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REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY  
CONFERENCE WITH CITY MANAGERS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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L No one knows better than city managers what the problems are in American cities today. There is no need for me to spell them out for you. You see these problems in panavision, in technicolor, and hear them with better-than stereophonic sound. You live with them every day and you're asked -- everyday -- to find the solutions.

You know how our country has shifted from a rural to an urban population. You know about the impact of traffic congestion, of suburban growth, of overtaxed school facilities -- and the very difficult problems of slums and blight.

And many of you also know that slums have been a particular concern of mine for many years. Some of you have heard of what I call "slumism", a term that begins to describe the nature of our critical urban problems.

↳ Slumism is a sinister force. It refers not only to the physical slums of our cities, but also the psychological, and economic and social deprivation of the people who live in those slums.

To see the impact of slumism you need only travel to the center of most cities today. There you find shabby physical structures, inadequacies of transportation, accumulated debris and garbage -- and people without hope.

↳ And these problems are not restricted to the large cities alone. All cities -- large and small -- are victims of slumism.

And slumism is a direct factor in the riots and violence in some of our cities today.

People without hope -- people caught by the vicious forces of the ghetto -- are easy prey for those who seek to destroy and disrupt our efforts to build a more just and free society.

This generation of Americans has learned it is not enough to meet the threat of communism abroad with military force alone. We have learned to employ a variety of tools -- economic, political, diplomatic and military.

We must now display the same wisdom at home in our fight against slumism.

Where naked Communist aggression is encountered abroad -- as it is today in Vietnam -- free nations have no alternative but to answer this aggression with military force, but always hoping that negotiations will replace armed conflict and common sense will be substituted for irrationality.

At home, riots and violence cannot be tolerated or condoned. When outbreaks occur, peace and domestic tranquility must be restored as quickly as possible.

Freedom and justice can never be the product of terror and injustice.

But, in fighting communism abroad, we also recognize that free and stable societies cannot succeed without economic aid, education, medical services, technical training, and the broad range of assistance which only can defeat poverty and despair.

And we can do no less in our struggle against slumism at home. The ending of riots and of violence must lead to a renewed and intensified attack upon the complex causes which generate despair and hopelessness among the residents of our urban ghettos.

We have, of course, been concerned with slums for some time. In fact, in 1892, Congress appropriated money for a "study" of the slum situation.

During the New Deal days under President Franklin Roosevelt we began to face up seriously to our national responsibilities in this regard. In the 1930's, social security, public housing, unemployment insurance, and other important improvement programs became part of the American scene. And after World War II came urban renewal and a host of other new programs.

Public housing and urban renewal have set creditable records of assisting nearly 2,500 localities in America with Federally-aided low-rent public housing programs today.

More than 2,200 -- or just about 90 percent -- are in places with less than 50,000 population.

More than half the localities taking part, in fact, are places with populations below 5,000.

And of some 800 cities with Federally-aided urban renewal programs, more than 575 -- or nearly 73 percent -- are cities with less than 50,000 population.

In short, this means that these programs have not been run just for New York, Chicago or the other huge metropolises. It does mean -- and I'm always surprised that this is not more widely recognized -- that our established anti-slum programs -- public housing and <sup>urban</sup> renewal -- have been widely used by the many smaller communities which also urgently need them -- the communities you represent.

✓ We know that smaller cities serve the urban economy of the nation as much as large cities do. The small city often serves as the downtown of surrounding areas.

It is the market place, the distribution center and the provider of services for agricultural and other rural areas. And you know and I know that the problems of smaller cities can be just as aggravating as those of big cities.

Smaller cities often don't have the resources of the larger cities. They don't have the planning staffs, the credit ratings, the municipal management power to carry out the kinds of citywide improvement programs they need.

That is the reason why Congress has repeatedly given liberalized financing formulas to smaller cities in many of our urban assistance programs.

What does all this mean for you?

It means, more than anything else, more and more work.

L City managers are at the most sensitive and the most important point of friction -- the point of action -- in modern America. City managers are called upon to provide -- and to put into practice -- day-by-day solutions to our urban problems.

L It's clear to me that professional management of the business of our cities has never before been so urgently needed -- never before been such a crucial factor in shaping our lives -- never before been so critical in making local government operate efficiently. I remember, and I'm sure you remember, those fighting words of World War II: "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

L For those of you who are looking for the tools, for those of you who are ready to actively apply the kind of "Creative Federalism" we have been talking about throughout the land, there is a feeling of new opportunity in the air today.



✓ We have long recognized the necessity of combining our housing, renewal, and community development programs -- together with related planning, financing, and urban re-  
search functions, into a cohesive, unified, and effective Federal Department.

✓ And today, with the new Department of Housing and Urban Development -- ably led by one of the best urban strategists in the country, Secretary Robert C. Weaver -- we have begun to devote cabinet-level attention and national policy direction to our complex of urban problems.

✓ At about the same time that the Congress enacted the law creating this new urban department, President Johnson also signed into law a major legislative achievement -- the 1965 Housing and Urban Development Act. This was one of the most far-reaching pieces of national legislation ever put together for dealing with the problems of housing and community development.

Many of the new provisions of this Act already are familiar to you. One of the most significant -- the Rent Supplement Program -- is now getting underway.

✓ The Rent Supplement Program certainly is a major breakthrough. Under it, we are starting to provide housing for those low-income families that really need it. And we are going to provide that housing by private enterprise -- under a cooperative arrangement of public and private effort that will result in a maximum contribution from each.

✓ Preliminary approvals have already been made for more than 90 housing projects in 34 States. And the number of small cities involved is again sizeable. They include such smaller towns as Shelton, Connecticut; Chambersburg, Pennsylvania; Clarksville, Tennessee; Bayou, Mississippi; Odessa, Texas, and Farmersville, California.

All this is very encouraging. And all this shows we have been moving in the right direction.

↳ But in 1966, it is not enough. The problems of slumism are growing bigger and more urgent. We have enjoyed many successes but expectations threaten to outstrip our capacity to respond effectively.

For example, in the next ten years we will have to produce:

- twenty million new homes
- schools and classrooms for 10 million more children
- transportation systems that can move 200 million people and 80 million cars a day.

These figures spotlight the "urban gap" -- the gap between what Americans living in cities need and what they have been getting. They show that even if we can catch up to overcome past deficiencies, the "urban gap" will widen steadily unless we can mount a massive new national effort to overcome it.

Such a new effort will have to be more than a series of one-shot measures. We must help communities attack problems on an areawide basis -- to analyze and meet all the root causes of these manifold problems -- and to work out solutions that reflect the total interrelatedness and interdependence of all the complicated strands of our modern urban society.

Such an approach is incorporated in the Demonstration Cities Program -- the 1966 legislation that is now before the Congress. The Demonstration Cities Program will spell the differences between our capability to keep pace with the mounting pressures of urban change -- and the disastrous effects of slumism and defeat. This program should be supported by everyone dealing with the urban challenge.

In the 16 months since President Johnson asked me to undertake the special and challenging assignment as liaison between the White House and local government, I have learned a lot more about city problems than I had ever been exposed to even as Mayor of Minneapolis.

And more than anything else, I have learned that good municipal management -- the kind of professional competence and capability you have -- will be the most important factor for shaping our urban future.

The residents of America's cities depend on you. We, }  
here in Washington, depend on you.

The distinguished group of experts in Federal urban programs who are with <sup>us</sup> ~~me~~ today will be able to answer your questions, and bring you up-to-date on the many resources and needs they can provide.

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I know you will have an informative session. And  
I trust that you will go back home knowing that President  
Johnson and your National Government are helping you.



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