TRANSCRIPT OF REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY CHARTER COMMISSION - DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WASHINGTON, D. C. April 11, 1973

Mr. Chairman, Mr. President. After all Terry Sanford aspired to and succeeded in becoming president of Duke University. I have never been president of anything.

I want to compliment our distinguished chairman for his leadership of the Charter Commission, to acknowledge his good sense as a citizen and as a Democrat, to congratulate him on his remarkable record as a Governor and to give him my personal thanks for the gift of his friendship which is precious to me.

My fellow Democrats. By the way, I asked Terry, how many Democrats we have here today. He said that we have at least 400. That's a better record than the Congress has on critical votes. I hope you do a better job of exercising your responsibilities than we have of recent date -- in trying to give some balance, some sense of direction to the government of the United States.

I have some notes here to which I want to refer because this is serious business. I am not here to give you the typical partisan speech that will hopefully bring you out of your chairs and to your feet.

Last night I was in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. We had over 1200 people at a fund raising dinner, getting ready for some elections in 1973, bringing together the elements of that party in the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I hope that my presence there was what I hope it may be here this morning, namely a healing presence. We brought together diverse elements of our party in fellowship, understanding and in common purpose and this has been happening wherever we go across this country.

Some people have said to me, "Mr. Humphrey, why are you out on the hustings talking to the Party? Are you running for something?" The answer, so you may be at ease, is absolutely not. But I want to tell you that it will not do Democrats any good to run for anything, unless we make up our minds to pull ourselves together and start acting like a party rather than a back alley brawling outfit. 5 5

I want to talk to you, as I talked to my young friends of the Minnesota State legislature after we obtained our first majority in both houses of the legislature in more than 100 years. The easiest thing in the world is to be in a minority position in the political power structure and to have the luxury of criticism and dissension, with each and every one of us doing our own thing and going our separate ways. The most difficult assignment is to act responsibly without demanding conformity, to accept responsibility without giving up the precious right of expressing our honest differences and to understand that ultimately we must come to some decision.

During the past decade or more we have emphasized dialogue, debate, discussion and dissension -- precious rights in a free society and absolutely essential to the Democratic Party or any other political institution in our country. But, after you are all through with those four "D's" of dialogue, dissension, discussion and debate, you have to come down for decision. And that means that sometimes you have to respect what is the will of the majority, hopefully to work for the day that you can change the majority to your point of view, but being a member of a team, being a responsible, thoughtful member of a working party.

Now, the purpose of this Charter Commission has been clearly outlined to you. You know what you are here to do. It's to make this Democratic Party of ours even more open to participation by all of the American citizenry, to make it a more responsive party to human need, a more effective instrument for the good of the people of this country. Our purpose is also, of course, to win elections, because in winning you have a chance to realize your goals.

I have witnessed in my public life the phenomenon of some people who are never so happy as when they are unhappy and never so unhappy as when they are happy. I have witnessed some of my friends and associates who thought that when you have won you must have sacrificed something. It was almost immoral -- that in the process of winning you possibly have to make a compromise or two and, therefore, it was really unworthy of us.

I want to urge you to think differently than that. Remember what Franklin Roosevelt once said, that there are times when you have to make some adjustments, some small compromises to be in a position to make great decisions. And what this country needs more than anything else is a sense of determined, gifted, inspirational, dedicated leadership capable of making great decisions, because every problem that faces us today is difficult and is going to be more difficult as the years go by. We are a coalition party and we always have been. We do not have the purity of Ivory soap, 99 and 44/100 percent pure. Sometimes we have tried to be that pure and we floated right out of existence. I suggest that we need just a little more substance.

I know that some of the traditional characteristics of our society which helped us coalesce in the past have changed. You know that, too. We have changed from a rural society to an urban society. We're a younger people today as a nation than we were some years ago. We're larger in terms of our population. We are a more educated people. We have more information. We are under the constant impact of the media which brings us this information and it becomes more difficult for us to sort it out.

But I must say that the fact some of the conditions have changed does not mean that coalition we need has disappeared. It means only that we must provide to that coalition new leadership, new incentives, new communication, new reasons for respect and loyalty to the Democratic Party.

Now, as you turn to that task, I point out that it is the Democratic Party which since 1968 has worked for internal reform. And, might I say, that reform is always difficult. It is by its very nature change at work and most people do not like change, until they've had the opportunity to experience what its results may be. But we have had the courage to attempt reform. Some of the reforms may not have been what some of us would have liked, but we have tried to move with the times.

Our opposition party has really been as stale as can be in terms of any innovations or any internal reforms. It's been derelict in its responsibilities to itself and to the nation. And I submit that ultimately this party, this Republican Party, will be rejected by the voters for its contempt for the democratic processes within its own party and contempt for the democratic processes within government itself.

Now, as a former candidate of the Democratic Party, I can say that it is imperative that illis Party provide two essential services: responsible leadership on the one hand and informed criticism of this Administration's numerous weaknesses and errors on the other. We must do both at the same time. We must be the spokesmen and the educators for millions and millions of people in this country.

I want to warn this Charter Commission that we face a disciplined, well organized, highly financed, determined opposition. There is a party line that emanates from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue that is as strong and as firm a party line as any system of government has ever known. The cabinet officers, the appointees of the President of the United States, speak as if they were, in a sense, programmed through a computer. They use the same words, the same cliches over and over again in their attacks upon the Congress, their attacks upon fiscal irresponsibility -- as they put it. They threaten that this Congress will raise people's taxes. They talk of turning power back to the people.

All they're returning to the people are the problems, not the power. They are concentrating power in supercrats, in the faceless Office of Management and Budget, in counselors to the President that they say have executive privilege and immunity from interrogation by the legitimate established committees of the Congress of the United States -- concentration of power where they violate the first amendment, concentration of power where they intimidate even those who say they want to tell us the truth. It's a dangerous situation.

I submit that the Democratic Party has the responsibility to speak up on these matters that relate to a form of direct or indirect censorship, that relate to the structure of government, that relate to the very central purpose of the Constitutional system.

And yet today we have happening in this city things that no one ever dreamed could have happened. We have in this city an Administration that is guilty of deficit spending like no Democrat was ever guilty. And they have painted over it as if some how or other it's not their fault at all.

There is some poor little crippled child out there, some poor little mentally retarded boy or girl. And we are told that if we help them it will unbalance the budget and cause inflation. I think the Democratic Party ought to buy a great mirror as a gift for the White House and the Executive Branch of government and let them take a look in it and see their own dirty faces and find out what's going on in this country.

Yes, we have to be the spokesmen on the crises that result from the Administration's handling of this economy and don't you let them off the hook. This business-like Administration that worships at the altar of the false gods of efficiency has mismanaged this economy. They started in 1969 making the working people of this country pay for the Administration's own mismanagement. And now they are trying to con the workers once again.

Phase III was going to permit easier negotiations for our trade union friends, you know, loosen up the controls so that we could get more to the market place. You listen well to what Hubert Humphrey tells you. As these prices skyrocket, as these profits skyrocket, as these interest rates and dividends go up for their favorite friends, this President and this Administration will point its finger at the working people of this country when they start to demand wages that will permit them to live, to pay the rent and the grocery bill, to pay the mortgage. They will say it's your fault that we're in trouble and it's the fault of that Democratic Congress. They will try to cleanse themselves, but like Shakespeare's Macbeth, the "damn spot" will not go away if we keep identifying it. It belongs on them.

We have to be the spokesmen on this Administration's calloused indifference, its arrogant neglect of human problems, human resources, the problems of our cities, of the poor, the jobless, the young, the old -- as reflected in its budget.

Why we have government by proclamation today which tells us that the urban crisis is over. Why of course, it is. There never was one in San Clemente or Key Biscayne. It's over. Well, I want to say to you, Mr. President, you walk with me the streets of West Philadelphia. You walk with me the streets of Washington, D. C. You walk with me the streets of Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Newark. Go with me, Mr. President, to Spanish Harlem, to Bedford Stuyvesant. Go with me to many parts of the Bronx and South Bronx. Then I doubt you will dare to come back and tell the American people that the urban crisis is over. That, ladies and gentlemen, is sheer poppycock.

And, worse than that, it is deception of the highest order. We can't tolerate it. We must speak up. We have to be the spokesmen in rejecting this Administration's contempt for Congress and democracy through the gross assertion of executive privilege which has no historical basis, its imperious exercise upon Constitutional power. You know, the Constitution says the President must faithfully execute the law. And he is. He's killing them off, one by one.

We owe our everlasting thanks to a free press, to a courageous press, the spokesmen against the corrupt concealment and conspiracy in the infamous, shameful Watergate case. This isn't just a game among folks that regularly do such things to each other. We are told by some that, "boys will be boys," "girls will be girls," "things like this happen."

I've had reporters come to me and say, isn't that what they did to you. Well they defeated me, I know that. But I've said quite honestly that I didn't need any help losing elections. I was able to do it on my own without their help.

Well I know the difference between Watergate and someone getting up in a meeting and harrassing you, someone that disconnects the loud speaker system as you're talking, someone that plants a story. These things have gone on in politics and those are within what we call some of the livable rules. But there is a lot of difference between that and having pecple running around with gumshoes and gloves picking locks, putting wiretaps on telephones, bugging walls and hiding a bug in a plant, trying to get a dossier on everybody and having it find its way to the great offices of this government. There is a lot of difference between playing political jokes and pranks and doing things that are outright illegal. Let's not forget it. This is not something to be laughed off.

We have to be the spokesmen, to point out the authoritarian attempt to govern by fiat, to arbitrarily impound funds that have been appropriated by the Congress of the United States and ordered by law to be used, to use impoundment as a way of exercising the illegal power of item veto which is denied by the Constitution and the traditions of the Federal government.

Impoundment is being used by this Administration and this President to change the face of America, to violate the law, to terminate programs, to strike down the public statutes that have been passed by the Congress of the United States.

There are many things to center on today. We have a government that has failed even to look ahead to the energy crisis which threatens us. The Republicans have been in office now better than four years and they still don't have a plan of action. We have a government that fails to look ahead sufficiently to offer solutions for the transportation crisis, a government that can point out time after time that the Office of Economic Opportunity doesn't work or that there are too many hospitals in America -- even though there are 300 counties in America without a doctor or a hospital. We have got work to do, ladies and gentlemen. And that is why it's important that we get on with it, that we start to take care of this country, not lose faith in it, not let this Administration return to its original dogma and ideology that the forces of the market place can take care of everything.

We have been listening to lectures on self-reliance, on the work ethic. I don't need any President to talk to me about the work ethic. My father and mother did that long before I ever heard of Richard Nixon or the Republican Party. I don't need that.

What America needs is not a lecture on the work ethic, but somebody to energize us, to organize us, to inspire us, to give us the tools to do the things that need to be done.

There is so much to be done in this country -- so many things. That's why I appeal to you to settle down and to do it with a sense of commitment. I used to say to my students that knowledge without commitment is a luxury. Commitment without knowledge can be dangerous. But to know what the facts are and to have a commitment to do something about those facts, to know what the problems are and to search for solutions, to be willing to try, that's the way we make progress. We don't make progress by looking at something and saying, "Well, it didn't work. Let's quit." We have to be the pioneers of days yet to come. The era of pioneering is not over. It's just that the arena of pioneering has changed. We have to look ahead. We have to be willing to talk about planning the proper use of our resources. We must have goals, priorities. I want this party to look down the road for an America that's to be and that can be five years from now, 10 years from now. I want us to offer the American people some hopes, some dreams and not merely the nightmares of the present or the mistakes of the past.

I want us to remember what it is that this Party works for and stands for. We stand for people. And, while we put a lot of emphasis upon minorities, the old and the young -and while we talk about the blacks and the browns, the Chicano, the Indian and others, one thing we want to put above all of this is the word, "people." We need to build a coalition where the things that we do are not only good for poor people, but good for middle income people, good for all

Let me tell you that a mother with a sick child, whether she is middle income or poor, worries about that child. And we've got to have a system of health services in this country that can take care of the child regardless of the income of the person. That's the kind of concern our Party must have.

Well now, dear friends, I'm a very outspoken man these days. This is the day of liberation, they say, the day of emancipation. Emancipation must come every day. We have to emancipate ourselves from the past, disenthrall ourselves, as Lincoln said, with things as they were or might have been. We have to think anew because the times are different.

I don't have all the answers to these problems -- obviously, I don't. But I'll tell you that together we can find some answers. I appeal to the intellectual community of America now to get off this kick with beating its breast with righteous indignation over a war that they hated and to get on with new ideas that will help a country they love. We have always tapped into the intellectual community. We need them. We must ask them now to help us find solutions.

And I ask all of you here whether you come from a union, the NAACP, a city or rural area, whether you're young or old, whatever you may be, I ask you to try to examine how best we can serve this country. We have to have a party that not only points out the mistakes in America, but the hopes of our people. The American people are not going to listen to us if all we do is complain. We've got to show this country that we understand the greatest title which can be stowed upon any living mortal is to be a citizen of the United States of America. We've got to show this country that we understand its potential. We've got to demonstrate to this country that we believe that we can enrich human resources with policies and programs. We've got to get people to understand that there is a role for government to play, except to retreat, to disengage, to withdraw.

We've got to demonstrate to this country even such a mundane thing as how important a budget is in terms of its effect upon the lives of our people and the future direction of this nation. We've got to be willing to accept the idea of forward looking planning, growth and development. We have to challenge this Administration that wants to leave every human problem to the forces of the economic market place. We have respect for that market place, but it can't do everything.

So I'm going to speak out. You may not always agree with what I say. And I may change my mind. That's my right. There is no one that is quite so foolish as the person who has once said something and found out later that what he said was wrong and still sticks with it. That person may be consistent, but he's a fool. I don't intend to let consistency stand in the way of doing what I think is right. Well, let's go to work. We have won in the past. We can win in the future. We can do it. Let's orient this Party to issues.

If you will permit me a little parochial pride, I think that in the state of Minnesota we have been able to bind up the wounds about as well as anyone. In the state of Minnesota this year we elected for the first time in the history of our state a good working majority in both the house and the senate. We have a Democratic governor and a lieutenant governor, a public service commission and an attorney general. We have a working government that is honest, forward looking and progressive. We're doing things now that we have talked about for 30 or 40 years. We're demonstrating that the purpose of winning elections is action.

And I want this great Charter Commission now to concentrate its attention on how we build this great political instrument of the Democratic Party, not merely to gather together for our cocktail parties and our fund raising events, but to have work sessions across this land on issues. I want this Democratic Party to start to sponsor these work study sessions on every critical problem that we have. And I don't want us to do it just before the election. We ought to be doing it in every state, in our own way, and hopefully then to pull together this information so that the Congress of the United States and the leaders of our party can do something that will give us a sense of direction. So let's go to work.

I haven't talked to you about delegate selection today. That's in another commission. I'm going to leave it there. I have talked to you about how you win elections once you have selected the delegates -- and for what purpose.

Let me say to you that no matter how many differences we might have had that I really believe that this country would have been better off -- the poor people, the working families, the students, the farmers, the business people, if George McGovern, Ed Muskie, Scoop Jackson or Hubert Humphrey, or name a half dozen more, had been elected President of the United States. I think we would have been better off.

Well, are you ready to go to work? Are you ready to speak up for the people? Are you ready now once again to be the kind of a party that we're supposed to be?

We're not cost accountants and double entry bookkeeping specialists. We hire them. Remember that old adage that experts are supposed to be on tap, not on top.

What this country needs from you is a sense of guidance, of leadership, of inspiration, of persuasion. What it needs in the Presidency is what I've talked to you about time after time, what old Teddy Roosevelt used to say at the White House, a bully pulpit. And what Woodrow Wilson said of it, the nation's classroom. The man that occupies it must be the nation's teacher.

Today we have neither -- and the Democratic Party has a chance now and in the future to provide both. But, in the meantime, build, build, create, innovate, coalesce, join together, reach out and touch each other. Make up your mind that you can get converts. Go talk to people. Be concerned about them. Be their representatives no matter how little they may be, how insignificant, no matter the size of the town or the city. Walk proudly. Say, "I'm a Democrat. I have lived and fought in the spirt of great leaders of this country. This Republican crowd is not going to make me ashamed of Roosevelt and his programs. They are not going to make me ashamed of Harry Truman and his programs. They are not going to make me ashamed of John Kennedy and his programs. They're not going to make me ashamed of Lyndon Johnson and his programs. I'm a Democrat and I'd rather be a Democrat even in defeat than a Republican in victory."

Thank you very much.

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Remarks of Senator Humphrey

Democratic Charter Commission

Washington, D. C. - April 11, 1973

PURPOSE OF THIS CHARTER COMMISSION IS TO MAKE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY EVEN MORE OPEN TO PARTICIPATION BY ALL AMERICANS, MORE RESPONSIVE, A MORE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF BOTH

--WINNING ELECTIONS, AND

--DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO A GOOD LIEE FOR THE AVERAGE WORKING FAMILY AND THE MINORITIES. WE ARE A COALITION PARTY. SOME OF THE TRADITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR SOCIETY WHICH HELPED US COALESCE HAVE DEFEND. BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE COALITION HAS DISAPPEARED, ONLY THAT WE MUST PROVIDE NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW INCENTIVES, NEW COMMUNICATIONS, NEW REASONS FOR RESPECT AND LOYALTY TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

As you return to that task, I point out that it is this Party which, since 1968, has worked for this internal reform. The Republican Party has been both hide bound and derelict in its responsibilities to the Nation. Ultimately the Republican Party will be rejected by the voters for its contempt for democratic processes. As a former candidate of this Party I can say it is imperative that the Democratic Party provide two services -- responsible leadership on the one hand, and informed criticism of this Administration's numerous weaknesses and errors. We must be the spokesmen and the educators:

-- ON THE CRISIS IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S HANDLING OF CONSUMER PRICES;

-- ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S ARROGANT NEGLECT IN ITS BUDGET OF HUMAN PROBLEMS, OF OUR CITIES, OF THE POOR, OF THE JOBLESS, OF THE YOUNG;

-- ON ITS CORRUPT CONCEALMENT AND CONSPIRACY IN THE WATERGATE CASE;

-- ON ITS CONTEMPT FOR CONGRESS AND DEMOCRACY IN GROSS ASSERTIONS OF DEXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE, ITS IMPERIOUS EXERCISE OF UNCONSTITUTIONAL WAR POWERS;

-- ON ITS NEAR-TOTALITARIAN ATTEMPT TO GOVERN BY FIAT, TO ARBITRARILY IMPOUND FUNDS ORDERED BY LAW TO BE USED, TO ABRUPTLY CUT OFF PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY LAW WITHOUT SEEKING A CHANGE IN THE LAW.

-- ON ITS FATAL BLINDNESS, ITS FAILURE TO LEAD ON THE GREAT CRISES WHICH CONFRONT US -- IN ENERGY, IN TRANSPORTATION. - ITS SELF-SERVING REFUSAL TO PROPOSE TAX REFORM.

PEOPLE ARE TIRED OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ACTING LIKE IT'S SORT OF A CLANDESTINE FISTICUFF SOCIETY. THEY WANT US TO ACT WITH VIGOR. THEY WANT US TO ACT WITH PURPOSE. BUT THEY ALSO WANT US TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE KNOW THIS COUNTRY, WE KNOW ITS POTENTIAL, AND WE'RE CAPABLE OF GIVING SOME LEADERSHIP.

I'M AT THE STAGE OF MY LIFE PUBLICLY WHERE I'M SEEKING NOTHING FROM YOU. THERE IS NOT A THING THAT ANY OF YOU CAN GIVE ME, NO MATTER WHAT, EXCEPT YOUR FRIENDSHIP.

I'M GOING TO BE A VERY OUTSPOKEN SENATOR. I'M GOING TO SAY WHAT'S ON MY MIND. I'M GOING TO DO WHAT I THINK OUGHT TO BE DONE. AS I SEE MANY OF OUR GOOD MEN DEPART FROM THIS WORLDLY EXISTENCE, I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO USE WHAT DAYS I HAVE TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY. I'M GOING TO BE JUST THAT KIND OF DEMOCRAT.

IF I OCCASIONALLY SAY SOMETHING ON POLICY MATTERS THAT YOU DON'T AGREE WITH, THAT'S JUST MY OPINION. I'M NOT GOING TO BE PICKING ON PEOPLE PERSONALLY. THAT I'M NOT GOING TO DO. IF ANY MAN HAD A RIGHT TO DO IT, I'VE OFTEN SAID TO MYSELF I THINK THAT I MIGHT HAVE SOME OF THAT RIGHT, BUT I'M GOING TO SET YOU A GOOD EXAMPLE. I'M GOING TO TRY TO BE ABOVE THAT KIND OF PERSONAL ISSUE AND BE ON THE ISSUES.

WE NEED EACH OTHER. GOD ONLY KNOWS WE NEED EACH OTHER.

We've got to have a spirit in this Party where we want each other; where you have accommodation for the other fellow; where we understand the problems up in New YOrk; and New Yorkers understand what we've got in Minnesota; where we understand the problems in Texas, and where you understand the problems in Maine; where you understand the problems in California, and you understand the problems in Nebraska.

-4-

We've just got to have that kind of spirit. We've got to get over this regionalism. We've got to get over this business of driving people out of the Party. We've got to open up this Party and bring them in.

-- WE WON'T WIN WITHOUT

-- MINORITIES - Women your - old -- OUR DEMOCRATIC ELECTED OFFICIALS IN CONGRESS, THE STATEHOUSES, THE CITIES AND COUNTRY.

-- I'M TALKING ABOUT PARTICIPATION OF THESE AND OTHER GROUPS AT EVER LEVEL -- AND IN OUR NATIONAL CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS, TOO.

-- Now, I have my recommendations and ideas on the rules for Delegate Selection. But I will place those before the Mikulski Commission.

THIS COMMISSION IS GOING TO HELP US TO BETTER REPRESENT THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE, EASE THEIR CONFIDENCE AND

001536

WIN ELECTIONS.

I'M INTERESTED IN WINNING -- AND GOD ONLY KNOWS THAT HAD GEORGE MCGOVERN, OR ED MUSKIE OR HUBERT HUMPHREY WON YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THE MESS YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE IN THIS COUNTRY RIGHT NOW.

-5-

You just know it. No matter how bad we would have been in the eyes of some, the poor people of this country, the old people of this country, The school kids of the country, the farmers of this country, the working people of this country, would have had a lot better deal than they're getting out of this crowd.

I THINK PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THAT. BECAUSE THEY'RE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND IT, LET'S CAPITALIZE ON IT, LET'S SHOW WHAT WE MEAN BUSINESS. LET'S BE THE PARTY THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST.

Let's be that Party of Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy and Johnson.

LET'S BE THAT PARTY WHICH HAS FACED ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND EMERGED MORE UNIFIED AND STRONGER THAN EVER.

LET'S BE THAT PARTY WHICH HAS FACED THE PROBLEMS OF THE NATION AND INSPIRED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE BY TRUE LEADERSHIP.

LET'S BE THE PARTY THAT WINS, AND DESERVES TO WIN.

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