

THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

DFL CONVENTION

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

JUNE 27, 1970

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I am honored by your endorsement;

I accept it proudly because I think we Democrats
have a job to do for Minnesota and for America.

As we look ahead to the campaign to
come I think we must first take stock. As
Lincoln asked -- "Where are we and whither
are we tending?"

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↳ We must first acknowledge that we have
major problems. ↳ No longer can the administration
in Washington blame its troubles on its
predecessors. ↳ An administration that has been
in power for 18 months must assume responsibility.

↳ Here is the bill of particulars: !

--- inflation is at the highest rate since the time
of the Korean war; the cost of the necessities
of life --- food, clothing, medical care ---
are going up, up and up.

--- interest rates are at the highest in over
100 years.

--- credit and money are tighter than they
have been in 50 years.

--- not only is there rising unemployment
approaching the 5% figure, but overtime
pay is gone for most workers, high hourly
rates in some jobs have been lost and ^{there are} lower
hourly wages in other jobs. — underemployment

our country
L In short, the ~~economy~~ is in trouble.

L Beyond that, our people are worried and ~~fed~~
~~up~~ L Young people are disillusioned and discouraged.

The nation seeks leadership and direction -- but
draws a blank from Washington.

L These are some of our problems. Now
the question we must ask is this: Is it hopeless?
Are these problems the symptoms of a society
that is decaying before our very eyes? Are we
indeed a sick society, as some say?

I don't think so. I think we must know
that America can work; that America is working
right now despite the unimaginative national
leadership we now have in Washington. Although
they're working at it, it takes more than 18 months
of Nixon-Agnew-Mitchell to stop decent, hard-
working Americans from building a better life
for themselves and their families.

We must acknowledge then, that we have problems -- some long-standing ones, some new ones. We must know, too, that we in America have always been able to come up with men to match our mountains and people to face up to our problems.

Now, how do we best solve our problems in the future?

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I believe that those who seek to bring change are dead wrong if they think that either violence or extremism can help in answering our problems. Violence can only beget more violence.

Nor is disruption or organized chaos a tactic that can best bring about change. Americans are quite properly fed up with life in the fever zone.

They want, and they will get, some order and stability and decency in our political process, and they will turn thumbs down on those who abuse the freedom that our system provides.

There was, I think, a general misunderstanding of the motives of the so-called "hard-hats" who marched in New York and St. Louis in recent weeks. The press said these were "hawks" who marched against "doves". I don't think so.

I think many, if not most, of those hard-hats were for a speedy withdrawal from Indochina. What was bothering them was seeing ~~colleges~~ buildings burned. What was bothering them was seeing the flag ridiculed or burned. Their marching chant, you may recall, was not "war" or "hawk" or "racism" or anything like that.

All they said was "U. S. A. All the Way" -- which is not such a bad slogan.

↳ The strategy of despair and disruption then, offers no real solution for the America of tomorrow.

↳ Nor does the present Republican administration offer a real solution to our problems. While the extremists suffer from an excess of passion, we are faced on the other hand with a national administration that exhibits a lack of compassion.

It is revealing, I think, to take note of how an Administration describes itself. In Washington today the Republicans call themselves "Nixon, Incorporated". That is a pretty apt description. They behave like a cold, impersonal corporation and not like men who can offer leadership and feeling to Americans.

They are presently very concerned about making new organization charts with neat little lines and boxes -- but they don't care about the flesh and blood people in America.

↳ We Democrats care about the plight of the family farmer -- but not this Republican Administration.

↳ We Democrats care about the elderly who are short-changed by inflation--but not this Republican administration.

↳ We Democrats care about the young people wanting to buy a home but unable to afford the interest rate -- but not this Republican Administration.

↳ We Democrats care about decent health care for all Americans who need it -- but not this Republican Administration.

↳ We Democrats care about progress in civil rights, so that minorities in America can live in decency -- but not this Republican Administration.

So, despair and disruption is not the answer to our problems. Nor is the complacency of the efficiency-experts in Washington.

I believe that as we look to the future for the ways to face our weaknesses, we must first remember to consider our strength. Only when we know our power can we mass formation to confront the issues. Generals have lost battles because they didn't know their own strength.

So, when we think about civil rights in America, we can remember that ten years ago the issue in America was whether a black man could order a hamburger in a lunch counter. Today, black men sit on the Supreme Court, in the Senate,

on the Federal Reserve Board, and have sat ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ the President's cabinet. Surely, we have not done enough --- but we are on our way.

Ten years ago, the big issue in the Presidential election between John Kennedy and Richard Nixon was Medicare. The Republicans called it "socialized medicine", and said it would never work! But, today, 20 million elderly Americans are free from the fear of heavy medical and hospital bills. We have not done enough --- we will do more --- but we are on our way.

Ten years ago, we talked about federal aid to education --- and that seemed like the impossible dream. But we did get federal aid to education --- we still don't have enough --- but we are on our way.

↳ So, we must remember as we look to the future that this nation is not a failure; we have just begun to fight. We are a nation and we are a state that can do the job for the plain, decent, people of America who know that America can live up to its promises.

↳ The pushing and fighting within our Party has provided reams of newspaper copy in the last few years. But a most important point has been largely over-looked. Our party --- on a state level and on a national level --- has been the only authentic engine of reform in the United States ↳ It was that in the past. It is that now. And it can be that in the future.

↳ It is of that future that I want to talk about today.

↳ For unless our Party --- with all our differences --- can offer Americans a continuing vision of a better day ahead, then our critics may be justified in whatever they say.

Ben P. Morgan

What shall we do? What is our program? We must end the war in Vietnam by speedy, systematic, responsible disengagement and withdrawal. We must end the recession and the economic downturn which is consuming our resources and weakening our economy. We must end violence on our streets and on our campuses. We must end the division in our country. We must end the bitterness that echoes from high places --- condemning press, students, dissidents, and those who seek constructive change. The violence must stop, the killing must stop, the hate must be uprooted.

Americans must again be able to look at fellow Americans with mutual respect.

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L Our challenge and our program is not only to end
the pollution of the air, the water and the earth, but also
to end the pollution of our minds and spirits, to cleanse
ourselves of racism, hate, prejudice, poverty and
illiteracy. It is a big order, but our cause is great, and
we --- and only we --- can do it. It can not be done by
those who preach despair or disruption; it can not be done
by those who preach complacency or stand-pattism. Only
we can do it. And we can do it only if we recognize how
important our mission is, and recognizing that, we must stand
together as brothers in a noble cause or watch our cause be
tarnished and our cause be lost.

Per
I remember John Kennedy used to use a short and
swift reply at press conferences when questioned about
America's ability to cope with its problems. President

Kennedy would look his questioner straight in the eye and point that finger and say: "This nation can take care of itself." And this nation could --- this nation still can --- and this nation will take care of itself in the future.

My friends, either we are going to do the job --- or the job isn't going to get done. Either we Democrats in the Congress, in the State House, in the City Hall and the town hall, will come up with the pioneering work that needs to be done --- or it won't be done and the plain people of America will suffer. Either we Democrats and we DFLers have to look ahead to the year 2000 and decide what kind of America we want and then go do it --- or it won't get done.

That's why I'm running for office. I think that America works. But I think that America can work better.

We have come a long way --- and we have a long way to go. Only we can do it --- so let's be on with the job.

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