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For Release: Saturday A.M.  
April 14, 1956

WORLD NEEDS TO HEAR THE REAL VOICE OF AMERICA, SENATOR HUMPHREY SAYS

"What has America to say to a world in ferment?" Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) asked his audience at the Golden Anniversary dinner of the national intercollegiate forensic society, Delta Sigma Rho, in Chicago last night.

"To war-weary nations and peoples, blinking like trapped rabbits before the headlights of a car approaching to crush them, what have we to say?

"To our friends in Asia, determined to free themselves from colonialism, racism, and poverty, what is our message?

"To small-minded people at home or abroad who are bent on promoting their personal ends at the price of common effort, have we an effective appeal?"

As the featured speaker at the 50th anniversary celebration of the speech society's founding, and as one of seventeen distinguished members to receive a special service award, Senator Humphrey addressed the group on the subject, "The Real Voice of America".

"At a time of mounting international rivalry and bitter domestic controversy," Senator Humphrey said, "our ability to talk and act with wisdom may spell the difference between genuine progress and hopeless failure. Complicated problems are beginning to strike us with almost machine-gun regularity.

"Involved in all of these problems is the struggle for men's minds.

"The world has been watching us lately, and found us wanting," Senator Humphrey continued.

An abstract of his remarks follows:

"America, once the hope of history, has recently been providing only slender fare for the minds and affections of the world's two billion non-Americans. The Voice of America which we have actually projected has alternately been blurred and uncertain, garrish and strident, hesitant and weak.

"From some of our leaders the world has seen a boisterous fluctuation from one untenable position to another. From others it has alternately been bored and dismayed by an apparently calculated effort to reduce major American policy statements to the lowest common denominator of domestic political abstraction.

"Yet it is ideas, not commonplace comments or militant threats, that will stir men's souls. What we say, and how sincerely and convincingly we say it, largely depends, of course, upon what we know about the world. This in turn depends on how well we listen to the rest of the world, how seriously we consider the Voices to America.

"These Voices to America are insistently bringing us messages which we have not yet heeded. They are telling us that tidal forces have been released all over the world today which can be summed up in a demand for increased human dignity. As Americans reconsider their relations with Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, and the people of other underdeveloped areas, of this much we may be sure: in this century, by one means or another, change is coming to every village. At the Bandung Conference in Indonesia last spring, the industrially backward continents of Asia and Africa formally moved on to the center of the world's diplomatic stage.

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"Basically our long-range choice as Americans is whether we shall unconsciously hinder the still non-Communist people of these continents in the achievement of their aims, perhaps finally turning them into the hands of totalitarian enemies, or whether we shall find a way to join with them in democratic development.

"Understandably most of us have been preoccupied with Communism these past few years. Most of us think that its menace will be with us for a long time to come. The Communist threat demands firm and constant vigilance. But it is equally essential that we peer behind and beyond that threat long enough and deliberately enough to look steadily at the basic problems that we would have to face even if there were not a Communist agent anywhere, even if Karl Marx had never lived.

"Most of these issues are problems of revolt against the status quo in the interests of a wider achievement of human dignity. This revolt takes many forms: nationalism and anti-colonialism in Asia and Africa; the struggle of the Negro against second-class citizenship in the United States; the fight for agrarian reform and industrialization in all underdeveloped areas. The Communists do not need to create these popular issues; they need only to exploit them.

"The important thing is the coinciding of these two major issues of peace and human dignity. The H-bomb has heightened our military insecurity in the context of a world-wide revolt and the interrelationship of the two problems cannot be forgotten. Peace and human dignity are both fraught with such explosive implications now that no one can dismiss either of them as pleasant abstractions. We cannot hope to meet either without meeting both. Nor can we allow our concern with immediate crises to blind us to these larger comprehensive problems.

"The Communists, however wrong they may be, are not blind to these problems.

"Even the smiling cynics of the Kremlin have pitched their appeal to the poor and the disinherited. They have stolen our slogans, and parodied our principles. It is a shabby stunt on their part, but it may in the long run be productive of much good. We cannot ignore this apocalyptic appeal, this false vision of a classless society, this hollow cry of brotherhood, this empty claim to offer a society based on justice.

"We shall have no relief from this challenge and we deserve none. We must expose the hypocrisy of the Communists the only convincing way we can: by ending our own.

"Our individual voices that make up the real Voice of America must meaningfully reaffirm the traditional American position, born of the period of our own fight for freedom, that we recognize and support the principle of self-determination of nations. We must come to realize that it is in the best interest of the United States not to have satellites, but to have healthy, viable, stable friends in the world -- governments with roots among their people, sound economies at work erasing the dreadful heritage of poverty which many of these governments have inherited from colonial days.

"We must do more than we have done yet to recognize and applaud the work of those newly free nations in support of the principle of responsible self-government throughout the world.

"Moreover we must never forget that the image we as a nation cast abroad, the real Voice of America, is mightily affected by what we do at home. One of the best criteria for predicting how a nation will behave in its international relations is its record of achievement among its own people. We judge the Soviets in this manner, and part of our skepticism about their sincerity on world issues is grounded in our awareness of how brutally the Kremlin has conducted its domestic policies.

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"We should consider our own behavior from the same perspective. At times we have forgotten that we shall not enhance freedom by aping the enemies of freedom. Democratic institutions are not safeguarded by totalitarian techniques. To be strong we must be true to ourselves.

"With our rigid refusal to liberalize our discriminatory Immigration Refugee Acts, we make a mockery of our basic principles. Ill-conceived and discriminatory immigration legislation has been a blemish on our democratic record. It is absolutely essential that so fundamental and significant an area of America life and law as immigration be revised so that prejudice may give way to understanding, and expediency to justice.

"Our so-called 'domestic' record on civil rights has also assumed world-wide importance today. The behavior of a white jury in Sumner, Mississippi, a short time ago crowded out all other news stories on the front pages of papers in Asia, Africa, and even in Europe.

"The central principles on which America was founded are now being considered by others in their evaluation of us. Brotherhood and equality of opportunity have now become central aspects of America's national image as it is seen abroad. Just as Lincoln decided upon emancipation of the Negro slaves not only as an 'act of justice', but as a 'military necessity', so the achievement in America of racial equality and liberal immigration policies is what is now demanded on both those grounds. 'What can conquer your unpardonable pride of race?' Gandhi asked of the whole Anglo-Saxon world, and we must answer him.

"Our responsibilities and the requirements of our national security no longer permit us the luxury of temporizing and evasion on civil rights here in the United States. Communist propaganda has recognized that issue clearly, and has effectively gone to work. Our proper response both to it and to the threat of the new bombs is to do what we should have done anyway without them. Communism and the atom have only heightened our age-old dilemma of good and evil, and raised the stakes of moral choice.

"In the days ahead, the real Voice of America will project the best in our way of life chiefly to the extent that each of us, through our own voices, reaffirm our capacity for mutual good will.

"At no time has it been more important for Americans to remember that neither the arrogance of the selfish, nor the self-pity of the envied, becomes us. Neither offers us even a basis for survival, much less a salvation from our current perplexities. In the last analysis it is a magnificent thing to be caught in a situation where not one of us can save himself without saving others.

"Perhaps all of this in the last analysis is not very far removed from the objectives of the society whose 50th birthday we are celebrating tonight. Probably no single organization in America has been more responsible for injecting capable, articulate, and thoughtful voices into the mainstream of American life during the last generation than Delta Sigma Rho. I should like to think that these voices, contributing to an affirmative, constructive impact on this nation and the world, will constitute the kind of Voice of America which we have not always had in recent years, but which has now become essential. I should like to think that those words were prophetic which were spoken by our good friend, Judge Loevinger some years ago, and which were reprinted in last month's anniversary issue of the GAVEL:

"We must make and keep the Delta Sigma Rho emblem, 'the key to power', a pledge and a promise -- a pledge that the wearer has undergone a severe test of intellectual and forensic efficiency; that he has had his moral and social fiber trained and tempered, and that a broad and stable base has been laid whereon to build a life of activity, public or private; and a promise that he will use his power wisely, prudently, and conscientiously; that everywhere, when called upon, he will speak sincerely; that everywhere he will use his influence to promote 'sincere and effective speaking'. Only thus will Delta Sigma Rho ever remain 'an inter-collegiate honor fraternity that honors.'"



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