

REMARKS
THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

AIR FORCE ACADEMY

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

JANUARY 29, 1970

The sixties have been a decade of discovery, a decade of turmoil and change. In the past ten years, our nation confirmed the shift to an urban culture; made good on John F. Kennedy's promise to put man on the moon and saw tremendous changes in popular taste -- in music, film, clothes, art, theater -- changes that, in most cases, have been indicators of our movement toward a more open, more liberal, society.

Though such distinctions as decades may be arbitrary and meaningless in terms of how lives and events actually progress, nevertheless, there is a psychological aura about the end of a decade, and the beginning of a new one. It is an artificial but nonetheless recognizable break that allows us to reflect on the past and to speculate on, and plan for, the future.

Ten years ago, as the sixties were coming over the horizon, the Democratic Administration's legislative agenda for the decade included some items that, at the time, seemed visionary and over optimistic.

Such items as the Civil Rights bill, the Voting Rights Act, Federal Aid to Education, the Peace Corps, Medicare and Medicaid, a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, a Federal Housing bill, Model Cities and the Economic Opportunity Act stand as landmarks of achievement for the 1960's.

It is hard, from today's vantage point, to realize how controversial -- if not revolutionary -- these proposals seemed at the time, how imposing an agenda we set ourselves for the decade just past. Today we take for granted the remarkable "people legislation" of the sixties, and we tend to forget the struggles that preceded their enactment.

Yet, each was a major breakthrough in attacking the age old problems of poverty, illiteracy and inequality, and, though none of these problems are yet fully resolved, there are promising signs that some of our new approaches can eventually provide solutions.

It is not my purpose to re-live the 60's, but rather to point out the opportunity this change of decades offers to develop a new agenda for the nation, to outline the priorities and goals which can make the 70's the decade of decision and development.

This is what I hope to see the President do this year. As Chairman of the Democratic Policy Council, it is what I hope to help the Democratic Party -- as a responsible party of opposition -- do this year.

National leaders cannot rest on the laurels of the past, however hard won. New problems wait to test the national purpose -- problems that challenge the ingenuity and the leadership of all of us.

What are the problems our national leaders must grapple with in the seventies and eighties? Some old ones hang heavier than ever over our head:

... war - with its terrible cost in human life.

... the nuclear arms spiral -- and the frightening increase in man's capacity to destroy himself.

... inflation -- and the consequent erosion of family spending power. The past twelve months have been the most inflationary since the Korean War, and there is little hope that present economic policies will halt the wage-price spiral.

And there are new problems, posed in the sixties, that will demand solution in the seventies:

...Pollution. A consistent poisoning of our environment that threatens man with death at the hands of the very air he breathes. Modern greed -- from the Santa Barbara oil slick to phosphate and nitrate poisoning -- increasingly threatens the age-old relationships between man and nature. The President's recognition of this danger in the State of the Union message will be of little value without an adequate commitment of Federal dollars and the institution of national standards and safeguards ...

... The interlocking web of issues that comprise the Urban Crises -- inner-city education, noise, welfare, garbage, housing, health care -- many of which also affect our suburban and rural residents. As a partial solution, I have proposed an Urban Development Bank that would operate domestically much like the World Bank does internationally in providing low interest loans to our troubled areas.

... Law and Justice -- the increasing resort to violence as a mode of expression, and drugs as a form of rebellion.

.. Last, but by no means least, of the large national concerns is the increase in Polarization, in deep division, not just between white and black, but between young and old, consumer and seller, northerner and southerner, laborer and intellectual, military and civilian, rich and poor, government and journalist, voter and politician. All these -- and more -- are unhappy indicators that we mistrust our neighbor.

Divisive attacks do not help to unite us.

Bombast, abuse and double talk are no substitute for sober, reflective reaffirmation. The United States is a strong and resolute nation, resourceful and healthy. Our national leaders must pursue consistent, responsible policies abroad, while preserving free institutions and nurturing humane policies at home.

I think we can do this in the seventies. I think there are hopeful portents, good reasons for us to weight the precarious scales of prognostication toward optimism ...

... Internationally, I take heart from the successful first round in the SALT talks, and the chance for continued success in Vienna -- a success that holds promise, for the first time since we entered the nuclear era, of halting the race toward over-kill.

... Communications technology -- television, a tool to be used, not abused, and the communications satellites, offer the possibility of a fully informed world citizenry, a world that, in Marshall McLuhan's phrase, is truly a global village. And, as one who believes deeply that man is rational, and nature neutral, I am equally committed to the premise that man can control his adventure on this earth, and that information is the tool he needs to do it -- the tool with the leverage to move nations onto the paths of peace.

... Domestically, I look to the awakened and revitalized Congress that this year did yeoman's work in re-examining the dollar priorities of our nation and coming up with measures that met our people's needs -- measures that included a revised tax structure that eliminates many of the inequities suffered by low and middle income families for decades; that included a 300% increase in the Administration's request for dollars to fight the pollution battle.

... And I look also to our young people, and commend the serious interest this activist generation takes in the complicated world they have inherited from their elders. They are not all demonstrators, my friends, and very few are drug addicts. I have worked with young people on two campuses this year -- a large state university, and a small private college -- and I have visited many, many other campuses across the nation and I say to you that this is the smartest, the best informed, generation that America has ever produced.

... And I am encouraged at the progress we are making in political reform, in opening up our party structures and offering political power to those who have been powerless since the nation began. I speak not only of the Voting Rights bill, but of intra-party reform, of the effort I am proud to have initiated in my own party for universal registration, for free access to the polls for everyone, with no further archaic restrictions.

This month, as President Nixon begins his second year in office at the start of a new decade -- he has a fresh opportunity to help us improve our nation, and to help man improve his planet.

As President, Mr. Nixon is our Commander in Chief, and he must be our leader, must be ahead of the rest of the nation -- indeed, ahead of the nations of the world -- both in identifying national needs and international problem areas, and in directing us to thoughtful and imaginative solutions.

He must help us to move purposefully into the seventies -- to move toward greater freedom and greater opportunity for all our citizens, and to diligently and resolutely work for peace in the world. We have solemn reason to pray that he is able to do so.

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General Maormer
officers + men of U.S. Air Force Academy
Captain KohT

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BY

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

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Decade 7

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*Urban
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