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Excerpts from Remarks by
Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey
Annual Brotherhood Meeting
Dental Fraternity of Washington,
February 16, 1960

NATION MENACED BY DECAY

✓ Sisterhood

✓ Brotherhood

✓ Civil Rights
debate

✓ Mrs H

One of the greatest opportunities of this Session of
the Congress is to approve legislation to strengthen international
medical research. We are hoping that before too long, the
House will have approved a far-sighted research bill, already
passed by the Senate. Under the bill, the United States will
strengthen world-wide research against such major diseases
as cancer, heart disease, nervous ailments, mental illness,
dental disorders and other problems. The House indicates it
may considerably alter the Senate version. But I am hopeful
that out of the ultimate Senate-House Conference Committee,

may come one of the great landmarks in international health.

Thus far, attention has naturally focussed on combatting
the major killing and crippling diseases which strike so
dramatically, cutting down human lives.

Without in any way detracting from the importance of
those diseases, cancer, cardiovascular ailments, etcetera,
we must give adequate attention to some of the less dramatic
but nonetheless insidious and damaging ailments.

Here, I refer, among others, to diseases of the teeth,
and adjacent structures. In particular, I mean the problem of
dental decay. This is, as you know, the most widespread,
single health problem of the American people.

*Dental
Decay*

Dental decay costs this nation a staggering sum. It
takes a toll not simply in terms of financial costs to the

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victims of dental disease, but in terms of human health, nutrition and happiness. For too long, dental research was regrettably treated by the United States Government as somewhat of a "stepchild." Fortunately, today, that situation has been largely corrected. But infinitely more must still be done in research. Toward this goal, the dental profession is ready, willing and eager to cooperate.

One of the recent publications in our Senate International Health Study pointed out this fact, confirmed by dental experts:

There is a priceless opportunity to learn ^{much} about solving our own dental problems by studying how and why dental disorders occur or do not occur abroad.

Already we have learned a great deal about oral diseases, for example, bu studying the teeth of the Eskimos. We have been intrigued by one foreign report that in a local study of

of dental caries in India, an average of less than one
decayed tooth was recorded per person under 15 years of
age.

Shah

If we can find out why this low rate of caries exists there,
what there is in the water, or perhaps in the food, or in
the way of life, which accounts for the low rate, then dental
science may benefit generally. (X)

our "National Enamel"

But there is a larger implication to what I am saying
tonight. The problem of decay into our national enamel cuts
much deeper. Our nation is not simply menaced by the danger
of nuclear war from without, war which can be a swift killer;
it is menaced by decay from within - decay which strikes
relatively silent for a long time, decay which is for a long
time painless but which is nonetheless a menace.

In my judgment, our nation faces critical problems of decay which dare not be postponed. The centers of many of our cities have been decaying with slums.

The purity of our waters, including the Potomac, has been decaying with pollution.

Our school buildings have been decaying, because they are too old and too full.

Our roads have been decaying from mounting auto and truck traffic.

And there is another aspect of decay - a decay of will in some high places. It is evidenced by a failure to call our people unto a high moral purpose. What purpose? The purpose of saving freedom throughout the world. The purpose of

carrying the American message - adequate American aid - to
the two-thirds of the world, racked by poverty, disease,
illiteracy and malnutrition.

~~Disarm~~
~~Intern~~ ~~Atmosphere~~

I say we must arrest this decay of spirit - this decay of
will - this decay of zeal to win.

Human
RTS

We must strengthen the enamel of freedom if we are
to have a healthy national and international organism.

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