

REMARKS OF VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY
CONTINENTAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
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VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Mrs. Reyholds. Governor Dempsey, and Senator Ribicoff, my friend John Bailey, and Mr. Roberts, of this great Connecticut General, and the housewives. I thought -- I wasn't sure you were announced, whether it was Housewives of Greater Hartford or Greater Housewives of Hartford. But anyway, I prefer the latter.

Now, some of you I noticed just a minute ago were doing what I have been doing for several days. You were casting fond eyes at a very lovely young lady. And she is here with us. And it is Inger Stevens, as you know. She is here. Inger.

(Applause)

Sit right over there.

By the way, this is Inger's birthday.

(Applause)

MISS STEVENS: The reason we were a little late was that I was given a cake on the plane -- that the Vice President spent all night making. It was delicious. It is quite an honor for me to be here today. And I am so happy to see all of you here. We have got the best man.

(Applause)

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: And I have another friend with me. By the way, before I got to the other one, I just want you to know, I did make that cake. You know, I come from the land of where we bake cakes, you know, either Pillsbury or General Mills. It makes no difference. My name is not Betty Crocker. I baked the cake, and I got a kiss. And I will tell you it was worth every minute of it.

Now, the next person I would like to have you meet is a truly great American, and a wonderful gentleman in his own right, and a great American athlete -- a marvelous, warm human being -- Rafer Johnson.

(Applause)

You see, I pick the best in women and the best in men.

(Applause)

Now, I want to just take a very few minutes of your time for a word or two that I have in mind, and then I want to

listen to your questions, and hopefully make some response.

I know that I am talking to people that are deeply concerned about our country, and we all have a right to be. But that concern should not drive us to frustration. And that concern should never in any way upset our faith in the ultimate accomplishment and the ultimate ability of this country to do what needs to be done.

I know that you know this, but let me just re-state it.

We have gone through a period of tremendous change in America. If the change were nothing more or less than the result of science and technology, as symbolized by APOLLO 7, if that were the only change, it would be enough to upset people.

But it is the change of the vast interstate highway system, and a bumper-to-bumper line of automobiles that keeps Americans moving from one end of their country to another. It is the change that has come from a society that was only a few years ago predominantly rural, and now is highly industrialized. It is the change of a younger society, where most of our people, the majority, are under 25 years of age.

(Applause)

It is this kind of a change. And it is another kind of a change. It is a change in the society that is doing incredible things. And generally speaking, what we hear are the things that go wrong, not the things that go right.

Let me just give you one indication of that change.

Last year one million of our black Americans, the Negro Americans, came out of poverty -- one million of them. We have doubled in this country, for example, the number of people, of black Americans, that have been able to finish their high school training and move on into college, in the last five years. Twelve million Americans that were once relief clients, on Welfare, none productive, tax-consuming -- twelve million of them now in the last eight years have become productive, taxpaying citizens in this country.

This is the only country of any substantial size in the world in which the majority of people are not poor but rather are rather well off.

We are the only society of any of the major industrialized countries, outside, may I say, Inger, of the Scandinavian countries, in which the poor are not a majority.

We are doing things in this country, great things. And we are having to change habits. And you know how difficult that is.

I said to a group last night that maybe some of us of my age cannot change our habits. But then let us work for the younger group that is coming up the line.

I saw outside of my home last Sunday little children

playing, and how well I remember a little chap by the name of Clyde, another little chap by the name of Carl, and another little one by the name of Theresa, and Carl was baking a big chocolate cake. And he was putting on what he said -- super-duper frosting. He had been listening to the television, And Clyde, who was a little Negro boy, was building a highway, and I was helping him -- I put some bricks in there, so that he would make a sort of an underpass and an overpass. And I was having the time of my life. Because I live in a neighborhood where within three blocks there is public housing, low middle-income housing, and upper income housing, and it is all an integrated neighborhood. And everybody seems to get along fine. And in the worst days that we had in Washington there was no trouble at all in this particular neighborhood. And you know what little Clyde said, the fellow that was building the highway. He became exasperated after a while. Carl was still over there baking his pies, and he was making cakes, and he was having me come over and wanting me to taste it, and he was putting on sand, fixing it all up. But little Clyde was an engineer. And he said to me, "Humphrey, you can't build a highway, because Theresa keeps walking through it all the time."

Now here were children black and white playing together, and learning how to live together.

The central question in American today is one that goes far beyond economics. It goes far beyond anything that we have ever thought about before. We have taken it for granted. The question is can we trust each other, can we learn to live together as a people. That is the great question.

(Applause)

And this is what we mean by national unity. There is no use of talking about unity unless you know what we mean.

Now,,we have on our currency "In God we trust." But if you cannot trust each other, what makes you think you can trust Divine Providence, because you aresupposed to be the creature of Divine Providence.

And I put it right on the line. I think we are making a fundamental decision this year. We are going to decide for the whole world whether this experiment that we call democracy, where we have these inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, where we proclaim to the world that we believe in human equality, where we proclaim to the world that we believe in equal protection of the laws and equal rights under the law -- we are going to give the world a demonstration of whether we really believe it. The world's greatest public opinion poll is being taken in the United States in 1968. And it isn't just a question of wages alone, and it isn't just a question of consumer protection legislation, it isn't just a question of better highways or even better schools. It is a question about people. Can we as Americans express to the world the hope, not the hate, but the hope that this country is supposed to represent. So I have come to the people to ask people to vote their hopes, and not their hates. I know that it is easier to appeal to people's emotions on the basis of fear and suspicion and doubt and hate, people have done that throughout life. Hitler did that in Germany, and other people have done it. And we have

candidates even who today, for high and low office, have tried to appeal to some people on the basis of suspicion, doubt, hate, the worst basic evils of man's nature.

And I am not going to do that.

I happen to believe that there is some price -- there is a price that is too high to pay, even to be President in this country.

(Applause)

So what I am saying to you is, let's appeal to the best that is in us. In the worst of times you must do the best of things. Remember that. And these are difficult times. And we are called upon to do the best of things. That means building the best of cities, the best of schools, it means the best of our performance, it means the best of our attitude. And I am talking to the best of people about it, because you are going to decide it.

Remember, those of us in this room that have had a chance for an education, those of us in this hall today that have had a little better chance economically, we have a greater responsibility than someone else. I wish -- I have talked to young people a great deal, and I tell them, listen, don't tell me that anybody paid -- that you paid for your education. Once in a while I get some young fellow that comes up like myself -- I said this -- I earned my way through college. I guess I thought I did. But who is it that can pay for the writings of Shakespeare that were free for me in the library. Who is it in his tuition that can pay for the accumulated culture of 5,000 to 10,000 years. Who is it that can pay for the prophecy of the Scriptures? How do you mean you pay for things? What you are really here for is a steward of these great things. And if we live to be a hundred, and help a hundred people a day, we will never be able to repay for the blessings that we really have ourselves.

Now, what Americans need to understand is that America has not lost its way. It has not. What America is doing is finding its conscience. And this is the greatest ordeal that a people or a nation ever goes through -- when a man comes to himself, when a nation discovers its own destiny, when a people find their own conscience.

We are not a sick society at all. We are a changing society. We are not a nation that has had our best days. We are a country that is just beginning to see a better day. And I have asked people to help me become President so that we can hopefully look forward to a new day, because I believe the old era has ended, and a whole new period is upon us. And how we start this new period, this new day, is going to determine a lot what is going to happen throughout the whole day. With that, I await your questions. Thank you.

(Applause)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, with a certain degree of popularity in the Conservative movement in this country, how, as President, and as I believe as the best man, would you be able to lead most effectively?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: The lady said that with a believe, or with a feeling that there is a rather conservative mood, I think you would say, in the country, how do I believe that I could lead this country.

I do not think there is a conservative mood in the country. But I think there is an uneasiness in the country. And the uneasiness is expressed -- I mean is given evidence to by riots, by lawlessness, by difficulties that we see in our respective cities.

I want to say that in any period of great change, there is turmoil. I give you the example.

I flow in here in this plane this morning. We were delayed, we had to hold in a pattern for over a half hour, because we could not land, due to fog. But ordinarily, I mean sometimes when you come in a situation like that, you come through what we call a weather front.

I give you my example. We are going through a social weather front. We have been in what I call a low, into a low, clouds, difficult to really get a good vision, couldn't see the new horizons. But we were at least moving. But it has been a low front. And when we come out of the low into the high, like the weather map shows you, frequently, if you fly, and I do sometimes I used to do a little of it myself, I would call up the Weather Bureau and they would say, "Well, you better be careful when you get across Eau Claire, Wisconsin, we used to call it the 'Thunder Alley,' around Madison. You are going to run through the front, and when you go through the front there is going to be some turbulence, but if you veer around you may miss the thunder heads."

Now, we are coming out of the low of a segregated society, of a society in which there were far too many people that were illiterate, far too many people with little or no chance. We are coming through a period in which there is television and communication and media that shows people what can be. And we are going through where the low and the high meet. And when that happens, there is turbulence. And what you need during that period of time hopefully and prayerfully, first of all in yourself, is confidence. Don't tear the seat belt off, but put it on. Secondly, you ought to have a good pilot. And you ought to have a good co-pilot.

(Applause)

And may I say -- may I say that you want to have a pilot that has confidence in the ship that he is flying. And I have confidence in this Republic. And my co-pilot, Ed Muskie, can take over any time and fly it if need be.

I think we can govern. And I'll tell you why. I think that you put your finger on the real central question about the politics. I think that if Mr. -- if the Republican nominee, Mr. Nixon, were to be elected, he would have to make a coalition in order to govern. He will have to make it with Strom Thurmond, he will have to make it with the most conservative elements of the Democratic party and the Republican party. The

party has about two-third conservatives, or maybe three-fourths, and about a quarter of them what you call liberal representatives. The Democratic party has about three-fourths to two-thirds liberals, and about a third or a quarter of what I call very conservatives. We haven't had what you might call a realignment of the parties.

Mr. Nixon will have to govern on the basis of putting together the reactionary and conservative elements. Hubert Humphrey will have to govern by putting together what I call the moderate and the progressive elements of America. And I will be able to do it.

(Applause)

QUESTION: Mr. Humphrey, there is a very good chance there may be a truce or armistice signed before election. How will that affect the total campaign, and specifically will it help you?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I have said many times -- I'll back up -- one of my weaknesses in politics I find out is candor with the people, because if you have it, you are apt to say things, and then if it does not work out they say, "Well, you see, he didn't know what he was talking about." Prophecy is not a gift of a man in public life, particularly when they take down every word, (laughter) because there is always somebody that comes back. You know, if they find all the Dead Sea Scrolls, some of the prophets are going to look a little bad, too, (laughter).

But I think that events will have a great deal to do with what happens in this country. I think events have. I think the events, the tragic events of the assassination of Robert Kennedy had a great deal to do with what has happened to me. I have said it openly, and I will say it again. It soured the whole political situation. It made it unhappy. It made it miserable. It was an event that was a catastrophic, tragic event. I think that the events that surrounded the Chicago convention hurt us. I don't think there is any doubt about that. I think that if peace could come, the event of that would not only help me, but it would help every living mortal in the world. And that is what is more important.

(Applause)

And I want to say I hope and pray it can come. I had somebody ask me the other day, "Do you think President Johnson will be willing to go out and help campaign?" I said he has told me he would, and we have talked about it, and he has already spoken in my behalf. But if I could have my "druthers," what I would rather have the President be able to do than anything, and I know this is what he is doing, I know that what he is giving is time too, if he could give 24 hours a day, every day between now and January 20, to just one thing -- to find a way to bring that tragic war in Vietnam to a conclusion.

(Applause)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what would you propose

to do about the Pueblo situation?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Just continue the diplomacy that we are presently practicing. I know that sounds not very promising at the moment. But I want to give you some encouraging.

In 1960, I believe it was, or late 1959, or '60, the Russians intercepted an RB-47, which was a reconnaissance plane and its crew, flying in the Baltic area, near the Baltic, and they said that our plane was violating Russian air space. It was not. But they seized it just exactly as the North Koreans seized the Pueblo. They took that crew, and they held that crew in prison. And we pleaded, and nothing came of it. And we had a lot of big boys around that said, well, we ought to just go in and bomb them. We have got an awful lot of bombers around this country. I want to put it very frankly. Any fool can start a war. It takes a statesman, may I say, to be able to stop one.

(Applause)

We are going to pursue the Pueblo matter through every channel, and we are today, through every channel. We still have the world court to go to, we invoked the good offices of the U. N., and we have asked the Soviet Union and others to help. And my feelings, my feelings that just as it was with the air crew that I spoke of, that there will be some -- that there can be and I hope there will be the release of these men. I have no positive evidence. But I remember what the Russians did in the instance of John Kennedy's inaugural. After President Kennedy came into power, after his great victory, the Russian Government released those pilots. And it was the beginning of an era of better relationship between our two countries. I hope and pray that the same pattern may be followed after January 30, 1969.

(Applause)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, would you work towards increasing Social Security benefits for senior citizens?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My dear lady, I spoke yesterday in Detroit on this subject. Yes, I would. I have been in touch with the Social Security Administration, and what I say to you now is not conjured up out of my imagination, but it is entirely possible, over the next four years, because of the increase in our Gross National Product, and because of the increase in the number of employees, to be able to provide a 50 per cent increase over the four-year period in Social Security benefits, over the four-year period. We had a 13 per cent increase here just recently in one year. And we believe that this is an absolute necessity, raising the minimum from \$55 to \$100 for a person, and raising the minimum for a couple from \$82.50 to \$150, as a minimum.

I also happen to believe that there ought to be a cost of living escalator clause in the Social Security Act, so that those persons that are on Social Security, and have fixed incomes as a result of it, that when the cost of living goes up, their benefits rise accordingly.

I further believe that we ought to --

(Applause)

I further believe we ought to liberalize the provision that permits -- that today restrains people who are age 65 or 62, depending on when they wish to receive their benefits -- that we should liberalize that provision which restricts the amount of income that you can earn without reduction of benefits.

(Applause)

And finally, finally we need to put under Medicare prescription drugs -- very important.

(Applause)

I wish I could be here all day. I am getting the word. I got to get out of here, girls, but keep it up. We will fight them off.

Let us get this lady back here.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, is it possible to have Medicare under 65?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, it is. I think that -- we have a kind -- we hope to have a kind of what we call Kiddiecare, for little ones, ~~between the~~ ages of first day and age four, as a kind of post-natal care for our youngsters. We think that this is very very possible. We also feel that we ought to have a much better type of hospital and Medicare care for the handicapped, which are eligible under Social Security age 50. What you are talking -- I do not believe that we ought to have general health insurance across the country. We have got private -- I am in a private insurance company here.

(Applause)

Yes, ma'am?

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, your basic candor is to be greatly admired. But I would like to have you clarify your position on Vietnam.

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Oh, my goodness. Well, I'll get my card out. I want to tell you why I do that. Every time you talk about the Vietnam war, it is just like that you were trying to rewrite Scripture. And you have got to be careful. There is a theology about this war. It has gotten to be not a question of what the war is about any more, but what people think it is about, and what your views are are not as important as whether you left out a word somewhere along the line. So let me read it for the hundred and fourteenth time.

I said in my television address at Salt Lake City that I would stop the bombing in North Vietnam.

(Applause)

] I said I would regard this as an acceptable risk for peace. I said before taking this action -- and any President would do so, if he didn't he wouldn't be worth having as President -- that I would want to be sure what this would mean in terms of the safety of our troops.

(Applause)

I would therefore look very closely -- I would therefore look very closely at evidence, direct or indirect, by deed or word, of Communist willingness to restore the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam. Now, why. Because that is the easiest thing for them to do. It is an international zone. It was not violated for a long period of time, and it could easily be restored without losing face so to speak on the part of the North Vietnamese. I said I would reserve the right if North Vietnam shows bad faith to resume bombing. I think it is clear why my emphasis lies, and I think it is also clear that Hanoi could with very little difficulty take action concerning the demilitarized zone. Now, I would say more about this, but frankly there are the most delicate negotiations underway right now that we have ever had, and the less that I say, the less confusion there will be. I only want you to know that the highest priority of my public life has always been and will continue to be trying to build those blocks that lead to peace. Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Peace Corps, Food for Peace program, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, all of these bear the name of Hubert Humphrey.

(Applause)

When John Kennedy -- when John Kennedy signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, he looked over at me, and handed me the first pen, and said to me, "Hubert, this is your treaty." I consider that the finest compliment that I have had.

Now, I got to go downtown -- they say in Hartford, they say there are 10,000 people. But look at the quality of this audience!

Thank you very much.



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