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2
3 SPEECH OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
4 on
5 FRIDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 2, 1968
6 at
7 MAUNA LOA RESTAURANT

8 *Detroit Metropolitan Citizens for Humphrey*

9 * * *

10 MR. DEEB: These are the kinds of men
11 and women who make up the backbone of our community and of
12 America, and these are the kinds of men and women who make
13 up the backbone of our metropolitan effort. So, we are
14 especially happy that the Vice President could be with us
15 today to help us begin that effort.

16 And without anything further, I give
17 you the Vice President of The United States.

18 (Applause.)

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you...
20 thank you very much.

21 (Applause.)

22 Thank you, thank you very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 Thank you very much, Michael Deeb. I
25 was just waiting for dessert and I didn't think that was me.

(Laughter.)

But I can see that we have a very efficient executive

1 director. He gets on with the business, makes the introduc-
2 tions, puts on the program, and sits down and relaxes.

3 (Laughter.)

4 This is the way the new administration will operate.

5 (Laughter and applause.)

6 I want to thank Paul Donahue for his
7 wonderful work for bringing this meeting into being and for
8 his sense of direction and cooperation here.

9 I was just told by Bob Fenton that the
10 name of this restaurant which, of course, you all know is
11 Mauna Loa which means "long volcano." I don't know why he
12 told me that.

13 (Laughter.)

14 I was just saying to him, I asked him how long I was going
15 to speak. First he said, "I hear you are a rather fiery
16 speaker," and then he said, "I thought you might like to
17 know that the name of this restaurant is the Mauna Loa and
18 it means 'long volcano'." And I got the message from him.

19 (Laughter.)

20 And I want to thank you very much. It
21 is good to be here. I was somewhat disturbed here today by
22 the applause meter, and I want my friend Elgin to know that
23 I am the candidate, Elgin.

24 (Laughter and applause.)

25 It is kind of embarrassing to go down the line shaking

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hands and having someone pull it back once in awhile and says, hello, Mr. Baylor --

(Laughter.)

I have Elgin saying all the time now, this fellow is the candidate. But I am honored to have him here with me as a friend, supporter, great American.

I am very pleased to see you here today and thank you very much for the turnout that is so evident here. I think we have a variety of professions and activities that is represented by your presence in this room.

I thought the title for this gathering was rather impressive, sort of made me feel patriotic, the Founding Members of Citizens for Humphrey. Now, that ought to get anybody into office.

(Laughter and applause.)

I always feel a little better when I am a founding member. It sort of reminds me of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution and the other great moments in American history. But this is a very important moment for me and I hope it is an important moment for you.

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We're trying to build across this country a citizen's participation in my campaign. We, of course, run on a partisan ticket; political parties are a fundamental part of the structure of American government. They are the vehicle, the mechanism through which and by

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which and on which candidates for public office, in most instances, make themselves available to the electorate and become public servants. But all of us know that political parties serve a limited function, and while they can place before the electorate the candidates, it is the electorate that ultimately decides who will be the public servants, the victors. And, therefore, we need this broad base of political support, and we need it now, possibly now more than ever before, a citizens' group in this kind of peaceful struggle that can exist in politics, a citizens' army that is willing to carry the banner of a candidate and of a cause, and that is willing to help carry the message of that cause and of that candidate.

All of my public life I have been fortunate in having a good cross section of support from the many groups and, interest groups, economic groups, fraternity groups, ethnic groups, religious groups in our society. I served as some of you know as mayor of a great city, the City of Minneapolis. I can say that now in Metropolitan Detroit without any fear of being booed because the Detroit Tigers are so far out in front...

(Laughter and applause.)

But in that capacity as the mayor I found out, first of all, that you needed a broad base of support to get elected and you needed an even broader one to be able to serve your

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1 community. And one of the, one of the happy experiences
2 in my public life was when I ran for reelection; I had the
3 president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the
4 AFL-CIO, and the president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce
5 as my co-chairmen and I figured that was about as broad a
6 base as you could get.

7 (Applause.)

8 This country faces incredible problems.
9 It also has unbelievable assets; and what we need to do is
10 make up our minds whether the problems are beyond our capa-
11 city to deal with and thereby give up, or whether in look-
12 ing over this great nation and to our resources, both
13 physical and human, the assets and culture that we have are
14 so plentiful and so great that any problem is manageable
15 and correctable.

16 I am, and I proudly say, one of the
17 optimists of the American dream. I say that since the
18 history of this country has demonstrated to me unmistakably
19 that no matter what the difficulty, and we have faced many
20 difficulties greater than in the present, we have somehow
21 found in the character of the American people that real
22 strength and that sense of responsibility that has brought
23 us through.

24 America is the constant story of dis-
25 covery. We are an exploratory people, a pioneer people,

1 and we are always discovering some new, something new that
2 enriches our country and our lives, and strengthens our
3 country and our purpose. This is the true story of The
4 United States. I have often said to young people when I
5 have talked to them that America stands for doing the impos-
6 sible. Most anybody can do what is possible; it takes a
7 great people with a great sense of purpose and mission to
8 do what some people say is impossible to do. Once it was
9 said it was impossible to have government by the consent
10 of the governed; no one else had ever had it. It surely
11 looked like it was impossible to keep this union, this
12 great federal union, together. It appeared many times as
13 if it was impossible to form a more perfect union such as
14 our Constitution calls for. It appeared at times impossi-
15 ble, at least in World War I that some people thought it
16 was impossible on the other side for American forces to
17 come in time. In World War II there were those that said
18 it was impossible for us to produce the planes that were
19 required, and to produce the armies that were necessary
20 to win, and we did it.

21 All the time there have been the
22 doubters, there have been those that said we couldn't make
23 it, and there was always a good deal of evidence that
24 seemed to substantiate their claim. From the first days
25 of this country when secession was a pattern of political

1 conduct in some parts of this land to this very moment when
2 people say that this nation is sick and has lost its way and
3 is in its dying and decaying moments, there is always a
4 little evidence that indicates that there may be some truth
5 to it, and there are always those that expound a full case
6 of despair and doom on the basis of that little evidence.

7 But I stand before you today to tell
8 you that history is on our side. I cannot say to you that
9 history repeats itself; I cannot say that the tomorrows
10 will be as great as the yesterdays on the basis of history.
11 I can only say that the only way that I know to change
12 what we can do tomorrow and what we can do today is by
13 some evaluation by what we have been able to do on other
14 days in darker moments and then to project what our capa-
15 city is for now and the tomorrows and the future.

16 So, I have come out forthsquare on the
17 proposition that there isn't a single problem that con-
18 fronts this nation today that is not, that is beyond our
19 capacity to handle it or to come to grips with it. The
20 first sign of our strength is that we know there are prob-
21 lems; only the strong admit their limitations. The weak
22 are so unbelievably uncertain of themselves that they can
23 never afford to admit weakness.

24 It is a fact of person and nation that
25 one of the tests of your strength is the capacity and the

1 ability to face up to your difficulties.

2 Now, I do not come to you to tell you
3 that all is well. I come to tell you that we know well
4 enough what to do with what is not well. I come to tell you
5 we need the same kind of commitment today relating to the
6 future of this country and its problems and its difficul-
7 ties and indeed its promises that the founding fathers of
8 this republic had; and, don't forget, when the men signed
9 that Declaration of Independence they signed it with these
10 words "that they pledge their lives and fortunes and their
11 sacred honor to the success of their venture," namely,
12 that venture of carving out a free nation, a nation that
13 respected those God-given, divinely-inspired, unalienable
14 rights of life and of liberty and of the pursuit of
15 happiness.

16 Ladies and gentlemen, those rights are
17 still the most precious rights that man has. They are
18 the great promises of the universe and indeed the great
19 promises of this society: The right to life to live, the
20 right to life with freedom, and life and freedom together
21 add up to the pursuit of happiness. These are the goals
22 of this land and they are noble goals, and no country has
23 done more to fulfill those goals than this nation.

24 We have been a constant source of
25 inspiration and hope to other people who have tried

1 freedom, who wanted freedom, who have tried self-government
2 and have wanted self-determination. I remind you that this
3 nation's purpose is not just the production of goods and
4 services or even to become strong and mighty. This nation's
5 purpose is to set an example, an example of an idea, a good
6 idea, that was put to work and a good idea that went into
7 action and a good idea that produced good results. This is
8 what America stands for.

9 (Applause.)

10 I have been described as, sometimes by
11 critics and cynics, as the happiness candidate. Well, I am
12 happy in the citizenship that is mine, fortunately. I am
13 happy that I live in this land. I am happy that I live at
14 a time when we can do so much to help somebody else. And,
15 I am happy that I am alive.

16 (Applause.)

17 The highest calling in life is to
18 serve, to minister, to serve others. That is what public
19 service is all about. And, that is what the presidency is
20 all about. The presidency of this land and whoever serves
21 in that office must be a leader, at least he should aspire
22 to be a leader; he must be an educator; he should be able,
23 and hopefully he can, to communicate so that he can bind
24 this nation together, not necessarily in one mind but in
25 one spirit; he must be, in other words, someone that can

1 help mobilize the human and the spiritual resources of the
2 land and its people; he must be able to call people into
3 action and to delegate and to mobilize resources and target
4 them in on the problems that beset us.

5 I am a man that looks upon problems not
6 as a negative thing. I prefer to take problems and call
7 them challenges; difficulties and call them opportunities.
8 In other words, let's have this be the politics of challenge
9 and opportunity, not the politics of problems and diffi-
10 culties.

11 (Applause.)

12 We are all aware that we live in a new
13 day and a new time. Every day is a new day. Many times
14 people come to me and say, "Mr. Vice President, don't you
15 know this is a period of change, every day changes." The
16 only question is for what, for better or for worse? And
17 the purpose of man on this earth is, in my mind, to carry
18 out God's will that the change shall be for the good.

19 (Applause.)

20 So we do live in a new time. In fact, I think we are in a
21 new era, a new epoch, that period, that generational period
22 of the postwar since World War II has come to an end, and
23 the times call for new thoughts, new solutions, new prior-
24 ities, new policies. This does not mean that you repudiate
25 the past. It means you learn from it, you build on it, but

1 you understand what has happened.

2 Science and technology alone have
3 changed our world. The space age alone has changed this
4 world. The nuclear age has made this world so small that
5 there is no place to hide. The fact is that there is only
6 one thing you can do, and that is make the best of what you
7 have here.

8 I jokingly said the other day to an
9 audience for those that are so worried that they want to
10 stop the world and get off... I often tell them that the
11 space program has been cut back and the number of flights
12 limited.

13 (Applause.)

14 Quite frankly, I don't believe there is very much chance
15 for anybody in this room to get out of this world alive.
16 I think we're going to have to stay right here.

17 (Applause.)

18 So I call upon you to help work it out.
19 Now, no man in the presidency could do it alone. If he
20 could I shouldn't want him. We do not want a country in
21 which one man, one voice, one source of authority, can do
22 everything for everybody because if he can do everything
23 for everybody he can do everything against everybody, and
24 that is too much power.

25 (Applause.)

1 But the presidency must be, as the president himself must
2 be, represent the clarion call of the greatness of this
3 country, of the **people** of this country. He must be the
4 man that calls for the best, and I think there is a lot of
5 good in the American people. I do not believe that America
6 is typified by the raucous harsh voices of the angry and
7 those filled with hate. I do not believe that that is
8 America. I believe that that is nothing but a blemish, yes,
9 indeed, a cancerous blemish on the countenance of America,
10 not the heart of America, not the spirit of America. That
11 hate is but a cancer and sore on the surface of America,
12 and hate has no place in this life.

13 (Applause.)

14 I have spoken of this great silent
15 majority in this land, but it is not silent on election day
16 because the soft whoosh of the ballots dropping in the
17 ballot box represents the tool, power, and authority.
18 Election day is the people's day because it is the day of
19 popular sovereignty. And the American people are thinking,
20 they are concerned, they are thinking about the kind of
21 life they want for their children, the kind of life they
22 want for their community and for their nation and for the
23 world. And they expect from their leader not merely emo-
24 tion, which is a wholesome quality, but reason. They
25 expect their leader to have a sense of responsibility,

1 responsibility that is based upon a feeling of confidence
2 and of faith in the purposes of this country and in the
3 capacity of this country. They expect from their leader
4 responsiveness, too; responsiveness to the needs of the
5 nation and of the people.

6 I believe that the American people
7 expect and want change for the good. I believe they want
8 change, but I think they want it with order. I think they
9 want it peacefully. I think they want it rapidly. But I
10 don't think they want it with violence and lawlessness. I
11 think they want it in order and steady progress and that's
12 the way --

13 (Applause.)

14 So we live in a new time and that new
15 time can be characterized, in my mind at least and I hope
16 in yours, almost in these words: I grew up as a child of
17 the depression, and in those days it was security that
18 people sought. They had the traumatic experience of losing
19 everything; banks closed, jobs gone, industry gone, shut
20 down. And the experience from that, that experience led
21 to a philosophy in this country, let's make sure that
22 doesn't happen again, let's tie it down somewhat more, and
23 we built from it welfare, unemployment compensation, and
24 Social Security, and all that we called security. Today
25 we have that: We have it in labor-management contracts;

1 we have it in government; we have it in job law. The period
2 of Social Security is now a matter of history.

3 The challenge of tomorrow is the period
4 of social opportunity, which is what people really want, a
5 chance to be something, to be daring, to have mobility, and
6 there is so much, so much that can come with it. Security
7 is all right, it is something now that we can, well, almost
8 take for granted; it has become an accepted part of the
9 conduct of economic and social relations in our country.

10 But a new day for many people that have
11 had neither security nor opportunity has come upon us and
12 it is that day and that period of what I call the era of
13 social opportunity. That is the one that we are now coming
14 into. And what does this mean?

15 Well, let me be very frank about it.
16 Most of us live well. This is the only nation on the face
17 of the earth in which the poor are a minority - very inter-
18 esting observation. Likewise in this nation, there are
19 fewer and fewer poor every year, which is a great tribute
20 to our economy and to our system and our economic-
21 political structure. But, nevertheless, there are too many.
22 A nation of affluence, a nation with our science and our
23 technology, a nation with our know-how, our resources,
24 cannot be happy or content when it has a large segment, a
25 substantial proportion, of its people still living in abject

1 poverty, misery, and deprivation. So it is right for busi-
2 nessmen and labor to arrange for guidelines, participants
3 in full, for white and black, or whomever you may be, to
4 have a common cause and a common purpose.

5 What is that purpose? To find every
6 person opportunity -- as I call it, social opportunity --
7 to break away the impediment, to remove the roadblocks so
8 that people, Americans, citizens, without regard to their
9 color, without regard to their ethnic origins, without
10 regard to their religion, without regard to their station
11 in life, citizens that bear the title of American citizens
12 shall have the chance to make something out of their lives.
13 That is what we mean by social opportunity.

14 (Applause.)

15 I can say to this audience that there
16 is so much to be gained. You know, you don't have to turn
17 to the left or turn to the right or even stay in the middle.
18 In this election year what you need to do is look up, to
19 help people get out of the slums, that will help them lift
20 their eyes to a brighter and bigger goal. Not to the left,
21 not to the right, not even the politics of the middle, but
22 the politics of stand up, look up, and call upon the
23 American people to stand...

24 (Applause.)

25 And what great possibilities there are.
Some of our greatest people today have come from the homes

1 of deprivation. Let me speak of this area of America today
2 that some people say is the problem, and it is, that many
3 people properly characterize as a cancer in our society,
4 the urban crisis, and it is here.

5 But let me tell you what is to be found
6 there. If we but set ourselves to the task, if we but
7 release the energies that are there, if we but emancipate
8 the inhabitants of those miserable ghettos, emancipate the
9 inhabitants from their fears, from their frustrations, from
10 the illiteracy and disease and hopelessness. We are living
11 in a period of emancipation world-wide. That is what's
12 going on in Eastern Europe, that is what's happening in
13 Asia, in Africa. It's what's happening everyplace where
14 people want to be something. They want individual identity,
15 they want emancipation from misery, frustration, and
16 deprivation. That is what is to be found in this great
17 emancipation of America, if we will but set ourselves to
18 the task.

19 I will tell you the greatest athletes
20 of today, many of them have come from the homes of the poor.
21 The titleholders, those who bring glory to this republic
22 in international competition, more of them come from the
23 poor than from the rich.

(Applause.)

24 Some of the greatest artists of today, the literary genius,
25 the artist, the cultural genius of America, much of it today,

1 more of it comes from the homes of deprivation than from
2 the homes of the wealthy. Another example of what I mean
3 is I am sure if we can produce champions and fine champions,
4 champions as we call them on the field of competitive activ-
5 ity, if we can find champions in the ghettos and in the
6 inner-cities and in the homes of deprivation, if we can
7 find artists and literary geniuses in the homes of the poor,
8 then I am sure we can find great leaders and great doctors
9 and great lawyers; I am sure we can find skilled workers;
10 I am sure we can find a whole new America, if we just set
11 out to do it.

12 (Applause.)

13 So when I shall call upon this nation
14 to explore, when I call upon this nation to join me in a
15 great voyage of discovery, what I shall be saying is come
16 discover the rest of America, come see that other part of
17 America which today is shoddy, ugly, dirty, and come see
18 it with me and then come find what is there, the potential;
19 come help me, come help America, come help us emancipate
20 this part of America, whatever the cost, whatever the
21 investment, however we do it, mark my words that it will
22 be small indeed in terms of cost of failing to do it. Just
23 remember this --

24 (Applause.)

25 Just remember this, that whenever we invest in human beings

1 we invest in the finest resource that we have and the divi-
2 dends from investments in human resources are dividends
3 that live on for generations and come every year, year in
4 and year out, in increasing amounts.

5 See, this is why I am an optimist about
6 America. I am an optimist about America because each gen-
7 eration we discover another part of America. Each period
8 in our history we have found others who for a period of
9 time seem to offer little, only problems, and all at once
10 they came into their own and they became the great new
11 leaders of America.

12 The life line of this country has been
13 constantly refreshed; sometimes by immigration. I think
14 it is now having its chance to be revitalized and be
15 refreshed by people who have been with us since the begin-
16 ning of this republic, black people, white people, Mexican-
17 Americans, Puerto Ricans. You name them, any minority, any
18 one of these minorities has within them the greatness of the
19 majority, the majority of great achievement, the majority
20 of great production, the majority of a great life. That's
21 the way I believe about this country and I intend to do
22 something about it.

23 (Applause.)

24 I want you to help me, I want your
25 help, as I said, and I leave you with this note: No man

1 alone can do these things. There must be a moral commit-
2 ment on the part of the people and there indeed must be a
3 moral commitment on the part of those people that wish
4 to associate with a cause and with a man and, in this
5 instance, with a candidate. I call upon people, not just
6 Democrats, all people to help. My message is not designed
7 for a particular audience. It is designed for the American
8 audience and indeed it is designed, I might say I hope, for
9 the world audience because, ladies and gentlemen, if we
10 cannot preserve peace amongst ourselves we, who speak a
11 common tongue, who have a common citizenship, and in a
12 very real sense a common culture, if we can't find a way
13 to live together in tranquility and justice and freedom
14 and self-respect, what makes you think that we could help
15 anybody else in the world to live that way?

16 (Applause.)

17 The American example at work. The
18 America that Lincoln called "the last best hope of earth."
19 This is the most powerful weapon that we have. Other
20 nations can create and have instruments of mass destruc-
21 tion, powerful instruments, machines of war. Today we face
22 that kind of international arms competition. There is no
23 way that The United States of America can be safe in an
24 arms race. There is no way that The United States of
25 America can help save the world in an arms race or even

1 make the world, as John Kennedy put it, "Safe for diversity."

2 But there is a way for America to help
3 the world and can, in a very real sense, maybe help save
4 it or make it safe. And that is to demonstrate here in The
5 United States that we have a, that we have a respect for
6 human dignity, that we have a deep and abiding respect for
7 people, that we in this pluralistic society judge people
8 on merit, we accept them as the finest creation of God
9 Almighty. We see in them a preciousness which no man has
10 a right to destroy. And, if we can demonstrate we under-
11 stand the meaning of self-respect and understand the meaning
12 of human dignity, I tell you we have created and unleashed
13 in this world a force that no one else can match.

14 (Applause.)

15 And that's why I come to you, to ask
16 your help by designing this force in this the last third of
17 this Twentieth Century. Let the year 2,000 be known as the
18 year that America demonstrated for once and for all to the
19 whole world that people of every walk of life, of every
20 race, creed, color and origin, that people can live as
21 brothers and sisters, that they can really practice human
22 brotherhood instead of merely saying it. That we have come
23 to understand the meaning of a more perfect union, and that
24 we have come to understand the meaning of brotherhood in
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1 our lifetime, not brotherhood just in a song or in a poem
2 or in a reading.

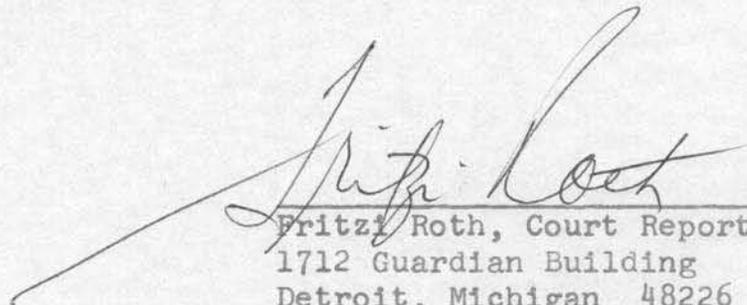
3 I thank you very much.

4 (Applause.)

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I, Fritzi Roth, do hereby certify that I have recorded stenographically the speech of Vice President Hubert Humphrey, at the Mauna Loa Restaurant, Detroit, Michigan, on Friday, August 2, 1968, and I do further certify that the foregoing transcript, consisting of twenty-one (21) typewritten pages, is a true and correct transcript of my said stenographic notes.


Fritzi Roth, Court Reporter
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