

OPENING REMARKS BY  
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, CHAIRMAN  
THE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COUNCIL  
6226 NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

MAY 13, 1971

We meet today to resume the task of charting new directions for the Democratic Party in the 1970s.

As I emphasized at the last meeting of the Democratic Policy Council in late March, Richard Nixon must be defeated next year.

But his defeat cannot be accomplished by default, even though it appears -- at times -- that the Republicans are determined to limit their occupancy of the White House to four years.

The Democratic Party must win the Presidency in 1972; it is not sufficient simply for the Republicans to lose.

It is essential that we win through affirmative and positive effort. Across this country there are millions of Americans who watch the performance of the Nixon Administration with growing disillusionment . . . and who seriously doubt the capacity of our democratic system to deal with the problems that most directly affect their lives.

But today it is not just the poor and deprived who feel ignored and forgotten by their national leaders . . . this is now the lot of middle income wage earners, farmers, businessmen, young people, senior citizens, and blue collar workers.

To win the White House in 1972 will require that the Democratic Party address itself directly to the needs and aspirations of all those Americans who today regard the Nixon Presidency with growing despair and hopelessness.

The fact is: the American people are tired of hearing promises that are never kept. They are increasingly confused by the Nixonese -- that new lexicon of governmental language designed to cover a maze of shifting and contradictory policies on the domestic and foreign scene. And they are worn out by a seemingly endless flood of public relations gimmickry from the Nixon image-makers, everything from a phony county fair on the White House lawn to a guest shot on "Laugh In."

The times cry out for clear, direct, straight-from-the-shoulder talk about what must be done in this country . . . and how we can do it.

America needs new leadership, capable of bringing --

Reconciliation to a people who are today the victims of fear, of doubt and division;

Reconstruction to a Nation whose cities and rural countryside are deteriorating and plagued with problems of pollution, slums, and obsolescence;

Reaffirmation for a people who are questioning the values and the ideals of American life. Yes, reaffirmation of that noble goal of one nation, of a nation united in common purpose, dedicated to liberty and justice and opportunity for all.

This is the challenge and opportunity before the Democratic Policy Council as we continue building the foundation for the 1972 Party platform.

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Last week the Census Bureau reported what should shock even the most complacent among us -- a fact that ruthlessly strips away the cant and self-righteous posturing of the Nixon Administration's efforts to root out poverty in America.

The Census Bureau reported that for the first time in a decade, the number of persons living in poverty increased significantly.

During the 1960s the number of Americans living in poverty declined steadily at an average annual rate of almost 5 per cent. But in two years of the Nixon Administration this steady decline was dramatically reversed: in 1969-70, 1.2 million persons were added to the poverty population, an increase of five per cent.

In large measure this increase can be explained by Mr. Nixon's disastrous economic policies -- policies that in two years time almost doubled the unemployment rate of 3.3 per cent that Mr. Nixon inherited from the Democrats.

But unemployment is only a partial explanation: we must not overlook the frontal attack by the Nixon Administration on the Office of Economic Opportunity, or the record-high interest rates that destroyed thousands of small businesses and drove farmers into bankruptcy, or the withholding of billions of dollars voted by Congress for a variety of urgent public needs, or the Presidential veto that killed hundreds of thousands of public service jobs, or the cutbacks in vital education, health and training programs. All of these and other decisions -- made with cold calculation by the Nixon Administration -- combined to produce this shocking increase of persons living in poverty.

The Democratic Policy Council has a moral, we well as political, responsibility to speak out clearly on this matter -- to indict the Nixon Administration for this massive failure of executive leadership, and then to specify the steps that must be taken now to reverse this downward spiral.

Make no mistake: the survival of our democratic system may well be the issue in 1972 if we are unable to resume the steady march of millions of Americans out of poverty. Those of us who helped design the programs of the 1960s understood that even these were inadequate, that they were only beginnings pointing the way toward more adequate and comprehensive efforts by the public and private sectors. But we hoped that steady and visible results would give us time and opportunity to accelerate the rate of progress, to build on the foundations that had been laid.

Now, the Nixon Administration has sacrificed even the minimum level of success that had been achieved in the 1960s. And, in so doing, the Nixon Administration has lost the time and opportunity to finish the job.

\* \* \* \*

In these tragic circumstances, the Democratic Party must act, not just in behalf of those persons added to the poverty population in the past two years, or in behalf of those who never reached even what the government defines as "poverty". . . . No, the Democratic Party must act in behalf of every American because every American has a very direct and personal stake in the outcome of this struggle.

I believe the American people are ready to move forward once again.

I believe that too many persons seriously underestimate the readiness of the American people to respond to a national leadership of compassion and courage . . . a national leadership that calls forth the best instincts of the American people.

I believe the Democratic Party today faces an extraordinary opportunity to regain the leadership of this Nation . . . if we but summon the vision, and the dedication, to do the things that we know must be done . . . so that all of us in America will know the blessings of peace, freedom and happiness.

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OPENING REMARKS BY

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, CHAIRMAN

THE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COUNCIL

6226 NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

MAY 13, 1971

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WE MEET TODAY TO RESUME THE TASK OF CHARTING NEW  
DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE 1970s.

AS I EMPHASIZED AT THE LAST MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC  
POLICY COUNCIL IN LATE MARCH, RICHARD NIXON MUST BE  
DEFEATED NEXT YEAR.

BUT HIS DEFEAT CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BY DEFAULT,  
EVEN THOUGH IT APPEARS -- AT TIMES -- THAT THE REPUBLICANS  
ARE DETERMINED TO LIMIT THEIR OCCUPANCY OF THE WHITE  
HOUSE TO FOUR YEARS.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MUST WIN THE PRESIDENCY IN  
1972; IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT SIMPLY FOR THE REPUBLICANS  
TO LOSE.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE WIN THROUGH AFFIRMATIVE  
AND POSITIVE EFFORT. ACROSS THIS COUNTRY THERE ARE  
MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO WATCH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE  
NIXON ADMINISTRATION WITH GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT . . .  
AND WHO SERIOUSLY DOUBT THE CAPACITY OF OUR DEMOCRATIC  
SYSTEM TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT MOST DIRECTLY  
AFFECT THEIR LIVES.

BUT TODAY IT IS NOT JUST THE POOR AND DEPRIVED  
WHO FEEL IGNORED AND FORGOTTEN BY THEIR NATIONAL  
LEADERS . . . THIS IS NOW THE LOT OF MIDDLE INCOME WAGE  
EARNERS, FARMERS, BUSINESSMEN, YOUNG PEOPLE, SENIOR  
CITIZENS, AND BLUE COLLAR WORKERS.

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TO WIN THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1972 WILL REQUIRE THAT  
THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ADDRESS ITSELF DIRECTLY TO THE  
NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL THOSE AMERICANS WHO TODAY  
REGARD THE NIXON PRESIDENCY WITH GROWING DESPAIR AND  
HOPELESSNESS.

THE FACT IS: THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE TIRED OF  
HEARING PROMISES THAT ARE NEVER KEPT. THEY ARE INCREASINGLY  
CONFUSED BY THE NIXONESE -- THAT NEW LEXICON OF  
GOVERNMENTAL LANGUAGE DESIGNED TO COVER A MAZE OF  
SHIFTING AND CONTRADICTIONARY POLICIES ON THE DOMESTIC AND  
FOREIGN SCENE. AND THEY ARE WORN OUT BY A SEEMINGLY  
ENDLESS FLOOD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS GIMMICKRY FROM THE  
NIXON IMAGE-MAKERS, EVERYTHING FROM A PHONY COUNTY FAIR  
ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN TO A GUEST SHOT ON "LAUGH IN."

THE TIMES CRY OUT FOR CLEAR, DIRECT, STRAIGHT-FROM-  
THE-SHOULDER TALK ABOUT WHAT MUST BE DONE IN THIS  
COUNTRY , , , AND HOW WE CAN DO IT.

AMERICA NEEDS NEW LEADERSHIP, CAPABLE OF BRINGING --  
RECONCILIATION TO A PEOPLE WHO ARE TODAY THE VICTIMS  
OF FEAR, OF DOUBT AND DIVISION;

RECONSTRUCTION TO A NATION WHOSE CITIES AND RURAL  
COUNTRYSIDE ARE DETERIORATING AND PLAGUED WITH PROBLEMS  
OF POLLUTION, SLUMS, AND OBSOLESCENCE;

REAFFIRMATION FOR A PEOPLE WHO ARE QUESTIONING THE  
VALUES AND THE IDEALS OF AMERICAN LIFE. YES, REAFFIRMATION  
OF THAT NOBLE GOAL OF ONE NATION, OF A NATION UNITED IN  
COMMON PURPOSE, DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND JUSTICE AND  
OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

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THIS IS THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY BEFORE THE  
DEMOCRATIC POLICY COUNCIL AS WE CONTINUE BUILDING THE  
FOUNDATION FOR THE 1972 PARTY PLATFORM.

\* \* \* \*

LAST WEEK THE CENSUS BUREAU REPORTED WHAT SHOULD  
SHOCK EVEN THE MOST COMPLACENT AMONG US -- A FACT THAT  
RUTHLESSLY STRIPS AWAY THE CANT AND SELF-RIGHTEOUS  
POSTURING OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO ROOT  
OUT POVERTY IN AMERICA.

THE CENSUS BUREAU REPORTED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME  
IN A DECADE, THE NUMBER OF PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY  
INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY.



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DURING THE 1960s THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS LIVING IN  
POVERTY DECLINED STEADILY AT AN AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF  
ALMOST 5 PER CENT. BUT IN TWO YEARS OF THE NIXON  
ADMINISTRATION THIS STEADY DECLINE WAS DRAMATICALLY  
REVERSED: IN 1969-70, 1.2 MILLION PERSONS WERE ADDED  
TO THE POVERTY POPULATION, AN INCREASE OF FIVE PER CENT.

IN LARGE MEASURE THIS INCREASE CAN BE EXPLAINED  
BY MR. NIXON'S DISASTROUS ECONOMIC POLICIES -- POLICIES  
THAT IN TWO YEARS TIME ALMOST DOUBLED THE UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATE OF 3.3 PER CENT THAT MR. NIXON INHERITED FROM  
THE DEMOCRATS.

BUT UNEMPLOYMENT IS ONLY A PARTIAL EXPLANATION: WE  
MUST NOT OVERLOOK THE FRONTAL ATTACK BY THE NIXON  
ADMINISTRATION ON THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY,  
OR THE RECORD-HIGH INTEREST RATES THAT DESTROYED THOUSANDS  
OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND DROVE FARMERS INTO BANKRUPTCY,  
OR THE WITHHOLDING OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS VOTED BY  
CONGRESS FOR A VARIETY OF URGENT PUBLIC NEEDS, OR THE  
PRESIDENTIAL VETO THAT KILLED HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF  
PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS, OR THE CUTBACKS IN VITAL EDUCATION,  
HEALTH AND TRAINING PROGRAMS. ALL OF THESE AND OTHER  
DECISIONS -- MADE WITH COLD CALCULATION BY THE NIXON  
ADMINISTRATION -- COMBINED TO PRODUCE THIS SHOCKING  
INCREASE OF PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY.

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THE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COUNCIL HAS A MORAL, AS WELL  
AS POLITICAL, RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT CLEARLY ON  
THIS MATTER -- TO INDICT THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION FOR  
THIS MASSIVE FAILURE OF EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP, AND THEN  
TO SPECIFY THE STEPS THAT MUST BE TAKEN NOW TO REVERSE  
THIS DOWNWARD SPIRAL.

MAKE NO MISTAKE: THE SURVIVAL OF OUR DEMOCRATIC  
SYSTEM MAY WELL BE THE ISSUE IN 1972 IF WE ARE UNABLE  
TO RESUME THE STEADY MARCH OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS OUT  
OF POVERTY. THOSE OF US WHO HELPED DESIGN THE PROGRAMS  
OF THE 1960S UNDERSTOOD THAT EVEN THESE WERE INADEQUATE,  
THAT THEY WERE ONLY BEGINNINGS POINTING THE WAY TOWARD  
MORE ADEQUATE AND COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS BY THE PUBLIC  
AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

BUT WE HOPED THAT STEADY AND VISIBLE RESULTS WOULD GIVE  
US TIME AND OPPORTUNITY TO ACCELERATE THE RATE OF PROGRESS,  
TO BUILD ON THE FOUNDATIONS THAT HAD BEEN LAID.

Now, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS SACRIFICED EVEN  
THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF SUCCESS THAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN  
THE 1960s. AND, IN SO DOING, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION  
HAS LOST THE TIME AND OPPORTUNITY TO FINISH THE JOB.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN THESE TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY MUST ACT, NOT JUST IN BEHALF OF THOSE PERSONS  
ADDED TO THE POVERTY POPULATION IN THE PAST TWO YEARS,  
OR IN BEHALF OF THOSE WHO NEVER REACHED EVEN WHAT THE  
GOVERNMENT DEFINES AS "POVERTY". . . .

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NO, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MUST ACT IN BEHALF OF EVERY  
AMERICAN BECAUSE EVERY AMERICAN HAS A VERY DIRECT AND  
PERSONAL STAKE IN THE OUTCOME OF THIS STRUGGLE.

I BELIEVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE READY TO MOVE  
FORWARD ONCE AGAIN.

I BELIEVE THAT TOO MANY PERSONS SERIOUSLY UNDERESTIMATE  
THE READINESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO RESPOND TO A  
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF COMPASSION AND COURAGE . . . A  
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP THAT CALLS FORTH THE BEST INSTINCTS  
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

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I BELIEVE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY TODAY FACES AN  
EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY TO REGAIN THE LEADERSHIP OF  
THIS NATION . . . IF WE BUT SUMMON THE VISION, AND THE  
DEDICATION, TO DO THE THINGS THAT WE KNOW MUST BE DONE . . .  
SO THAT ALL OF US IN AMERICA WILL KNOW THE BLESSINGS OF  
PEACE, FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS.

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