

OPENING STATEMENT
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PRESS SEMINAR
FEBRUARY 13, 1967

Three years ago this month plans were being drafted for a War on Poverty. On March 16, 1964, those plans were revealed in a special message to the Congress by President Johnson. In that message, he said:

"It will not be a short or easy struggle -- no single weapon will suffice -- but we shall not rest until that war is won."

Our policy has not changed. Not only is this Administration determined to continue the war on poverty, this is one war we seek to escalate.

The President's Budget reflects our determination. No less than 25 billion dollars in income and in services will be available for the nation's poor in the coming fiscal year --

if the Congress approves. This represents an increase of 3 billions over the present year. Some of this, of course, represents Social Security payments towards which the recipients have contributed.

This figure includes a little over 2 billion dollars for programs run by or for the Office of Economic Opportunity. During the next three days you will be looking in depth at the OEO programs -- but you should never forget that the war on poverty encompasses much more than these programs alone.

The proposed budget for OEO will mean a 25 per cent increase over current levels of operations. This is a much needed increase, and I hope the Congress will agree. The needs and demands for community action funds, for Head Start, for Job Corps, for neighborhood health centers, for VISTA projects, for Neighborhood Youth Corps -- and all the others which you will be reviewing -- are so great that we must make every effort to meet them.

These OEO programs have taken hold and are beginning to have a substantial effect.

The war on poverty has created eleven hundred Community Action agencies, serving half the nation's poor and touching all of the 50 most poverty-afflicted metropolitan areas.

- It has enlisted more than 56 thousand citizens for community action boards, more than one-third of them from the poor.
- It has helped prepare 1.2 million pre-schoolers for the first grade through the Head Start program.
- It has given work and training to 5 hundred thousand young people through the Neighborhood Youth Corps.
- It has helped 25 thousand high school youngsters through the slum-to-college Upward Bound program.

- It has graduated 13 thousand young people from residential Job Corps centers, with 29 thousand more now in training in 113 centers.
- It has utilized 5 thousand senior citizens as "foster grandparents" to 10 thousand children in public and private institutions.

* * *

In these first weeks of the current session, the President has sent several important messages to Congress -- and each of them is in effect a poverty message.

In the Economic Report, the President has opened up for review and consideration two of the most basic areas affecting the over-all attack on poverty in an affluent America:

1. Some welfare programs are obsolete and even counterproductive. We must stop contributing to the breaking up of families; we must provide incentives for getting off welfare and taking jobs.

2. The various proposals for guaranteed income should be thoroughly evaluated to see which can properly be meshed in with our present range of programs and benefits.

In the message on Older Americans, the President has reminded us again of our obligations to those who have built this great America, and of the services they still can render. He has requested a 20 per cent increase in Social Security.

In the message on Children and Youth, the President has again stressed our obligations to those born into a culture and environment of poverty. That message constitutes a historic commitment by this nation to provide adequate opportunities for our children and our youth to develop their skills and make their own way in our society.

* * *

There will be other messages too. And there will be suggestions for specific legislation. And there will be

requests for adequate appropriations. For education.
For health. For our cities. For training.

But this Administration does not believe that it can, or should, or will do the whole job itself. There is indeed a major federal element that we must be prepared to provide. But we are seeking ways to expand the state and the local role in all of these areas. We seek an expanding role for the private sector: business, labor, the churches, the universities, the civil rights groups. We are building a creative partnership among all elements of our society.

Finally, it is of course clear that the federal government cannot at this time do all that it would like to do. There are indeed other heavy responsibilities which cannot be ignored or postponed. When those burdens are lifted -- as some day they will -- we will be prepared to move ahead and accelerate our progress toward full opportunity.

In these three years since that first message to Congress, there has been one basic, underlying accomplishment. The poor are no longer "invisible." They are no longer the forgotten fifth of the nation. Their problems and their lack of opportunities are now forcefully on the conscience and the mind of all Americans. You of the mass media have contributed to that greater understanding. There have, of course, been times when you seemed more interested in exposing the poverty program than in exposing poverty, but I'm not complaining. You have done a marvelous job in waking up America to this great challenge.

Now, I would welcome your questions.

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STENOGRAPHIC TRANSCRIPT

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

PRESS SEMINAR

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REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Washington, D. C.

13 February 1967

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from a tape recording.

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NATION-WIDE COVERAGE

Remarks of the Hon.

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,

Vice President of the United States of America

Monday, February 13, 1967

at the

O. E. O. PRESS SEMINAR

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VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I thought it would be a good idea this morning to give my friend, Mr. (Buchbinder?), an opportunity to hold forth with you. He tells me that whenever I come here, that I always crowd in and deny him the privilege of expounding upon his knowledge of and philosophy about or for the war on poverty.

VOICE: [Inaudible.]

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: [Inaudible.]

[Laughter.]

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: So I gave that privilege to Mr. Buchbinder and I'll hold forth for a few moments and I know that you have some questions. I only put the time limit on that -- I'm going to take my granddaughter over to see the President and Mrs. Johnson at twelve o'clock noon, and I want to be sure that I don't [inaudible] any longer than that. Because while you're important, you take second place to that particular event and that particular individual. She's been spending a friendly and -- Monday morning with her granddad and I have upset my entire schedule for that purpose.

I have an opening statement which you have received, I trust, or will be given.

Three years ago this month, plans were being drafted for the war on poverty. I had the privilege of sitting in on that drafting as a member of the United States Senate, talking with Mr. Shriver, talking with other members of the

administration and getting some insight into what the plans were and hopefully getting some idea as to how we might best advance those plans.

On March 16, 1964, those plans were revealed in a special message to Congress by President Johnson. In that message he said, and I repeat it because it is the very essence of the task before us.

"It will not be a short or easy struggle. No single weapon will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won."

Now, our policy has not changed one bit since that initial statement. Not only is this administration determined to continue the war on poverty, but this is one war that we seek to escalate. The President's budget reflects this determination. No less than \$25 billion in income and in services will be available to the nation's poor in the coming fiscal year, if the Congress approves.

This represents an increase of over \$3 billion over the present fiscal year, 1967. Some of this, of course, represents Social Security payments, towards which the recipients have contributed. This figure includes a little over \$2 billion for a program run by or for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and during the next three days you will be looking in depth at these OEO programs.

But you should never forget that the war on poverty

encompasses much more than these programs alone -- much more than the programs of the OEO. I would refer you to the President's message, his economic message, in which he lists out many of the programs that are divisions or brigades or regiments, so to speak, in this war on poverty.

The proposed budget for OEO will mean a 25 percent increase over current levels of operations. Now, this is a much-needed increase; and I hope that the Congress will see fit to grant that increase. The needs and demands for Community Action funds, for Head Start, for the Job Corps, for neighborhood health centers, for Vista projects, for Neighborhood Youth Corps, and all the others which you will be reviewing, are so great that we must make every effort to meet them; and I would emphasize that the budget that the President presented was a minimum budget. We feel that this is absolutely essential, as we did last year when the Congress cut that budget and thereby caused some difficulty for these months, between now and June.

These OEO programs have taken hold, and I'm here to proclaim that we have made substantial progress, and are beginning to have a substantial effect. The war on poverty has created 1100 community action agencies serving half the nation's poor, and touching all of the 50 most poverty-afflicted metropolitan areas.

The war on poverty has enlisted more than 56,000

citizens for Community Action boards, and more than one-third of them from the poor. In other words, the war on poverty is not something being fought around a desk in Washington, but it's being carried out in the field -- by the people who are in the front line of this struggle.

It has helped prepare 1,200,000 pre-schoolers for the first grade through the Head Start program. If it had done nothing else but this, it would have been a valuable and worth-while investment.

It has given work and training to 500,000 young people through the Neighborhood Youth Corps -- 500,000 that wouldn't have had that work or training without the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

It has helped 25,000 high-school youngsters from the slum to college Upward Bound program, which is one of the most inspiring and I think rewarding programs of the war on poverty.

It has graduated 13,000 young people from residential Job Corps centers with 29,000 more now in training in 113 centers. I might add that the average wage of those who came into the Job Corps center, if any of them had a job, and there were very few that did, was 70 cents an hour. When they leave the Job Corps center, the average wage is \$1.71. They are adding to the Gross National Product of this country and making a very substantial contribution to the economic well-

being of themselves and of the nation.

I said there were 29,000 now in 113 centers; I should amend that. I believe there are approximately 31,000 now.

This war on poverty has utilized 5,000 senior citizens as foster grandparents to 10,000 children in public and private institutions.

Now, these are just a few of the accomplishments. We can claim, of course, many other things that have happened, such as the increase in employment due to the growth of our economy which has been a major factor in removing large numbers of people from what is called the poverty category.

Now, in the first few weeks of the current session, the President has sent several important messages to Congress, and each of them is in effect a poverty message. I spent part of yesterday just re-reading those messages. The message on older Americans, the message on the economic report, state-of-the-union message, and I want to make a comment on the child -- the message on children.

In the economic report the President has opened up for review and consideration two of the most basic areas affecting the over-all attack on poverty in an affluent America.

First, some welfare programs are obsolete and even counter-productive. We must stop contributing to the

breaking up of families; we must provide incentives for getting off welfare and taking jobs; the various proposals for guaranteed income should be thoroughly evaluated to see which can possibly be meshed in with our present range of programs and benefits.

The economic report, I believe, is the most succinct statement of the problems in the poverty area, as well as the possibilities of progress that I see.

In the message on older Americans, the President has reminded us again of our obligation to those who have built this great country, and of the services they can still render. He has requested a 20 percent increase in Social Security payments, as you know, for those that are in the real low payment area, about two and a half million, it was a 59 percent increase, and there are many other over-all increases and expansions provided for in the President's report.

In the message on children and youth, I believe that was just last week, the President has again stressed our obligations to those born in a culture and in an environment of poverty. That message constitutes a historic commitment by the nation -- this nation -- to provide adequate opportunity for our children and our youth to develop their skills and make their own way in our society.

Now, there will be other messages, too; and there

will be suggestions for specific legislation. There will be requests for adequate appropriations for education, for health, for our cities and for training.

I happen to believe that the area of emphasis is upon jobs, and training, and training related to jobs. These are the immediate efforts that we need to make.

But this administration does not believe that it can or should or will do the job itself. There should be, of course, a major federal element that we must be prepared to provide, both in terms of leadership and resources.

But we are seeking ways to expand the state and local role in all of these areas. We seek an expanding role for private enterprise, for the private sector. I met, this past week, with Mr. Wright, the President of the United States Chamber of Commerce; and I would like to call to your attention their report of the Chamber of Commerce on disadvantaged youth; and also the recent address of the President of the Chamber of Commerce, entitled "The Great Society."

What the private sector feels that it can do and what it is doing. You know that -- some of you may know that about two weeks ago, I addressed -- here in Washington -- the Advertising Federation, and pointed out the possibilities of incorporating into the war on poverty the profit incentive, the profit motive, as well, not only the war on poverty, but in our -- the war on slumism, the blight of our cities, and

the problems that our people face in the slum areas, and how this can be made a part of our enterprise system. In the City of Pittsburgh, some of that is going on right now, where large financial institutions and enterprises have been brought in to the remodeling of the city and the redevelopment and rehabilitation of human life.

We are seeking, as I said, this expanding role for the private sector. Business and labor, the churches, the universities and the civil-rights groups. And I might add, once again, because this is a sort of a squeaking wheel that I keep moving around, that the universities have a special obligation in the war on poverty. I would suggest, as an old professor in the field of social sciences, that you should remove your laboratory experiments from the comfortable surroundings of the university campus, out into the community; take your graduate students and your seniors and your juniors and take them out into the areas of real life, even if it's ugly at times; and let our young people in universities, under the guidance of the experts that are there -- the professors -- learn about the social problems, not from a textbook, but from interview, from living with the poor, from visiting in the areas, from truly bringing the university campus into the slum and into the job training area.

What we're trying to do, as we've said before, is to build a working partnership, a creative partnership, a

partnership of the elements of our economy that all have a stake in this struggle.

Now, finally, it is of course clear that the federal government cannot at this time do all that we would like to do. There has never been a time that we have been able to do all that we would like to do in anything that we would like to do. We always had to ration our resources, have priority, and we will continue to do that in our public life, and private life as well.

There are, indeed, other heavy responsibilities which cannot be ignored or postponed. And when those burdens are lifted, as some day they will be, we should be, and I hope we will be, prepared to move ahead and accelerate our progress towards full opportunity.

In these three years since that first message to Congress, there has been one basic, underlying accomplishment. The poor are no longer invisible. They are no longer the forgotten fifth of this nation. Their problems and their lack of opportunity are now forcefully on the conscience and the mind of all Americans. And if nothing else has happened, that, in itself, is a worthy accomplishment. Because you never meet a problem until you identify it. And we went around this country for a long period of time pretending that the poverty of the one-fifth of our people was not really here, or maybe more -- maybe what we were doing was attempting

to ignore it, even though we knew that it was here, hoping that somehow or other the relief check and the welfare agency would ease the pain of poverty, and thereby ease our conscience. I want to make it quite clear that the process of the war on poverty is not to make poverty more tolerable. The purpose of the war on poverty is to find answers to this social disease that has gripped humanity for amny years, thousands of years; therefore we're going to have to experiment; we're going to try, we have no dogma, no doctrines, no ritual, we're a pragmatic people. Trial and error. We'll seek to find answers through experience. And of course this will give all of you something to write about, because we'll make many mistakes, but we'll also make some accomplishments. And I hope that in the reporting, that you will be just as excited about a life that has been saved, as a dollar that's been wasted. I hope that you'll be just as moved and as excited in your reporting and in your commentary about a neighborhood that has been rehabilitated as about an agency that is uncoordinated. You of the mass media have contributed immeasurably to this greater understanding of what's going on in our country. You have contributed to letting the nation know about the problems of the poor, the lack of opportunities, all of this is now forcefully on the conscience of America. I must say there have been times when you seem more interested in exposing the poverty program than in exposing poverty. But

that's just a friendly comment amongst friends; I'm not complaining; just as we in the government have sometimes much more interest, apparently, on occasion, on defending what we've done rather than really reaching out to find out what more we can do. I want you to know that I think you've done a good job in waking up America. You've been sort of the alarm clock. Just keep the bell ringing, and remind some people that it has to be wound up occasionally, too, with some resources. You can be of great help to us.

All right, that's my message for the morning. I'll be glad to entertain some questions.

Yes.

[Question-and-answer period begins.]

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Q: The President has said he will appoint a top-level committee to study guaranteed income for all Americans -- but already a leading official (Wilbur Cohen) has stated publicly that he thinks this would not be a very good idea. What do you think?

A. This is indeed a very complicated and a very controversial matter. The usual liberal-conservative division does not automatically apply here. Economists from Milton Friedman to Mike Harrington seem to favor some form of guaranteed income. That's why the President seeks an in-depth review of all pending proposals.

There are two things I wish to say at this point:

First, we are a humane and a compassionate people. That's why today we make available billions of dollars, public as well as private, for the welfare of millions who cannot be self-sufficient. We must continue to do this -- do it more generously and with less indignities.

Secondly, no system of guaranteed income should be thought of as a substitute for basic programs like education and training and health and housing. Money income is vital, of course, but money alone won't guarantee escape from poverty. So let's not think for a moment that a simple system of income payments will permit us to dismantle all of the health, education, and manpower programs we have developed.

Q: What about this report made by Lou Harris that so many dropouts in Job Corps are related to race and to violence in the centers?

A: I have not seen the full report -- and I daresay neither has the author of that article -- but I don't think we should be shocked to learn that these kids who come from the most disadvantaged families in America should have difficulties. Don't forget: every one of them was a dropout when he entered Job Corps. Every one we help get a job, or back to school, or into the military service, is a major victory.

But many things have been done to reduce the number of dropouts and you'll be hearing about them in the next day or so.

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REMARKS

The Vice President got the seminar off to a fine start. His support was very much appreciated.

FROM:	NAME Herb Kramer, Public Affairs	DATE Feb. 16, 1967
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