Most of the decisions we have made in the 89th Congress have been very difficult. I know. I have been a part of the process of making these decisions. I can remember the days in this Capitol when for a man to get up here and talk about integration and civil rights was to be the recipient of catcalls and boos. I went through that period. And I know what it means to have people castigate you, what it means to have them hurl their darts of cynicism and skepticism and antagonism toward you. But that is part of the building of a political Party, and of a great country, and indeed the part of building the accomplishments that are now with us today.

We didn't get civil rights legislation in one session of Congress. Harry Truman convened the First Commission on Civil Rights in this nation. And it started back there with his Commission in 1947. Then the Democratic Convention of 1948. And

then all the way on up through the days of John F. Kennedy, and then Lyndon Johnson. And isn't it interesting -- and it is something for you to reflect on -- that the man who has done more for civil rights than any other man in the history of this country came from the South, Lyndon Johnson, from Texas.

(Applause)

We didn't get Federal aid to education by just getting the 89th Congress, even though the 89th Congress was responsible for its coming into fruition, for its being. Federal aid to education has been argued over or fought over for decades. And many a man that is no longer with us has made vast and important contributions to the realization of extensive Federal aid to education.

In 1961 this Federal Government channeled into education all higher education, secondary, elementary, vocational, manpower training. It channeled into education approximately \$4.25 billion of dollars; this year, \$10.5 billion.

And I used to say to some of my friends, keep arguing about Federal aid while we pass it. Because I was afraid that if we would quit arguing about it we might not buckle down to the job of getting it a matter of law. But today no longer do we have these arguments as to whether or not Federal aid to education is going to violate states rights, or whether or not it is violating the separation of church and state, we are thinking about the children of this country.

And I happen to feel that it is quite symbolic that a former country school teacher that had a handful of little Mexican American students out in Southwest Texas has become the author of, at least the proposer of the inspiring force behind the greatest program of Federal aid to education that any national has ever known. And that man is the President of the United States right now, Lyndon Johnson.

(Applause)

And Medicare, the first bill I ever introduced in Congress, was to provide hospital and nursing home care under Social Security to persons aged 65 and over. That was in May, 1949. And you ought to have heard what people said, some of you did, I see. It proved every suspicion that anybody had about this man from Minnesota. I even made the mistake of sending out a copy of the bill and asked for objective, frank, observations from my doctor friends throughout the country as to what they thought about it. And they told me. But every single year of my public life I introduced that bill, either as main sponsor or cosponsor. I learned by about 1955 or 1956 that if you want a bill passed that you ought to find a member of the Committee to which that bill goes. And I sat alongside of Senator Clinton Anderson, of New Mexico, one of the truly great men of our Congress. And I said, "Clint, look, I am not getting any place with this, except in trouble. But I believe in it, and I know you do. Why don't you take it?"

And he looked it over, and he said, "I think I could."

And I said, "I would like to be your cosponsor."

And he took it, he knew what to do with it, he is a master at the art of legislation. And here we are today with a program of compassion and humanitarian concern, a program of medical, hospital and nursing home assistance known as Medicare that will benefit millions and millions of people, hurt no one and help many, strengthen the nation, and do something that ought to have been done a long time ago.

Now, I mention these things. I could go down one program after another, education, health, conservation, agricultures, housing development, urban development, a new Department of Housing and Urban Development. We have been arguing about this for 15 years. It is here. This is an Administration of accomplishment, not promises. This is an Administration of achievement, not rhetoric. We would get the job done. We can give you some rhetoric too and some promises, but we also give you achievement, we give you performance. And that is the record.

I want you to take that record back out to the people.

And you have many, many more things beside what I have mentioned to you. You have an Administration that is committed to opportunity, to every single American, not merely the right or the privilege of opportunities, but to help people go through the gates of opportunity. We have opened the gates, and now we are engaged in helping people walk through those gates. This

strengthens America.

America is no better than its people. And believe me, if you do not believe it I hope that you will do a little studying about it. Lincoln was right. The last best hope on earth is this country. And the greatest shield of peace in the world is this country. The hope of millions of people in the world is this country, and what it stands for. And that is why I believe that we have to build that inner strength for the long run, for the long duration. We have to have staying power, endurance. We have to have perserverence and patience, and also direction. And we have it. And this Party has it.

You should go forth almost with a crusading zeal to talk about not only what we have done, but how we have done it. We have not torn the country apart. We have healed the wounds. We have united people. We brought them together, at the time of our prosperity we have been willing to do something about our poor. At the time that we had the greatest system of education we were finding people that were poorly educated. At the time of our wealth and power we use our wealth for humanitarian purposes and our power with restraint.

I wish I had the time here today to talk to you about the international scene. I feel what we are doing is right. I do not apologize for it at all.

(Applause)

As a matter of fact, it is the right thing to do.

Our position in South Vietnam is a moral position. Our position in South Vietnam reflects the lessons of history. We have learned, haven't we, that aggression unchecked is aggression unleashed? I hope that we have learned that you cannot let the giants of the earth who are imbued with evil and despotism prey upon the weak. What we are doing in South Vietnam is of vital importance to every little nation on the face of the earth, of ever small nation. And we are not there for power or wealth or dominion or domination or conquest. We are there to prevent the success of aggression. And we are there to prevent the success of aggression simply because aggression is a pattern of international conduct that cannot be condoned in the 20th Century. Little aggressions can lead to great wars. And if we can't -- didn't learn that out of Hitler period, then we have learned nothing.

We are in South Vietnam because we believe in free elections . We believe in Constitutional government. We believe in self-determination. And we believe in peace. And peace not obtained by the retreat from reality. Sometimes to obtain peace you have to be firm and strong. You even have to meet force with force.

We did not enter World War II because we wanted war. We entered it because we wanted peace. The whole objective of World War II was a world of peace.

We have not entered into South Vietnam because of

a piece of geography or even a government. We are there under treaty obligation, yes. And we are there, by the way, because of the obligations under the United Nations Charter. And these are important words, and they are seldom repeated. The duties of every nation under the Charter of the United Nations is to suppress aggression and to promote self-determination. These are the words.

Now, that is a sacred treaty, the Supreme Court of the land. And the fact that some people don't abide by it does not relieve those of us who have the strength and the moral commitment not to abide by it.

So I ask you to take your case to the people, remembering that you have 35 governors that are up for election, and 35 Senators, the full House of Representatives. And remember this, that every gain that you have made can be lost. And remember that there are still many more things to do, cities to be rebuilt, streams to be cleansed, nations to be helped, and a peace to be won.

And I submit that this Party has given a great deal of leadership in all of these areas. When I think of people like Elinor Roosevelt, when I think of people like Adlai Stevenson, when I think of people like John Kennedy, all who have literally died in the cause of peace, or in the betterment of humanity, I think that we can say that our party has made its contribution to this noblesse of man's causes, the search for peace.

This is not to say that others have not contributed,

because they have. There is really no partisanship in peace. And there should be no partisan ship in national security.

But I want my fellow Democrats not only to be pragmatists, I want you to be dedicated idealists. Because in this day of abundance of material goods a political party needs idealism as never before. And you particularly need it if you are going to talk to the young, to the oppressed. You need it if you are going to be able to talk to the world. And a nation that can't talk to the world today is a nation that has no one to speak to.

Fellow Democrats, if you have got any questions, ask me, and I will try to answer you.

(Applause)

Brother Jackson.

DR. JACKSON: Mr. Vice President, how do we answer the question that the war in Vietnam is causing a deterioration of our war on poverty here on the domestic scene?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I want you to go back to the State of the Union address of President Johnson -- and I can only paraphrase it -- when he said that this nation is mighty enough, strong enough and rick enough to fulfill its international commitments and to continue the work of the Great Society, the programs of the Great Society. The exact phraseology is much better than that, I paraphrase. And we are. The answer is the truth. There is no better answer than to any of these questions,

particularly if you have the truth on your side, and say the truth.

And what is the truth? The truth is that we are doing more in the war on poverty. We have a substantial amount of money in the Office of Economic Opportunity, which is only part of the war on poverty. The war on poverty is in education. We are adding billions.

The war on poverty is Medicare. Who do you think these people are that are going to get Medicare? These are most of these people with incomes under a thousand dollars. They are very poor. And they are going to have Medicare.

The war on poverty is manpower training and development.

The war on poverty is Head Start and Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps.

It is all of that, but also elementary and secondary education. We are going to put in this year well over one billion dollars extra money for the children of the poor in the areas where children have been deprived of a fair education, where the economic base is low, and where the incomes are low. This is all a part of the war on poverty.

I wish we could do more. I want to do more every year for my family. I want to do more every year for some of my friends. And I want them to do more for me every year too.

There is always a limit as to how much you can take.

Now, I hope that we can bring that tragic war to a close. There is no more painful, no more distressing

situation that faces us today than this tragic situation out in Vietnam. And believe me, you have no idea how much time we give to trying to find a way to bring it to an honorable conclusion, to find a settlement.

But I hope that those who are now complaining that the war in Vietnam seems to put a cloak or a halt on some of the poverty programs and some of the other programs, when that war is over I hope they will be willing to appropriate the extra money and vote for the extra money that they are now complaining about.

(Applause)

Anybody else?

Don't tell me that I have been so good that I have answered all your questions.

Mr. O'Neill?

MR. O'NEILL: Mr. Vice President, many people are disturbed by the aid to economic aid that we are giving developing countries. Is there any prospect that we can reverse that trend, recognizing that as the economic aid has been declining our military requirements have been rising?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Our military assistance aid and our economic aid have both declined in recent years, that is, in terms of the foreign aid budget request, for the foreign aid bill that goes up to Congress. But in economic aid overseas, my fellow Americans, there are other items. There are such things, for example, as the amount of food that we make available, which

has been very substantial. Last year it was well over two billion dollars. This is real economic aid. It is not only food, it is converted into currency which is made available in those countries, up as high as 60 or 70 per cent of the total amount available for loans on projects within the countries that receive the food aid.

I happen to be one that believes that our economic aid program does need strengthening, Mr. O'Neill. I cannot get out of my mind that famous encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, of Pope John the XXIII, and I think every good Democrat, regardless of your religious preference, ought to read it -- in fact I don't think you can be a good Democrat without reading it -- read what he said, that the threat to the peace in the world today is the growing gap between the rich and the poor nations. And it is a growing gap. We have everything to lose in a great war. Many people have little or nothing to lose. And this is why the appeal of violence and revolution and Communism is so strong to them.

And so while I know that we are doing many things -- actually our total foreign aid package is over \$6 billion, when you get the food in it and you get the extra items that come in with military assistance, economic assistance, import-export, bank loans, and if you add on it that the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank, much is being done.

May I add one other thing. While all this has been going on, new developments -- this Administration is the sponsor of the

Asian Development Bank, which represents a whole new chapter of history in Asia. I happen to think -- and I am going to speak on this this weekend, I don't want to get ahead of myself, but I want to give you the details -- I happen to think that the great change that has taken place is America's involvement in Asia -- which ought to be. You can't be a world leader with a half-world involvement. You can't be a world leader with a half-world knowledge. And we are basically involved in terms of our knowledge and our understanding and our orientation with Europe, somewhat with Latin America, but there stands Africa and Asia, which in fact represent about two-thirds of the population of the globe. We are going to have to be involved.

And that was the meaning, as I said on a radio or TV transcript last night of the Honolulu conference, make no mistake about it, that was a lot more important than just a meeting with Prime Minister Ky or the Chief of State Thieu. That was the meeting that laid out the beginning of a program of American participation in self-help, in Asian initiatives for Asian people, America's participation and involvement. This will be developed, like everything else it grows with experience and with trial and error.

Anyone else?

I have to run along in about five minutes.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)



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