

FRIDAY P 10
MARCH 29 1968OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

REMARKS
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
YOUNG DEMOCRATIC CLUBS'
1968 CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH 29, 1968

1968 is an important year for America.

Americans will make basic decisions this year about the future of our country and the world.

But before we do, I think we must be sure to face the realities-- in our country and the world--of the time in which we live.

Reality number one is this.

John Kennedy said it: "Peace and freedom do not come cheap and we are destined -- all of us here today -- to live out most, if not all our lives in uncertainty and challenge and peril."

That is exactly the way it is. And to think otherwise is an illusion.

Reality number two is this: The answers to these uncertainties... challenges and perils -- and you know them well -- are not simple answers.

We won't end hunger by one massive grain shipment.

We won't end war by dropping the bomb or ending the draft.

In year 23 of the Nuclear Age, we surely know that the time of The Dramatic Gesture of All-Purpose Solution is now a part of the faded past.

The human environment is a complex, troubled place.

And the answers to its problems are neither obvious nor clear-cut.

We should, by now, have reached the end of our Age of Innocence.

* * *

Which brings me to reality three: America is a grown-up nation. We must be able to act our age.

The mass media tell us everyday that half our nation is under age 28.

That is particularly helpful to know if you're selling Fresca.

But I think America's mean calendar age means very little.

The question is: Regardless of calendar age, how mature are we? And that is how we shall be judged as we try to wrestle with the big problems in the world around us.

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Reality number four: Almost 200 years of experience give us reason to believe that the American political system works.

It is true, as Churchill said, that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried.

Yes, it is imperfect. But it works. And it has worked -- and can continue to work -- for us.

And within that system, I might add, our two-party system works.

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Reality number five: We have more chance in America today to overcome the troubles that plague man than at any other time in history.

We have, certainly, more material skills and resources with which to work.

We have, more importantly, a growing moral concern in our society... a higher sensitivity to the plight of our fellow man than at any other time I can remember -- and all of this in the midst of affluence.

Let's not sell ourselves, or our prospects, short.

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You may say: All this is obvious.

But I state these realities for the equally obvious reason that many of them are being overlooked, and by people who should know better.

Symptomatic of this was a piece I read recently -- prepared by an American student after he had witnessed a discussion session with Ambassador Goldberg at Harvard University.

The student was disappointed at the outcome of the discussion. He gave advice for the future.

He wrote:

"...It should be remembered that this was not an intellectual confrontation, it was a political one. The political effectiveness of the anti-war arguments, rather than their mere correctness or rationality, should have been the primary consideration.

"Rational arguments that do not imply or provide a radical critique of the war should have been eliminated. Since there will be some answer to any question, it is most important that the question itself convey an expression of radical opposition to the war."

You will pardon me if I say that talk about divorcing the intellectual from the political... advice that "rational arguments should have been eliminated" is all too familiar to a democrat (with both big and small "D") who has been through this before.

I got my fill of it in pre-war America. I got my fill of it in my own political party in Minnesota right after the war, when a cynical Communist minority all but preempted the rights of the democratic majority. They almost took over our party.

But a few of us who were young people -- and who had, I might add, faith in the workability of the democratic system -- took the

shouters and the disrupters on.

We took them on and beat them.

We didn't do it by threatening them. We didn't do it by chanting obscenities. We surely didn't do it by sitting back and complaining at the injustice and inequity we saw around us.

We rolled up our sleeves. We out-organized them. We got out the vote. We got up earlier. We stayed up later. We worked harder. We used the democratic processes. And we won.

Others -- in Europe, for instance -- went through the same process in the same years.

But many of them lost. And we know what happened to their societies.

When we fought that fight in Minnesota they called us "Humphrey's Diaper Brigade."

I was proud to stand then along with Orville Freeman and Gene McCarthy, among others, to make democracy work.

And I am proud today that all of us, and many others too, have stayed at the same business.

Gene McCarthy is running today for President of the United States. Secretary Freeman and I support President Johnson.

But I think my friend Gene McCarthy's campaign -- honorable and devoted to the issues -- reflects just how we felt, and still feel, about the way people can best make themselves heard.

They do not have to look outside the democratic system -- or the Democratic Party, I might add.

They do not have to resort to the tactics of totalitarianism.

And I say beware of any political medicineman who says our democratic system, or our party, do not leave proper room for popular expression.

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We are Democrats. And, as such, I think we bear special responsibility for meeting the unrealistic and often irresponsible charges now being made about our party and our President.

I said earlier that our society is better equipped than ever before to challenge the future.

Not by accident. It got that way because our Democratic Party and our President kept their promises -- promises, in many cases, broken or unkept for a hundred years before.

This Administration has -- in the past 4 years -- given millions of Americans nothing less than a new Charter of Hope.

I won't list the achievements. Just ask the people of America.

Ask the retired couple who get prompt and thorough medical care -- with dignity -- under Medicare.

Or ask their children, who aren't burdened with their hospital and doctor bills.

Ask the Negro citizen in Mississippi who cast his vote in a recent Congressional election without fear of intimidation or retribution. Or ask the Negro Americans who can stop at any restaurant...sleep in any hotel...walk in any public park...what the last four years have meant to them.

Ask the mothers of 9 million American children who now have that all-important chance for a decent education because of a federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Four Presidents have struggled to get federal help to these youngsters. One President did it.

Ask the thousands of Americans who are making themselves heard in local community action councils and boards in every major city in America. Ask these people which President first gave them a say in shaping their own destinies...the chance to become first-class citizens.

I hear talk about "participatory democracy." This is it.

Ask the workers who are today protected by a dollar-sixty minimum wage. Ask the ones who now have minimum wage protection for the first time.

Ask the businessmen of America what the longest period of sustained economic growth in America's history means.

There is not much new about the problems of our slums or our impoverished rural areas...about blighted opportunity in America.

What is new is that remedies have come faster in the last four years than ever before in the history of this Republic.

Those who deny that record distort history.

They discredit the very ideals of the Democratic Party.

They cheat Americans out of justified pride in their past, and shake their confidence in this nation's ability to cope with tomorrow.

Yes, there is dissatisfaction today. There is dissatisfaction because equal opportunity for all is well within sight...but is still beyond reach.

And there should be dissatisfaction, until Democracy's House is complete.

Dissatisfaction, however, is no excuse for the cheap deception of violence or irresponsible demagoguery.

It calls instead for the national maturity I talked about earlier.

"The art of progress," as Whitehead said, "is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order."

Order and change...change and order.-- you can't have one without the other. And those are the goals of our President.

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Finally, a word about the ultimate reality of our nuclear time: That we must find peace or perish.

"No one can be certain about the meaning of peace," as Adlai Stevenson said. "But we can all be certain about the meaning of war. The future is still open -- open for disaster if we seek peace cheaply or meanly, but for real peace if we seek it bravely and nobly."

The world knows the meaning of war all too well. And that is why peace must be our business.

Next Monday, I shall be in Mexico City to affirm our country's pledge to help keep Latin America free of nuclear weapons, or the threat of their use.

A nuclear non-proliferation treaty is now pending before the United Nations.

Just within the last year,

-- we have seen the establishment of a new Asian Development Bank;

-- We have joined with other nations to lower the barriers to international trade and economic growth;

-- we have concluded an agreement barring nuclear weapons from outer space;

--we have agreed on a consular treaty with the Soviet Union;

--the hot line kept the Middle Eastern crisis from exploding into a major international confrontation;

--President Johnson's personal envoy averted war over Cyprus.

Those are the building-blocks of peace.

They might not be very dramatic. They certainly are not the result of some magic formula discovered on the political stump in an election year.

But they are hard, realistic achievements that bring peace closer.

So does the Peace Corps . . .and Food for Peace . . .and foreign aid . . . and service overseas by young people in uniform and shirtsleeve.

Now our country is involved in a conflict 10 thousand miles away . . .in a country few Americans had ever heard about . . .where the people don't look, talk or think like us.

Take an open, democratic society. Engage it in that kind of conflict, with all its pain and misery, into family living rooms -- via television.

And you have what we have today: Concern . . .impatience . . .debate.

But we elect a President not to do what is popular or easily understood.

We elect him to do what is necessary and difficult.

That is what President Johnson is doing today -- just as other Presidents have done before him.

President Truman faced up to it in Korea.

Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson have faced up to it in Vietnam. We must be ready to fight when we judge that not to fight would mean wider danger and a general threat to world peace.

President Johnson wants what most Americans want. He wants peace.

But not the promise of peace as an election year gimmick.

Not peace that is just the lull before the storm.

Not peace based on wishing or hoping.

But real peace . . .peace that will last for ourselves and our children.

Others feel that more could somehow be done to bring peace today. Yet I must admit that their concern has yet to be matched by their specifics.

Meanwhile, President Johnson continues to pursue the difficult middle course -- neither giving in to appeasement nor reaching for the terrible weapons that could mean World War III.

That course offers no easy way out.

But I believe it is the right course.



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And deep down I believe most Americans know it is.

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So here is America in 1968: No longer a young nation . . .no longer a people concerned only with the next chimney and the next hill, but a country thrust into the center of world power and responsibility.

Here is America: No longer able to afford the luxury of escapism, in its own cities or in the wider human community.

Here is America: Rich and comfortable . . .but knowing, that wealth does not make justice, and comfort does not mean peace.

And in this year, we must ask ourselves: Are we up to our burdens?

Are we willing to make the sacrifices that democratic government imposes upon us?

Are we willing to win our rights by exercising our responsibilities?

More specifically, as Democrats, are we going to fall victim to division?

Are we going to imperil the work of these past four years and hand power, by default, to a party that lives in the nostalgic past . . .to a candidate we have defeated before?

We cannot.

And we will not if you will join with me in supporting the President who has done more in these past four years for the growth of democracy in America than any President in this century.

President Lyndon Johnson is that man.

President Lyndon Johnson is the man who has given all his waking hours to the search for justice in America and peace in the world.

President Lyndon Johnson is the man who deserves your commitment now and every day until November.

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