

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK

SEPTEMBER 7, 1966

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Communist

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I am indeed privileged to bring the greetings of the government and people of the United States to the delegates from more than 70 countries attending the 13th International Conference on Social Work.

This is the first time since World War II that persons from all parts of the world concerned with social welfare have met in our country to discuss common interests and concerns. We ~~have been~~ ^{are} honored by your presence, and I am confident your deliberations have been challenging and productive, *and constructive.*

Your sessions have focused upon a significant and important question -- Urban Development: Its Implications for Social Welfare.

Your findings will be studied and applied by persons in many lands who are striving to ~~perfect~~^{improve} the quality of urban life in the face of rising counter-pressures -- population growth, the rural-urban migration, food shortages, lack of development capital, insecure political institutions, and the dehumanizing forces of technology and industrialization.

< Few nations are exempt from the threat of "runaway urbanization". The growing complexity of life -- the rising interdependence among persons in this age of specialization -- almost dictates that men shall live together in vast metropolitan areas in search of a more just, secure and happy life.

< Historically the growth of cities and the rise of democratic societies were closely linked. The economic and social freedom -- not to mention the political opportunities -- encountered in the city were essential factors in evolving a new social order based on mass participation.

Today -- with the value of widespread political and economic participation well established -- we face another and equally vital challenge: to insure the sanctity of human values and individual action in the midst of this process of mass urbanization. Individual identity!

Urban centers too often resemble a kind of living hell -- where individuals are systematically and ruthlessly deprived of any real opportunity to exercise meaningful choice in these vital areas of life. They should, instead, be places where all men can experience the humanizing impact of creative and worthwhile employment... refreshing leisure activities... stimulating education... satisfying home surroundings... and efficient public services. #

In America we are in the midst of a great national effort to rescue our cities -- and the people who inhabit them -- from decay, deprivation, and discrimination.

Slumism

As President Johnson said recently, "...one word
can best describe the task that we face...and that word is
immense. In less than 40 years, the urban population of
this country is going to double, and we will have to build
in our cities as much as has already been built since the
first settler arrived on these shores."

And we know that more than bricks, mortar, glass
and steel are involved. To again quote our President:
"...It is the people who live in our cities and the quality
of the lives they lead that should concern every public
servant today."

We are all acutely aware of the violence and civil
disorders which have taken place in some American cities
over the past several years. We know that in most cases
these outbreaks involve Negro Americans or other minority
groups who live in the poorer, more deprived areas of our
large cities.

- But this violence is
not unique to American
cities. It is world-wide.
~~etc.~~

✓ We decry and deplore this violence and strife. We know that only under conditions of civil peace and domestic tranquility can we hope to achieve the progress which will guarantee to all men full equality and opportunity in their daily lives..

✓ But we also know that the lives of those who live in these areas bypassed by our national prosperity and affluence must be changed -- hard, visible evidence must be forthcoming that a new day of opportunity and achievement is at hand.

yes ✓ Hard, visible evidence in terms of self-respecting job opportunities -- and the education and training necessary to hold those jobs.

✓ Hard, visible evidence in terms of decent housing and recreational facilities which respect -- rather than destroy -- the unique character of neighborhoods.

✓ And hard, visible evidence in terms of a welfare system which preserves a sense of human dignity -- and provides the

motivation and stimulation for generating self-support and self-help and self-respect,

Generations of poverty, discrimination and despair have left scars which cannot heal in a day, a month, or a

year. Unremitting effort, expanded resources, patience and

understanding on all sides are required -- but the job can,

and will, be done.

The Hour is late, the task immense, the need compelling.

There is, however, this additional question which

must be faced in America and elsewhere: "In the process

of meeting basic material needs, how is the vitality of the

human spirit preserved in the impersonal urban environment --

especially among people who have been on the bottom rung of

our urbanized society's social and economic ladder?"

Physical slums alone do not produce the problems concentrated in our urban ghettos. If it were possible to

replace overnight the tenements in our cities with new housing,

we would not overcome simultaneously the unemployment,

juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, poor education, ill health and family breakdown.

✓ A recent study revealed that most of the rioters in Watts, California last year were employed and lived in reasonably decent housing. Yet these persons struck out blindly and senselessly against forces which seemingly denied them all opportunity to become real persons -- in their own eyes and in the eyes of society. In the terrible rioting and violence which occurred, we actually discovered persons attempting to achieve a sense of identity and selfhood.

✓ Yes, it is one thing to provide food and shelter to those in need. It is quite another to perfect a substance and style of life which preserves those human attributes necessary to the maintenance of a civilized and rewarding life.

Almost two centuries ago our founders spoke about the rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Today this promise has penetrated into the remotest corners of our urban ghettos -- and people are sensing the full and complete meaning of these historic words.

↳ This concept of freedom has never been restricted to the original 13 colonies huddled on the eastern coast of this continent. Indeed, from our earliest history we have viewed the cause of freedom in America as the cause of all mankind.

And today the affirmation, "We Shall Overcome!" or the cry, "Freedom Now" is not just on the lips of our heroic civil rights workers in this country -- but it is echoed by people everywhere.

and it came from America - the
↳ Therefore, whether we succeed or fail here in our efforts to achieve a humane and humanized urban society will have an impact far beyond the borders of this nation.

↳ We admit frankly that many of the answers have not been found. But some vital ingredients to success are known:

-- First, we must attack simultaneously the problems generated by the physical environment and by the socio-economic conditions if lasting progress in either realm is to be achieved.

 A wide spectrum of social and welfare services -- when combined effectively with physical improvements -- can upgrade both personality and environment, transforming the downward spiral of poverty and despair into a rising curve of self-sufficiency and faith in the future.

-- Second, persons who suffer from deprivation of both body and spirit must participate directly in prescribing and administering the cure.

There are great reservoirs of latent energy, talent, enthusiasm and insight to be tapped if we but possess the skill, common sense and faith to do so.

 We are, in fact, witnessing throughout America a magnificent rebirth of freedom in our urban and rural slums.

People are being offered the chance -- and the responsibility --
to help mold their future, and the future of their neighborhood
and city. *and they are responding.*

-- Third, we must emphasize those government and
non-government programs which demonstrate to persons in the
context of daily living that they really count -- that society has
a place for them. *needs them.*

Elements of the antipoverty program like neighborhood
legal services, health centers, and VISTA have this capacity
to tear down walls of ignorance and doubt which bar
meaningful participation in society at large.

↳ The National Teacher Corps and educational advances
stimulated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act can
help young minds -- otherwise destined to remain closed and
stagnant -- experience the marvelous excitement of learning
and discovery.

*- What a rewarding
experience to see young people
come alive as they are touched
by good books, beautiful music,
creative arts.*

And for those persons who require financial aid and related social services, ~~they~~ ^{these} should be provided as a matter of right -- and not as the result of complex, sometimes incomprehensible, administrative criteria and requirements.

-- Finally, in our efforts to develop area-wide responses to the physical problems of housing, transportation and urban redevelopment, we must not ignore the smaller dimension wherein the individual can experience the rewards of a rich and varied life.

Government policy must be directed toward encouraging the creation -- or preservation -- of vibrant and living neighborhood communities. A city cannot simply be a place to live -- to work -- to exist.

A city must be a community in the richest sense of the word -- a combination of material and spiritual resources which gives every person a chance to express his unique

talents and personality. *It must be rich soil in which the flowering seed of human dignity and personality grows & flourishes.*

This involves an eye for humane and intimate details -- as well as a determination to conquer the major social and economic ills. This means a concern for the small park, ^{the} play area, ^{the} corner store, and ^{the} neighborhood center,

↳ We are, ~~in short~~, coming to see that the process of urbanization can be directed toward securing the betterment of man both materially and spiritually -- if we possess the will and the wit to direct and control these forces for the fulfillment of human objectives.

Civil Rights act, the Voting rights act,
↳ Through such proposals as the Demonstration Cities *Regulation* Bill, the rent supplements program, the Omnibus Housing

Act of 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the many facets of the War Against Poverty, this nation is

seizing the initiative on a number of fronts to stop decay of people, as well as buildings.

↳ We are involving all levels of government -- and urging full participation by private foundations, universities, service groups and individuals.

One fact must remain in our thinking: America today
is blessed with the material and human resources to accomplish
this goal.

We also know that some nations have initiated
particular programs and approaches which are more imaginative
and effective than what we have attempted in the United States.

We welcome the opportunity to learn from your experiences --
we solicit your counsel and advice.

*Each country must
design its own renewal*

In the same manner, we hope you can learn from
us as ~~President Johnson's~~ *our* vision of the Great Society takes
form and substance through legislation, executive decisions,
Civil and action programs at all levels of government and the private
sector.

What task is more vital than liberating millions of our
fellow men from a life of misery, poverty and defeat -- *what challenge*
is more satisfying than enabling them to exercise qualities which are uniquely human --
the ability to create, to judge, to accept rights and responsibilities,
to use freedom, to acquire dignity and self-respect?

With this sense of common purpose and identity
among the peoples of the earth, we cannot doubt the
eventual victory of the human spirit -- or the achievement
of human freedom -- even as we build cities worthy of man's
highest aspirations.

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Vice President Humphrey's Address Before the Plenary Session
of the XIII International Conference of Social Work

September 7, 1966

My good friend Whitney Young, who has undoubtedly stimulated you with a very exciting address this morning, Dr. Winston, and the many delegates who are here from -- what is it? -- 74 countries in our great world, we welcome you--belatedly, but welcome you once again-- to our Nation's Capital.

I am indeed very privileged to be able to bring the greetings of the Government and the people of the United States to the distinguished delegates from more than 74 countries attending this XIII International Conference of Social Work. I am sure that you have heard from many of our governmental representatives, but for me this morning this is a very happy day, to be able to share some time with you and to be in your presence and once again to extend the hand of friendship and a good neighbor to good people who are dedicated to good work.

This is the first time since World War II that persons from all parts of the world concerned with social welfare have met in our country to discuss common interests and common concerns. Oh, how refreshing it is to meet together to talk about things in which we do have common interests rather than diverse interests!--to meet together to plan ahead for a better world, rather than to argue about this old world. We are very honored by your presence and I am confident that your deliberations have not only been challenging and productive but are constructive and offer a ray of hope to millions and millions of people who cannot be with us today to perceive and to understand what you are doing.

Your sessions have focused upon a very significant and important question, a question that commands the attention of leaders in countries throughout this world, countries that are industrialized and countries that are developing.

The subject "Urban Development--Its Implications for Social Welfare"-- Dr. Winston, I am sure you have some appreciation of that problem in the United States--and your findings will, as I have indicated, be studied and applied by persons in many lands who are striving to improve the quality of urban life in the face of rising counter pressures, counter pressures such as population growth, the rural urban migration which is a universal phenomenon, food shortages, the lack of development capital, insecure political institutions and, above all, the dehumanizing forces of modern technology, science and industrialization.

Man is fighting today as never before to preserve his identity in the mass movement of humankind and the fantastic change that sweeps over this world because of industrialization, technology and science. Few nations, if any, are exempt from this threat of runaway urbanization--and I know of no better way to describe it than to call it "runaway urbanization"--almost out of control. The growing complexity of life, the rising interdependence among persons in this age of specialization almost dictates that men shall live together in vast metropolitan areas in search of a more just, secure and happy life.

And the search goes on relentlessly, even if at times not successfully. Historically the growth of cities and the rise of democratic societies were closely linked. The economic and social freedom, not to mention the political opportunities encountered in the city, were essential factors in evolving a new social order based on mass participation.

As I entered this hall today I was privileged to meet the representative from Greece. Can we ever forget the Greek civic state and what it meant for the cultural life of the people? indeed, for the better life of the people. This was one of man's most impressive efforts in attempting to provide an environment worthy of mankind. Today, with the value of widespread political and economic participation well established, we face another and an equally vital challenge to insure the sanctity of human values and individual action in the midst of this process of mass urbanization.

We face the task of individual identity, and it takes more than an identification card to assure individual identity!

I will confine most of my remarks to the experience that I know best, namely my own country. May I say to my fellow Americans that if I seem to be critical do not be alarmed because really the measure of one's strength is his willingness, or his capacity, to admit his limitations. It is only the weak and the insecure who proclaim that they are the best. It is only those who live in fear and doubt who seem to have all the answers. The fact is that each and everyone of us representing our respective countries in this Conference know that man has not found the answer to his problem of how to live a meaningful life, how to enrich that precious life. We are here today with that purpose in mind, searching relentlessly for answers to the purpose of life, namely to make life rich and meaningful, and dear and precious. So I speak of our country--my country, the United States. Sometimes urban centers, too often, resemble a kind of living hell where individuals are systematically and ruthlessly deprived of any real opportunity to exercise meaningful choice in these vital areas of life. Those urban centers are found all over this earth. I know of few countries, if any, that are exempt from such condemnation.

Urban centers should instead be places where all men can experience the humanizing impact of creative and worthwhile employment, refreshing leisure and cultural activities, stimulating education, satisfying home surroundings and efficient public services. These are some of the minimum standards for a modern city. In America we are in the midst of a great national effort to rescue our cities and the people who inhabit them--to rescue them from decay and deprivation and discrimination. I have termed the affliction of our cities as "slumizm". The slum, in our language, indicates decay, obsolescence. It means that, generally speaking, the buildings, the physical facilities, have eroded, broken down, are no longer serviceable or worthwhile. But "slumizm" has an even greater meaning this day and age--a more profound meaning. It is not merely the decay of buildings and physical structures; it is the feeling of hopelessness, despair and bitterness that grips so many people who inhabit these obsolete, antiquated, broken down, deteriorated physical structures.

Slumizm relates then to both physical and spiritual qualities--the decay of the spirit, of the will, as well as the decay of the buildings and the public facilities. So we are in the midst now of first identifying the disease that afflicts us, and we have identified it. We are out to correct it, to heal, to build, to rescue our cities and the people from decay, and deprivation, and discrimination. And I am happy to tell you we are determined to accomplish our goal!

As President Johnson said recently, "One word can best describe the task that we face, and that word is 'immense.'" In less than forty years the population of this country is going to double and we will have to build in our cities as much as we have already built since the first settlers arrived on these shores, and I might add that we are going to have to rebuild much of what the first settlers built! This is not to be critical of first settlers. It is just that later settlers did not do so well as the first settlers. We know that more than bricks, and mortar, and glass, and steel are involved, because if that were all that were involved, our task would not be immense. It would just be challenging.

To again quote our President, "It is the people who live in our cities, and the quality of the lives they lead should concern every public servant today." I would like to add, and it's a bit dangerous for a Vice President to add to a Presidential statement, that it's not only the concern of every public servant but of every private citizen!

We are acutely aware of violence and civil disorders which have taken place in some American cities over the past months, and indeed over the past several years, very much aware of it, and pained and grieved about the cause of it. We know that in most cases these outbreaks involve our minority groups--Negro-Americans or other minority groups--who live in the poorer and the more deprived areas of our larger cities.

But lest anyone in this great audience take comfort in the fact that these disorders and these tragic developments are happening to America, let me say that this violence is not unique to American cities. It is worldwide. You know it, and I know it. Few, if any, countries have been spared. Disorders, lawlessness, violence, looting, burning -- we decry and deplore this violence and strife. We know that only under conditions of civil peace and domestic tranquillity can we ever hope to achieve the progress which will guarantee to all men full equality and opportunity in their daily lives. But we also know that the lives of those who live in these areas, bypassed by our national prosperity and affluence, must be changed. You cannot have two cities within one, and you cannot have two Americas within one!

I want this audience to know that we take seriously the pledge that our school children utter or recite almost every day of their school year. We call it "The Pledge of Allegiance" and it is generally recited as the pledge of allegiance to the flag of this Republic. And the important words are these: "One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." There may have been a time when that was a recitation for little children, but today it is a command to adults and children alike. We know that there can only be one nation in this nation, and hopefully, one world in which we have common standards for human betterment and human dignity. So we seek hard, visible evidence; hard, visible evidence must be forthcoming that a new day of opportunity and achievement is at hand. Words are no longer enough and promises have been in surplus quantity. Yes, hard visible evidence in terms of self-respecting job opportunities, and the education and training necessary to hold these jobs; hard visible evidence in terms of decent housing that people can afford; and recreational facilities which respect rather than destroy the unique character of neighborhoods; and hard visible evidence in terms of a welfare system which preserves a sense of human dignity and provides motivation and stimulation for generating self-support, self-help and, above all, self-respect.

Generations of poverty, and discrimination, and despair, here and elsewhere, have left scars which cannot heal in a day, or even a month or a year. Therefore, unremitting effort, expanded resources, patience, perseverance, and understanding on all sides are required. But having said that, we must clearly understand that the job can and will be done. The hour is late, the task, as the President said, is immense, and the need is compelling, if we are to have a world worth living in. There is, however, this special or this additional question which must be faced in America and elsewhere, and I put the question this way: In the process of meeting basic material needs, how is the vitality of the human spirit preserved in the impersonal urban environment, especially among people who have been on the bottom rung of our urbanized society's social and economic ladder? In other words, how can you make it possible for the human spirit to be a vibrating, vital force in the life of those who have been pushed down and down through generations, and indeed sometimes centuries? Physical slums alone do not produce the problems concentrated in our urban ghettos. If it were possible to replace overnight the tenements in our cities with new housing, we would not overcome simultaneously

the unemployment, the delinquency, the drug addiction, the poor education, the ill health and the family breakdown. A recent study revealed that most of the rioters in Watts, California, last year were employed and lived in reasonably decent housing. Yet these persons struck out blindly, and sometimes sensibly, against forces which seemingly denied them all opportunity to become real persons in their own eyes and in the eyes of society. Yes, it is one thing to provide food and shelter to those in need; it is quite another to perfect a substance and a style of life which preserve those human attributes necessary to the maintenance of a civilized and rewarding life. It has been stated much simpler, "Man does not live by bread alone," even though bread is vital to his life. He wants more than just physical comfort. This is not his end and purpose.

Almost two centuries ago, our forefathers, or founders, spoke about the rights to "life, liberty," and then those precious words, "the pursuit of happiness." Not life, liberty, and property, but life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Today this promise has penetrated into the remotest corners of our urban ghettos, and people are sensing the full and complete meaning of these historic words. I have to remind my fellow Americans that some of the ferment which is evident in this great Republic of ours has a very honorable, historic foundation. Americans are not satisfied with second-class citizenship, and they ought not to be. This concept of freedom, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" has never been restricted to the original thirteen colonies, and subsequently thirteen states huddled on the eastern coast of this continent. Indeed, from our earliest history we have viewed with Thomas Paine the cause of freedom in America as the cause of all mankind. And I think the greatest export that this country has ever made is this export of the idea that man was important and that he had a right to have something to say about the conditions of his life. The export of the idea of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," more important than all of our foreign aid, more important and more, let me say, of greater meaning and strength than all of our armies, the idea of the dignity of man and his worthwhileness.

And today the affirmation that we shall overcome and the cry "Freedom now" -- these are American words and American utterances, but they are not just on the lips of our American heroic civil-rights workers in this country, men like my good friend Whitney Young who symbolizes to me the real American dream coming true, but these words "We shall overcome" and "Freedom now" are echoed by people everywhere, and I want my country to be in tune with that cry. Therefore, whether we succeed or fail here in our efforts to achieve a humane and humanized urban society will have an impact far beyond the borders of this nation. Our war on poverty in America, its success or its failure, will tell a great deal about we are able and willing to do in the war on poverty in other areas of this world.

We admit frankly that many of the answers have not been found, but I also proclaim that we are searching for those answers. But some vital ingredients for success have been found and are known. First, we must attack simultaneously, on a broad front, the problems generated by the physical environment and by social economic conditions if lasting progress in either realm is to be achieved. We no longer have the luxury of just

taking one little problem at a time. That's for another age, if ever. A wide spectrum of social and welfare services, when combined effectively with physical improvements, can upgrade both personality and environment, transforming the downward spiral of poverty and despair into a rising curve of self-sufficiency and faith in the future. We've learned also that persons who suffer from deprivation of both body and spirit must participate directly in prescribing and administering the cure. We call this at home involvement of the poor in finding the answers to poverty. There are great reservoirs of latent energy, talent and enthusiasm and insight to be packed if we but possess the skill, the common sense and the faith to do so.

The story of America is the story of the success of the poor. Most people who came to this land came here poor. We are in fact witnessing throughout America a magnificent rebirth of freedom in our urban and rural slums and sometimes it is well to observe that freedom does not come quietly. It is restless. People are being offered the chance and the responsibility to help mold their future and the future of their neighborhood and their city. And I am here to testify this morning that the people are responding; thousands of them that never before had a chance to say anything or to do anything about their neighborhood or their conditions are today active members of community action committees, community action groups that are doing things to make their lives and their neighborhood better.

Thirdly, we must emphasize those government and nongovernment programs which demonstrate to persons in the context of daily living that they really count, that society has a place for them--in other words, that they are needed. People want to be needed, and they want those of us who have it a little better to know that they are not only needed but that that they have a valuable contribution to make. Elements of the anti-poverty program in this nation, like neighborhood legal services, health centers and Vista, volunteers in service to America, have this capacity to tear down the walls of ignorance, prejudice and doubt which bar meaningful participation in a society at large. The National Teacher Corps, an effort on the part of our Government to put the best teachers in the areas where they are needed, and the educational advances that are stimulated by elementary and secondary education can help young minds otherwise destined to remain closed and stagnant experience the marvelous excitement of learning and discovery. And I am a refugee from a classroom in a sense. I have had a rich and rewarding experience as a teacher and a professor, and I can say to you that there is no greater thrill in life than to see young people come alive as they are touched by good books, by stimulating discussion, by beautiful music and creative art. This is the real life, and is it any wonder that those who are privileged to teach feel as if they have a bit of heaven right here on earth, because it is a wonderful, wonderful experience. Now I am not asking for the privilege of going back to teaching right now, I want you to know, even though, may I say, that as Vice President, I feel that I do have a role in teaching--to carry the message of economic, social and political reform to this nation, to speak wherever I can.

I have spoken to you now about some of our efforts here at home, in our urban centers. I want to make it quite clear that for those persons who require financial aid and related social services--and we will have these people in our society for years to come--these aids and services should be provided as a matter of right, and not as the result of complex, sometimes incomprehensible, administrative, bureaucratic criteria and requirements. How this would simplify some of our endeavors!

And finally, in our efforts to develop area-wide responses to the physical problems of housing and transportation and urban development, we must not ignore the smaller dimension wherein the individual can experience the rewards of a rich and varied life. You know, sometimes we think so big and plan so big we forget about the people. That's a very, very unfortunate and dangerous thing to do. Government policy must be directed toward encouraging the creation or the preservation of vibrant and living neighborhood communities. A city cannot simply be a place to live and work, exist and to die. A city should be, and must be, a community, and a community means a place in which you commune, in which you converse, a community in the richest sense of that word, a combination of material and spiritual resources which gives every person a chance to express his unique talents and personality. A city must be the rich soil in which the flowering seed of human dignity and personality can grow and flourish.

We in our country sometimes have arguments about who is a conservative and who is a liberal. Well, let me--since I haven't spent much time trying to define conservatism--let me for a moment say a word about an area of human activity in which I've had some involvement called "Liberalism." Liberalism is not merely the design and the plan of things. Liberalism is not merely related to the appropriation of vast amounts of money, nor is liberalism merely a design by Government directed to improve what some persons call "the country," or "the nation." And liberalism is not merely an idea. Liberalism is--if it is to have any meaning at all--about people, how you can design a better world for people, not merely an argument of philosophy but, more importantly, a discussion as to how people can find themselves, how we can create an environment in which the seed of human personality can flower, how mankind can lift himself with the help of institutions, political and social, that give him an environment in which he can grow. I weary sometimes of discussions--indeed theoretical discussions--about liberalism. The liberalism that I like, and that I think is meaningful, is one that offers people an opportunity to grow and to flourish, to develop and to mature, and to assume responsibility as well as well as to have privileges in modern life. And it is that liberalism to which social workers must be, and should be, dedicated--not merely to argue over the words, but rather to think about the people; not to have a paternalistic attitude as if we know what is best, but rather to have an inquiring attitude as to how we can help people themselves find what is best for themselves.

All of this involves an eye for humane and intimate details, as well as the determination to conquer the major social and economic ills.

This may mean even a concern for such things as the small park, the play area for the children. Yes, green grass, and fresh air--that's quite a necessity these days. The corner store in the neighborhood center. These are the intimate details that are needed for the good life. And we're coming to see that the process of urbanization can be directed toward securing the betterment of man both materially and spiritually. And it's the spiritual improvement of man that ultimately defines whether or not a liberal, constructive, progressive philosophy has taken hold. If we possess the will and the wit to direct and control these forces for the fulfillment of human objectives, then those objectives can be obtained. Here on our home front, through such proposals as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Demonstrations Bill which, my fellow Americans, still awaits action in one House of our Congress, the Rent Supplement Program that can help provide decent housing for low income people, the Comprehensive Housing Act of 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the many facets of the War on Poverty, this Nation is seizing the initiative on a number of fronts--the broad spectrum of fronts--to stop the decay of people as well as the decay of buildings.

We are involving all levels of Government and urging full participation by private foundations, universities, service groups and individuals. But one fact must remain in our thinking: America, rich, powerful, growing, is today blessed with the material and the human resources to accomplish this goal of arresting the decay of the human spirit and the physical things, and reversing the whole order of things, stopping the downward spiral of poverty and despair and moving this nation upon the rising curve of a better life and hope. We also know that some nations have initiated programs and approaches which are more imaginative and effective than we have even dared to attempt here in the United States. And we not only welcome the opportunity but we look forward to the opportunity to learn from your experiences, and quite frankly, while you are here, we solicit your counsel and your advice. We know we do not have all the answers. And one thing else that we know is that each country with its own social system, each in its own way, must design its own renaissance, its own rebirth, its own renewal. There isn't any special pattern that fits everyone because nations and people, thank goodness, are individuals.

In the same spirit we hope that you might feel that you can learn from us as our vision of the Great Society takes form and substance through legislation, through executive decisions and civic action programs at all levels of Government, and the private sector. And I say to you and to my fellow Americans, do not despair if it seems as if people yearn for more even as we do more. This business of the so-called rising expectations is not unique to developing countries. You see, we have some underdeveloped or developing areas in the United States too, and when people taste the sweet fruit of a better life, just to sip it, they want a full meal. And that is our goal.

So as I leave you, I ask these questions and I am sure that you have in your hearts and your minds the appropriate response. What task can you envision that is more vital than liberating millions and millions of our fellow men from a life of misery, poverty and defeat? And remember there are more people in that category today than there are those who live happily and in comfort. What challenge can you dream of, or even think about, that is more exciting than enabling people to exercise qualities that are uniquely human--the ability to create, to judge, to accept rights and responsibilities, to use their freedom, and to use it constructively, to acquire dignity and self-respect? What is it that you could wish for more than the fulfillment of these hopes and aspirations -- the liberating of millions from despair and poverty, enabling millions to come into their own so that they can enjoy not only self-respect but to have all of the rights and privileges that man was intended to have by his very nature?

With this sense of common purpose and identity among the peoples of the earth, we cannot doubt the eventual victory of the human spirit, and the victory that we seek to achieve is the victory of the human spirit. Nor can we doubt the eventual victory of the achievement of human freedom, even as we build cities worthy of man's highest aspirations.

I hope you leave this capital city of ours with renewed hope and renewed dedication. I hope that you will leave with a determination to make your city all that you have ever dreamed of as a city worthy of you and yours, because I know of no better way to help build a better world than to make it a personal adventure and a personal crusade. The improvement of life is not only the privilege and the responsibility of government; it is the high duty and the exciting challenge of every individual -- in his own way, in his own time, in his own community, and in his own country! And then the mosaic of peoples and nations may indeed become a beautiful mural of the better world that we seek for ourselves and our posterity.

Thank you for coming to Washington and giving us the privilege of being with you and of sharing in your hopes and your dreams. Good morning.

9/8/66



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