

REMARKS OF
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
WHITE HOUSE SEMINAR
SHERATON-PARK HOTEL

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I am honored to be with you this morning at the Annual Meeting of the White House Seminar.

I have had the privilege of meeting with this group for each of the past three years.

First, let me say that we are pleased to have your services, if only for one summer. Even in so short a time you can make significant contributions here in Washington. And I think you will gain, too -- if only from seeing just how things work here. I hope you will

put this experience to good use. At the risk of sounding like a commencement speaker, I will say that your generation faces great tasks and that you will need all the experience and knowledge you can get.

We are surrounded today by a technology which is still in its infancy.

Information is already running ahead of our ability to use it.

International political crises can develop and involve the entire world in the time it used to take for an ambassador to a small country to draft his long-hand report on a local uprising.

Two-thirds of the world is poor and seeking to break through, by whatever means, to something better.

We have wealth and power to do great work -- or to destroy ourselves.

The point I want to make this morning may seem self-evident. But it bears repeating.

The point is this: That this nation and world will survive and prosper only if individual man can control the great forces moving about us.

As society becomes increasingly complicated -- and, therefore, by necessity, increasingly organized -- there is danger of losing sight of the individual.

It is precisely in such a complex society that the individual's needs are greatest. And it is in such a society that we need men and women able to exercise individual judgment and to take individual initiative.

That is why this Administration is committed to giving each child entering life full, equal and free opportunity for personal fulfillment, while at the same time providing for the general welfare.

↳ We seek to create an environment where each American can contribute to and share in the betterment of the human condition. We seek to create an environment in which each man may and will be able to do something for all men. This is the goal of the Great Society.

↳ But we will not reach that goal by government initiative alone. It will only be reached, finally, by the commitment, involvement and action of individual Americans, each working where he is.

Is our American society today a society of individual involvement? Or is it, as some have charged, a society of individual alienation?

The test is what is happening around us -- by the signs and symptoms. I think the signs and symptoms are positive. I think they give us reason for hope and confidence concerning the fate of individual man as well as our society in general.

There is no question, in fact, in my mind that your generation is indeed a generation of involvement.

The best example of this is seen in activity and ferment on campuses across our country. This should not be cause for worry. What is happening indicates that the excitement of dialogue and questioning has returned to the campus.

It was not so long ago that we had a college generation of apathy and complacency -- a generation of people who simply didn't care about much except their own comfort

and security, a generation moved by the herd instinct. But apathy and complacency are not the mark of your generation.

The fact is that more and more young Americans are devoting their productive years to service.

Some people call this "Do-Goodism." But let me say that I pray the day never comes in our country when a man's best efforts to aid his fellows -- to "do good" -- are rejected.

Our young people are not selfish. The young people of America know that life is better for them than it was for their parents. They know for certain that it is much better than it was for their grandparents. But they are not saying to themselves and others, "Let's just keep it for ourselves."

This generation, as the President has said, may well become known as the Volunteer Generation.

More than 10,000 young volunteers are now serving in the Peace Corps. More than 3,000 have already returned. And more than 100,000 have asked to participate in this bold and idealistic experiment.

When VISTA, -- the Volunteers in Service to America -- was launched, more than 3,000 inquiries were received from young people on the first day of business.

These were volunteers for jobs without great financial reward, for hard and often thankless service.

Nothing sums up this life better than a letter written by Robert Rupley, a Peace Corps Volunteer killed earlier this year :

"Apathy, ignorance and disorganization are the

things we want to eliminate . . . No volunteer can hope for absolute success, nor can he even expect limited success to come easily. In many ways the life of the volunteer who sincerely seeks to effect progress is miserable. That may not seem to be a very hearty recommendation for the Peace Corps, but if we as enlightened people ignore the moral and economic poverty of the unenlightened, we really slight the challenges and needs of the modern world."

The civil rights movement is surely more than anything else a product of the courage and vision of a better America held by the students who first tried to be served in a segregated public facility.

It seems a long time ago, but it was only last year at this time that the Congress responded to this moral

challenge and passed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This challenge has not gone unanswered here in Washington.

President Johnson, in two memorable speeches, -- first before a joint session of Congress, and again at Howard University -- called for the abolition of discrimination in voting, and faced directly the deeper and more profound effects of systematic discrimination on the social and family life of the American Negro.

This Congress will shortly respond to the first of the President's calls when the Voting Rights bill becomes law.

But the burden of guilt and shame -- a burden of

every American -- will not be purged until the dignity and self-respect that is the inalienable right of every citizen has been returned -- returned to those Americans who have suffered for so long under second class citizenship.

Your generation has taken this cause, has accepted it, is fighting for it. *ll*

2 Now, President Johnson has proposed a Teacher Corps to attract young people to the crisis areas of education.

The Teacher Corps will enable talented young people and experienced teachers to work where they are most desperately needed -- in areas of chronic unemployment and poverty and the ghettos of our urban centers.

Members of the Teacher Corps will offer hope to those without hope. The Teacher Corps can offer

promise that there can be a new day -- with hard work and enlightened encouragement -- such as is now being demonstrated in Project Head Start, which makes each young child an experiment into a better tomorrow.

Yes, this American generation has involved itself in the struggles for world peace, for equal rights and equal opportunity, for social justice.

What does this renaissance of involvement mean?

Most importantly I believe that it signals the return of the American spirit that was described by John Adams as "one of public happiness" -- a spirit, in the words of Adams, "that possessed the American colonists and won the Revolution even before it was fought . . . a spirit which is reflected in the life, in participation of public discussion and public action. This spirit of public happiness is a joy in American citizenship, in

self-government, in self-control, in self-discipline,
in dedication."

↳ The public business ought not to be gloomy business.
We are talking about the business of a great people
essentially optimistic, outgoing, idealistic and enthusiastic.

↳ The spirit that John Adams talked about remains
alive today.

For democracy to work, the individual must feel
a responsibility for the course his country is following,
and he must know that his desires and efforts do make
a difference. This generation has reaffirmed the
importance of the individual in the cooperative effort
of all men to improve our society.

So, as I conclude, let me salute you for your
involvement in the future of your country and the
world. It will be your responsibility sooner than you
think.

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