

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

WALTER JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL

BETHESDA, MARYLAND

JUNE 9, 1971

The decade of the 70's will be exciting and challenging, offering an abundance of both perils and promise.

I believe it should be a decade for building a new American spirit and a stronger, more just society.

The '60s were a time of dissent, disorder, discovery and decision. They were the best of times and the worst of times -- the best because they provided great social change, the opportunity to re-examine our ideas about the direction this country should be taking.

A hundred years before, when our Nation's capacity to govern itself and chart its destiny was being put to the most severe test in its history, Lincoln said:

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion. We must think anew; we must act anew; we must disenthral ourselves."

To "disenthral" literally means to "free from bondage." And that is what the American people are demanding -- a release from the continued tragedy and demoralization of the war in Indochina . . . from the tension and waste of an escalating nuclear arms race . . . from the anxiety of an economy in recession . . . from the hypocrisy of an affluent nation that is privately rich, but publicly poor. . . from continued governmental delay in meeting the critical needs of people -- in health care, education, job opportunities, environmental protection and other basic areas.

It is to this kind of disenthralment, this new release from bondage that I believe we must address ourselves.

The experience of the '60s provided the opportunity for learning. Neither you nor I will graduate until we learn the lessons of that decade and translate them into positive action for the '70s.

The decade of the '60s was a shattering decade when problems at home and abroad rocked the ship. It was not the first time, nor certainly the last for stormy weather.

But the point is that we lived through it without a violent upheaval. Certainly one reason we persevered was that the conscience of young people responded with moral conviction and imagination to the urgencies which confronted us.

We saw that power and wealth were not measures of justice or even the essential ingredients of an ideal society. We decided that while it is our ideal to create a great society, we are still, after all, a long way from our goal.

There was war in the '60s, and there is still war and the tragic waste it involves. There was, and is, poverty and disease and pollution deteriorating our environment.

But there were also decisions: The Voting Rights Act . . . recognition of the need for a war on poverty . . . new assistance to education.

My generation had some waking up to do; your generation helped sound the alarm.

I am convinced that together we can now translate our experience into drive.

We can graduate.

Together we can reaffirm the basic principles of our representative democracy. We can by disenthraling ourselves, "enthral ourselves," if you will, with the basic principles of our representative democracy. We can reaffirm a love for the idea of America.

The impulse is there; it is in the American people, if it is summoned by a leadership with vision for what America can be.

Wherever I go in this country I still find a basic belief in the rightness of the idea which brought us here.

It's in the American flag on the motorcyclist's jacket.

It's in the lights burning late in the legal aid office on Lenox Avenue.

It's in the song lyrics on your radio: "There's a New Day 'Comin'."

Yes, it's in the young veterans who came to Washington -- some of them without arms or legs -- to tell us to end the war.

It's in the millions of ordinary people sweating their way through hard daily work because they haven't given up their hopes and ambitions for their children and grandchildren in this New World.

More than ever, I have faith in the resiliency and the strength of this American society of ours.

We've lost our innocence. But we still have our dreams.

The America of tomorrow requires a new patriotism, not only the patriotism to flag and country, to history and heritage, but the patriotism of service to people and love of mankind.

The new patriotism for the America of tomorrow is the patriotism of compassion for those who are in need, of the relentless fight for justice for those who have been the victims of injustice.

It is the patriotism of judging each other not on the basis of color, creed, or ethnic origin, but on the quality of character -- yes, on merit.

The America of tomorrow needs the passionate patriotism of unbounded confidence in our ability to create a better society, to build new and beautiful cities, to clean out our slums and ghettos, to cleanse ourselves of bigotry and intolerance.

The patriotism for your generation must be an unflinching dedication to peace and a respect for those who have the courage to truly seek peace and work for peace -- not only the peace that comes when the guns of war are silent, but the peace that comes from building a community of nations where differences are tolerated and the rule of force and brute power is rejected.

The new patriotism must embody a commitment to the preciousness of life and the enrichment of the human spirit -- a patriotism that measures our greatness not merely in the standard of our living but in the quality of our life.

This kind of patriotism will require more courage and steadfastness to principle and purpose.

The beloved Adlai Stevenson described it in these words:

"Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime."

It is this challenge of discipline that will determine our future.

Can we be firm without being belligerent?

Can we be resolute without being angry?

Do we have the moral stamina to take problems and transform them into challenges? To take difficulties and make them opportunities?

If we do not, there is no future. If we do, the future is ours.

I believe we can do all of these things. There is a dynamic quality to the people of this Nation. It is manifest in the restlessness, the turbulence, and the dissent of our times. We know we can do better and we know we must.

The poet Thomas Wolfe in the dark days of the depression challenged every American in those stirring words of faith and promise:

"To every man his chance; to every man regardless of his birth, his shining golden opportunity. To every man the right to live, to work, to be himself. And to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him. This . . . is the promise of America."

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BETHESDA, MARYLAND

JUNE 9, 1971

B.C.C.

1956

Bob Hope - "Don't go"
Aldous Huxley - Presidents Future
standards

001960

THE DECADE OF THE 70'S WILL BE EXCITING, AND CHALLENGING,

OFFERING AN ABUNDANCE OF BOTH PERILS AND PROMISE

but I BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE A DECADE FOR BUILDING A NEW
AMERICAN SPIRIT AND A STRONGER, MORE JUST SOCIETY.

THE '60s WERE A TIME OF DISSENT, DISORDER, DISCOVERY
AND DECISION. THEY WERE THE BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST
OF TIMES -- ~~THE BEST BECAUSE~~ THEY PROVIDED GREAT SOCIAL
and CHANGE. THE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-EXAMINE OUR IDEAS ABOUT
THE DIRECTION THIS COUNTRY SHOULD BE TAKING. ~~the best~~

A HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE, WHEN OUR NATION'S CAPACITY TO
GOVERN ITSELF AND CHART ITS DESTINY WAS BEING PUT TO THE
MOST SEVERE TEST IN ITS HISTORY, LINCOLN SAID:

"THE DOGMAS OF THE QUIET PAST ARE INADEQUATE FOR THE
STORMY PRESENT, THE OCCASION IS PILED HIGH WITH
DIFFICULTY AND WE MUST RISE WITH THE OCCASION, WE
MUST THINK ANEW; WE MUST ACT ANEW; WE MUST DISENTHRALL
OURSELVES."

↳ To "DISENTHRALL" LITERALLY MEANS TO "FREE FROM BONDAGE,"
AND THAT IS WHAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING -- A RELEASE
FROM THE CONTINUED TRAGEDY AND DEMORALIZATION OF THE WAR
IN INDOCHINA . . . FROM THE TENSION AND WASTE OF AN ESCALATING
NUCLEAR ARMS RACE . . . FROM THE ANXIETY OF AN ECONOMY IN
RECESSION . . . FROM THE HYPOCRISY OF AN AFFLUENT NATION
THAT IS PRIVATELY RICH, BUT PUBLICLY POOR . . . FROM
CONTINUED GOVERNMENTAL DELAY IN MEETING THE CRITICAL NEEDS
OF PEOPLE -- IN HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, JOB OPPORTUNITIES,
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER BASIC AREAS.

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It IS TO THIS KIND OF DISENTHRALLMENT, THIS NEW

RELEASE FROM BONDAGE THAT I BELIEVE WE MUST ADDRESS OURSELVES,

The EXPERIENCE OF THE '60s PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY

FOR LEARNING, Neither YOU NOR I WILL GRADUATE UNTIL

WE LEARN THE LESSONS OF THAT DECADE AND TRANSLATE THEM

INTO POSITIVE ACTION FOR THE '70s.

The DECADE OF THE '60s WAS A SHATTERING DECADE

WHEN PROBLEMS AT HOME AND ABROAD ROCKED ~~THE SHIP~~ *our Space Ship - Earth*

But, it WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME, NOR CERTAINLY THE LAST FOR STORMY

WEATHER.

But THE POINT IS THAT WE LIVED THROUGH IT WITHOUT *major*

• VIOLENT UPHEAVAL.

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L CERTAINLY ONE REASON WE PERSEVERED WAS THAT THE CONSCIENCE

OF YOUNG PEOPLE RESPONDED WITH MORAL CONVICTION AND

IMAGINATION TO THE URGENCIES WHICH CONFRONTED US.

L WE SAW THAT POWER AND WEALTH WERE NOT MEASURES OF

JUSTICE OR EVEN THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF AN IDEAL

SOCIETY. L WE DECIDED THAT WHILE IT IS OUR IDEAL TO CREATE

A GREAT SOCIETY, WE ARE STILL, AFTER ALL, A LONG WAY FROM

OUR GOAL.

L THERE WAS WAR IN THE '60s, AND THERE IS STILL WAR ~~and~~

THE TRAGIC WASTE IT INVOLVES. L THERE WAS, AND IS, POVERTY

AND DISEASE AND POLLUTION DETERIORATING OUR ENVIRONMENT.

L BUT THERE WERE ALSO DECISIONS: THE VOTING RIGHTS
Civil Rights action -

ACT . . . RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR A WAR ON POVERTY . . .

NEW ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION.

L MY GENERATION HAD SOME WAKING UP TO DO; YOUR GENERATION
 HELPED SOUND THE ALARM.

L I AM CONVINCED THAT TOGETHER WE CAN NOW TRANSLATE
 OUR EXPERIENCE INTO *positive forward progress.*

L WE CAN GRADUATE *to a better understanding*
and to more positive action

L TOGETHER WE CAN REAFFIRM THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF OUR

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY. L WE CAN BY DISENTHRALLING OURSELVES,

"ENTHRALL OURSELVES," IF YOU WILL, WITH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

OF OUR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY. L WE CAN REAFFIRM A LOVE

FOR THE IDEA OF AMERICA.

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L THE IMPULSE IS THERE; IT IS IN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE,

IF IT IS SUMMONED BY A LEADERSHIP WITH VISION FOR WHAT

AMERICA CAN BE.

L WHEREVER I GO IN THIS COUNTRY I STILL FIND A BASIC

BELIEF IN THE RIGHTNESS OF THE IDEA WHICH BROUGHT US

HERE.

L IT'S IN THE AMERICAN FLAG ON THE MOTORCYCLIST'S

JACKET.

L IT'S IN THE LIGHTS BURNING LATE IN THE LEGAL AID

OFFICE ON LENOX AVENUE.

L IT'S IN THE SONG LYRICS ON YOUR RADIO: "THERE'S

A NEW DAY 'COMIN."

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✓ YES, IT'S IN THE YOUNG VETERANS WHO CAME TO WASHINGTON --

~~SOME OF THEM WITHOUT ARMS OR LEGS~~ -- TO TELL US TO END

THE WAR.

✓ IT'S IN THE MILLIONS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE SWEATING
THEIR WAY THROUGH HARD DAILY WORK BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T
GIVEN UP THEIR HOPES AND AMBITIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN IN THIS NEW WORLD.

✓ MORE THAN EVER, I HAVE FAITH IN THE ^{Unity}RESILIENCY AND
THE STRENGTH OF THIS AMERICAN SOCIETY OF OURS.

✓ ^{may have}WE'VE LOST OUR INNOCENCE; BUT WE STILL HAVE OUR
DREAMS.

h THE AMERICA OF TOMORROW REQUIRES A NEW PATRIOTISM,
NOT ONLY THE PATRIOTISM TO FLAG AND COUNTRY, TO HISTORY
AND HERITAGE, BUT THE PATRIOTISM OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE
AND LOVE OF MANKIND.

L THE NEW PATRIOTISM FOR THE AMERICA OF TOMORROW IS
THE PATRIOTISM OF COMPASSION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED
OF THE RELENTLESS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE
BEEN THE VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE.

L IT IS THE PATRIOTISM OF JUDGING EACH OTHER NOT ON
THE BASIS OF COLOR, CREED, OR ETHNIC ORIGIN, BUT ON THE
QUALITY OF CHARACTER, -- YES, ON MERIT.

THE AMERICA OF TOMORROW NEEDS THE PASSIONATE

PATRIOTISM OF UNBOUNDED CONFIDENCE IN OUR ABILITY TO

CREATE A BETTER SOCIETY, TO BUILD NEW AND BEAUTIFUL

CITIES, TO CLEAN OUT OUR SLUMS AND GHETTOS, TO CLEANSE

OURSELVES OF BIGOTRY AND INTOLERANCE.

THE PATRIOTISM FOR YOUR GENERATION MUST BE AN
UNFLINCHING DEDICATION TO PEACE AND A RESPECT FOR THOSE

WHO HAVE THE COURAGE TO TRULY SEEK PEACE AND WORK FOR

PEACE -- NOT ONLY THE PEACE THAT COMES WHEN THE GUNS OF WAR

ARE SILENT, BUT THE PEACE THAT COMES FROM BUILDING A

COMMUNITY OF NATIONS WHERE DIFFERENCES ARE TOLERATED AND

THE RULE OF FORCE AND BRUTE POWER IS REJECTED.

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L THE NEW PATRIOTISM MUST EMBODY A COMMITMENT TO THE
PRECIOUSNESS OF LIFE AND THE ENRICHMENT OF THE HUMAN
SPIRIT -- A PATRIOTISM THAT MEASURES OUR GREATNESS NOT
MERELY IN THE STANDARD OF OUR LIVING BUT IN THE QUALITY
OF OUR LIFE.

L THIS KIND OF PATRIOTISM WILL REQUIRE MORE COURAGE
AND STEADFASTNESS TO PRINCIPLE AND PURPOSE.

L THE BELOVED ADLAI STEVENSON DESCRIBED IT IN THESE
WORDS:

"PATRIOTISM IS NOT A SHORT AND FRENZIED OUTBURST OF
EMOTION, BUT THE TRANQUIL AND STEADY DEDICATION OF
A LIFETIME."

L IT IS THIS CHALLENGE OF DISCIPLINE THAT WILL
DETERMINE OUR FUTURE.

CAN WE BE FIRM WITHOUT BEING BELLIGERENT?

CAN WE BE RESOLUTE WITHOUT BEING ANGRY?

DO WE HAVE THE MORAL STAMINA TO TAKE PROBLEMS AND
TRANSFORM THEM INTO CHALLENGES? TO TAKE DIFFICULTIES
AND MAKE THEM OPPORTUNITIES?

L IF WE DO NOT, THERE IS NO FUTURE L IF WE DO, THE
FUTURE IS OURS.

L I BELIEVE WE CAN DO ALL OF THESE THINGS. L THERE IS
A DYNAMIC QUALITY TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS NATION. IT IS
MANIFEST IN THE RESTLESSNESS, THE TURBULENCE, AND THE
DISSENT OF OUR TIMES. L WE KNOW WE CAN DO BETTER AND WE
KNOW WE MUST.

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THE POET THOMAS WOLFE IN THE DARK DAYS OF THE
DEPRESSION CHALLENGED EVERY AMERICAN IN THOSE STIRRING
WORDS OF FAITH AND PROMISE:

"TO EVERY MAN HIS CHANCE; TO EVERY MAN REGARDLESS
OF HIS BIRTH, HIS SHINING GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY. TO
EVERY MAN THE RIGHT TO LIVE, TO WORK, TO BE HIMSELF,
AND TO BECOME WHATEVER THING HIS MANHOOD AND HIS
VISION CAN COMBINE TO MAKE HIM. THIS . . . IS THE
PROMISE OF AMERICA."

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