

Remarks of Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey  
At Reception for Florida Delegates to Democratic National Convention  
Americana Hotel Bal Harbour, Florida  
June 4, 1968

Mayor Chuck Hall, Mayor of metropolitan Dade County:

While we take the last pictures of the Vice President here, who is going to be the next President of the United States (applause)....

Mr. President, I cannot tell you -- officially as Mayor of Metropolitan Miami-Dade County, and also in behalf of my good friend Steve Clark, the Mayor of Miami, and of the other fine, distinguished people out here -- what a great privilege and pleasure it is for me, as your close friend and as the Mayor, to tell you that we are most proud to have you in our midst, and to tell you also that I have had a premonition and a little omen -- and everybody here agrees with me -- that we are not going to win as President for you, but it's going to be the greatest successful campaign that anyone has ever had in this country of America! (applause) The Vice President....

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Chuck, when you.... When Chuck Hall introduces you, you sure are introduced! (applause) His enthusiasm is contagious. I want to thank him for spreading this good cheer around these precincts.

I am so happy for the privilege of visiting with some of you tonight, formally, socially. We were here for the meeting of the American

Federation of State, County and Municipal employees, and while I was here in this area -- this beautiful area of Florida -- I thought it would be a good idea if we could get together with some of those who are very active in the Democratic Party circles.

I am so happy to see the State Chairman here, Pat Thomas, that is with us tonight. And I am very happy to see the National Committeeman, Committeewoman; all of the representatives of the different districts.

I must say that you have taken your life, literally, in your hands, in more ways than one, to come here -- threading the eye of the hurricane, as some of you told me. As a matter of fact, I was of the opinion that the people that were programming my day here were somehow or another tied up with the opposition. (laughter) We started out this morning in New York City, journeyed to New London, Connecticut, flew down here into Florida.... And about every half-hour, somebody would say, "Well, you're going to be doing just fine: you're going right through the hurricane."

Of course things were much better than that, like most things in life. They never turn out as badly as the pessimists make them sound.

I'm not here to do anything except to say hello. I'll come back on another occasion when we can talk more politics. (applause) I have a number of good spokesmen in this midst. And I have told Claude Pepper here, that anytime that he wishes to be unleashed in my behalf, I unleash him. (laughter) And I told many others here the same thing.

But I told my friend Senator Smathers before I came down that I'd behave, and I kept my word. He is your favorite son candidate, and until you people have a chance to do your caucusing and make your plans, all I

wanted you to do was to have some good Midwestern hospitality in this wonderful Southern state of Florida. (applause)

I don't want you to be misled, however. I am very serious about this enterprise upon which I've entered. (laughter; applause) And at the proper time we'll be here to carry on our campaign actively, and talk to other people of this great state about the many things that concern them and concern our nation.

I've had a rich, wonderful experience these past weeks, travelling again around our country. This is no new experience for me. I sort of take pride in the fact that I may have travelled as much in this country as anybody since Eleanor Roosevelt, (laughter) and I look forward to getting around to as many of the states as possible. I look forward to a day in Chicago in the late part of August. And I look forward to the happier days after that gathering, when I can have the rare privilege of taking on the best that the opposition has to offer. (applause)

As a matter of fact, I sort of feel like I ought to get tuned up ahead of time so I am in full running gear and full running condition at the time that the main event comes off.

We want to wish you well. I hope that I can be of help to the Democratic Party. I hope, more than that, that I can be of help to our country. I would like to see our Party bind up its wounds, join together in a program of Party organization and Party unity. I think you people know that I have tried to help build the Democratic Party. I have never tried to tear it asunder. I really believe that a man that seeks the high office

of the Presidency has an obligation both to his party, and of course most of all to his country.

I have said, and I say it with all the sincerity of my heart and soul, that I believe the first responsibility of any man that seeks this greatest office in the gift of man -- the Presidency of the United States -- that his first obligation is to try to unite the people behind common purposes; to try to find out what it is that we seek to do for ourselves and for a troubled world, and then to work with the people -- not to work on them, to speak to the people and not to speak at them, to listen to the people, to try to sense their desires, their hopes and dreams, and to hear their voices.

I hope that I'll be able to do that. I have spent now a good deal of my life in public service. I haven't a single regret for a single day of that life of public service, unless it would be that I could have done better and wish that I had done better. All of us seek to improve, and this is my message to America: It isn't that we're perfect. It isn't that we're imperfect. It is that we seek to do better.

If there's any one thing that you can say about the American people, it is that each year we set ourselves new standards of performance. And I hope it will always be that way.

I have been razzed and kidded a bit as being the candidate of optimism, and the man that they say pursues the politics of happiness. I thought you'd like to know that I don't think there's anything wrong in that. (applause)

I surely would not want to work in the vineyards of the politics of hatred. I surely would not want to indulge in the politics of hatred. I surely would not want to be a part of the politics of doubt and lack of faith.

I believe that this country stands for something. And what it stands for most of all is the dreams of the American people -- the dreams coming true. Many of us very ordinary people who have seen our families come into their own -- many of us who came from very humble stock, have seen a chance in our own lifetime for ourselves. And every one of us here in this gathering, wanting a better thing and a better day and a better time for those that follow after us.

This is the great thing about this country. We are optimists. And I plan on talking to the people on those terms. I plan very frankly on calling upon you to help me -- to help me win this nomination, and then to go on and help us win that election. And together -- together -- we will help each other make this a better country.

Thank you very, very much.

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