

ADDRESS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
BEFORE THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S PRESS CLUB
JANUARY 6, 1965

Thank you very much, Madam President, Members of the Women's National Press Club, Members of the 89th Congress, Members of the Society of Isaiah - "Come let us reason together" - and Members of the Order of the National Consensus.

I am happy to be with you tonight - happy to have participated in what Senator Murphy has appropriately called "The greatest show on earth." The only trouble is you never know when it starts and when it is over. If you don't believe it, ask Mike Mansfield; he can tell you.

I have been taking down a few notes tonight. I have enjoyed looking at these speakers. They all come up here with this casual sense of informality, as they reach in their pockets and pull out their well-written speeches.

I can't help but keep remembering what the President of the United States has told me. He has told me several things that I ought to remember.

But one of them I think I remember rather distinctly. He told me to keep my eyes open - and you can imagine what the other thing was.

Mr. President, I want you to know that I have been keeping my eyes open, and I have been surveying and assaying this great assemblage this evening.

I am happy to report to you, Mr. President, that the distinguished Ambassador from the Republic of France, the distinguished Ambassador from the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics have both been very happy tonight, as has the entire audience. I think that is a great accomplishment in the field of international and domestic developments.

The President has also made some other demands upon me, some of which I have fulfilled - one of which, by the way, he should have remembered, which he didn't. He should have quoted Senator Hayden.

I heard Senator Fannin tonight say, "You can't misquote silence." Gosh! I wish I'd have heard that some years earlier.

I've made all the sacrifices that any man ought to make for public life.

I have resigned as an officer of A.D.A.

I've ridden horseback down at the Ranch.

I don't know what more a man can do to prove his fidelity and loyalty.

I've heard some other things this evening and pondered a few that haven't been said that have caused me to make some comments, limited and extended as they may be.

First of all, I want to say something to my successor in the United States Senate, Senator Mondale, about the gag you pulled up here about shaking hands and taking pulse. You have been doing this on McCarthy and Humphrey for 10 years. I've never had a budding, young politician of Minnesota ever come up with a smile on his face and say, "How are you?"

That isn't what he means. He has a doctor right alongside of him who says, "How are you? I hope not well."

This fellow has also indicated to you something which has caused me some concern. I noticed today that the distinguished Majority Leader was going to appoint a Committee on Ethics.

I want to say right now, Senator Mansfield, you want to look into this fellow Mondale. He is going to share half of his salary with his predecessor. He'd better, or there will be a conflict of interest.

Never has this distinguished Press Club had a speaker so well prepared and so underpaid in all of its history. Bobby - Senator, I should say - I want you to know that it wasn't only "Joe" types who got elected on his name. Name me anybody else who got elected with a name Horatio.

I have been watching this Senator Robert Kennedy who just pulled a big power play on Senator Ted Kennedy by getting that Internal Revenue office in New York instead of Boston.

I've been watching that back row.

I wonder if he really knows that Senator Mansfield, Senator Russell Long and Hubert Humphrey know that all the business of the Senate that is important is concluded in the Cloak Room. This fellow is just close to the seat of power back there.

Well now, let's see, what other random remarks I have on this.

Oh yes, yes, yes, I don't want to leave my Republican friends out of this.

I'm supposed to give some advice here and I will get around to that, but until I do I thought maybe I ought to say a few things that are close to my heart. That word "heart" has some appeal to me after the recent Campaign.

I want to say to all the Members of the House of Representatives that you look so joyful here tonight. There are a large number here. There's Hale Boggs whom you'll see for months ahead.

I want to say to every Republican Member that "In your heart you knew there was a Ford in your future." Now we had a Ford in our past; I hope we can keep him with us in the future.

Senator Mansfield, I want to say to you as the Majority Leader that whenever you are just a little short in the Senate, remember you have Long and he will deliver; he'll do all right.

There are 71 Senators here tonight, according to our Madam President, Miss Ottenberg. There are more Senators here than Senator Mansfield will see between now and next Fall.

I have some reason to know why they are here. They heard that the Vice President was supposed to make a short speech and be silent. Well, Mike, you will have me silenced very shortly. But up until now, I want you to know you have to respect me. I am just a citizen and a taxpayer and I am loaded with gripes.

Now, I want to give my advice and it is going to be very brief.

First of all, it is the greatest privilege in the world to serve in the Congress of the United States. Anyone who serves there knows that. It is not only a fellowship, a friendship and a partnership but it is a fellowship of responsibility.

There are a few notes of advice that are always worthy.

I might say in some jest and in some truth that you want to stay very close to this Women's National Press Club. Just stay close enough to make it interesting and not enough to get into trouble.

And then there are two rules you should follow. I speak to you now of the spirit, not of partisanship but of the spirit of the Great Society where we are all brothers and sisters - for a day or two at least.

Two rules: 1) I want you to respect and follow your leadership; 2) to maintain your independence.

Now let me delineate in some detail what I mean. First of all, as a Democrat, follow your Leadership, and as a Republican be independent.

Then, may I say, whenever you are in doubt, remember you are with the vast majority of the Congress of the United States.

Ladies of the Women's National Press Club and my colleagues in the Congress, guests and friends, what greater privilege is there in this day and age than to be a public servant in the greatest democracy on the face of the earth! What greater responsibility is there than to know that the decisions that we make individually and collectively may well determine the future of the world in which we live! What greater honor is there than to know that when you are elected to a high position of public trust that you occupy a position of honor.

And there is no substitute for honor.

There is no substitute for integrity.

There is no rationalization or explanation that can ever, in any way, explain away when you have defiant evil.

So I say to the Members of the Congress, new and those of us who have served together throughout the years, we are indeed a very, very fortunate people.

We who have been chosen and elected and selected to represent the people of the United States in this the second half of the 20th Century, not only have the responsibility for America, but we indeed have some responsibility for mankind.

I join with every citizen in every land who believes that the purpose of Government and the purpose of organized society are to provide an environment in which mankind may be emancipated from his fears and from his prejudices, in which freedom - freedom as we understand it and know it - may emancipate the mind and the spirit so that mankind may be worthy of the blessing which has been his, the blessing of knowing that he is a member of a brotherhood in a Great Society of one people in one world blessed by one God.

Thank you very much.

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