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REMARKS OF  
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

at the

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D. C.  
January 11, 1964

(Senator Humphrey, Vice Chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, presented the report of the Committee at the Democratic National Committee meeting. Following the description of the Committee's activities, Senator Humphrey gave the following extemporaneous remarks.)

I know that every Congress takes its kicks. But I want to go on record here without any fear of being proven wrong that when the four years of the Kennedy-Johnson Administration have been completed and the record is tabulated, that the record of the 87th and the record of the 88th Congress, both Democratically-controlled Congresses, will be one of the most outstanding records in the history of the Government of the United States.

... Applause ...

I know we have our limitations and we surely have been told about them. But I want to remind my fellow Democrats that you don't improve your situation by joining in on the clack. You better start finding out what has been done. And plenty has been done. After all, this is a national election year. The last national election was in 1960, a hard fought campaign. And I might add that when I saw the other night the film "The Making of a President" and saw the Republican candidate in action, I can't understand yet how he got as many votes as he did.

I have been proud to be a part of the team that has carried on the New Frontier, and the New Frontier is still our goal, our objective and our commitment. The Republicans belong to the Lost Horizon, and believe me they deserve it.

So let's just take a good look at what we have been doing. I just jotted down a note here. I had no intention of reviewing this, except as I looked out over this audience and saw some people who had talked to me and had written to me about this Congress of ours and these Congresses. I ask you to put it in proper perspective. You are the custodians, the stewards, so to speak, of a political party that has been given responsibility for governing this Nation for a four-year period. At the end of this four-year period we have to come back and make an inventory and a report to the stockholders, the people of the United States, the citizens. Well, first of all, we inherited a political structure that was creeping along in serious trouble abroad, its money system literally on the rocks in terms of international payments; its prestige abroad at low ebb; unemployment mounting and the economy slowing down to at best a creeping pace.

It was President Kennedy that asked that we get this country moving once again. This is a big country and it took a big man, with big ideas and great determination to get this country moving. And we got it moving under his leadership. We got it moving to a point where today instead of talking about a \$600 billion economy we have it; where the morning newspapers tell you that unemployment is still going down, not up; where price levels have been stabilized, where our balance of payments situation internationally is better than it has been in five years. These are just a few of the things.

Where a President of the United States today can talk about peace, can negotiate for peace, and not negotiate from fear, and not negotiate from weakness, but negotiate from strength; where we command respect from the Soviet Union to a point where they are willing, at long last, to talk more reasonably and sensibly about the problems that exist in the world.

This didn't happen easily. Your Government and the party that made possible this Government, has strengthened America to a point where it is the uncontested political and military and economic power in the world today. No

combination of powers can even stand up against us. This is a record to be proud of.

... Applause ...

So our President, Lyndon Johnson, our President today, can offer some overtures of reduction of arms which helps the economy, which promotes an attitude and an atmosphere of peace and understanding, and he can do it safely, securely. Why? Because in the years from 1961 to this date, that great President and fallen leader that we loved so much gave this country the tools, the sinew, the strength, by asking the Congress of the United States and the American people to provide that strength for our military establishments, for our diplomacy, for our foreign aid, and for all that makes up our security. Be proud of this. Know this record. This just didn't happen. It was worked on. It was planned. It had to be legislated, and it had to be executed and administered, and we did it.

Let me just say a few other things. This is an Administration - and I talk about the Administration in the same terms as it always has been. Remember that great line in President Johnson's address following the death of our great President Kennedy, when he spoke to Congress? He said, "Let us continue." And don't you forget that line. That is what you are here for. Let us continue.

The Program that President Kennedy had was a program that President Johnson gave his thought to, his inspiration to. He was a part of it. This was a team. I know. I sat there with these men. I worked with them. We are continuing a program. Yes, we will add to it, but the program today is the Kennedy-Johnson program. That is our program and you have an obligation to take it to the American people.

... Applause ...

Area Redevelopment that has helped your areas; accelerated public works which have helped your communities; nursing homes, more nursing homes built for our old people in the last 3-1/2 years than in the preceding 200 years, under this Administration. Urban redevelopment, housing, college housing, more housing built for the elderly in the last 3-1/2 years than the previous 100 years, under your administration. Know it. And we haven't even started. We ought to be doing more. If we can get rid of some of these reactionaries that stand in our way, we would do more.

Minimum wage extension, Social Security improvements, the food stamp program for our needy, the expansion of Food for Peace, the school lunch program, the milk program - little things, yes, but affecting the lives of people.

Farm credit, the Small Business Administration - they doubled their activities, doubled them, for every little independent businessman in America.

Modernization of the defense establishments, streamlining of the Pentagon and the Defense Department.

And when you get into the field, my friends, of education, never in the history of America has more been done in the field of education than in the past 3-1/2 years. The broadest, most comprehensive program of aid to higher education that any free nation in the world has ever known passed, presented to the Congress by President Kennedy, passed by the Congress while President Kennedy was yet in the White House, and our leader, and signed by President Johnson, the National Defense Education Act extension, a huge expansion of vocational education and technical education. We moved out of the frontier of education for the young.

Mental health - the greatest advance in the field of mental health and the first major attack on the area of mental retardation by any country in the history of the world. It is a massive program and it has been accomplished under this Administration.

Aid to medical schools, schools of pharmacy, schools of nursing, and other professional schools.

Remember that record. Then I add that we had some things in the foreign policy that we can be proud of.

The Peace Corps - the finest demonstration of the spirit of America that this country has ever known, and under very able direction, I might add.

The Disarmament agency, which made possible the negotiation of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The Alliance for Progress.

And a host of other activities - National Defense, space activity, the program to combat poverty. I will leave you on this note: Weren't you impressed with that message to Congress the other day? Isn't that a movement for action?

... Applause ...

The Republican leader in the Senate said, "Why, that is a blueprint for paradise." I didn't want to go quite that far, but if he thinks that is the case, I will buy it.

There is one thing for sure, you will never get a blueprint for paradise from a Republican. You can rest assured of that.

... Applause ...

But it is a blueprint of progress, and it builds on what we have already created, and it extends that which we have created. It goes back to the days of Franklin Roosevelt, right on up to this present moment. This is a party that recognizes that our duty is to people. The Republican party forgets that. If there is any one thing that I feel sad about, it is that during the eight years of Republican administration, it wasn't only that the Government forgot the poor and the needy, but it was a kind of planned indifference. If four out of five were getting along well, why worry about the fifth?

This administration isn't content to be proud and happy about the four out of five doing well. We want to know what we can do to help number five, the fifth, the one that may be lost.

So the President of the United States recognizes that there is poverty in our midst of plenty, and he says, "We will wage unrelenting, unconditional war against it." I felt better when I heard that, because the Democratic party is only worthy of respect when it is a party of ideals and idealism, enthusiasm and conviction. That is what wins us elections. The reason it wins elections is because people respect that from a great government of the people.

So we are going to do something in this Congress. We are going to forward this program of war on poverty. We are going to pass this Tax Bill, and inject into this economy billions of dollars of new capital for new jobs, new investments and new expansion. Make no mistake about it. We are going to pass the most comprehensive and effective and, may I say, socially just civil rights legislation that has ever been passed in the history of the United States.

... Applause ...

I make one plea to my fellow Democrats: Why can't we do this without tearing each other apart? Why don't we do this like ladies and gentlemen? Why can't we do this without prolonged, unlimited debate? We know these things have to be done. We know there is no room in America for second-class citizenship. We know the day of the past is gone.

My plea is not to put the blame on anyone. If anyone is to blame, we are all to blame for what has happened. Therefore, we all ought to work to try to remove this spot, this ugly spot, from our countenance. We have today in the White House, as if it was almost an act of - well, indeed it was an act of - fate, a Southerner, a man from the South, who today will lead this Nation into a united program of equal rights for all. What a great opportunity this is for America.

... Applause ...

All that I ask as a legislator is that the Party that I am a part of admonish each of us to conduct ourselves with good manners, good taste, firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right. But with malice towards none and with charity for all. Those are the words of a great President.

As I have said a number of times, there is plenty of room in this issue of civil rights for the party of Lincoln to join with the party of Jefferson and Jackson, and other great Democratic leaders, to accomplish what is a national program for the Nation, for all of us. This ought not to even be a partisan enterprise.

I think the standard of conduct that we must have in 1964 will have to be judged every moment by whether or not what we are doing is worthy of the memory of the man who graced this Nation, who commanded the respect and the admiration and the affection of millions of people everywhere in the world. The Democratic Party has unusually heavy responsibilities in the months ahead. We have the responsibility to carry out the commitments and promises of the New Frontier, for the Captain of that New Frontier, who is no longer with us.

We have the responsibility to do this in a manner that is dignified and responsible and honorable. As President Johnson said, we are not going to discuss personalities. We are going to discuss issues.

We are not going to get into the petty little peeves of politics; we are going to be working on principles. I say to my fellow Democrats, every one of you that mourned and now mourn the loss of John Kennedy, the best thing that you can do is to be worthy of his faith, to be worthy of his memory. The only way that I know that you can be worthy of that is to see to it that the man that he selected as his partner at the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles in 1960, that Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States, has our unqualified support, and that we serve notice upon this Nation that we intend to see that he is re-elected with a great and smashing majority.

Thank you very much.

... Standing applause ...



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