

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

UNITED STATES BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCES

BRAINERD, MINNESOTA

JULY 3, 1976

ANOKA, MINNESOTA

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

JULY 4, 1976

TODAY AMERICA CELEBRATES A VERY SPECIAL BIRTHDAY. IT IS THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT -- THE GREATEST FORCE FOR FREEDOM IN THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION. IT IS A TIME FOR CELEBRATION, AND A TIME FOR REFLECTION -- ON WHAT WE HAVE BECOME AND WHAT WE WANT TO BE.

WE AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS HAD OUR EYES FIXED ON THE FUTURE. THE MOST DISTINGUISHING MARK OF AMERICAN CHARACTER SINCE THE FIRST COLONISTS ARRIVED ON THIS CONTINENT HAS BEEN A PROFOUND FAITH IN PROGRESS, IN OUR ABILITY TO CREATE A BETTER LIFE FOR OURSELVES AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. OUR PROGRESS AS A NATION HAS BEEN A CONSTANT PROCESS OF BECOMING, OF CONSTANT MOTION AND GROWTH, OF EVOLVING ASPIRATIONS AND IDEALS.

h WHAT WAS DECLARED IN 1776 WAS NOT THE FULLNESS OF AMERICAN
FREEDOM, BUT THE COMMON PRIVILEGE OF LABORING FOR ITS FULFILLMENT --
AND THAT TASK WILL NEVER BE FINISHED. EACH GENERATION HAS ITS
OWN SUMMONS TO THE CAUSE OF LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF
HAPPINESS.

h THE RECORD OF AMERICA IN THE LAST 200 YEARS REFLECTS THE
GRADUAL EVOLUTION OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, AN IDEAL THAT WAS
REVOLUTIONARY AT ITS BIRTH AND REMAINS SO TODAY. OUR BICENTENNIAL
CALLS US TO STUDY THAT RECORD; TO FOCUS OUR THOUGHTS ON OUR PAST
HERITAGE, OUR PRESENT PROSPECTS, AND OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

h THE AMERICAN DREAM IS SIMPLY A METAPHOR FOR THE CREATION OF
A TRULY OPEN SOCIETY.

h SUCH A SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH MEN AND WOMEN ARE FREE TO
DEVELOP THEIR TALENTS, TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS.

h IT IS ONE THAT IS FREE OF THE SPECTERS THAT HAVE HAUNTED
GENERATIONS OF MANKIND -- HUNGER, DISEASE, IGNORANCE, FEAR,
RACIAL PREJUDICE, SLAVERY AND SERFDOM, POLITICAL OPPRESSION
AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

h ~~INSTEAD~~ THE OPEN SOCIETY IS BASED ON THE IDEA, SET FORTH
IN OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, OF THE INHERENT DIGNITY OF
MAN, ENDOWED BY OUR CREATOR WITH A SOUL AND WITH CERTAIN RIGHTS
THAT CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY.

h THIS EMPHASIS ON THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF MAN IS WHAT
GIVES SENSE AND REASON TO THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WE CALL
DEMOCRACY.

WITHOUT IT, ^{People} ~~they~~ BECOME THINGS TO BE MANIPULATED AND CONTROLLED,

RATHER THAN RESPECTED AS DEMOCRACY REQUIRES.

RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF ALL ~~men~~ -- THE NOTION THAT "ALL ~~men~~ ARE CREATED EQUAL" AND ARE THUS ENTITLED TO EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER THE LAW -- IS A VERY RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE, EVEN IN THIS, THE GREATEST OF ALL DEMOCRACIES, THE IDEALS STATED IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ARE NOT YET FULLY REFLECTED IN OUR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM.

IN THE LAST 200 YEARS WE HAVE ONLY GRADUALLY EXTENDED THE FRANCHISE AND OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES TO INCLUDE THE POOR AND WOMEN, AS WELL AS RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES.

YET PAINFULLY SLOW AS OUR PROGRESS MIGHT APPEAR IN HINDSIGHT,
WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN THESE 200 YEARS.

WE HAVE BEEN SUMMONED TO THE CAUSE OF "LIFE, LIBERTY AND
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS." LIKE OUR FOREBEARERS, WE MUST BE
WILLING TO EXPERIMENT, TO RISK FAILURE AND TO BEAR THE
CONSEQUENCES OF OUR MISTAKES, BOTH PAST AND YET TO COME.

WE MUST BE PREPARED TO DO THE THINGS WE OUGHT TO DO, BECAUSE
THEY ARE RIGHT.

WE MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE SOME SACRIFICES NOW IN ORDER TO
PROTECT AND PRESERVE WHAT WE MOST CHERISH IN AMERICAN LIFE FOR
THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

WE MUST ACCEPT THE BURDENS OF LEADERSHIP AS THE STRONGEST
NATION OF THE FREE WORLD AND SET A GOOD EXAMPLE BY ADHERING TO
OUR PRINCIPLES BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD,

WE MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR ACTIONS, BOTH AS
INDIVIDUALS AND AS A NATION.

THIS IS THE CHALLENGE OF OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR: TO CONTINUE
TO CHART OUR PROGRESS BY THE LIBERATION OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND
TO WORK FOR ITS FULFILLMENT. THIS IS THE PROMISE OF AMERICA!

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