



FOR RELEASE
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April 7, 1968

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

TELEPHONE REMARKS
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
TO THE JEFFERSON-JACKSON DINNER
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
APRIL 6, 1968

If we had to render account to Presidents Jefferson and Jackson tonight, I think we could say that we are doing our best to live up to their ideals . . . and that American heroes are still paying the supreme price of freedom.

I believe we could also say that Americans are prepared to carry forward the noble cause they left us.

"In spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream," said Dr. Martin Luther King. And he died with that dream still bright in his mind.

But what of our American dream today? Has it been lost in a deep pit of public and private immorality?

Are we a society **drifting**, without purpose, and moving away from our higher instincts?

I say no.

I say the assassin's bullet . . . the sulking bigot . . . the shrewd demagogue . . . the violent fear . . . do not stand for America in 1968.

I say we have our strength and our vitality -- more than any other nation in the world.

I say **our very impatience** and anguish at the injustices of our times prove that our dream is intact.

But this is a time of great change . . . a time of ferment . . . a time of growth and transition. And it is a time when new crises and new opportunities follow close on each other's heels.

It is a time when the hazards and hopes before us in the world compete with urgent needs and aspirations here at home.

It is a time when we are called upon to match our resources and our commitment -- national and personal -- to our American dream.

And it is a time when painful lessons reveal how great the cost of human progress can be.

Perhaps it is not surprising that our struggle seems hardest, the wind blows coldest, and every slow step is an agony of human will as we near the summit of our potential.

* * *

Almost two centuries ago we dedicated ourselves to a marvelous new idea -- that every single child should have the right, at birth, to free and equal pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

We dedicated ourselves to the principle that men should not be divided, ruler and servant . . . slave and master . . . rich and destitute.

We launched a peaceful, human revolution to achieve what had never before in the world been achieved.

Through blood and heartbreak, through failures and false starts, America has always kept its eye steadily on that goal. Today we are taking small children by the hand in our ghetto streets. We are giving them health and education and hope.

We are reaching out to the hard young men without skills or jobs. And we are helping them get those skills so they can get those jobs.

We are pledged to rooting out the dirt, the ugliness, the congestion and the fear which fill America's cities and replacing them with clear sunlight and a new spirit of community.

Kentucky has been in the vanguard.

Kentucky was the first state in the union to pass an open housing law.

Louisville was the first Southern city to desegregate its public schools.

Your great Governor Breathitt played a leading role at the White Conference to Fulfill These Rights, along with Martin Luther King.

But clearly we must do more--much more.

And clearly we cannot wait.

No single American -- living with anything less than equal chance in this great society -- should be made to stand waiting for that chance while we possess the means to help him.

And we must pledge our every effort to see that he shall not.

For the cause of freedom is our cause. The cause of equal opportunity is our cause. The cause of orderly democratic government is our cause.

* * *

Where do we go from here?

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First of all, we do everything possible to maintain order in our society.

Order in the streets -- yes.

Order that protects the lives, the property and the rights of every citizen, black and white -- yes.

Order that is enforced by every means at our command -- yes.

For the rule of law cannot, and must not, give way to the rule of the jungle -- or the very basis for democratic self-government is perverted and denied. But there is another dimension of what we must do.

For there is a higher law and a deeper order that dictates to the conscience of each of us.

It is the higher law and deeper order expressed in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a Nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Martin Luther King was voicing more than his personal dream.

That dream is my dream.

I believe it is America's dream.

How is it to be achieved?

Only through the positive daily acts of all Americans . . . of all colors . . . of all religions . . . of all regions and economic groups.

There are places where we can help now. . . where we can prove our faith in America and what it can be.

We can pass without further delay the Civil Rights Bill now pending in the Congress.

We can mobilize the resources -- both public and private -- that will banish the spectre of poverty from our land.

We can provide jobs for the hard-core unemployed and for young people who need help.

We can root out the last vestiges of discrimination, segregation and inequality . . . in schools . . . in employment . . . in housing . . . and in public services.

We can commit ourselves unreservedly to the broad program of action recommended by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders so that America will not become "two societies, one black, one white -- separate and unequal."

But finally -- and most important of all -- we can undertake a program of personal action as well as public action.

For discrimination is personal policy -- not national policy -- in America today.

Violence is personal policy, not national policy.

That which denies some of our fellow citizens the right to a job . . . the right to promotion on the basis of merit . . . the right to live where he chooses . . . is personal policy.

We can summon the courage for reconciliation and reject the cowardice of violence.

If we do recognize that the answer to a better America lies within each one of us . . .

If we do rededicate ourselves to the mission of healing this nation . . . of accepting each one of our fellow citizens not as stranger but as brother -- then truly this time of tragedy will be remembered, not as the moment when America lost her faith, but as the moment when America found her conscience . . . when America once and for all determined to step forward into the full, clear light of freedom.

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