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mDuke

*Immigration
Refugees*

Address of

Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey

before the

American Immigration & Citizenship Conference

March 4, 1965

Washington, D.C.

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Celler*

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Sen Kennedy

Sen Kistner

Sen Fong

I welcome this opportunity to talk with you about
a long overdue piece of legislation -- legislation to
amend the immigration law to remove the discriminatory
National Origins Quota System.

Since your Council represents many organizations
in the immigration field, I appeal for your continued
help and support. It is through efforts such as yours
that the public increasingly realizes that our present

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immigration law is based on the unacceptable theory that some persons are better than others because of their ethnic origins. ^{recently by civil Rts Act} We have removed all elements of second-class citizenship from our statute books. We must, similarly, remove all elements in our immigration law which suggest that there are second-class people.

We can no longer delay in bringing about needed changes in our basic immigration law which, in its present form, dates back to ^a climate long since past.

Like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an "Immigration Act of 1965" would serve to align us with the times and conditions of today. This Administration now has proposals before the House and Senate which would give us the statutory tools to practice what we've long been preaching.

We are not proposing an omnibus bill. We are not

proposing unlimited immigration. We are not proposing
any changes of the present law's security and qualitative
safeguards.

What we are proposing is to abolish the discriminatory
provisions embodied in the National Origins Quota System
which now asks "Where were you born?" and not "What can
you do to benefit the United States?"

Someplace in American history, ~~Americans~~ ^{we} who were
~~immigrants themselves~~ began to believe that the
geographic, ethnic and national origin of a person
determined his suitability as an immigrant. ~~Subsequently,~~
this belief was ~~codified~~ ^{codified} into law as our national
~~immigration policy~~. That codification is unjust. We
^{should} Americans judge each other on the basis of ability,
industriousness, intelligence and integrity. These
judgments are the keystone upon which our free society

is built. Yet our immigration law, unlike most of our laws, continues to imply judgments on our fellow man outside the United States on the basis of national, geographic and ethnic origin.

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~~Whether man wants to come to the United States or not, he is left with the impression that our standards of judgment are not based on the merits of the individual-- as we claim to judge men -- but instead are based on bias and prejudice.~~

~~Thus it is not difficult to understand the impact our immigration laws have on people abroad and their effect on our national interest.~~ If for no other reason than to tell people around the world the basis on which we actually judge ourselves and others -- not to speak of the contributions all immigrant cultures and traditions have made to our way of life -- a revision of our immigration laws is fully justified.

The history of immigration to the United States is really the history of this country. As far back as 1644 people speaking eighteen different languages were living side-by-side peacefully in the town of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island.

A roster of pioneers in the organization of many of our industries would fill many pages. Among them:

-- John Jacob Astor (a German immigrant) was the great pioneer in the fur industry;

-- Andrew Carnegie (a Scottish immigrant boy) -- founded the American steel industry;

-- Joseph Pulitzer (a Hungarian immigrant) -- made a great contribution to journalism;

-- Michael Cudahy (Irish) was one of the most successful figures in the development of the meat-packing industry;

industry by German immigrants.

Many of these immigrants entered our country as children -- young and unknown. They attended our schools and our laboratories. Their drive, their imagination, their desire to "prove themselves" helped to make United States industry the greatest in the world and our standard of living the highest.

Refugees who fled from ~~Nazi~~ tyranny, such as Albert Einstein, ^{of Europe} were persons of great distinction who contributed immeasurably to our scientific and cultural development. ~~that the war of Italy~~ Others were small children, who fled with their families to this country for safety. Today they are working with other young scientists in our laboratories, helping to conquer space. The "spirit" that is so typically American -- the welcoming of people of all backgrounds and the freedom of opportunity -- has helped the immigrant and the refugee, who in turn, have

helped and continue to help the United States. The most
energetic and hard-working people of each American
generation have been those newest to our country.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was always
mindful and proud of his Dutch heritage, reminded us
on several occasions that "we are all immigrants" and
that the contributions which first generation immigrants
have made to the cultural and economic life of our
country is in no small measure responsible for our great-
ness.

Who can deny that our present national life has
not benefitted by the distinguished services of a

D.S. Saund, former California Congressman born in

India. Has not our cultural heritage been enhanced
by the proven talent of an I.M. Pei ("pay"), Chinese-
born architect now designing the John F. Kennedy

Tong

Memorial Library? Are we not grateful to the forebears

who gave us the eminent contributions of a Bunche at

the UN, a Grounouski, a Celebrezze and a McNamara in

the Cabinet? ^{or} A Humphrey to the drug business?

~~We believe that~~ American immigration policy as
expressed in our laws is important both to our foreign
policy and the domestic welfare of the United States.

note

L The National Origins Quota System does not truly

reflect the real character of the American people --

and it gives a false image of our thinking to the world.

Its effect is that a Greek is not as welcome as a Pole,

and a Pole is not as welcome as a German. And it is

based not on what you may be today, but on where you were
born.

and so it is important that our immigration laws reflect
our national character and objectives more accurately.

L Surely our concern is not for the accident of place of
birth but for the inherent worth of the man or woman

who seeks to come here. This was our joint concern back in 1952 when we stood together with President Truman against the Immigration Act of 1952. On that occasion we did not prevail. Today I am confident we shall prevail.

↳ We are confident the Congress will adopt the indispensable reforms which this Administration has proposed to end discrimination in immigration. I know we can count on you for your intensified and continued efforts to help effect these needed reforms.

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MARCH 9, '65
STATLER HUTTON

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

MR. DUKE: Chairman Innes, Mrs. Murphy, Members of the Board of the AICC, Members of Congress, Members of the Clergy, friends of the cause of just and liberal immigration:

I speak to you as the outgoing President of this organization and I speak to you with the background of four years of association with and working with the prime ministers, the heads of government, the chiefs of state, of this world... I speak to you with a sensitivity to greatness. I have had occasion to make personal, subjective judgments on the qualities of the great men of the world (and the lesser men) who come here to Washington to confer with the President of the United States and our Secretary of State.

I've had occasion during the career of Senator Humphrey... I've had the honor... of introducing him as a candidate, as a senator, and previously as a Vice President.

I speak to you as well with the knowledge of what it means to be in the presence of a great man and, in that sense, and with a sense of greatness, I introduce the Vice President of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much, my very good friend, Mr. Duke. And Gee, anyone who would introduce me with such gracious and kind and wonderful words HAS to be a very dear friend! I'm delighted that this is not a gathering of scientists because then you would have to seek the truth! (LAUGHTER)

It's a rare privilege and a genuine honor to address this Conference, The American Immigration and Citizenship Conference. And I want to say at the outset how happy I am that this head table is graced by the presence of so many distinguished members of Congress - and a very distinguished former member of the United States Senate. In fact, at this meeting is the power and the influence - if I may use that word in its most honorable sense - that can make sound immigration policy a reality. You wouldn't have to go much further than right here.

And I'm particularly delighted therefore to note the presence here of Congressman Celler, Congressman Feighan, Senator Kennedy and Senator Fong... and "once a Senator, always a Senator," Senator Keating... and others that are so important to us. (APPLAUSE)

And permit me to single out my old friend from the Republican side of the House, Bill McCulloch... (APPLAUSE)... because Bill, Bless your heart, we can't do much without Bill, can we men, and we need his help.

And there are others. It's a shame to start mentioning names, but I just want you to know that the President of the United States and the people of this great Republic look to these members of the Senate and the House for the results that are long overdue, long overdue and much needed.

Therefore, Mr. Duke, I welcome this opportunity to talk with our friends of this Conference and to talk to each of you about this long overdue piece of legislation.

A Vice President isn't supposed to talk about the particulars of legislation... we leave that to the experts of the Conference. And I'm afraid that if I intrude upon their special jurisdiction that I will be appropriately and fully reprimanded. So that I shall speak in terms of the generalities, but also I would hope of the specific truths.

This legislation that I speak of is in the Senate known as S-500 and according to my informants here in the House, as HR-2580. And it's legislation that's been presented not once but several times. Presidents in my experience have been asking for legislation of this type - President Truman, President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and now President Johnson. May I say that I do not believe that four Presidents in succession can be wrong. I think they're very much right!

(APPLAUSE)

This is legislation to amend the Immigration Law to remove the discriminatory national origins quota system and to make other adjustments. Now, since your Council represents these many organizations that are so vitally concerned in this immigration field, I appeal to you once again and through you to the many people that you represent for your help and your support. You get just what you ask for in this country. The Congress of the United States is a busy place and many people come there with many requests and it is not always possible for members of Congress to sort out these requests easily on the basis of priority.

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I think I can say as one who served for sixteen years in the Congress that it helps to have the citizenry help us ascertain or determine the priorities of legislation. So go back to your church groups, go back to your civic groups, go back to your communities, your labor, your business groups, your veterans organizations and others... go back to them and ask that the voice of the people be heard, and not only the voice but the conscience of the American people. I think if you do this there'll be no doubt what will happen in the Congress. Because it's through your efforts and others like you that the public is educated and given the information that it needs to make the proper decisions. And it's through your efforts that the public increasingly realizes that our present Immigration Law is based upon a totally unacceptable theory for any free people, namely, that some persons are better than others because of their ethnic origins..

And may I say that whatever your religious conviction, you can find no proof for that statement. We are in a very real sense one people with one God... and those people who believe in the concepts of brotherhood should practise it, not only in their religious churches, cathedrals and synagogues, or whatever other institution of religious worship you may attend, but to practise it in our lives.

So I repeat it is a denial of everything that we believe in, of every prayer we've ever uttered, of every patriotic word that we've ever said, of every pledge we've ever made... that some persons are better than others because of their ethnic origins.

Now we have recently by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ... and the legislators here today have been in the vanguard of that successful effort... we have recently removed here on the domestic scene all elements of second-class citizenship from our statute books, at least the illegal parts, may I say... of practice in America.

I suggest, therefore, that we must similarly remove all elements in our Immigration Law which suggests that there are second-class people that may be knocking at the doors of this citadel of freedom for acceptance in entrance.

We can no longer delay in bringing about needed change in the basic Immigration Law which in its present form dates back to a climate long since passed. It was that climate that produced isolationism in this country; it was that climate, may I say to the workers, that denied you a chance to organize; it was that climate which produced the most vicious practices of monopoly; it's a climate that Americans have now repudiated in most every aspect of their life. It's a climate which produced the vicious practices of monopoly... it's a climate that Americans have now repudiated in most every aspect of their life. It's a climate which produced a Ku Klux Klan, which produced racial bigotry and intolerance and religious intolerance... and that climate has no place in this modern-day America, particularly when America must offer leadership to a world that is being storm-tossed by the forces of tyranny.

I therefore suggest that we cleanse ourselves of this blot on our character, this blot or this mark of second-class people

that is written into our law.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a contemporary law. It served many useful purposes and it served above all to align us with the times and with the conditions of today. And this Administration ... (and I might add again I want to make it clear that I know of no great moral issue in America that is partisan). I don't come here to speak as a Democrat, I would like to think that I am speaking today for the American people. I never considered the Civil Rights Act an achievement of Democrats; I considered it an achievement of the Congress and the President and the American people... and men and women of all parties at work. (APPLAUSE) ... worked to bring that Act about.

I do not consider the immigration policy that's on the books or the one that we seek to place on the statute books... a matter of partisan politics. Because if it's partisan politics, then it is the worst possible kind of politics. It ought to be the politics of the American people and the American conscience and we can't pass an immigration bill anymore than we can pass a civil rights bill unless men of good will and understanding and tolerance and faith put their party aside for a moment, or at least any partisanship that they may have, and start to work as Americans and as human beings... for the good of their country.

Well, now, if these proposals which are before the Congress, which are the end-product of several Administrations and the requests of many people and groups, if these proposals are passed, then your government will have the statutory tools to practise what we've long been preaching.

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Now we're not proposing any omnibus bill. There's nothing in this legislation to frighten anybody unless you're just anti-people! There may be a few that are but I don't think we ought to be worried too much about those.

We're not proposing unlimited immigration; we're not proposing any changes of the present laws' security and qualitative safeguards; we're not opening up the floodgates... What we're really doing in a very real sense is opening up the gates of American justice and compassion. The finest hours of this Republic have been at those moments when this country opened its gates to the refugee, opened its door and its heart to the immigrant, and really made the Statue of Liberty not a statue but a living goddess of all that this America means.

Now what we ARE proposing is much more important than what we're not doing. What we are proposing is to abolish the discriminatory provisions embodied in the national origins quota system which now asks the question: Where were you born? It doesn't ask the question: What can you do to benefit the United States?

I'd like to recall to this audience's memory the words of our beloved late President, who asked us (and I can only paraphrase it)... "Ask not what your country can do for you but ask what you can do for your country." We ought to put THAT philosophy into our immigration policy. What benefit can this would-be new American give to this country? Not "where were you born"...

Now someplace in American history we sort of got off the track. We began to believe the geographic, ethnic and national origin of a person should determine his suitability as an immigrant. And I'd like to remind this audience that that period has cost us an awful lot... that's the period where you rejected the League of Nations, that's the period where you had high protective tariffs, that's the period when you forgot your neighbor, that's the period when you closed your gates and you ultimately closed your banks, closed your industries, lost your homes, lost your farm and lost your self-respect. Now what more evidence do you need of the sins of a people?

The present system of immigration is a part of a pattern that almost destroyed this country, and it seems to me that as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Second Inaugural of Abraham Lincoln we might remember those immortal words: "With malice towards none and with charity for all, and with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right." And we might also remember his admonition to us about this wonderful America of ours... that this IS "the last best hope on earth." And since it is, I think we ought to make sure that it is all that we want it to be.

So, we got off the track of our great tradition and of our principle and now we seek to get back on the highway of American life. And that means that we Americans should judge one another, or each other, on the basis of the only standard that is worthy of us... of ability, of industriousness, of intelligence, of character, and of integrity. And these judgments are the keystone upon which our free society has been constructed, and yet our present Immigration Law - unlike

most of our other laws - continues to imply judgments on our fellow men, or our fellow man, outside the United States, on the basis of national, geographic, and ethnic origin.

And may I say if you judge those OUTSIDE of America that way, you have the tendency to apply that sordid prejudice to those WITHIN the family of Americans. It has a way of slopping over... that's the best way to describe it.

Now if for no other reason than to tell the people around the world the basis on which we actually judge ourselves and others - not to even mention the contributions of all the immigrant cultures and traditions and the great benefits that these cultures and traditions have made to our way of life - a revision of our immigration laws is fully justified.

I can offer many other reasons. So many great people in America have asked for this... martyrs, fallen heroes... have cried out for America to stand up and live by its commitments.

Now the history of immigration to the United States is a thrilling one. What a wonderful lesson this is! I remember when I was a student at the University of Minnesota, I studied the waves of immigration into my state and I learned a lot about politics. Ken... I found out where those Democrats were living in those days! (LAUGHTER) And I also found out where those Republicans were - and My, there were a lot of them! (LAUGHTER)

But the history of immigration almost... it really tells you the whole story, at least a major part of it. It tells you so much

of the art and of the music and of the industry and of the agriculture and of the religion of your people. I don't think you can really know your America unless you know about waves of immigration, the history of immigration.

Then if you study immigration you'll know a little bit more about history than remembering the dates of the wars and the treaties. Now as far back as 1644 people speaking 18 different languages were living side by side peacefully in the town of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island, and I might add they were living more peacefully then than now! (LAUGHTER) But there were 18 different language groups then... the first great American city, an amalgam, in a sense, or should I say a home for the many different diverse cultures and languages.

I heard the other day a phrase that I hope I can recall correctly... that the "heavenly chorus does not require unison or a oneness of voice, but harmony." We don't need a oneness of people. I've heard our President say that we do not need unanimity, what we need is unity, which is based upon respect for one another.

And this whole pattern of immigration tells us so much about the vitality of American life, tells us so much about the richness of our life in every way - monetary, industrial, cultural - every way. There is no nation that you can think of that is so fully equipped for world leadership as we, the American people, and why? Because there are so many of us of different backgrounds. And I might add sometimes I wonder whether the government of the United States really uses all of those talents as well as it should.

Maybe I shouldn't have said that. This part of the speech wasn't cleared at all. As a matter of fact, I have a tough time clearing any of this. (LAUGHTER) I get loose every so often, you know... (LAUGHTER)(APPLAUSE) Now Angie, if I get scolded, you protect me... you led me into this! I'm weak...

Well, I could go down and list, for example, if one wanted to think about it, the great achievements in industry and start citing the names from the watch that I wear (I'd better be careful about the commercial)... to the radio that I use. Why, I must say to my good friends here of ~~so~~ many different backgrounds... I just noted here in this little library out in my hometown, the first library I ever saw, it was a Carnegie Library... Scottish immigrant boy by the name of Andrew Carnegie founded the American steel industry... and those who are journalists surely remember Joseph Pulitzer who was a Hungarian immigrant... and I'm sure my friend, Senator Kennedy, can recall not only the great immigrants of Irish ancestry of HIS family but of Michael Cudahy, one of the most successful figures in the processing of foods. Oh, I've listed a whole lot of them, I'm not going to bother you with them all...

But even the yeast that Mother used to use when she made bread, the Fleischman Yeast, never would have happened without a fellow from Hungary by the name of Charles Fleischman. And then during those years of World War II... who can ever forget William Knutsen? I was asking here a moment ago about the man who founded the Bank of America... I believe it was his father who was an Italian immigrant, and if that isn't enough, why, just think of Johnny Pastore, Senator from Rhode Island,

Italian extraction... why we could go up and down this whole country... and I might ask you, just think how bad it would be in America if there wasn't a Humphrey's Drug Store! (LAUGHTER) Got that commercial in...

Well, many of these immigrants that one can recall - the books are filled with their names - they entered our country not as adults, they came as children, young and unknown, packed in ships, they attended our schools and our universities and then our laboratories.. it was their drive and their imagination, their desire to prove themselves that helped to make the United States what it is, particularly American industry, the greatest in the world, and our standard of living the highest.

I know, for example, in Northeastern Minnesota, from whence Congressman John Blatnik comes, that there we have what we call "The little United Nations," people from every conceivable group in Southern Europe: the Bulgarians, the Rumanians, the Serbians, the Albanians, the Yugoslavs, the Croats, the Czechs, the Russians... you name it... they're all there, every one of them... the Italian, the Greek, the Montenegrins, Spaniards... just all over, the whole area... and they produce more college graduates than any other part of our state, more Ph.D's... why? Because their parents, the parents of these children, even into the second generation, they have a consuming ambition to prove themselves, to advance, the dynamism of our society. They're not content - like some... restless, ambitious, and constructive.

Well, then, think of the refugees that have come to our country. And this good man who is here, Angie Biddle Duke, who has done

so much in this refugee effort... he must feel good to know how much he's done for others. We can name the refugees who made possible America's power today.

Where would we have been - had it not have been for the madness of Hitler and of Mussolini - with Albert Einstein coming to America and Fermi? Where would our nuclear power have been? I want to remind this audience that many of the great scientists of today were children only a few years ago that came as refugees, driven out by the tyrants and the despots on some basis of racism or political tyranny. America DID permit them to come under emergency legislation and America is the world's foremost power today because compassion and a sense of justice permitted us to open our gates to let people come and join us so that today the wonders of the missile age and the space age are in a large measure being explored and developed by the sons and daughters of immigrants or immigrants themselves who came here as youngsters, or as the escapees, from tyranny. And it was this spirit ^{is} that/so typically a part of our country that has helped the immigrant and the refugee who, in turn, have helped to continue to build the United States.

And I cite this once again so it shall not be forgotten: the most energetic, hardworking people in this Republic today, the most energetic and hardworking people of each American generation, have been those newest to our country. So when you want to put a little more zest into America, add a little more flavor to this great Republic, give it a little more drive, just let there be a little infusion of new

blood, the immigrant. He's restless, he seeks to prove himself.

Now Franklin Roosevelt used to pride himself on citing his Dutch ancestry, or heritage, and he would say repeatedly: "We're all immigrants"... and how right he was and how right he is.

Who can deny, for example, that our present national life has not benefited from men like this man here to my right... not an immigrant... but comes from what we frequently used to call "The Pacific Triangle." Thank Goodness, he's an American citizen from the great State of Hawaii, Senator Fong, a man of good heart, good mind, patriotism.

We've all benefited by the distinguished services of D. S. Saund, former California Congressman, born in India... the American Congress was the better because of his presence.

And has not our cultural heritage been enhanced by the proven talent of I. M. Pei (?), the Chinese-born architect, now designing the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library? Are we not grateful to the forbears who gave us a Ralph Bunche at the UN? John Gronouski, in the Cabinet of the United States? A Celebrezze, a McNamara... and many others...

American immigration policy, as expressed in our laws, is the reflection of this nation, of its convictions, of its attitude, and as expressed in our laws it is vitally important to our foreign policy and to the domestic welfare of the United States. I underscore its importance to foreign policy in a world of developing nations, in a world of the great thrust of nationalism, in a world where people are demanding their place in the sun. If America pulls the curtain on that rising sun of new nations of peoples, America will live in its own darkness and suffer the consequences.

The National Origins Quota System just doesn't reflect the character of our people and it regrettably gives a false image of our thinking to the world. Its effect is that a Greek is not as welcome as a Pole and a Pole is not as welcome as a German, and it is based not on what you may be today but on where you were born... and therefore I submit that it's important that these laws reflect our national character and objectives accurately. And the men here can see that that's done.

Surely our concern, therefore, is not the accident of place of birth, but for the inherent worth of the individual. We either believe in human dignity or we don't. And when I see these men who wave the flag and proclaim their anti-Communism, I want them to remember one thing: the difference between a totalitarian of whatever color, the black ones or the red ones, the difference between a Communist and a man who believes and loves freedom, is respect for human dignity. THAT'S the real measure and the real difference. The totalitarian has no belief in the spiritual meaning of human dignity. The free man says he believes in it. He believes that God truly created man in his own image, he believes there is a spiritual content to the life of an individual ... that is the commitment of a free man. The totalitarian sees man as flesh and blood, as something to be used, not something that should be a blessing and be blessed.

And it seems, therefore, as we proclaim our love of country, and as we proclaim our hatred of totalitarianism, or as we demonstrate how we reject it, that the best way to prove that we really mean what we say about freedom and that we really mean about communism, is to

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identify ourselves unquestionably, unalterably, with human dignity. And if you do that, you cannot leave the present law on immigration on our statutes. (APPLAUSE)

And with that I ask you to bestir yourselves... these meetings are of little good if we only come here to look at one another, you're already convinced. What we need to do when we come to the nation's capital and work with one another, study together, confer, what we really need to do is to be anxious to get back home, because the future of this Republic depends upon its teachers, upon its leaders, and every one of us has an obligation to be a teacher. We know pretty well what needs to be done, at least, in these limited areas of our concern. At least, we have the obligation to go home and join the dialogue and the debate and not to stand idly by while people make false accusation, surely not to stand idly by when we practise contrary to our beliefs.

So if I've done anything here today, I hope it's to charge you up a little bit. I'm a perennial and congenital optimist and I'm an actionist. I believe in advocacy... there are far too many people that prefer to be somewhat apathetic. I therefore suggest that those of us who have been blessed with good health, good fortune, good living, and the privilege of an education, which we've had, we make it our business to try to lead, to try to help, to ^{be} advocates for that which is our heritage.

Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)



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