



PRESS RELEASE

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REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY TO THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN KOREA AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, JULY 1, 1967

Thank you very much, Mr. Newman, and my fellow Americans, and particularly these fine young people that we have here, and our good friends of the citizens of the Republic of Korea that are with us today. May I suggest first of all that we do get very folksy and very close and anybody that can squeeze together a little closer, ... and gentlemen, I wouldn't mind being out there. There are some very attractive ladies. Just squeeze in a little bit, because I do see a few out there that are getting a little more rain than they really need.

I was told when I arrived here that ... the day before yesterday ... that there was great need for moisture in the rural areas of Korea. And, I'm happy to say that President Johnson's emissary brought along the gift that the farmers of Korea wanted more than anything else, namely, some rain. But we will attribute that happy set of circumstances to much greater authority, may I say, than even the President of the United States.

This is my third visit to Seoul, Korea. The other two visits were about a year and a half ago, in December of 1965 and February in 1966. I find, of course, many changes in that year-and-a half period of time. First, I've had people ask me, "Did you notice any change in this great city and country?" And I said, "Well, first of all, it's much warmer." I've noticed that. I come from Minnesota where the climate is not at all dissimilar to, at least many parts of Korea, and because I spend most of my time in Washington, the humidity that I have experienced the last day or two made me feel very much at home here in Seoul, Korea. So it's been a pleasant visit.

I am here for the purpose, as you know, of the inaugural ceremonies and inauguration of President Park. I'm very pleased to have been given this opportunity to come once again to this friendly country, this fine ally, of the United States, and this free country in Asia. While I'm here I shall be visiting, and have already, with the President of the Republic of Korea, with other officers of government, and with the Vice President of the Republic of China. And, just a few moments ago I left a very extended and intensive discussion with representatives of the Republic of Vietnam. General Chieu, who is the Secretary-General of the National Directorate, is here representing that government and people, and I met with the General and the Ambassador and the Minister of Economy, discussing our mutual concerns and our mutual responsibilities in Southeast Asia. Tomorrow, or later on today, I can say I will be meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan, a very distinguished statesman and leader in Asia, a gentlemen that I have been privileged to know some time. And we will have the opportunity to exchange views of many problems that are of concern to each and every one of you.

Let me just say this to you, that we always look upon our diplomatic representatives...our Ambassador, our Minister Counsellor, our Administrative officers in the Embassies, our Charge'...we look upon them as our diplomats and we look to them to represent, as we say, the interests of our country, wherever they are assigned. And I can say that we have been very fortunate here, in Korea.

The former Ambassador, Ambassador Brown, served with great distinction. I was privileged to be house guest with Ambassador Brown and his wife, and I was privileged to know them for some time. The Ambassador-designate for Korea is with us today as a member of the mission, Ambassador Porter, who comes to us from his most recent assignment in Vietnam. Mr. Newman, who is here, and has been my host with his very lovely lady, Mrs. Newman, has surely earned the respect and the gratitude of the American people and of all of you for the manner in which he has carried on and carried through the responsibilities of this Embassy.

But the fact is, that everyone of us are ambassadors. Every single person here that bears the title "citizen of United States" has a responsibility no less than that of those who are assigned to so-called diplomatic posts, or foreign service posts, in our Embassy. I know that in this fine gathering here today, because it's quite obvious there are officers and men of all the branches of our military service; the manner in which you conduct yourself, what you say, what you do, how you think, and how you are, will tell more about the United States than any official pronouncement that can be made from Washington or the Ambassador.

And there are people here of the different departments of our government: the civilian departments in agriculture and commerce and aviation and in the scientific areas of our government. All departments of our government are in a very real sense represented by designated personnel at our embassy posts. And you, too, are carrying out an assignment no less important in your respective areas than the Chief of Mission. The Chief of Mission coordinates the activities; you make the activities. And then, may I say, that the families -- the families really represent the spirit of America. And this is not to be maudlin or sentimental, it's just a fact.

When you talk about the Voice of America, and I know our USIS people are here, our United States Information Service people - they do a very fine job up in this part of the world, and indeed, all over - I am very pleased with what I have seen and what I have witnessed as to their activities. But the real voice of America is your voice, what you are, what you do, what you say, how you act, and how you relate yourself to those with whom you are neighbors. Remember, we are guests here and I always like to remember that, because really a guest has a special responsibility. A guest in your house or your home - you would expect that guest to at least abide by the established norms of social conduct. And the host, of course, has special responsibilities too. But sometimes, even if the host isn't what you might want, you, as a guest, have a continuing responsibility.

I don't need to lecture you; I have no intention of doing so. I just want to say that the best part of America is what I see down in front of me. I am a grandfather, four times, and a father, four times, three sons and a daughter, and I am extremely fond of, and really in love with, young people. And when I see these wonderful young people here, I know that we have the best representatives in the world. And wherever they go to school, wherever they go to church, wherever they shop, wherever they are, I think they tell more about our country than the State Department can, or the Pentagon, because the reflection of a nation is to be found in the countenance and the words of the children of the nation. They tell really what's going on. First of all, they are so frank and honest about it, they do not deceive...and they do not practice duplicity or complicity. They just are what they are. And I have travelled all over the world for our country, as Senator and now as Vice President, and I think the most wonderful attribute of our country is to be found in the health and the vitality, in the enlightenment, in the brilliance and the general demeanor and conduct of our young people. And I want to salute them. They're pretty, the men...the young men look real healthy and strong, and I know that they do a good job for you.

Now I want to leave you with just these thoughts. Many of you have been away from home for some time. And, you know, I was in Europe about two months ago, and many people asked me about Europeans when I returned to the States - what do they think of America? And I say - well, some liked us and some didn't. They're very independent. They are standing on their own. You cannot expect people that you have helped to always go around and bow down and say "thank you" forever. As a matter of fact, the reward of helping someone is when the day arrives that that person can stand on his or her own feet. It's like raising a family.

The reward of family - of being father and mother - is the day when the son or the daughter walks out of your home into his own life, or her own life, to establish their family, and to live their own lives - to live those lives in health and wholesomeness, and, hopefully, in progress and success, and with respect for parents, to be sure, but not always writing home every day and saying "thank, you, Mama; and, thank you, Daddy".

And I think we Americans ought to recognize that we have been a very privileged people in these last 25 years. We have been blessed with untold strength and wealth as a nation. We earned it. We worked for it. Many other people work hard and don't get it. We have an amazing social and political system, an outstanding economic system, and this socio-political-economic system has given us tremendous rewards and dividends. And out of that we have shared of our bounty and we have been a generous people.

I think it's fair to say that no nation has ever been so generous in victory, and no nation has ever tried to do so much for so many, and asked for such little amount in return. But having patted ourselves on the back, and being in public life as I am, I don't expect people to go around all the time saying "thank you."

There's an old story about a politician who was accosted one day by a man that he had helped repeatedly, and this - Alben Barkley, the former Vice President, used to tell this story, and he's the greatest American politician I've ever known, he's really Americana in politics at its best - and when Alben Barkley was alive he would tell this story about the man back home, in Paducah, Kentucky, who came up to him and said to him, "Now, I'm very disappointed in you, Senator." (this is when he was a Senator) He said, "I'm very disappointed in you. In fact I'm not at all sure I'll vote for you in the coming election." Senator Barkley is reported to have replied, "What do you mean you're not going to vote for me? How can you do that?" He said, "Don't you remember when your son needed a job and I got him a job at the Post Office?" Oh yeah, I remember that." He said, "Don't you remember when you needed a loan out on your farm, I got you a loan from the Farmer's Home Administration?" "Oh yes, I remember that." He says, "Don't you remember when your sister's husband was in trouble and it looked like there may be some legal problems, and I interceded for your sister's husband and got him off?" "Oh yes, I remember that." He said, "Now don't you remember that I once appointed you to serve on a commission so that you could get a trip abroad when you could have a very fine time travelling at government expense?" He says, "Oh yes, I remember that." And Senator Barkley says "You mean to tell me you're not going to vote for me?" He said, "Why in the name of all that's fair and decent wouldn't you vote for me after all the things I've done for you?" He said, "Yes. But what have you done for me lately?"

Now don't go around expecting people to always cheer us. The rewards of American foreign policy are not in gratitude. That will come from decent people. And it will generally come silently. The reward of American foreign policy comes in the strength of the people that we seek to help. It comes in their happiness. It comes in their success, in their freedom, in their progress, and we ought not to expect a statement signed and delivered once a year as an annual present saying that you made it possible. Just be pleased that we have had as much as we have, and despite all of the sharing that we have been a part of, we still have more than any other people on the face of the earth.

I'm very proud of our country and I want you to know that we are doing very great things back home. I imagine there are some people here who have been here a couple of years, and maybe some....I met a couple from Iowa that just got in a couple of weeks ago...and, there are some of you that have been here a short period of time. What are we doing back in our country?

Here's what I told our friends in Europe. We are engaging in a tremendous adventure back in the States. The adventure of opening up the gates of opportunity for the first time to literally millions of our people. We're engaged in a great struggle, the struggle of making American citizenship and equal citizenship for every American.

Now we've waited a long time. The greatest honor that can befall a people, it seems to me, is to be a citizen of the United States. You don't need any other title, you don't need to be General, or Colonel, or Admiral, or Captain, or President, or Vice President, or Governor, or Senator, or Congressman - just be "Citizen." That's enough honor for anybody. And we are trying to make citizenship, in the U.S., American citizenship, a reality, in terms of both privileges and responsibilities for everyone. And we are doing it through a massive program of education.

There are eight million - just get this one figure - eight million boys and girls today in American education that are getting high quality education now, that never had any of it, two years ago. Under the Federal Aid to Education Programs, working with state and local government - a tremendous effort - there are six million young people in higher education in America today, and one million of them are there because the government cared and made possible scholarships, fellowships and student loans. And that's the wisest investment we'll ever make.

We are waging a war on poverty in our country. We haven't won that war, and it will be a long one. I'm not sure when the victory will be obtained. But I know this, that we have been able to release from the prison of poverty literally hundreds of thousands of people, millions of them, in the last few years. For the first time they are earning a decent living. Thousands and thousands of young people are getting their first chance at education, as I pointed out, I happen to be Chairman of the President's Youth Council, working with young people, and I can tell you that this summer, for the first time, we are penetrating the hard - corps unemployed - people that no one ever knew before, no one ever cared about before, apparently, people that have been by-passed, even by the social agencies and the churches, and we're getting at them. And what are they getting out of it? They're getting income. They're getting experience. And, they're getting self-respect. And we're doing it.

Now there are many things more that need to be done, but we're making genuine progress. And I want you to know that. When you talk about America, you don't need to tell people that we're strong. They know it. You don't need to tell them that we're rich, because they know it. The per capita income in America as compared to this country is something you even not ought to talk about, because the variance is so glaring that it can only set up deep concern and embarrassment.

What is really important that's happening in America is not that some people are getting richer. It's not that we've got the biggest weapons and the biggest bombs, or the best air force or army or navy or marine corps, or coast guard, or whatever unit you happen to be in. That isn't really what's important. That is a reflection of what's really going on in the body politic. What is really important in America is that millions of people for the first time in their lives are beginning to experience the benefits of our society. Old people are getting good medical care. Never had it before. Young people are in school that were never in good schools before. People, without regard to race, color or creed, are getting jobs on the basis of merit where they were excluded before. These are things that count. The poor are getting a break. And the rich aren't getting hurt either.

So these are the things that are happening. This is the story that I want you to tell about America. And you take that story, and when you get a chance to visit, in your social life, or in your clubs, or wherever you are, you don't need to tell people about just our space program - even though it's wonderful - or our big factories - even though they're great and our system is marvelous - tell them about the little things that you hear about. You'll always hear the bad news. They'll have heard that already. That's well reported. But I want you to tell the people the news of what's happening in government and in private life in America.

In hundreds and hundreds of communities, where people, for the first time in their lives, are getting the opportunity to be participating, working, self-respecting, dignified American citizens - and this is the important message for the world. Because what we are doing at home is what everyone else wants to do. What the people of Korea want, is what we have. And they don't want to take it from us. They'd like to learn from us. But we need to set the example, precept and example, and I think we're doing it.

Well, I've had a great time here being with you and I know that many of you have had to stay outside far too long in this rain, but they do need it. I'm a sort of a farmer at heart and I know the importance of rain out in South Dakota or Minnesota, my old stamping grounds. And I hope that the rice farmers, the rice producers of Korea, find this rain helpful and I hope that none of you feel that it has been in any way something that you couldn't tolerate. And particularly, I hope you won't say so, because I made this speech. That would make me most unhappy.

Thank you very much.



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