

[May 14, 1963]

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECH BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY AT
YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL MAY 5, 1963

(JOHN BAKER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE)

INTRODUCTION: The speaker is no stranger among honored scholars.

He is one. In his last year he was captain of the State Championship Debate Team, valedictorian of his graduating class, and at the University of Minnesota, he won the coveted Phi Beta Kappa key like wearers of so many in this audience, a proof of scholarly excellence early demonstrated promised a large contribution of great service to the civilized world, as well as the honor of personal distinction. Hubert Humphrey has been teacher as well as scholar. First, as professor of Political Science at MacAlester College, and, later, in the Senate of the United States. It is his conviction, and he has acted upon it that one of the highest duties of the Senator is that of a public educator. He is, moreover, a legislative leader in the field of education, effective counselor and advocate of the National Defense Education Act, educational television, the Peace Corps, and the National Program. Time after time on the Senate Floor, Senator Humphrey has directed effectively and dramatically that needed employment and tax cuts and teachers' salaries and the serious instruction and the need for improved curriculum to prepare young leaders to carefully arrive at challenges in the the/hard century ahead of them, rather than to utilize the out-moded methods and textbooks of such a past. President Theodore Roosevelt one time was asked the definition of a "gentleman." And he replied,

a "gentleman" is a man who is at home in any company. I know Senator Humphrey best officially as the hero of the nation's farm people. But to the world in general, the Senator is best known as recognized leader in international affairs, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, official U.S. delegate to UNESCO, and many other conferences meeting at the United Nations; effective advocate for the Food for Peace Program. Senator Humphrey for many years was a strong legislative right arm to both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy in the important work of disarmament; he has been a successful fighter against Communism both at home and overseas. Senator Humphrey was the first U. S. Official to engage Premier Khrushchev in extended heated debate on Russian soil, and it has not been officially reported which one got the last word. (Laughter) And knowing Hubert as I do, I would guess that it was our speaker. Long before his eight-hour debate with the Soviet leader, Senator Humphrey demonstrated his skill to be provocative without being provoking, to disagree without being disagreeable, to be objective as all societies should without being objectionable. Some days ago a charming young lady of Yorktown class of 1963 was just leaving her home to go out with the boyfriend. She was not wearing her glasses. Her mother inquired why. "Mother," she said, "I look better to him without them, and besides he looks better to me." Senator Humphrey, these honored scholars with and without glasses look mighty good to me, and with or without glasses, you look

mighty good to us. Our speaker was two-term mayor of Minneapolis, Minnesota while in his early thirties, now in his third six-year term as a United States Senator from Minnesota. A hard-working state, a to the President, elected leader of the Senate, a truly great American, and an honor scholar grown up Hubert H. Humphrey. (Applause)

Senator: Thank you very much, Secretary Baker. And I say that you are my favorite introducer. I only regret that Mrs. Humphrey isn't to hear all of here tonight/these remarkable utterances; I've been telling her for, let's see now 27 years, that all of this is true; she tells me that it takes a few more years to prove it. It is a delight to hear an introduction such as I've just heard and know that somehow or other one or two of you may have been trapped into believing it. I have experienced tonight a remarkable sensation of pleasure and enjoyment by being able to see you receive, and I say you, I mean you honored students, receive your certificates which indicates your excellence and your achievement, your scholastic ability. I know that your principal, Mr. Kerr, is very pleased with this outstanding record that you have achieved, and I want to compliment him, because it is impossible to have this many honored students, honor students without having a very honorable and honored superintendent or principal of schools. So to you, Mr. Kerr, my congratulations, and to the members of your faculty. I also wish to say just a word to

Mr. Augur, who has spoken tonight, the President of the Yorktown P-TA. The P-TA is a needed function in our school life and community life, and I sense that the P-TA of Yorktown has been doing more than the average, if only to have sponsored this event. It has earned for itself the right of community exhibition and respect. Now, let me thank this young man, the outstanding Mr. Baker, Mr. James Baker, who, that doesn't downgrade you at all John, but young Mr. Baker has given us the message tonight that has set the tone for any remarks that I might wish to offer.

I come to you as a refuge from a classroom, so to speak. I've been introduced as a former teacher, I can say that I feel that I am yet a teacher. Sometimes not doing too well, but at least most of the time attempting to convey a message. Tonight, I'd like to speak not at you, I hope I do not speak in a tone that is in any way antagonistic, but I do hope that what I do have to say might at least provocative. I'm really not here to tell you what to think, I'm here to help you if I can just to think, so that we can think together. I learned a long time ago that it is very difficult to have new and original ideas, but I have also learned that the process of education is essentially saturation. Sometimes we achieve it through osmosis, you just have to absorb it. So what I say tonight will possibly represent to you, thoughts, words you have heard many times, but maybe we can say them anew with some new arrangement, and thereby stimulate to you new thoughts

about old problems, new thoughts about old challenges, and new thoughts about some of the new challenges. I recognize that it is a particular honor to be invited to speak to honor students. It's also a tough assignment. It's much easier to speak to members of the United States Senate (laughter). Then I know that I'm only talking to my equals (laughter). But tonight I feel quite inferior. I passed the remark to Mr. Baker and Mr. Wheeler what a fine looking group of students we have before us, and I mean that quite sincerely. I'm a parent as well as a Senator; I have a daughter, I even have two granddaughters; and I have three sons, one son in the University, a sophomore; one son graduating this year from high school, and another son who we hope will graduate some year, if he improves a bit (laughter); I've had at least one son on the honor roll, hoping to have another; so I've had what you might call the honors and the perplexities. Tonight I saw before me what we as parents look upon as our greatest pride and possession, our loved ones, our young ones. And I say to you young people that you have set a fine example for all of us. Anybody that could lose faith in America when they see you has lost faith in himself first of all. I don't say that you're angels, and if you are I would not be here talking to you. I'm not the right kind of person to be talking to angels. I'm quite sure that you're spirited young people, and I'm also very confident that you're young people that know what you want to do when set about the business of doing it.

Now you represent the best that this school has to offer. And that means a great deal, because this school at Yorktown represents the best in education, secondary education. I say that after examined the records of this remarkable educational institution. To those of you who are citizens of this community, members of this P-TA, whose sons and daughters attend this great school, you're indeed a fortunate group of people. Every group in America, and every parent in America is not this fortunate. But every parent ought to be. I have only one message tonight. It is that every boy and girl in America regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, or economic status deserves the same opportunity that these young men and women have experienced in their Yorktown school. Notless, as much or more, and in fact, until that opportunity is made available to every boy and girl in America, America will never realize its full potential. So tonight I'm going to talk to you about a challenge to our educational structure, and about what education means to our country. Many of us who are older in this audience grew into adulthood thinking that the wealth of America was to be found in the bank, or insurance company, or industry. But as Woodrow Wilson, the great teacher, a great scholar, a great President, once said "The wealth of America is in its people." And surely the wealth of America is in its young people. And the strength of America, and today we think in terms of power and strength,

the strength of America is not only in its people, but in its young people, and in its people and young people educated, trained, skilled prepared unbelievable challenges and tasks that lie ahead. Now young friends, let me tell you quite frankly, your future is going to be more difficult than that of your parents, and don't you let them tell it won't be. You will have more opportunities, but you're going to have more difficulties. For example, many of you didn't have the opportunity that I had to have grown up in a time and in a community and in a situation where I could work alongside of my father and learn the wholesome experience of work. Not to read about it, not to study it as a sociological phenomenon not to talk about it as if it was something that you looked forward to or tried to have it as part of my life. And that experience within itself is an education. Many of our young people today do not have that opportunity. I am told they arrive at what we call the 20's or the gainful employment period in their lives. I had that chance because my father was a small town druggist, he was a good citizen too, he was interested in his church, he was interested in town, city, state, he was interested in political life.

He was interested in his children and he was interested in his country. He taught his sons and his daughters as he conducted his business. But, today can I do that with my sons, and my daughter? No. The United States Senate, for example, just doesn't approve of having your sons stand along side of your desk all day. And, it doesn't approve of having people hire their families for their offices. Even if they did, the constituency doesn't. (Laughter) So we have a little different experience. And this is characteristic. I am sure that my good friend who introduced me, Mr. Baker whom I've known for many years, and respect as and as a fine government servant and administrator. He cannot take his family with him to his office. Yet, I would venture to say that his parents were able to have him alongside of them, in an experience of home life and work life. I don't know if this is better or worse. I'm only saying that it is a unique experience which many people today would need, and do not have. I think it was good, because it gave us, as I said, first of all an experience called "work". Discipline of work, the capacity to do work. Now you're going to have to learn that. Many of you, later on, which is sort of an educational retardation; this is the kind of an experience that ought to come early in life. But I a moment ago, that the strength of this Nation, the new power, the new wealth is in you. And harbored in you, yes and physical fitness, because the mind is somewhat conditioned by the body, your in you and your terms and terms of your attitude, your philosophy, because the

activity of the mind and the body is surely conditioned by one's attitude and his outlook on life. But basically, the wealth and the strength of the nation is in brainpower. Today we are about to witness another example of organized intellect, brainpower put together representing the strength of the nation. When an astronaut by the name of Cooper who was disciplined mentally physically, emotionally, who was educated in the terms of his task to the finest point, that the takeoff would orbit this earth over 20 times. Real power, real strength. I understand that a year ago your speaker was a great man. ^(WERNER VON BRAUN) And obviously he told this audience, or the audience in attendance then, the importance of science and technology. For science and technology can come only one way, through an eight billion jet and intellect. But discipline, training, education/^{the wealth of nations} is no longer in lands, no longer in gold, no longer in natural resources, in mines, in weapons. The wealth of nations today is to be found in trained intellect. In the mind, in the mind that is emancipated. In the mind that seeks inquiry. In the mind that asks questions and gets answers. In the mind that is difficult and fashioned to meet the problems of the day. This is quite a change. And if you don't think so, just look at what is the concern of the nation today. There is no talk in the newspapers today about the gold reserves and what's happening/^{to} them than there is about the reserves of power, brainpower, of potential knowlege that's in the mind, and in the

in the hearts, and in the soul of hundreds of thousands of people who have never been privileged to go on to college, and some of them who are school drop-outs in high school. If we could get America as much excited about the hidden resources, the vast amount of resources that are to be found in America in terms of the undeveloped intellect, of the undisciplined, the untrained mind that awaits the hand of the teacher, the mind of the teacher. Then I think America would qualify as being called a truly great nation. But our thinking today is in terms of extremes, in terms of , in terms of the balance of payment. All of this is important, but it is secondary. And one of the tasks of the educated citizen is to have priority, and a nation needs to have priority. And if America is to achieve its greatness, indeed, if freedom as we know it is to survive, if the state of Virginia which gave to us Jefferson, one of the great scholars and teachers and students and philosophers of all time, if a commonwealth such as this is to survive, and realize and achieve its greatness, then the emphasis must be upon education. And this is why this citizen, this parent, this public servant addresses you tonight says "that the most valuable investment we can make, and largest investment that we can make is the investment in schools, and proper school equipment, in school facilities, in better teachers, better training for teachers, in modern educational techniques, in educational

machines, that supplement educational techniques and teaching. And where is it that we spend less, rather than more in terms of the need in education. Unless it relates to what they call the national defense. Here again our thinking is out-moded. Because many people presume that national security is to be found in the Army, in the Navy, in the Air Force, in the Marine Corps, and in the weapons that these great services are able to use, or that they have in their stockpiles. But it was General Dwight Eisenhower who said approximately 20 years "that the military is but the cutting edge, the fine edge of the blade, of the strength of the American economy and the American system. In other words, it is but what really gives this blade its strength, and what really gives the life its cutting edge, that really provides the national security is what is behind the manifestation, the visible evidence, of the Armed Forces. And throughout the nation, people talk in terms of our military---of guarding the American nation. Or our military as a great defender, defense system of the free world. It has a very important function to perform, and no one should underestimate it. Of course, we need it. And we need the most modern of tools, we need the best, and the simple truth is that the military is but a reflection of the entire community. And the military can soon lose its potency, it can lose its efficiency, its effectiveness, if a rush of the blade, to use the simile, corrodes and has lost its strength. Security in America today is not only in selective service, is not only in the Armed Forces, it is not only in the massive weapons that wreck destruction that we have. But

security essentially today is a trained and educated people themselves. And every person that is untrained, every person that is not privileged to develop to the maximum his ability, his talents, his capacities whatever they are. That person detracts from the national strength. I say this to you in some detail and I trust with proper emphasis, because I am convinced that the struggle in which we are now engaged, and have been engaged, for almost a generation and for better than a generation too, since the time of Hitler and now the Communist menace, that this struggle against totalitarianism will live with us as long as this class before me and these young people who are the honored society live themselves. I do not expect that our struggle with the forces of imperialistic peoples, with communist aggressors, of communist ideology, of dictatorship, totalitarianism, call it what you will, I do not expect that it will be over quickly. Unless the earth itself is consumed in flames---man's madness by the use of his weapons. I expect that if we can preserve a tenuous peace, that we will be fighting on this matter of ideology, and of ways of life, and of economic and social systems, not for one generation, but for several generations to come. We've had a Hundred Years' War before in human history. Is there any reason that we should expect one of lesser duration when the stakes are so high in this day and age? Ask this Senator and this citizen. Appeals to my country to put the proper emphasis upon the security of America and that emphasis is upon its people, the health of its people which we do

very poorly. Too many of our elderly, too many of our young with inadequate diet, with inadequate health. To put the proper emphasis upon people, to see to it for example that such a scourge as unemployment in a nation that is more prosperous than any nation in the history of the world, to see that it is banished. This nation cannot afford to have more than 10, 15 per cent of its capacity unused when we are in a struggle for our lives. This would be exactly like being engaged in a mighty military conflict and saying that five divisions can go home and rest. No military commander would ever permit it, then why should any citizen permit it, because when I say to this fine audience that if the Italians can have reasonably full employment, and if the French can have it, and the Germans and the Norwegians, and the Danes, and Finns, and the Swedes, and the Dutch and all modern civilized nations, and the Japanese, then we can do it if we will it. If we put proper emphasis upon the problem and the search for the solution. The truth is that we have no choice. Because every day we need people who are seeking work without the privilege of work and the duty of work, every day that we permit plants to lie idle, while there is want and need unanswered in this world every day so do we weaken ourselves. We cannot justify it economically, we cannot justify it morally, and we cannot justify it from the point of long-range national security. When people say to me "well we can't do it" then I say why are we trying to reach the

moon? That makes us think that we can conquer outerspace. But we can't even deal with the problems of inner man, and the problems here in earth, the problems that are soluble, because others have proven that it can be done. If tomorrow morning the French could prove that they had a cure for cancer, and they prove that by curing their own cancer patients, do you think that America would say that it couldn't be done? We'd say, of course, it can be done, it has been done, and we will do it. Well I say with equal forcefulness, and with confidence that the truth of my statement, that if others can maintain a fully employed economy we can also. But we need to examine all of the zones, and why its being done, and get on with the job of doing it. This requires a reformation of attitudes. It means again that we must think in terms of what is our wealth, and wealth is no longer just basic lands, the new wealth of today is mixing of science and technology with finance and with management, and the wealthiest states in the union is a state which has the greatest employment, the highest standard are those states and those communities which have blended together education and business, education and management, education and finance, instead of looking upon the university as an institution separate and unattached from the life of the community. The university in many of our great areas of life today in America, has become an integral part, an integrated part, of the total economic and social life of the state. I attended not long ago in my home state, a ceremony in which ^{twenty} six Nobel Prize winners were honored. A dedication

of a new Science Laboratory, a Nobel Science Laboratory. Of the 26, 18 were presently in California; in their university, and California today knows a prosperity and knows an expanding economy and knows a growing population, and knows a future like no other area in America. Disgust begets disgust, and they have learned to place emphasis upon education; for years we have heard how the people of California, regardless of what party was in power, who the governor may have been, the emphasis was upon education. And it has paid off. Now don't misunderstand me, education is more than going to school. Very frankly, education is more than having an honor-badge, or the pin of the honor society. Hitler had well-educated people, and so does Khrushchev. In fact, may I say to you that one of the great ceremonies of the Soviet Union is what they call the Georgian Hall in the Kremlin. I have been there, and I was in the Georgian Hall which is ten times as large as this auditorium, massive. And do you know how they treat the honored students in the Soviet Union? They have the entire Council of Ministers with the First Minister, the Prime Minister, and they invite in from all over the Soviet Union, honor students from age six on up with their parents as guests of the government. And they come to stay a week in Moscow. And every boy and girl that is an honor student is received, not by the principal of the school which is in itself an honor, but he is received and commended and given the honor medal for outstanding excellence

in education by him, by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Khrushchev. The entire government, every minister is present, for this ceremony. It would be as if the President of the United States would take off from the duties with the Cabinet and the Supreme Court and the leaders of Congress, and proceeded to the largest auditorium that America has and invited the honor students in every one of the 50 states of the Union, and they were there with their parents as guests of the government of the United States, in the Nation's Capitol, and they were honored. Not only by the certificates, not only by the badge, but by the presence of the officials of the country, by the highest officers of the government, and honored by public acclaim as champions. The Soviet Union has put emphasis upon its patience. And they have taken their country in 43 years from a country of illiterates, to a country today that surpasses us in space. That equals us in many areas of science. But I will say to you that excellence in education is not just excellence in the discipline of education, in the studies, the education that we want in the Free Nation is an education that not only trains the mind, but enriches the spirit. The education of emancipation, of enlightenment; that releases you from the prejudices and releases you from bigotry and intolerance and in fact makes you free in heart, in mind, in soul, and in body. The search for the better life. This is what we call the democratic process. That there is some freedom of choice; where there are bonds that are respected, and where the education is to be judged, the quality of education by what is done to preserve and

to protect and to expand the set values. It is not good enough to have people educated who have an utter disregard for human dignity. A well-educated person is one who realizes that the purpose of education is the enrichment of one's life and the sharing of the good things of life with others. The protection of the common good; the defense and the enrichment and the enhancement of the community; he understands that an educated man is a tolerant man, an educated person is one of understanding; of forgiving; and educated man is one possessed with a desire to achieve social justice. It isn't good enough just to be efficient, my fellow Americans. Dictatorships have efficient people. And I would suggest to you that as somewhat of a student you can read the old and the New Testament, the Magna Carta, or you can read the writings of Thomas Aquinas, or if you please the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Emancipation Proclamation. And you will never find the word "efficiency." But you will find something called "love," you will find the word again and again standing out in bold relief "justice" you will find the words "equality" "liberty" "totality" "individuality" "dignity" "compassion" and a truly educated person is one that has these qualities, the love of liberty for himself and others. Liberty that is responsible, and liberty that is not licence. Compassion, a willingness to be concerned about others and recognizing that we are not "an island until ourselves."

And recognizing what happens to another injuries you, or helps you. What I am really trying to say to you is that the education that we want is one that builds better people, not only better hands and minds, but the total man. One that makes one appreciate the arts, the humanity, as well as the sciences, one that gives you an insight into yourself as well as into the problems of the day. Now what are our responsibilities? I've had many wonderfully good things happen to me in my life. One was the privilege of a university education as well as a high school education. My high school was a very small one, and it didn't take a great deal of ability to be one of the leaders in the class, the class was very small; of course I haven't told too many people about that, my children found out, however, from their mother (laughter). But I went to the university of Minnesota and I was given an education. I worked when I was in college, at the university, I think that was fortunate but I've never fooled myself, and I don't want you to fool yourself. The community gives you an education, I don't care if you pay \$5,000 a year tuition, you couldn't buy an education, it is impossible for a student to buy an education, an education provided by the community, it may be a community of your church, it may be a community of a selected individual, it may be the public, it may be the commonwealth, it may be out here where it comes from local, state, and Federal aid. I happen to be the author of Federal aid to school construction, for areas that have Federal activity, we call it *N. D. E. P.* . I introduced the first Federal aid to school construction in the Congress,

in the 81st Congress. I conducted the hearings. We didn't get all we wanted, but we got something. And this school itself and many other schools in Virginia are the recipients of Federal aid to education, and let this be clear, you are not under Federal domination. And the principal is not bought by the Federal government. And the school system has not been destroyed, nor has your moral fiber been warped (slight laughter); in fact, may I say that the reason this is such a good school is that you have enough to do, you have the resources, you have the Federal aid and many other areas of America need it. And I for one advocate it. And I don't advocate it because it is Federal aid as such, I advocate it because ^{if} it is impossible, or if it is exceedingly difficult for a local community to provide adequate school facilities, and adequate teaching, and adequate libraries, and all that goes with the school system, then it is the duty of the nation that calls upon those young men and ^{for the defense of the nation and calls upon those young men and women} women/and future citizens for the productivity and the prosperity of the nation, it is the duty of the nation in this century to see to it that the education is provided. You're not all going to live in Virginia, you may travel to every corner of America and surely many of you will go to corners of the world. Therefore, the educational structure must have some uniformity in terms of benefits. And once you receive those benefits, you have an obligation ^{a social obligation} for the rest of your life, you have an obligation to country, you have an obligation to the world because you are privileged, and

if you go on to college or the university or higher education of any kind, and I trust you will and I am positive that most of you will, remember that you are one of the chosen, remember that for every boy and girl, every young man and woman that goes on to college, many more do not go for reasons, for many reasons, sometimes economic, sometimes due to lack of incentive, sometimes due to lack of adequate facilities. I think we might ask ourselves right now, and you should ask yourself, because one of these days you will be family people, what do you expect to do about higher education? We are going to have to build more classroom space in higher education between now and the year 1980, not very far away just 17 years, than America built from the beginning of our country in the 17th century up to 1960. We're going to have to build more college and university facilities even at the present percentage of students graduating from high school continues to go on to college, even if the percentage didn't increase, we're going to have to build more college, more classroom space, more higher education facilities and space in the next 20 years than we've had in the last 300. Right away I can hear some people say "well it can't be done, if it can't be done and surrender, give up" "it can't be done" "what do you mean it can't be done, it must be done." The only people that are worth respecting today are the people who do the impossible. Anybody can do what's ok, but the astronaut says when he goes into orbit "A-OK" excellence, not mediocracy. It doesn't take much to get by, and

it takes something to do a good job. Now one of the things that America needs, and one of the things that young people can give to America is a determination to do what needs to be done, and you can do it. When we needed the atom bomb in World War II, we did it. When victory needs was needed, we did it. And the whole history of this nation, in its periods of greatness, is when leadership led this nation, to achievements which other people said was impossible, or were impossible. If you can only do what others do, you're not much. If you can do what others can't do, then you qualify for being what we call honored, or distinguished citizen. I'd like to leave you now with just one or two other observations. I've said to you that the education that you receive now, and that you will receive, and by the way, may I say to the young ladies here, we need you very definitely, not only as fine young women, but to be the mothers of the future of the country, as childbearing mothers of the men who will be the future of the country. Many times we'll serve in the capacities of government and industry, but we need you as professional people, as doctors. What makes America think that most doctors should be men. I'm convinced that the better doctors will be women. There aren't many other countries where this is the case, and if we're going to have the body of extra workers that we need, we can't divide it up on lines of sex. We're going to need more men that are teachers, as well as the women. We're going to need thousands, hundreds of thousands of workers. And America

must be willing to pay that bill. Every community in America today has a greater need of better medical care, better nursing care, homes for the aged, and the elderly. I came from my home city of Minneapolis, where I served as mayor, the city of Minneapolis is over half a million people; its population declined 8% from 1950 to 1960, it went to the suburbs. But the population of those persons aged 60 and over increased 32%. Modern medicine has made it possible for people to live longer; the trouble is that there are not very many people around to care for them, although life doesn't become a true life a good life, it becomes a

We're going to need people that are social workers instead/^{of pretending}that there aren't social problems; we're going to need many more social workers and we're going to need ladies, women in that field. We're going to have to upgrade the professional standards of America, and the way we do it is to bring more people into the profession. Into law, into engineering, into architecture, into medicine, into industry, and a host of professions. And there is a great opportunity for the young women of today and tomorrow. Now I leave you with these two challenges, one to promote education. To promote it almost as you would a conviction that you hold dearly and that you believe others should share. To make it your business to see that the community in which you live when you become a little older, that that community will be known as the community of good schools and good homes and good churches. You can judge a community pretty well by those three in-

stitutions. I want you to make it your business to make America know not as a nation of lawyers, because we can fulfill that requirement, if we have a strong people and a strong government, that is a responsible government. But I want my America to be known as the nation of teachers, the nation of leaders. The nation that relieves human suffering, because the teacher will belong to the nation and the people to teach the illiterate, to heal the sick, to feed the hungry. And you can hear how a democratic people ought to excell, because not only will we learn the techniques of teaching, but we will learn to love the teaching. And we will be able to impart it, to those who are students. Not only will we learn the science of healing, but we'll feel the sense of compassion. The Scriptures tell us that "it is better to minister, than to be ministered unto." We have been told that to heal is a great source of good. And so we'll the healers, and we ought to be, sharing our science and technology our knowledge of medicine and drugs, and above all sharing our concern for humanity. Because healing is not really therapy, a drug, or the arts and science of surgery. Healing is also love, understanding compassion. And we can help feed the hungry. I was pleased tonight that Mr. Baker mentioned that I'd had a long and firm interest in our food for Peace, because I think it is immoral, not only is it economically wrong, but it is immoral in the world that the hungry to have too much in a land of affluence and to have too much and not to share it with others. I believe that America needs to know in its own heart that we are a blessed people, and that we have been called upon to share with others, and serve, and we ought not to complain about it. If we were denied the adequacy of

diet, if we were denied an abundance of food, then we should complain. And rightly so. But you live in a land, my fellow citizens, that Lord God Almighty has blessed with an abundance the like that mankind has not known throughout human history, and which science and technology and management and the skill of husbandry and farming has brought together in an age, and has produced an abundance of the earth such as mankind has never experienced. We are one of the few nations THAT was spared the bomb and the fire of World War II. We have a moral obligation to help others, and I do not think that it makes us look any better to complain that we are doing too much. Because if we are doing too much, then how do we have so much left over. A nation that can't find place to park its cars. A nation that abounds in countryclubs, a nation that builds new race tracks and spends twice as much on commercial recreation as it does on education. Don't tell me that we have given too much. And maybe that's why I not quite as concerned about some expenditures for the help of others as some people are. I support foreign aid; I would support it out of conscience if not out of conviction, but it is good for our national security. I couldn't comfortably live knowing that others were in such need and we were in such unbelievable abundance. I also feel that we have another obligation, and that is the obligation of respect of human dignity. Now let me get it off my chest. I want to say to this fine audience, and there may be those who will take exception. But my beloved country and yours in the last few

weeks no foreign enemy could have administered such a blow. You my fellow students, and we're all students, we will never live so long after seeing the spots removed from our countenance. I think that the prejudice we have seen in the last few weeks in Birmingham is despicable. No communist could have ever done this to us, and do you know that the Kremlin steeped up this propaganda 200% in the last month, it has beamed all over the world through its networks and saboteurs, and propagandists, not what they say, but what we do. They have inundated, they have flooded Africa and Asia and Latin America with the pictures of Americans doing an injustice to Americans, and I remind this fine audience that most of the world is colored, and while they may not have learned to live well, they have learned to die and to kill. We have taught them that. We haven't yet had a chance to teach the better life, but we have out of sometimes necessity, and sometimes out of need taught them to kill. Remember India raised 50 divisions of troupes in World War II, and Africa gave to the Russian allies 90 divisions of troupes, and they have learned how to kill, and how to hate, and when the photographs of the hate of Americans for Americans are displayed throughout the world we teach them even how to hate more. What a sad day. This isn't just a matter of our own relations, but I say to every parent in this audience that what has happened in our nation in the last few weeks has made it all the more insecure for your loved ones, and I say this as a parent, I see each day less chance for my sons to live out

their good lives, each day the chance that they will be destroyed, because America, powerful as it is cannot stand alone, nor can Western countries. And the Communists and those who detest our system and our values are using our own evil as their weapon. I apologize for those citizens for what I believe is the necessity of standing up for human rights, and I say in this audience and in this great commonwealth, that unless America learns how to live in America with Americans, regardless of their race, their religion, their color, their national origin, we will never be capable of living with anybody else in far away places, nor will we be capable of giving them leadership; because you cannot talk dignity, you cannot talk ethics and morality, you cannot talk progress, and you cannot talk about human equality, and all that we talk about in our great documents of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and self-government, and natural rights, and God-given rights, and not practice them. I know that it is difficult; I'm not one who says that these things will be overcome quickly. Man's prejudices are firm and they are very, very slow in changing, but they must be changed. Just exactly as we are capable of taking a boy from a Minnesota or Illinois or Indiana farm, and making him an expert jet pilot off an aircraft carrier, landing at full from stopping that plane in 350 feet and carrying more fire power than all the fire power carried in World War II. And I've seen it. An nineteen year old boy with a twin engine

bomber fully loaded with megaton weapons landing aboard an aircraft carrier, and taught how to do it. A boy that possibly was having difficulty riding the tractor only a few years or a few months ago, if you can teach a boy how to leave the clean life of the countryside, and put him into the unpredictable, unbelievably hazardous life of modern, military destruction and defense, you can teach people how to live together. We are going to teach them, or we are going to be willing to be taught, or we are going to have a miserable life. Then too we must live together, or learn how to live together as a nation. And that's why this Senator and this speaker to you tonight tells you that the United Nations is one experience, and one experiment in this living together. And when we live together with anybody there are problems.

And is this community so unbelievably different. Families have trouble, communities have even more, and states and nations have trouble, is it any wonder that there are difficulties in the United Nations, and all nations are not equal, nor are all people equal in their abilities. They are to be treated equally before the law; they're to be treated equally in terms of their dignity as individuals as created by their Maker, but the U. N. represents for us a free people an experiment in living internationally, it represents for us an experience in working towards an enduring peace, and it represents another sound investment in peace, peace is an operation vital to us. And my dear young friends, if we

don't have peace, what are you educated for? You know that your elders have three weapons that can wipe out you and all your friends off the face of the earth, and let no one tell you to the contrary. If there is any one Senator who knows, it is this one who has been privileged to sit in the high councils, and it is this that we have the capacity to destroy all of God's creation, not once, but twice to wipe it off the globe, to over-kill; now I believe that we must have the sense to arm, and I vote for these measures. But I say to you that the paths preserving the peace require a greater degree of patriotism than even the paths providing the defense. And when I think of men like Dag Hamersjold, Trygev Lie, U Thant, men who have been the Secretary Generals of the United Nations, I say to you that these are great men, these are real patriots, because their lives are dedicated to one of the greatest attributes, or one of the greatest vocations and avocations of all time, peace and "blessed are the peacemakers"; we need more talk about this; you don't have to be a theoretician, you don't have to be some kind of an oddball to be for peace, the oddballs are the one that are not, because perhaps to you to become an honor student, to be burned to be destroyed, you became an honor student to be honor to creation. And you have no right morally, politically, ethically to destroy that which you have not created. And you have no right to destroy God's own creation, and therefore the dedication to peace seems to me should be with a religious fervor, and a deep sense of personal commitment. This is why we need the United Nations, I know it is the best we have. This is why we must think

in terms of how we can rid mankind of his ancient enemy---of poverty and illiteracy and of prejudice. Because unless we rid ourselves of these enemies, surely as we are gathered in this room, those who find these enemies their allies the dictators the people who have no regard for human dignity will conquer this earth and rule like beasts. We were not put on this earth to permit mankind to be destroyed, we were put here to help in his emancipation, and his deliverance, and in his enrichment. I hope that you will think of these things, you and I are not going to settle all these problems, but we have a duty to try to make some contributions. And I have a feeling that the young people I see before me tonight will make more than their fair share of contributions. And I want to congratulate you, and I want to commend you, you have gladdened my heart and made me feel much better as an American, and as a man. Thank you very much.

FINIS

[May 14, 1963]

COPY

Notes for Address by
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Scholastic Honors Night
Yorktown High School

Arlington, Va.

May 15, 1963

You honor me by this opportunity to address you tonight. The students here tonight represent the highest scholastic achievements at Yorktown High School. And Yorktown represents the best that our system of secondary public education in America offers.

This meeting tonight also represents what I consider to be the new and most important strength of this Nation---an ever growing body of educated and skilled people.

Our National strength has many bases. But in an age of technology and increasingly complex and challenging domestic and international problems, our real power is brainpower.

We as a people and a Nation and as free men and women can not hope to win the struggles against totalitarianism and human and social need at home and abroad with armies, weapons, machines and dollars alone. We

can not hope to develop greater opportunities for all men in all lands with the raw use of equipment and wealth.

The most important elements in our formula for human progress are bound up in our intellectual capacity. We need what you have to offer: imagination, intelligence, talent, skills and---above all---education in the techniques and attitudes necessary for modern times.

Frankly, you at Yorktown are lucky. The opportunities you have here are near the top of the scale of educational standards in America today.

There are other schools, other communities, other states and entire sections of our country which do not give to our young men and women the same chances that you have.

What we and what every responsible citizen must realize is that education is an investment in our Nation's strength---in our economic productivity, in social and political responsibility, in scientific and technological progress.

This Nation looks to its youth to fill our military and security needs.

COPY

Every patriotic American supports the system of Selective Service, the Armed Forces and the use of our young men to give us military strength.

But our national security, now and in the future, requires more brainpower, not just more military power. Every responsible citizen should voice as much support for investment in our educational systems as in our defense systems.

Today, we can not be satisfied with an adequate, passing grade for our educational systems. We need to build our educational opportunities and facilities into the best, or we will find in a few decades or sooner that our Nation has become second-best to another power which does not have our dedication to freedom and the individual dignity of man.

We need today and every year the best educational techniques for our young men and women.

We need the best equipment and facilities in which they can study.

We need the best teachers we can train.

These are the real elements for progress---and, indeed, survival.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org