

~~Thanks, Ed~~
~~W. L. Weisl, Jr.~~

Sp. File. April 2
NYC

March 29, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William Connell
Executive Assistant
to the Vice President

RE: New York Johnson for President
Headquarters Opening Tuesday,
April 2, 1968

I deem it essential that when the Vice President is at the Headquarters opening Tuesday, he seek out and speak to Meade Esposito, one of the most influential Brooklyn district leaders.

The Vice President spoke at one of Esposito's functions a year or so ago. Esposito has great influence with Steingut and, I believe, should be inclined to be pro-Viet Nam.

This is important.

Ed

Edwin L. Weisl, Jr.

3/29 - Bill C. attempted to call
Esposito, but he was
away from the office for the day.
Sandy

NOTES

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

OPENING OF JOHNSON - HUMPHREY

HEADQUARTERS

NEW YORK CITY

APRIL 2, 1968

One thing about our country: any American can open up a campaign headquarters and declare himself a candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

Many do, as you may have noticed.

Those who do so seriously take on an enormous public responsibility -- to present the issues responsibly... to make our free electoral process serve the highest interests of our country.

For Democrats the responsibility is greater still.

For we are the majority party.

We are the governing party.

We are the party that has carried the torch of hope and social progress for millions of our fellow citizens.

So we must speak for the nation, not just for the party.

We must address ourselves to issues ... and not just to emotions.

For the world is listening and the fate of our nation is in the balance.

I might say, by the way, that I expect the Democratic party to bear that extra responsibility for another four years.

Democrats are going to march out of headquarters like this all across the nation and re-elect Lyndon B. Johnson President of the United States.

* * *

I don't say it will be an easy campaign.

And I don't say we can expect a binge of euphoric adulation -- not for a man whose mandate from the public is to do what is right as he sees the right, and not to do what is easy.

But I do think I know something about Americans. When they go into the privacy of the polling booth, they take their responsibilities seriously. And they are ready to vote for what is right for America, even if it is not easy.

I first ran for the Senate in 1948. I was one of a number of Democratic candidates who didn't have a chance, according to the pundits.

President Harry Truman was another.

The Democrats had taken a beating in the previous election.

The President's popularity was at a low ebb in the polls.

Some people didn't like his "style" -- the way he talked, the width of his trouser cuffs.

There were Dixiecrats on the right who had walked out of the convention when the mayor of Minneapolis said it was time "for the Democratic party to get out of the shadow of state's rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights."

There was Henry Wallace's peace party siphoning off votes on the left.

And there were the people ... silent, for the most part.

At first the crowds were thin. Then they began to get a little bigger. Still, there wasn't much cheering or waving.

But let me tell you that there is no louder noise in America than the sound of a ballot falling into a ballot box.

Why was Harry Truman re-elected in 1948?

First, I think the people respected his plain talk and appreciated his tough sense of responsibility.

Second, when it came right down to it, people could see that the Republicans, as usual, were long on criticism and short on solutions ... long on hindsight but short on foresight.

Finally, most Democrats worked very, very hard for President Truman because they believed that the Democratic cause was just too valuable to surrender.

They won a resounding victory.

We can do it again ... particularly against a candidate we've licked before.

* * *

Let me tell you where some of that public support is going to come from:

-- from the retired couple who get prompt and thorough medical care -- with dignity -- under Medicare;

-- from their children, who aren't saddled with hospital and doctor bills;

-- from that Negro citizen in Mississippi who is casting his vote for the first time without fear of injury or intimidation;

-- from that mother whose Head Start child is the first person in the family genealogy to have a real chance to escape from poverty;

-- from thousands and thousands of Americans who today have a chance to make themselves heard in local community action councils and boards because a President who believes in the people said, "Go ahead and plan your own destiny. We're here to help you."

When people ask you what you think of the slogan, "participatory democracy," you tell them: That's no slogan. It is my President's and my party's greatest gift to millions who are now becoming full-fledged citizens for the first time.

And I can tell you that those millions are going to participate -- in quiet gratitude on behalf of President Lyndon Johnson and the Democratic party come next November.

* * *

Now what about peace.

That word is on the lips and in the mind of every American today. I hear it every time I step into a Cabinet meeting -- every time I sit down to talk to the President.

What have we done about it?

Let me tell you that you won't find the answer to that question on the placards.

At least I didn't notice any placards when I got back last night from Mexico City where I affirmed our country's pledge to help keep Latin America free of nuclear weapons.

I haven't seen any pickets supporting the nuclear non-proliferation treaty that is now pending in the United Nations.

What has this Administration done about peace in the last year?

We have helped set up a new Asian Development Bank;

We have joined with other nations to lower the barriers to international trade and economic growth;

We have concluded an agreement barring nuclear weapons from outer space;

We have agreed on a consular treaty with the Soviet Union;

The hot line kept the Middle Eastern crisis from exploding into a major international confrontation.

President Johnson's personal envoy averted war over Cyprus.

Those are the real building blocks of peace.

And they are the result of hard, tedious, undramatic, lonely work -- not campaign oratory.

Then there is Vietnam, where there is no peace.

There is no peace, for one reason: Because Hanoi doesn't want it.

We want a real peace -- a peace that has some prospect or lasting ... a peace that is not appeasement ... a lull before the storm.

Adlai Stevenson said: "No one can be certain about the meaning of peace. But we can all be certain about the meaning of war. The future is still open -- open for disaster if we seek peace cheaply or meanly, but for real peace if we seek it bravely and nobly."

That is the harsh reality of our nuclear age -- harsh ... but still hopeful because it means peace can be won if only we have the courage to win it.

Do you want a peace candidate? I recommend President Lyndon B. Johnson

* * *

Finally, let me offer you this text for a campaign year -- John Adams, on what he called "the spirit of public happiness":

"It was this spirit that possessed American colonists and won the Revolution before it was fought, a spirit which is reflected in delight in participation in public discussion and public action; a joy in citizenship, in self-government, in self-control, in self-discipline, and in dedication."

That is the spirit that makes great election years, great Democrats, and a great America.

#



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org