

REMARKS OF  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
AT THE RECEPTION FOR DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY LEADER

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Urban Room  
William Penn Hotel  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Friday, September 13, 1968  
11:00 p.m.

Thank you very much, the soon to be elected U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, Joe Clark.

Mr. Mayor and my good friend Mr. Stacy and all those that are here with me tonight, and my fellow citizens, may I just tell you that the Mayor and myself and the Senator were detained coming to you because I had a very pleasant meeting via telephone with a wonderful man, a gentleman that just came back from Washington after having been out on the campaign route for this past week. Every night this gentleman and myself spend a few minutes on the telephone but because he had to leave very, very early in the morning, I decided I had better get back to him early tonight. He has just come back from a good long trip in the midwest starting out at San Antonio, Texas, first, and moving up through the central state, midwestern states, and he was giving me a first hand account, and he is doing a wonderful job, and I want to tell you good friends that I promised you if I were selected as the nominee of the Democratic Party that I would give you the finest man that I could find as the Vice Presidential nominee and I did in Ed Muskie.

(Applause and whistles)

I am going to take just a moment or two to say a word about him because he is going to be very helpful to us here in Pennsylvania, and he is going to be very helpful as he has been for many years to this country.

Senator Muskie is, as you know, the former Governor of the State of Maine twice, two times Democratic elected Governor of the State of Maine, and that is no small task. That makes you almost a miracle man in the beginning. He broke through.

They used to say as Maine goes so goes the nation and I agree that as Muskie goes, so goes the nation.

(Applause)

He is a man that has had experience in local government and state government, two terms in the United States Senate. He is the floor manager and sponsor of the Model Cities legisla-

tion, Mr. Mayor, that applies to all of our great cities. He is the national expert on problems of water pollution and air pollution. He is the author of the Intergovernmental Relations Act that ties together all of these great governmental structures of ours into a working partnership. But more importantly, he is a fine, intelligent, able and experienced man, and I consider it a rare privilege to be his partner.

We were friends. He wasn't selected because he came from a state that had a lot of electoral votes. I think you know that. He wasn't selected because somebody said in order for you, Mr. Humphrey, to get the nomination, you had better select Ed Muskie. We didn't have any middle man or any Mr. Fixit. There were no Strom Thurmonds in my arrangements.

(Applause)

He was selected for one reason. He is able. He is competent. He is a man of integrity and a man of great intellectual attainment. And I venture to say that whatever difficulties Joe Clark and I have, and we are both rather rambunctious fellows on occasion, that both of us would stand here and agree day in and day out, 24 hours a day, that whatever mistakes Hubert Humphrey made, that I may have made, that I surely didn't make one when I suggested to the Democratic Convention that Edmund Muskie would strengthen this ticket and Edmund Muskie would make a great Vice President and if need be Edmund Muskie would make a great President for this country.

(Applause)

He has a pretty wife, too. So do I.

(Applause)

I regret that Muriel isn't with me tonight. She loves to come to PMttsburgh but one of our friends, one of our reporter friends, was asking me a moment ago where is she and I said, well Mrs. Humphrey frankly has a cold, and really, she has laryngitis. You would think I would be the guy coming down with that as much as I like to talk, but maybe it is better that I be here, and she asks to be forgiven this time for not coming here but she is out on the road next week and I think that she is going to be of great help to me and of great help to our party.

Now, I want to visit with you just a little bit now about our party, about this election, and then I want to touch, just touch on a few of the key issues.

My fellow Democrats and those of you that may not be pledged Democrats, let me say to you, I said that I entered this contest first as a contestant for the nomination and now as your nominee in the hopes that I could help bring this party together, this great instrument of social progress called the Democratic Party. And I said that I wanted to do that so that we could help unite our country.

Now, I do not lay down rules of conduct in allegiance that deny you the chance to be yourself. Walt Whitman, a great poet, once said "Let each man march to his own music", and I

1 add on to that, but let's march to a common goal.

2 One of the reasons that we are Democrats is because  
3 we are really independent people. We don't lay down the dogma.  
4 There isn't any fixed doctrine. You don't have to memorize  
5 something and say it. You are in a Democratic Party because  
6 you feel that in that party there is room for intellectual ferment,  
7 for creative ideas, for differences and diversity, and  
8 hopefully out of those differences and diversity and ferments  
9 that we come up with a better idea. And that is the way I have  
10 always thought and always felt.

11 I have been a Democrat all of my adult life and I  
12 think there has been no one that has exemplified more in his  
13 public life the willingness to take a different point of view  
14 if I wanted to and if I felt it strongly than myself, and I  
15 respect the right of another person to do that.

16 Now, we have had some arguments in this party and boy,  
17 they have been pretty hot, and we have had a difficult and a  
18 hard fought convention. But, my fellow Americans and my fellow  
19 Democrats, I would rather have gone through the difficulties  
20 of our convention where we argued it out, where we struggled  
21 before the Credentials Committee and the Platform Committee and  
22 the Rules Committee, where we did it in public, where we showed  
23 the convictions that were ours and displayed our sense of  
24 purpose and our sense of commitment. With all of the fanfare  
25 and all of the trouble that that seems to cause, I would rather  
have all of that than to go through the organized boredom and  
mediocrity which the Republican Convention displayed.

(Applause)

Now, we come to the time where we have to make some  
choices. You never have had in your private life or your public  
life perfect choices. Every one of us knows that. I am sure  
there is many a woman that said why did I ever marry that fellow,  
and I am sure there has been many a father that said, how come  
that one is my son and my daughter, and the daughters and sons  
have said my goodness, why doesn't dad seem to understand me.

There are all kinds of little differences. This is as  
natural as life itself.

So, we are making choices not out of infallibility  
but out of fallibility. We are making choices out of men and out  
of political instruments designed by men.

The work of a political party is not the work of a  
saint and it never is the work of men of perfection. Candidates  
aren't either, even though when you hear us sometimes you maybe  
think that we are trying to parade ourselves as perfect people.  
Well, I am not and I frankly must confess it. But, I am going  
to ask this audience tonight of concerned people, not just  
concerned Democrats, but of concerned people, some questions.

I am going to ask you first of all, whether you want  
this country and the election of this country to be decided on



1 the basis of competition between three candidates where the  
2 decisive factor might be a candidate that bases his campaign  
3 at least in part upon separatism and segregation. I don't think  
4 you do. I don't think that the third party candidate is the  
5 candidate that you feel that you want.

6 Then, I must ask you do you want to have the national  
7 referendum known as an election decided on the basis of having  
8 elected a man who is not a racist but who has seen fit to  
9 associate himself politically with the most conservative and the  
10 most backward-looking representation of the Republican Party on  
11 matters of human dignity and human relations and racial rela-  
12 tions, and you know of what I speak.

13 Do you want to have as President of the United States  
14 someone that says hold on, let's not move? Do you want as  
15 President of the United States someone that says, well, I am  
16 for it, but? I am for the treaty, but? I am for the Justice,  
17 but? I am for this program on housing, but?

18 Ladies and gentlemen, I don't think that is what you  
19 want. A man that seeks the highest office of this land should  
20 at least tell you what he is for, without any ifs, ands, buts  
21 or ors. He should lay it on the line.

22 (Applause)

23 There is a central issue in this campaign, a central  
24 issue. Are we going to have an America that is a divided  
25 society, separate and unequal?

Are we going to have an America that is divided  
between rich and poor, black and white, urban and rural, northern  
and southern?

Are we going to decide this election upon passions and  
fears and suspicion?

Or, are you going to decide this election on what you  
believe will unite this country for its highest purposes  
of producing a fellowship, a community in America, a community  
of individuals that have learned how to live together as self-  
respecting and respectful citizens?

I can't put it any better than it has been placed in  
words, words that every child knows and I hope every adult.  
We are going to decide whether or not we are going to continue  
the process of building one nation, under God, indivisible, and  
with liberty and justice for all. We are going to decide that.  
We are in the process of deciding it now.

Now, we can halt that process. We can mark time. We  
have done it before. Or we can say we are ready, we are ready  
to march ahead. We are ready to make the great strides forward.  
We are ready to heal the wounds of this country. We are ready  
to reconcile our differences. We are ready to open up the gates  
of our political processes to more participation. We are ready  
to call upon every American and not only call upon them but  
to help them help themselves.

1 That is why I am in this campaign. And I am going to  
2 continue to talk this message as long as I have enough strength  
3 to stand before an audience because I am as convinced as I have  
4 ever been convinced of anything in my life that unless we pro-  
5 ceed with this job of trying to build a nation of brotherhood  
and of understanding and of tolerance and forbearance, that  
America is going to be divided and torn and rent asunder by  
conflict and dissention that will destroy the dream of this  
land.

6 And my friends, you can't let that happen. You have  
7 got to go on out and work. We have all the civil rights laws  
8 that man can possibly think of. Maybe we can think of some  
9 more. But what we need now are the practices of human  
decency, the practices of the good neighbors, the practices of  
the friend, the practices of a fellow American, and that is  
all we are.

10 We are not black or white, alone. We are not Protestant  
or Catholic or Jew, alone. We are Americans, and I submit to you  
that it is time that we started acting like them in one citizen-  
ship.

11 (Applause)

12 Now, let me talk to you about just two or three other  
13 things. It is late. We haven't been together like this for  
sometime.

14 I read the other day where Mr. Wallace said that there  
wasn't a dime's worth of difference between Mr. Nixon and Mr.  
Humphrey. And then, Mr. Nixon said that Mr. Wallace was dead  
wrong and he started to outline the differences.

15 That is the first time in this campaign that Mr. Nixon  
has been absolutely right.

16 (Laughter)

17 There are differences. Very serious differences. I could just  
18 check them down the checklist. There are differences on my  
view on the health care of our elderly under Medicare as  
compared to Mr. Nixon. I was for it. He was against it. That  
is a difference.

19 There are differences on minimum wage. I never have  
20 hesitated in my life to support its extension and its expansion  
and its improvement. The other candidate hasn't that flawless  
a record.

21 There have been differences on Federal Aid to  
22 Education which has been a blessing. Ask any state officer, ask  
any school officer, ask any mayor, any school board. Ask any  
child, Catholic or Protestant, black or white.

23 The Democratic nominee, the one you are looking at,  
24 has supported all of his life, every day in his work in the  
Senate, broad programs of Federal Aid to Education, because I  
believe with Jefferson that you can't -- you have to make a  
25 choice. You can't be both free and ignorant. And, I am for

1 freedom.

(Applause)

2 The Republican candidate has opposed Federal Aid to  
3 Education all of his public life.

4 There are many other differences, many of them. The  
5 Republican candidate said here just the other day if you elect  
6 that man, Hubert Humphrey, you will have four more years of the  
7 same, because he has been Vice President during this Administra-  
8 tion.

9 Well, let me take Mr. Nixon's argument for a moment.  
10 If you elect Mr. Nixon, you will have four more years of what  
11 you had, and let me remind you of what you had.

12 Three recessions, three recessions. \$175 billion of  
13 lost income.

14 Has anybody in Pittsburgh forgotten what you went  
15 through from 1953 to 1960 in this city in unemployment? I don't  
16 think you have.

17 Did you have any urban legislation? Did you have any  
18 war on poverty? Did you have any Head Start program? Did you  
19 have any Federal Aid to Education? Did you have any consumer  
20 protection legislation? Did you have great research programs  
21 that we have today in the field of pollution control and water  
22 purification? YMu know better.

23 I will admit to you that if you elect me as your  
24 President that you are going to have more Federal Aid to  
25 Education. I will guarantee that.

(Applause)

And, we are going to try to do something for the  
health of our children and we are going to see to it that not a  
child in this land ever goes to bed hungry.

(Applause)

And we are going to see to it -- we are going to see to it that  
the consumer has protection and we are going to see to it that  
the elderly have decent care and decent protection and are  
treated with respect.

This richest country on the face of the earth can  
afford to help our senior citizens live out the balance of  
their lives in dignity.

(Applause)

I know I have given -- I just want you to know there  
are differences. And there are some other differences. Only  
these past few days they have come out.

Number one, this is vital to every mother and father  
in this room and every boy and girl. The greatest threat to the  
peace of this world, the greatest threat to life itself, is the  
explosive arms race which consumes our resources, raises the  
level of danger, and constantly places upon those who are in  
positions of responsibility the awesome duty of making sure that  
no erratic act, no emotional act takes place that could trigger

1 a nuclear war.

2 Now, Mr. Nixon once said -- I don't know if I have got  
3 that card, I hope I have; I think I have got that right here --  
4 yes, I believe I have. Yes, indeed. In 1956 -- this is left  
5 over from a TV broadcast tonight, I didn't get to use that --  
6 in 1956 Mr. Nixon called Adlai Stevenson's nuclear test ban  
7 treaty proposal catastrophic nonsense and a cruel hoax. 1956.  
8 That was the same year that I established, and Joe Clark  
9 remembers, the Disarmament Subcommittee in the U.S. Senate and  
10 was the sponsor in the Senate of a proposal for a nuclear test  
11 ban treaty. Mr. Nixon said it was catastrophic nonsense and a  
12 cruel hoax.

13 Mothers, children in America today are safer. There  
14 is no radio active fallout. There is no Strontium 90 of any  
15 degree. At least, it has been minimized because in 1963 the  
16 man who is talking to you and the man who is your Senator, Joe  
17 Clark, and a few others of us in the Senate of the United States  
18 adopted a resolution to back up the hands of John Kennedy so  
19 that he could negotiate with the Soviet Union and the rest of the  
20 nations of the world a nuclear test ban treaty that has  
21 prevented these massive explosions of nuclear weapons in the  
22 atmosphere.

23 (Applause)

24 And Mr. Nixon said it was a cruel hoax. Well, thank  
25 God the American people did not listen to Mr. Nixon or this  
nation of ours and this world would be in much more serious  
trouble.

Now, we have another great treaty before us, and that  
treaty is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

I will just put it to you. Do you want every country  
in the world to have nuclear weapons and the technology to make  
them?

Look what this would do to the level of the danger in  
this world. We spent 2-1/2 to three years negotiating all  
around the world with nation after nation a treaty to prevent  
the spread of the technology for making nuclear weapons and to  
prevent the spread of nuclear weapons themselves, to prevent  
those weapons from getting into the dangerous situation in the  
Middle East, to prevent those weapons from getting into a  
dangerous situation in the Subcontinent of Asia, to prevent those  
weapons from getting into all parts of the world. It is bad  
enough now when we see Communist China with nuclear weapons,  
when we see France and Britain and the United States and the  
Soviet Union, five powers. Imagine what it would be like if  
there were 50.

Now, I helped negotiate that treaty. I went to Europe  
as your representative, sent by your President, a year ago  
April, and I went to six nations to help put together the pro-  
visions of this treaty, and this treaty has been labeled, and



1 properly so, the greatest single act to the contribution of  
2 world peace since World War II. That treaty rests in the United  
3 States Senate right now. It is in our interest. It is in the  
4 interest of humanity. It has got nothing to do with whether  
5 you like Russia or not.

6 We all know that the Russians have committed a  
7 dastardly act of aggression in Czechoslovakia. We know that.  
8 We know that this is a dangerous world. It has got nothing to do  
9 with that because all we are talking about is, will it prevent  
10 the spread of this technology, this dangerous nuclear weapons  
11 technology.

12 Now, we have got enough weapons right now here to  
13 defend ourselves and to attack if need be, to protect ourselves,  
14 and there is nothing there that says we can't have more if we  
15 need them. All that treaty says is that somebody else is not  
16 to get them. So, we lower the level of danger.

17 What does Mr. Nixon say? When we need statesmanship,  
18 when we need men that will rise above emotion and passion, when  
19 we need men that will leave the platform of demagoguery and  
20 stand upon the high standards of principle, what does he say? He  
21 says, well, I am for the treaty, but not now.

22 Ladies and gentlemen, we need decisive leadership.  
23 We need that treaty. It is in our national interest. It is in  
24 the interest of all of God's children. It is in the interest  
25 of humanity and I charge Mr. Nixon here tonight with the  
failure to exemplify the leadership that a President ought to  
have if he is going to lead this nation.

(Applause)

Just one more. I am just going to take one more  
quickly. There is one more grave decision remaining in the  
Senate and that is who is going to be the next Chief Justice of  
the United States.

Now, the Senate of the United States ought to vote it  
up or down. It is unconscionable that a filibuster or the  
threat of a filibuster would be used to block the nomination  
and the confirmation of a Chief Justice of these United States.  
This is the most unbelievable set of circumstances that this  
national has ever faced under the appointment and the nomination  
of a Chief Justice.

Now, what does Mr. Nixon say? He says Mr. Fortas is  
a fine man and a distinguished jurist and lawyer and a distin-  
guished judge. I agree. He is all of that and he is an  
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, now. And yet, because  
certain people in that body led by none other than Strom Thurmond,  
have said that Mr. Fortas will not be the Supreme Court Chief  
Justice of the United States, that the nomination languishes there,  
and Mr. Nixon stands out here and he says to you and everybody  
else, well, I am for him, but.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is one way to have the

1 vote up or down. I am not telling people they have to vote for  
2 Mr. Fortas. That is not my business. I am simply saying that the  
3 Senate of the United States owes it to this country to have a  
4 vote. The nomination is there.

(Applause)

4 And I am here saying -- and I am here to say that Mr. Nixon  
5 can get that vote. All he has to do is tell the Nixon  
6 Republicans and the Nixon Dixiecrats, and they are there, all  
7 he has to do --

(Applause)

6 -- is to tell them to remove the threat of the filibuster, to  
7 report the nomination, to bring it up on a rollcall vote and  
8 we will know who is for whom.

8 Now, there are two issues and I must say that the  
9 evidence continues to pile in. Ma. Nixon has made some very  
10 interesting arrangements for some of the more reactionary  
11 elements of the south, and I want you to understand that my  
12 relationships with the south are not the south of the midnight  
13 of the past but the south of the dawn of the new day.

(Applause)

11 And that is the difference.

12 All right. I am going to quit now. I just want you to  
13 know that this campaign is more than just get out and vote.  
14 This is a campaign on issues. This is a campaign on moral  
15 principle. This is a campaign on principle. And I am going to  
16 ask you to go on out now and fight and to work. I am going to  
17 go out and ask you -- I am going to ask you as you have never  
18 worked before.

15 There isn't any doubt but what this is a difficult  
16 campaign.

16 We have been fighting amongst ourselves for months.  
17 We have got to heal our own wounds and you have to ask yourself  
18 who you want to have become President of the United States,  
19 the man who fought Harry Truman, the man who fought against  
20 Adlai Stevenson, the man who carried his fight against John  
21 Kennedy, and the man who has fought the Democratic Party under  
22 Lyndon Johnson. You have to ask yourself do you want that  
23 gentlemen, that representative of the Republican Party, to now  
24 become the President or do you want to help the Democratic Party  
25 elect a man who will give you all that is in his heart and in  
his life to unite this nation and to help it fulfill the noble  
and high purposes that this country has set for itself.

I will leave the question and the decision up to you.  
Thank you very much.

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