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Hath H. Humphrey Organization

TOWARD A BALANCED NATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

By Hubert H. Humphrey

Shall we design or resign ourselves to our nation's future?

That is the basic question underlying decisions we make today in determining what kind of nation we want to create or leave for future generations.

For what we do -- or fail to do -- today clearly commits and fixes future patterns of life in this nation as well as on this planet earth.

We can no longer afford the luxury of approaching the future of our nation -- and its relationship to the rest of the world -- haphazardly.

A few years back, we learned almost overnight that the world we live in had shrunk to such a size that men on one side of the earth could completely destroy men on the opposite side within 30 minutes through new and devastating means of modern warfare.

More recently we have come to realize that even the natural resources of this earth and of our nation are indeed finite, and in many cases threatened with total depletion.

And today we are approaching a new realization, one which was stated so eloquently by Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos in their recently published book, "Only One Earth."

I quote:

"The establishment of a desirable human environment implies more than the maintenance of ecological equilibrium, the economical management of natural resources, and the control of the forces that threaten biological and mental health. Ideally, it requires also that social groups and individuals be provided with the opportunity to develop ways of life and surroundings of their own choice. Man not only survives and functions in his environment, he is shaped by it."

Of all the influences on man -- and one perhaps that man can most shape -- is that of housing. At one time, housing in this nation was simply the purchasing of a plot of ground and the nailing together of four walls and a roof. But, housing today cannot be approached on that simplistic a basis.

Housing today, like all other facets of our life, is only part of our total human environment. The earlier we clearly recognize that housing policy has implications for employment and industrial location, for the location and availability of health and educational services; that housing influences transportation systems (and vice versa) and that it demands thought and care in the construction of water and waste disposal systems and other utilities -- the earlier we will understand that housing is a truly

integral part of every individual's total pattern of living and that national housing policy must begin to reflect these realities.

The fact is that our nation has gotten by -- and I believe that is an appropriate characterization -- on a system of housing expediency. We have not been willing to look at housing in the total context of how man lives or wants to live.

What we have too often seen in housing policy are programs formulated without any thought given to how they might be integrated with the employment, health, transportation, cultural, recreational or other social service needs of people -- or any thought given to the ability of people to cope with the demands of becoming a homeowner -- or the seemingly inability of government to act decisively when it is painfully aware to everyone that current housing programs -- in both concept and operation -- are out of control.

As a result, we have many newspaper editorials today calling for the reform of Federal housing programs. We have example after example of unscrupulous dealers making a fast dollar from shaky Federal programs. And, we have -- most important of all -- a decreasing public confidence in the attempts by government to formulate a workable national housing policy.

We build close to two million new homes in this nation every year. But how many of these units are built on what I call a "unitized" neighborhood scale ensuring open occupancy, environmental integrity, and providing for a full range of essential facilities and services. Very few indeed! But this is the direction in which I believe our housing policy for tomorrow should move. Next, when and by what means will such a national housing policy be formulated and implemented? We have no time to spare; of that I'm certain! Our nation is faced with an expected 33 percent jump in new household establishment -- not by the year 2000 -- but within this decade!

Housing is the cornerstone of any life of quality. And, to make that life of quality come true, we need a national housing policy not developed as an isolated variable in the total life frame, but as a component of balanced national growth and development -- the kind of growth that will allow individual citizens to house themselves in comfortable balance with their other life support requirements, and desires.

As we approach our nation's bicentennial, it is not only appropriate, but essential that we look anew at the question of what kind of future we are now creating for ourselves and future generations by our decisions-or lack of decisions-as opposed to what we should be doing to move

toward a goal of human relationships based upon the Greek idea of "balance," of moderation, of "nothing too much."

Growth is seen by many as the opposite of stability; yet both are desired. Novelty is prized, but man is overwhelmed by too much change. Technology is both feared and indispensable.

Liberty versus tranquility, defense versus welfare, present versus future, are dichotomous terms that have expressed American goals since the beginning of our Republic.

Our challenge then is to reach out for the "balance" in human relationships that many of us believe to be attainable between conflict and cooperation, between growth and stability, between individual free choice and common good, between technology and social responsibility, between economic needs and environmental protection, between urban and rural, between the old and new, and between national policy and state and local policy planning and development.

But "how" and through what "means" can we reach out for that "balance"?

What mechanisms and processes do we now have that will permit and encourage us to develop the policies and plans that will be needed if we are to "create," to "design" and to "shape" our nation's future human environment?

I suggest to you that there are none, at least not any explicitly designed to deal with our nation's long range future.

We have no institution, process or mechanism today that is dedicated to or concerned with the consequences of the rapid and potent changes in opportunities resulting from the onrush of science and technology.

We have no national effort today concerned with the need for better techniques or measurement to help our society answer for itself the classic questions posed by Abraham Lincoln in his House Divided speech, which I wish to quote:

"If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do and how to do it."

At this critical stage in our national development we must provide the means and processes required to answer such questions, to identify at an early point the vital questions likely to confront our nation as the future unfolds, so that accommodation to change can be a deliberate, conscious and rational process instead of a violent reaction.

And it is precisely for this reason that I will be dedicating much of my future energies in the United States Senate to the task of forging legislation that will provide these needed processes, mechanisms and institutions, which will begin to help us "design" our nation's future and

achieve and reach that "balance" I referred to earlier.

On May 26 of this year in San Francisco before the Commonwealth Club, I unveiled the general provisions of what I call my "Balanced National Growth and Development Act," a proposed piece of legislation which I consider to be the most important of my 25 years of public service.

This bill provides for the establishment of an Office of Balanced National Growth and Development within the Office of the President to "develop specific national policies relating to future population settlement and distribution patterns, economic growth, environmental protection, income distribution, energy and fuels, transportation, education, health care, food and fiber production, employment, housing, recreating and cultural opportunities, communications, land use, welfare, technology assessment and transfer, and monetary and fiscal policy."

This new Office also will provide the means to develop these individual national policies in such a way as to reflect the appropriate inter relationships that obviously exist between and among such policies.

This new Office will tie together and coordinate the work of the Council of Economic Advisors, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Environmental Quality Council.

This new Office will be empowered to bring about more uniform and workable Federal assistance programs, to streamline the Federal delivery system now involving hundreds of categorical programs that so bewilder and confuse many state and local officials.

The bill also establishes new uniform planning requirements for Federal grants-in-aid and transfer to the new Office the comprehensive planning assistance program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act and administered by HUD.

The bill creates a national system of multi-state regional planning and development commissions, involving both governors and state legislatures, to help link-up and facilitate proper coordination among Federal, state, and local units of governments. This nationwide regional commission structure would be directly tied to the new Office within the Office of the President, rather than to a Department.

In addition, this bill would create a Joint Congressional Committee on Balanced Growth and Development. This Committee would be supported by a new Congressional Office of Policy and Planning within the Library of Congress, staffed by professionals and experts on national policy matters.

New requirements pertaining to the location impact of Federal facilities, activities and procurement are specified in the bill. We are the only developed nation in the world that totally ignores this critical question in our private and public decision-making.

This bill creates a new national research institution to monitor, measure and forecast developments and happenings in all the major sciences-soft and hard-and to report its findings, with possible alternatives that might be pursued.

It also provides for more detailed and continuous analysis of population and demographic trends, within the U.S. Bureau of Census.

And, finally it provides for the development of an annual report by the Executive Branch detailing "where we are," and "whither we are tending" in our pursuit of developing and implementing national policies. That report will be made available to and assessed by Congress and the people of this nation.

It will become a national working document for the entire nation to reflect its concerns and desires concerning national goals priorities and policies.

A draft of this bill will be made available soon.

I hope it is reviewed and studied in the spirit that I have drafted it; namely, as a beginning toward building a better America and a start toward a "Balanced National

Growth and Development policy" to help our nation guide and prepare itself for tomorrow.

Whatever may be the outcome of the travail of the present and our hopes and fears for the future, it also is well to be mindful of the sober and powerful injunction of the poet, Walt Whitman, who wrote:

"Now understand me well -- it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary."

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