

Israel Embassy

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT
HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCHOOL LUNCH
AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

AUGUST 3, 1966

I remember with great pleasure talking with you at your
banquet four years ago.

I was a Senator then, working to strengthen the School Lunch
Program; to expand the kinds of foods and the quantities we could
provide our needy families under the donation program; to get
a Food Stamp Program and a Special Milk Program under way;
to try some new approaches and new initiatives in education; to do
some new thinking in attacking poverty at home; to try the
Peace Corps approach abroad.

We will have ^{millions} millions of new mouths to feed within the next
few years, most of them in countries that can't support their

We should

present populations at an adequate nutrition level. Think of those children as we think of our own children.

L We need to help these developing countries -- not just with shipments of food -- but with an export of ideas and techniques from our own experience. But these programs must be adapted to their way of doing things -- adapted to the problems of climate and water and a social structure that has developed over a period of many centuries and cannot be changed over night.

L This is the essence of our Food for Freedom proposals -- to help others help themselves.

and We have done a lot of exporting of the idea you work with -- the National School Lunch Program. *L* The school lunch is a simple fact of life in this country now.

But Most people are unaware of the years of dedicated work and effort that went into getting the school lunch to its status of a

~~household word.~~ ^{Phrase} The depth and extent of support for this program from coast to coast is a most remarkable testament to your achievement.

L The School Lunch is a distant dream to most of the rest of the world. We are only on the threshold of a rudimentary program in most of the developing countries. But they are interested and they are working and they are using the techniques that we evolved over many patient years of trial and error as to how best we could get the job done.

L The Child Nutrition Act will give you a chance to break new ground. The new programs have as their cornerstone the kind of experience we have acquired in twenty years under the School Lunch Program.

There will be a Pilot Breakfast Program. And there will be nutritional standards as part of that Breakfast Program.

There will be provision for equipment so at long last we will be able to reach those schools we haven't been able to reach with the School Lunch Program simply because the school couldn't afford the essential equipment to serve a lunch.

There will be funds to help the States administer the new programs and to zero-in even more effectively on the special assistance program for needy schools under the regular School Lunch Program.

"You can't teach a hungry child." No one knows this better than you do.

With what we have to work with in this country -- with the sophisticated tools you have at hand -- we can close the nutrition gap. Let's close it for children, and let's close it for our low-income families.

↳ We still are a growing, expanding, restless country with a tremendous range of unmet needs. But there is no excuse for a nutrition gap.

↳ I am pleased to see on your program a cross-section of representatives from other agencies -- OEO, the Office of Education, and the Departments of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare.

↳ This is what we had in mind in our total effort to eliminate poverty in this country -- the need for a dialogue among those who administer parts of programs.

cooperation, united action

↳ For a long time, there was a lack of exchange of ideas. Each person ran his own corner of the show with little interest or reference to what the other fellow was doing. This is changing.

↳ I wish we could take all of you and all of the skills you have acquired and turn you loose on the really big problem -- how to get an adequate diet to billions of people throughout the world on a

day-in, day-out basis. This is the minimum. This is the essential
if there is to be even a ^{hope} ~~prayer~~ of peace and stability in the world.

↳ This is the President's dream and hope. ~~His concern, his~~
~~interest is to find out, to learn what you need to do your part in this~~
whole tremendous effort and then to see what he can do in the way
of clearing the road for you to move ahead.

↳ Food, health, and education are the three most important
words in the vocabulary of this Administration. Each has an
important synonym -- peace.

↳ Your President and your Vice President and the men and
women who represent you in the Congress of the United States are
fully committed to a strong, continuing and expanding School Lunch
Program. Let there be no doubt in your minds as to our support
for the work you are doing in the cause of peace for all mankind.

Justice

Transcript of talk by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey at the National Conference on School Lunch and Food Distribution, Wednesday, 3:00 p.m., August 3, 1966, at the Statler-Hilton Hotel, Washington, D. C.

Thank you very much, Mr. Smith, for your gracious introduction.

According to the program this is a break for milk, orange juice and coffee. I have been described many ways but never in such nutritional terms.

I just came from a very lovely luncheon at the Embassy of the State of Israel. I feel so peaceful. It only proves that if you feed the people of the world well, peace is in the air. But we all know that food plays a very significant role in the happiness and the health of mankind.

Four years ago I was a U. S. Senator taking an active role in working to strengthen our school lunch program. We wanted to expand under this program the kinds of foods and the quantities that we could provide our school children. I always was keenly interested in making sure that we had a variety of foods for these children and not merely make them the victims of accidental surpluses.

I also was one of those privileged to sponsor the pilot Food Stamp Program. We had a real battle in Congress a few years ago over that. Today it is a working program.

Coming from the State of Minnesota, I have an appreciation of the food qualities of milk. The Special Milk Program is dear to my heart and dear to my farmers and dear to the school children. We worked hard for it, too.

We also were working on some new approaches in education -- nutrition education, health education and programs across the board for elementary and secondary education, higher education and vocational education.

Four years ago we were beginning to talk about the attack that we wanted to make on poverty in this country. We suddenly discovered that about one-fifth of our fellow citizens were living in a status of less than equal opportunity. They actually were living in an income status that best could be described as "poor economic conditions". The greatest curse of poverty is the despair and the frustration that turns to bitterness and cynicism. It brings individual and social disorders that come from feeling that there is no place for you--that you have been left at the side of the road as the main stream of American life moves by.

When you were last here we also were working on the Peace Corps. It was my privilege to offer that legislation in Congress. I had offered it in 1959 only to have it frowned upon. But in 1962 the Peace Corps was becoming a reality with permanent legislation.

So, we have come a long way. Sometimes I think we forget how far we have moved because everytime we move ahead a little bit we become a little more restless to move ahead a little further. This is what we mean by "rising expectations". It does not refer only to Africa, Asia or Latin America. It refers to us, too.

We have made tremendous progress in this country in the fields of civil rights, poverty, aid to our young people, education and health. In three years we have more than doubled the entire budget for education. In three years we have more than doubled the budget for health. In three years we have more than doubled the entire outlay of government resources in combating poverty. A sizeable sum of our Federal budget goes into that and yet the word goes out that we haven't done nearly enough. I couldn't agree more. We haven't done nearly enough. But we have done three times as much as we did only three years ago. And we will continue to move ahead.

You're celebrating your 20th Anniversary. In the 20 years you have had this School Lunch Program you have learned a great deal. You started out with little and it is growing rapidly and surely. It grew because you fought the good fight and you had your friends in the Congress and in the respective administrations. You saw the need and you projected that need by your letters and your words. As a result of that, the School Lunch Program today is a firm, certain reality.

We always have new challenges. We're going to have billions of new people to feed in the years ahead and we need to be thinking in those terms. Most of them will be in countries where they presently can't support their populations at an adequate nutritional level. My fellow Americans, this great and wonderful world of ours of technology and science, of rapid change and innovation, faces the possibility of starvation, in the midst of man's great creative capacity.

4

This would be the worst of all sins. There was a time that mankind could starve because we knew not what to do. There was a time that famine could be the scourge of the earth because man did not have the tools or the knowledge to do anything about it. But not now. There is a word of scripture, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." People are forgiven if they know not what they do. But we do know, and we know that famine never need again come across the face of this earth. We do know that the prayer of "Our Daily Bread" can be a reality and not a hope.

No civilization that knows that it can banish famine from the face of the earth will be forgiven if it fails to fulfill its responsibilities. This is why I am in a very real sense a crusader for Food for Peace and food for people. I want to keep looking at our own great natural resources as well as our developed resources and the technology of our farm producers to make sure that our blessed America does its fair share.

This land of yours and mine last year produced almost 50 percent of everything that was produced in the world. Less than six percent of the world's population had over 35 percent of the world's personal income. Our gross national product was one-half of the total gross national product of the world. Less than 200 million people here had that. The other three billion throughout the world had the rest of it. We sometimes forget that. No nation has more to lose in a world that is torn by dissension and disorder and violence than this America.

We need a world in which there are the conditions that are conducive to peace. One of those conditions is an adequate supply of food and fiber. The late and beloved Pope John the 23rd said, "Where there is constant want, there is no peace."

The threat to peace is not in the Pentagon nor is the threat to peace in the Capitol of any state or in Washington, D. C. The threat to peace may very well be in these conditions of injustice, of malnutrition, of poverty, of disease and of illiteracy that descend on two-thirds of mankind. I think so. There are evil forces that use those conditions for their purposes of aggression, or for their purposes of conquest, or their purposes of lawlessness, or disorder, or violence or whatever else it may be. So those of you working with the School Lunch Program are not just directors of a little local program in your state or locality. You are a part of a vanguard, a part of a great army of peace workers.

I am one of those in government who believes that if we can't do well at home, we'll never do well abroad. I'm one of those who believes that the way that you can demonstrate what you can do abroad is by doing it at home. If you can't conquer poverty here, what makes you think you can do it in Africa or in Asia? If you can't close the nutritional gap here where we have an abundance of food and fiber such as the world has never known, what makes you think that we can do it any place else?

Domestic policy and foreign policy are inseparable. You cannot talk about brotherhood abroad and not practice it here. You cannot talk about equal opportunity in the world and not have it here. You cannot talk about

adequate food and health and education abroad and not have it here.

We have to set the example here and never forget it. If you remember that then your job becomes a very important one. We should think of children everywhere as we think of our own. Sometimes it's not so easy to be tolerant of adults. But if you can think of children then you get your vision and your attitude in proper perspective.

We need to help these developing countries that I speak of. We need to help them not just with shipments of food, but with an export of ideas and techniques from our own experience. That is how they can produce their own food and fiber, how they can develop their own systems of distribution and processing. No matter how generous we Americans may want to be, we do not have the capacity here in America alone to feed all of God's children even if we were so motivated. We can come in with timely emergency aid. But more importantly we can share ideas and technology. We can help other countries put their proper priority upon their food production, their health needs and their education.

Recently I spoke before the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. I pointed out that every industrialized nation has a responsibility to the less developed nations. There are basic principles and basic fundamental therapies that we have to practice. We are our brother's keeper.

Programs for the developing countries must be adapted to their way of doing things. They can't be just stamped "Made in the U.S.A. Use according to our directions." They must be adapted to the problems of climate and water,

soil chemistry and social structure--a social structure that is developed over a period of many centuries and cannot be changed overnight. This is the essence of the Food for Peace proposals which now are before the Congress of the United States--to help others help themselves.

I said to a group of young people the other day, "I wish you'd get as excited about some of these things in Congress as you do about Viet Nam." I Don't misunderstand me. People have a right to hold their point of view and there are many varied points of view about our commitments overseas. I'm not one to scold people for expressing their point of view. I've been expressing my point of view all my life and some people never have liked it. Sometimes I've even changed my own point of view as I've gone along and learned. But I would like to have some of my young friends and older friends who are so concerned about what they believe to be injustices of American policy abroad to become concerned about their own flesh and blood--to become concerned about Food for Peace.

I haven't seen a single picket sign for the Child Nutrition Act or the Demonstration Cities program. We need help with both these efforts. I haven't seen one for Rent Supplements, yet the biggest problem facing millions of Americans today--particularly low-income Americans-- is the inadequacy of housing.

But I see pickets protesting our policy in Viet Nam. I think they ought to reverse the signs occasionally. They ought to paint slogans on the other side about Food for Peace, Rent Supplements, Demonstration Cities, Housing--

the things that affect us here at home. The real test of a man's liberalism is what he thinks about people. You're involved with people and their needs. You're involved with the lives of people.

We've done a lot of exporting of the very ideas with which you work. The school lunch is a simple fact of life in this country today. It is so simple and it is so accepted that sometimes people don't even get aroused over it. Most people are unaware of the years of your dedicated work and the effort that went into getting the School Lunch Program an accepted fact of American life. The depth and the extent of support for this program from coast to coast is a most remarkable testament to your achievement. And your government is going to see to it that we have a permanent National School Lunch Program.

The school lunch is a fact for many of our children but it is not a fact for all of them. And it is a distant dream to most of the rest of the world. We're only on the threshold of a rudimentary program in most of the developing countries. But they are interested and they are working and they are using the techniques that we have evolved over the many patient years of trial and error as to how best we could get this job done. I want to make sure that we have the food supplies to help these people with those overseas school lunch programs. There is no use getting people all geared up for something and then saying, "I'm sorry, we're out of biscuits." That doesn't help.

The Child Nutrition Act should be headlines all over America in every country newspaper and every city newspaper because it relates to our most precious resource--our young. The Child Nutrition Act will give you a chance to

break new ground as well as to consolidate well won gains.

The new programs have as their cornerstones the kind of experience that you have acquired in 20 years under the School Lunch Program. The Child Nutrition Act didn't just come out of thin air. It came out of your experience. That's the way to get good legislation.

The Congress of the United States has good judgment. I am in the Executive Branch now and I want to compliment my friends in all of the Departments. They do a magnificent job. They have extremely difficult tasks. The allocation of resources in this country is the most difficult assignment your President has. But no one has a monopoly on wisdom. I served in the Congress long enough to know that the Congress of the United States knows how to protect, develop and expand something that has served the people well.

We used to talk about the "missile gap." We were worried that Russia was threatening our national security. But we closed that gap--which wasn't nearly as big as a lot of people thought it was--by making up our minds that we were willing to do what was necessary to close it.

And then we decided there was a "citizenship gap" in this country. We had known for a long time that you couldn't have first class citizenship and second class citizenship. You had to have one kind of America or quit repeating the Pledge of Allegiance. So we decided to close the citizenship gap and truly have "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." We are beginning to mean it, and we are beginning to act like that. We closed the gap in the citizenship area.

Now to the "nutrition gap." Some people are overfed and some are underfed. This is the only nation on the face of the earth in which you are really compelled to go on a diet. You pay people to put you on diets. But we are going to close that gap. We are going to do it because you showed us the way--not because some government planner said that's the way to do it. We have the means, the resources, the tools to get the job done. We are going to close it for our children and we are going to close it for our low-income families.

Many of the people here today are the ones that are battling to see to it that the food gap for low-income level people is closed. This is not going to be done by handouts--not by just being nice--but by opportunity and training and education--by a helping hand. We still are an expanding, growing, restless country with a tremendous range of unmet needs. We are going to meet every one of those needs. We may not correct them in my lifetime, but we'll meet them. The main thing is to make up our minds we can do it.

But there is one unmet need for which there is no excuse--that is food. I'm pleased to see on your program a cross-section of representatives from agencies of government--the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Office of Education, the Departments of Labor and Agriculture, Health, Education and Welfare. Each of these agencies has some work, some project which will affect what you are doing or you will affect what those agencies want to do.

This is what we had in mind in our total effort to wage a War on Poverty--to eliminate poverty. We are asking people to give up old habits, bad practices, so we can start to break that vicious cycle that holds people in this prison of

poverty. We are going to break the chain that has held impoverished generation after generation. We are going to do it primarily by working with children--with Project Head Start, for example, and the Job Corps. But there will be many disappointments before we succeed.

Someone said to me the other day, "I want you to know that I read in the paper where 40 percent of the Job Corp trainees are dropping out." I wrote back, "You may be right. But that is a fine endorsement of this program because 100 percent of the drop-ins were drop-outs before they started." One hundred percent of the Job Corp trainees were drop-outs. Ninety percent of them had never been to a dentist. Eighty-five percent of them had never seen a doctor. Most of them came from broken homes--the victims of lack of opportunity and deprivation. Now thousands of these Job Corp enrollees are going back to school. They are joining the armed forces, passing their literacy tests, going on to college.

When you think of a program that can rescue a child or a young person from defeat and give him a chance to stand on his own feet, that's progress. We're going to make some mistakes. We have been trying to find the answer to cancer for 50 years. But we don't close up the hospitals and research laboratories and fire the doctors if they don't find the cure for cancer. Poverty has been a curse for centuries. We aren't going to find the answer to it tomorrow afternoon.

We are going to have to experiment. We are working with the most intricate, complex, difficult, entity that God ever created--man. We are trying to find out how he gets his ideas, his motivation, changes his habits, the social en-

vironment in which he lives, to see if somehow or other we can't find some way, some means that person can lift himself up and become a man or a woman with dignity and self-respect. That is going to take some doing, but we are going to keep at it.

When I hear about so many mistakes we made, I wonder how we got as far as we did. To hear some people talk, you'd think America was a mistake. But this country didn't become what it is because everybody had bad judgment or because every political or economic or social or spiritual or educational leader was wrong. We tried a lot of things. Most of them worked. Some of them didn't. Out of our mistakes however, we can learn. We learn in the School Lunch Program and we are going to learn in our War on Poverty.

There are three major pillars of this Administration--policies at home and abroad--food, health and education. I heard the President of the United States say recently at a Cabinet meeting, "I want my policies overseas to be predicated on the three principles and three pillars of food, health and education."

Those three shall be paramount and those are the same three we are working on right here in America. Close the nutritional gap to improve the health of our people and broaden the educational opportunity of our people to see to it that every American boy and girl can have all the education he or she can take.

I have a layman's scripture that I carry in my pocket. I read it wherever I go. It's a quote from Thomas Wolfe. He tells what America is all about and what you're trying to do and what I'm trying to do and what I hope and pray every American is trying to do! "To every man regardless of his birth, his

shining golden opportunity; to every man the right to live and to work, and to be himself and become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him. This is the promise of America."

Those are beautiful words. I wish everybody in the world could fully understand those words and would accept them as our commitment to mankind—"To become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him. This is the promise of America."

This is our chance to be a part of that great enterprise. You have been doing it. I came here to congratulate you, and above all, to thank you for what you are, what you have been doing, and more importantly what you are going to do. Thank you very much.

Transcript of talk by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey at the National Conference on School Lunch and Food Distribution, Wednesday, 3:00 p.m., August 3, 1966, at the Statler-Hilton Hotel, Washington, D. C.

1966 Speeches

Thank you very much for your gracious introduction.

I see here that according to the program this is a break for milk, orange juice and coffee. I have been described many ways but never in such nutritional terms.

I just came away from a very lovely luncheon, very interesting luncheon and I have one or two observations I would like to make. First of all its a beautiful day outside and all the way here I was figuring out how I could play hockey, not from you, but from anything from here on out and I have been trying to convince myself that this would be the right thing to do for my physical and mental and emotional health. And yet, I can't quite figure out where I could go in the next few hours where I could take a swim or go play golf or take a hike and do it without too much difficulty, so I suppose I'll have to go back to work.

I was at the Embassy of the State of Israel for luncheon because the President of Israel, President Shazar was with us and I can tell you that if I have a nutritional gap it is not because the Embassy didn't try to take care of me.

I feel so peaceful. It only proves that if you feed the people of the world well, peace is in the air, I can assure you. What is it that you say "Watch out for yon Cassius, lean and hungry." But I guess we all know that food plays a very significant role in the happiness and the health of mankind.

I have several things in mind that I want to say to you, some of them jotted down here rather hurriedly. I regret very much that I'm not going to be able to be with you tonight but my program---my schedule of the day is not always in my own hands. We have had a very busy day today--some always unpredictable developments over in the Congress--and I am supposed to be, according to the Constitution, the presiding officer of the Senate. Then, we do have other matters that come up, so I decided that when I had a moment that looked like it would be free I should come here and once again enjoy the privilege of your fellowship. Because, I recollect about four years ago, I was with you here at your banquet in 1962, and I'm glad to see a few heads that nod that remember that occasion.

I hope that those of you who weren't there at that time will remember that you are going to get the same speech that you would have gotten at the banquet anyhow. And you may not be as sleepy now as you would be then, but I'm sleepier now than I would be then, so the speech will be shorter now.

Four years ago I was a U. S. Senator and taking what I hope at least was an active role and possibly, hopefully an effective role in working to strengthen our school lunch programs. And to expand under those programs the kinds of foods and the quantities that we could provide our school children as well as our needy families under the donation program.

I always was keenly interested in making sure that we had a variety of foods for family and American families and not merely make them the victims of accidental surpluses. And then I was one of the persons privileged to sponsor the first, well, the pilot program for the Food Stamp Program. We had a real battle in Congress a few years ago about that. You would have

thought that we were trying to increase the budget by billions of dollars and we merely wanted to try out once again a Food Stamp Program for needy people. Today it is a working program. We did get the pilot program through and then the Special Milk Program.

Of course coming from the State of Minnesota I have an appreciation as to the food qualities of milk that far exceeds many other areas of the land. The Special School Milk Program was dear to my heart and dear to my farmers and dear to the school children, so we worked hard for it.

And then, we were working to try some new approaches and initiative in education, in nutrition education, health education and indeed in education across the board for elementary and secondary education and higher education and vocational education. And at that time about four years ago we were beginning to talk about this attack that we wanted to make on poverty in this country. We suddenly discovered that about 1/5 of our fellow citizens were living in a status of less than equal opportunity and actually living in an income status that could best be described as living in poor economic conditions. Of course the greatest curse of poverty is not the poverty of course but the poverty of despair and the frustration that turns to bitterness and cynicism and all the other individual and social disorders that come from feeling that there is no place for you--that you have been left alongside of the road as the main stream of the American life moves by.

We were then planning and probing and working on what we might do to combat this century-old evil called poverty and we were also right at that time you were here four years ago working on the Peace Corp and it was my privilege to offer that legislation in Congress. I had offered it in 1959 only to have it frowned upon, but in 1962 the Peace Corp was becoming a

reality with permanent legislation.

So, we have come a long way. And sometimes I think we forget how far we have moved because interestingly enough everytime we move ahead a little bit you become a little more restless to move ahead a little further. This is what we mean by rising expectations. Painting these descriptions, you know, of the people in the less developed countries of the world. He said, "This flood tide of rising expectations," as if somehow it referred only to Africa or to Asia or Latin America. It refers to us, too.

We have made such tremendous progress in this country today in the fields of civil rights, the war on poverty, and aid to our young people, and aid to education and health. In three years we have more than doubled the entire budget for education. In three years we have more than doubled the budget for health. In three years we have more than doubled the entire outlay of the government's resources in combating what we call poverty. A sizeable sum of our Federal budget goes into that and yet the word goes out that we haven't done nearly enough--and I couldn't agree more. We haven't done nearly enough, but we have done three times or twice as much as we did only three years ago. And we will continue to move ahead, because it's these beginnings that really count and who knows of that lesson more than those I'm speaking to.

You're celebrating--what is it--the 20th Anniversary, and in the 20 years that you have had this wonderful program of the school lunch you have learned so much. You started out with so little and it is growing so rapidly or should I say it is growing so surely. Not always so rapidly, but it grew because you fought the good fight and you had your contacts in the Congress and in the respective administrations. And you saw the need and you projected that need by your letters and your words and your needs to the

representatives in Congress and the school lunch program today is a firm, certain reality.

We have always new problems. I don't often use that word "problems." I like to think of it in a more positive way, we have new challenges. We're going to have hundreds of millions, yes, billions of new people to feed in the years ahead and we need to be thinking in terms of the years ahead.

My, how time flies. I feel every bit as good as I did when I came to Washington, but they tell me I'm a little older. I think that's wrong, but they do tell me I am. I only know that I've been here now 16 years. I've lived in the house that we live in in Chevy Chase longer than I've lived in any house in my life. And I've never really called it home, because home is in Minnesota even though I love our place out here in Washington. In fact, every time my wife tells me maybe we ought to move into an apartment we have a whole week of coolness between us. But I have a feeling that things are moving in on me.

Millions of new mouths to feed in the next few years and yet, most of them will be in countries where they can't even presently support their populations or can't support their present populations at an adequate nutritional level. My fellow Americans, this great and wonderful world of ours of technology and science, of rapid change and innovation faces the possibility of starvation, in the midst of man's great creative capacity.

This would be the worst of all sins. Because there was a time that mankind could starve because we knew not what to do. There was a time that famine could be the scourge of the earth because man did not have the tools or the knowledge to do anything about it. But not now. There is a word of scripture, "Forgive them for they know not what they do."-and I think people

are forgiven if they know not what they do, but we do know, and we know that famine never need again come across the face of this earth. We do know that the prayer of our daily bread can be a reality and not a hope.

And I don't think any civilization that knows that it can do these things, --that it can banish hunger--can banish famine from the face of the earth--I don't think we're ever going to be forgiven, or ever going to be in any way condoned if we fail to fulfill our responsibilities. This is why I am in a very real sense a crusader for food for peace and food for freedom and food for people. I want to keep looking at our own great natural resources as well as our developed resources of land and water and the seeds and the tools--the technology of our farm producers--to make sure that our blessed America does its fair share. And when I say, "Its fair share" in combating this evil of hunger and malnutrition and famine I want to remind you what a fair share is. This great America of yours and mine last year produced almost 50 percent of everything was produced in the world. Less than six percent of the world's population had over 35 percent of the world's income, personal income. Our GNP was 1/2 of the total gross national product of the world. Less than 200 million people here had that. The other three billion somewhere else spread out over the world had the rest of it. We had half of it, the other three billion had the other half. We sometimes forget that.

So, when I hear people say "Oh, we're doing too much." I say, "Remember how much you have." Or I hear people say--"How do they expect us to do all of that?" I say--remember how much you already have been given, and whether it was given or whether it was earned--whatever the facts may be--it is here. And no nation has more to lose in a world that is torn by dissension and disorder and violence than this world--than this America.

We need a world in which there are the conditions that are conducive to peace and I remind you that those are the words to remember. Conditions that are conducive to peace--and one of those conditions is an adequate supply of food and fiber.

The late and beloved Pope John the 23rd said, "Where there is constant want, there is no peace."

The threat to peace is not in the Pentagon, nor is the threat to peace in the Capitol of any state or in Washington, D. C.,--in your nation's capitol--in the White House or the Capitol of the United States. The threat to peace may very well be in these conditions of injustice, of malnutrition, of poverty and of disease and illiteracy that descend on 2/3 of mankind. I think so. And then there are evil forces that manipulate those conditions, or should I say that use those conditions for their purposes of aggression, or for their purposes of conquest, or their purposes of lawlessness, or disorder, or violence or whatever else it may be. So, you members of the school lunch program or directors of it--you are not just directors of a little local program in your state or locality--you are a part of a vanguard, a part of a great army of peace workers.

I am one of those Americans in government who believes that if we can't do well at home, we'll never do well abroad. I'm one of those who believes that the way that you can demonstrate what you can do abroad is to demonstrate by doing it at home, and...I'll put it directly--if you can't conquer poverty here, what makes you think you can do it in Africa or in Asia or if we can't close the nutritional gap here with an abundance of food and fiber such as the world has never known, what makes you think that we can do it any place else?

To put it another way, domestic policy and foreign policy are one and inseparable. You can't talk about brotherhood abroad and not practice it here. You cannot talk about equal opportunity in the world and not have it here. You cannot talk about adequate food and health and education abroad and not have it here.

We have to set the example here and never forget it and if you remember that then your job becomes a very important one. It becomes like being Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense or National Security. You are a part of it. I didn't have all that written down here, I just decided to tell you that... Maybe what we ought to say is that we should think of children everywhere as we think of our own. Sometimes it's not so easy to be tolerant of adults but if you can think of children then you get your vision and your attitude, I think, in proper perspective.

We need to help these developing countries that I speak of. Not just with shipments of food, but with export of ideas and techniques from our own experience. That is how they can produce their own food and fiber. How they can develop their own systems of distribution and processing. In other words self-help, help themselves, because no matter how generous we Americans may want to be--as you've heard I'm sure a dozen times by now in this Conference --we do not have the capacity here in America alone to feed all of God's children even if we were so motivated. We can help--we can fill the gap--we can come in with timely emergency aid, but more importantly what we can do is to share ideas and technology and we can help other countries put their proper priority upon their food production, their health needs and their education.

I spoke to the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development here recently in Washington. I made a mistake in that speech--I didn't denounce anybody. I say that as a joke, because I've got to be careful what I say these days. I mean I was just emphasizing a point--I had a positive message--I didn't scold any nation for not doing its best because I think that some nations could do much better, but I did mention that every industrialized nation, every nation of modern technology has a responsibility to the less developed nations. We are our brother's keeper. I don't think Sunday religion is worth much. I think it's got to be seven days a week, and you'll make a lot of mistakes then, no use of bunching them all up on Sunday.

I think that you ought to practice these fundamental spiritual principles and try to put them into the work-a-day life. I know I don't come before you as a symbol of purity as such--that's why I go to church--because I need the help that I get there, but I do know that there are basic principles and basic fundamental therapies that we have to practice--and we are our brother's keeper.

Interestingly enough, that question was never answered in the scripture. It was just a question that each generation has to answer and if you don't answer it in the right way you'll find out what goes wrong in the world. But I repeat about these programs that we talk about for the developing countries. They must be adapted to their way of doing things. They can't be just stamped "Made in the U.S.A. Use according to our directions." They must be adapted to the problems of climate and water and soil chemistry and social structure,

a social structure that is developed over a period of many centuries and cannot be changed overnight. This is the essence of the Food for Freedom proposals which are now before the Congress of the United States--to help others help themselves.

I said to a group of young people the other day, "I wish you'd get as excited about some of these things in Congress as you do about Viet Nam," --and don't misunderstand me--people have a right to hold their point of view and there are many varied points of view about our commitments overseas and I'm not one to scold people for expressing their point of view because if I did I'd be scolding myself a great deal because I've been expressing my point of view all my life and some people have never liked it. Sometimes I've even changed my own point of view, as I've gone along and learned, but I'd like to have some of my young friends and older friends who are so concerned about what they believe to be the injustices overseas or what they consider to be the injustices of American policy to become concerned about their own flesh and blood--to become concerned about Food for Freedom.

I haven't seen a single picket sign for the Child Nutrition Act--we need some help, I haven't seen one for the demonstration cities--we need some help. I haven't seen one for rent supplements, yet the biggest problem facing millions of Americans today is the inadequacy of housing--particularly the low-income Americans. But I see pickets about Hanoi and Viet Nam and they're just charging all over. Now that is fine--I think they ought to reverse the sign occasionally though, they ought to only paint them on one side about Viet Nam and paint them on the other side about Food for Freedom, rent supplements, demonstration cities, housing--the things that really

affect us here at home. Because the real test of a man's liberalism--and many people like to call themselves that name which only a few years ago was held in disrepute and now has become a very honored term and I hope it always will be--the real test of liberalism is what do you think about people. You're involved with people--their needs--and you're involved with people or you wouldn't be in this program. You're involved with the lives of people.

Now, we've done a lot of exporting of the very ideas that you work with. This National School Lunch Program and today, fortunately, the school lunch is a simple fact of life in this country. It's so simple and it's so accepted that sometimes people don't even get aroused over it. Most people are unaware of the years of your dedicated work and the effort that went into getting the school lunch program an accepted fact of American life. The depth and the extent of support for this program from coast to coast--once somebody seems to touch it up a bit--is a most remarkable testament to your achievement. I thought you would like to have me make a little reference to that.

And I think that you have had all the demonstration you need that if you just stay on the job--and do your job in every way--that the government of the people, by the people and for the people will see to it that we have a permanent National School Lunch Program and I think you know that.

Now, the school lunch is a fact for many of our children and yet it is not a fact for all. But it is a distant dream to most of the rest of the world. We're only on the threshold of a rudimentary program in most of the developing countries. But they are interested and they are working and they are using the techniques that we have evolved over the many patient years of

trial and error as to how best we could get this job done. And I want to make sure that we have the food supplies to help these people with those overseas school lunch programs. No use in getting people all geared up for something--when you get them all ready for it then all at once you say, "I'm sorry we're out of biscuits." That doesn't help.

The Child Nutrition Act--which ought to be headlines all over America in every little country newspaper and every city newspaper because it relates to the most precious resource--our young. That Child Nutrition Act which I gather was explained to you in some detail by Secretary Freeman--he is really a missionary for that one--will give you a chance to break new ground as well as to consolidate well won gains.

The new programs have as their cornerstones the kind of experience that you have acquired in 20 years under the School Lunch Program. That Child Nutrition Act didn't just come out of thin air--it came out of your experience and that's when you get good legislation.

And I want to tell you the Congress of the United States has an awful lot of good judgment. I am in the Executive Branch now and I want to compliment my friends in all of the Departments and they do a magnificent job--they have almost impossible tasks. The allocation of resources in this country is the most difficult assignment that your President has. But no one has the monopoly on wisdom and I served in the Congress long enough to know the Congress of the United States knows pretty well how to protect something that has served the people well and how to expand on it and develop it if you help.

Remember we used to talk about the missile gap. Have you forgotten about that, or didn't that get out to where you were? You know, I'll tell you--there are sort of two wave lengths in America--Washington and the rest

of the country. When I'm out in Minnesota I pick up the paper and talk to the folks--everything seems so nice and peaceful and I come back and all at once I feel like I have been struck with an electrical bolt. There are emergencies, crises, inflation every place you turn--all the forces at work at home and abroad, right here in the nation's Capitol.

I remember a few years ago all we had was one speech after another up here in Congress about the missile gap. We were worried that Russia was threatening our national security. But we closed that gap and then some. First of all, the gap wasn't nearly as big as we thought it was, and if it was that big, we've overcome it in a short time; and how? By making up our minds that we were willing to do what was necessary to do to close the gap. Not by 'gab or yap but by closing the gap. Beginning right now to get the job done.

And then we decided there was a citizenship gap in this country. We said we had known it a long time that you couldn't have first class citizenship and second class. You had to have one kind of American or quit repeating the Pledge of Allegiance. And make up your mind that we have learned a great deal about the Pledge of Allegiance and didn't want to forget it, so we decided to close the citizenship gap. So we had one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. And we are beginning to mean it, and we are beginning to act like that. We closed the gap in the citizenship area.

Now to the nutrition gap. Some people are overfed and some are underfed. I wonder how we are going to take care of that? This is the only nation on the face of the earth in which you are really compelled to go on a diet. You pay people to put you on diets. But we are going to close that gap. We are going to do it because you showed us the way--not because some government

planner said that's the way to do it, but because you discovered how. And as I said--we have the means, the resources, the tools to get the job done. We are going to close it for our children and we are going to close it for our low-income families.

Many of the people today are the ones that are battling to see to it that the food gap for low-income people or low-income level people is closed. Not by just handouts--not by just being nice--but by opportunity and training and education--by a helping hand. We are still an expanding, growing, restless country--how fortunate that is--with a tremendous range of unmet needs. We are going to meet every one of those needs. Maybe not in my life time but we'll meet them. Main thing is to make up our minds we can do it.

But there is one need for which there is no excuse. One unmet need--that is food. I'm pleased to see on your program a cross-section of representatives from all the other agencies of government--the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Office of Education, the Department of Labor and Agriculture, HEW--you're getting the whole treatment. You practically have the entire Cabinet and they should come here, because each of these agencies have some work, some project which will affect what you are doing or you will affect what those agencies want to do.

This is what we had in mind in our total effort to eliminate poverty and to wage a war on poverty. I met a fellow the other day that said, "Where do I surrender?"

They are looking for people that are surrendering old habits, old bad practices, so that we can once start to break that vicious cycle that holds

people in this prison of poverty.

We are going to do it primarily with children. We are going to break that chain that has held family and generation after generation in the prison of poverty. We are going to do it by working with children. Project Head Start--for example--Job Corps--young people. Oh, I don't want to get off on that. I just want to tell you that I know there are many disappointments. I am a parent and who have never had any disappointments with your loved ones? If you haven't, I'd like to meet you in a telephone booth right out here. When you have all of the advantages--many of us had everything to work with.

Someone said to me the other day in criticism--a real nasty letter. I like those every so often. They sort of make me come alive. The nasty letter said to me, "I want you to know that I read in the paper where 40 percent of the Job Corp trainees or Job Corp men at work were dropping out." I wrote back, "You may be right. I want to thank you for your compliment. We haven't had such a fine endorsement of this program since it started because 100 percent of the drop-ins were drop-outs before they started." One hundred percent of the Job Corp trainees were drop-out--90 percent of them had never been to a dentist--85 percent of them had never seen a doctor--most of them from broken homes--the victims of lack of opportunity, deprivation. Whose fault it is I don't know, but there they are. But I'll tell you something. You know that thousands of these Job Corp enrollees are now going back to school. They are joining the armed forces, passing their literacy tests, going on to college. I have two of them in my office out of five that are entering college this year and those two boys that are entering college--not one of those two boys had ever seen a dentist or a doctor--were school drop-outs.

When you think of a program that can rescue a child or a young man from defeat, give him a chance to stand on his own feet, man or woman, that's progress. Sure, we're going to have some mistakes. We have been trying to find the answer to cancer for 50 years and one out of every 10 in this room will be affected and one out of every 5 will die of it. My second son has it, and I live in mortal fear of it. You think we'll close up the hospitals and research laboratories and fire the doctors if they haven't found the cure for cancer? No, we say here's another applicant--here's another day--go to it. Do you think poverty can stay with us as a curse so to speak for centuries and that we are going to find the answer tomorrow afternoon?

We are going to have to try--we are going to have to experiment--we are working with the most intricate, complex, difficult, entity that God ever created--man. We are trying to find out how he gets his ideas, his motivation, changes his habits, the social environment in which he lives, to see if somehow or other we can't find some way, some means that person lift himself up and become a man or a woman with dignity, self-respect. That is going to take some doing, but we are going to keep at it and I can just hear all the experts standing back there, "Well you made a mistake. Look at that mistake you made there, look at the boon doogle you made there."

Sometimes I despair, I hear about so many mistakes we made, I wonder how we got as far as we did. To hear some people talk, you'd think America was a mistake. Well, I'm here to tell you that this country didn't become what it is because everybody had bad judgment or because every political or economic or social or spiritual or educational leader was wrong. We tried a lot of things, most of them worked--some of them didn't.

Most of you here will get home safely. Some of you may not, but the ones that don't, you'll be the ones that we hear about. The mistakes, however, are not right. Out of these mistakes we can learn. We learn in the school lunch program and we are going to learn in our war on poverty.

Well, guess that's about all I wanted to tell you, except to remind you that there are three major pillars of this administration--policies at home and abroad--food, health and education. Now you can put all the trimmings on from there on out.

I heard the President of the United States say recently at a Cabinet meeting to Cabinet officers--I want my policies overseas to be predicated on the three principles and three pillars of food, health and education.

Now if you want to come around with some other variations--if you want to trim it up and adjust it, that's fine; but those three shall be paramount and those are the same three we are working on right here at home in America. Close the nutritional gap to improve the health of our people, broaden the educational opportunity of our people--to see to it that every American boy and girl can have all the education he or she can take.

And I have a little layman's scripture that I carry in my pocket. I read it wherever I go. Kind of nice when you get a little older, you can kind of become a crank on certain subjects. When you're younger, you're supposed to be more flexible. A quote from Thomas Wolfe--you've heard it many times. I think it appeared recently in one of the quotes in the "This Week" enclosure in your Sunday newspaper or was it in "Parade."

Thomas Wolfe, I think, tells what American is all about and what you're trying to do and what I'm trying to do and what I hope and pray every American is trying to do. "To every man regardless of his birth, his shiny golden opportunity, to every man the right to live and to work, and to be himself

and become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make. This is the promise of America."

I think those are beautiful words. I wish everybody in the world could fully understand those words and would accept them as our commitment to mankind--"To become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him. This is the promise of America."

This is our chance to be a part of that great enterprise and you have been doing it. I came here not basically to lecture--surely never to scold you--but to congratulate you, and above all, as a fellow public servant--to thank you for what you are, what you have been doing, and more importantly what you are going to do. Thank you very, very much.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org