

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM LUNCHEON

Washington, D.C.

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There are pessimists around the world who would tell you young people that you might as well throw in the towel right now. Drop out, give up, slow down. The future is bleak. To go out into a world that sometimes lacks such things as understanding and order and gasoline is a most unpleasant prospect, they say.

But I say that kind of an attitude is wrong. We may be facing an energy crisis of one type today. But there's plenty of energy around to overcome it. I'm not talking about solar energy or nuclear energy or the kind that comes from coal. I'm talking about the kind that comes from the minds and dedication of young people. You are the source of the energy that will make this present crisis seem like a light that just flickers a little and then comes on again, brighter than ever.

The real energy crisis in this country, the one that we must all live in dread of, is the one that will be created if young people lose the desire to help solve our problems.

God has given us vast resources. And one of the greatest of these resources is the dedication and commitment of youth.

Here's something to remember. It has to do with the attitudes of individuals and the attitudes of nations. It has been proved time and again by history and it is no less true today. One individual or nation will look upon a problem as a big stumbling block. But another will see it as a stepping stone. The difference is in the eye of the beholder. But the end result of these two attitudes is worlds apart -- the difference between success and failure.

Did you ever watch two boys or two girls crossing a little stream? Maybe they have to step on rocks three or four feet apart to keep from getting their feet wet. You may have done it. Well, usually the one who feels pretty sure of himself gets all the way across without falling in. Those rocks are stepping stones to that person. But many times the one who approaches those rocks with a great deal of timidity and fear slips, falls in and has to wring out his socks.

I just want to tell you that this country wasn't built by that timid kind of person that I just described. And it hasn't survived one crisis after another and grown stronger because it has been filled with the weak and the pessimistic. This country was built on the concepts of faith and confidence and destiny and purpose.

The founding fathers didn't plan on the citizens of this country just leading a bleak, day-to-day existence. Recall the words of Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . ."

While it is true that many of our citizens down through the years have led lives that were pretty bleak, when you compare the record of the United States with that of other countries you can't find one that holds a candle to it.

There is always a temptation to look around you and to decide the problems we are facing today are the worst in our history. But consider a few problems this country has overcome. We all know the story of the Revolutionary War and the terrible deprivation of the soldiers who fought in it and the other citizens who supported it.

That was a military and social problem. But there have been many, many problems of all types that this country has overcome. If you think that the recent political problems of this nation are unique, consider this.

Aaron Burr, the man who was Thomas Jefferson's vice president during Jefferson's first term in office, later wanted to form a New England confederacy. And while Burr was still politically powerful, he was developing grandiose plans for an empire in the West.

Skeptics back in those early years of our nation had plenty of examples of chicanery to point to. But the system was good, and it was strong. People like Jefferson helped form the system and were always looking for positive accomplishments. While some of those destructive plans may have been forming in Burr's mind, Jefferson was already sending Lewis and Clark to explore the vast western territories that later became part of the Louisiana Purchase. Burr sought to tear down the political systems of the young country. But we all know that Jefferson's positive accomplishments prevailed. His name today is associated with the highest of American ideals. Burr's is blurred by shame and disgrace.

There have been many other great issues that have tested the ability of Americans to turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones. What would your attitude toward this country have been if you had been a teenager in the 1860's instead of the 1970's? You would have seen more than six hundred thousand Americans die in a great Civil War. Another million were seriously ill or wounded during that war.

What would your attitude toward this nation have been during that terrible time? Each side maintained it was fighting for the America envisioned by the Founding Fathers. Yet, as the years went by, the hate and mistrust caused by that war mellowed. Old soldiers of both sides gathered at the battle sites and relived deeds of courage and traded compliments with their former enemies. No nation ever fought a civil war and 100 years later had as many ties of brotherhood as America. Lincoln called America "the last great hope of earth." He could make that statement in spite of the great difficulties of his time. He saw the stepping stones, not the stumbling blocks.

A Vice President, thrust into the highest office in the land because of the death of a President, has a difficult task. Yet, most Vice Presidents who have been thrust into the highest office in our land have served with distinction. In this century, Theodore Roosevelt proved to be a strong chief executive.

Harry Truman said he felt "as if the sky had fallen in" on him, yet he was a great President. Lyndon Johnson asked for the prayers of the nation, and he accomplished the finest civil rights record of this century.

These men all may have slipped off the stepping stones into the water once in a while, but they got right back onto those stones and made it to the other side.

The list of individual and national achievements could go on and on.

Thomas Edison's inventions with very little formal education;

Orville and Wilbur Wright's airplane developed from a box kite;

Doctor Salk and Doctor Sabin's polio vaccine.

I am proud to say that I live in a country that has fostered the freedom necessary for such men to make their contributions. And when I fade away, as old Senators do occasionally, I would much rather think that I have lived in a country that was free to express its generosity to other nations.

I'd rather be able to say that I have worked in the service of a country that has kept millions alive overseas than to think the United States had let those millions starve or die of disease. Sure, there has been some corruption and waste and inefficiency. But what other country could say that it saved Europe from starvation and economic collapse after World War II? What other country has sent enormous amounts of aid to victims of natural disasters around the world?

These are all achievements that have taken place in the past. Stumbling blocks, if you will, that have been turned into stepping stones.

What about the future of this country and its individual citizens? There are still a lot of problems that must be solved. The stumbling blocks are out there, if you choose to look at them that way. Well, I'll tell you, I'd rather be a young man today than any other time I can think of.

Think of the opportunities. You are going to be part of the greatest research and development effort in the energy field that the world has ever seen.

You are going to have the opportunity to go beyond the moon to other neighbors in our solar system.

You are going to participate in the development of the ocean's resources to a degree without historical precedent.

You are going to have an opportunity to reduce the pollution of our streams and our air and the other elements of our environment, while you are working on development of these new energy sources.

You will have the advantage of access to more information in every scientific field than any previous generation ever had -- a body of information that has grown by great leaps during every decade in this century.

And as the world grows smaller because of better transportation and communication facilities, and as its peoples grow more interdependent, you will have an opportunity to develop better systems of international cooperation. For

instance, the conservation and intelligent development of the world's resources offer the opportunity for cooperation if peoples and nations can but recognize it.

Yet none of these things can be accomplished by your generation or any other generation without an attitude built around faith and confidence and destiny and purpose.

Without these qualities mixed with kindness and generosity, all the technology in the world is worthless.

So couple your drive and ambition with these fine qualities of mind and you will give this nation and the world an era of peace and progress like none have ever seen before.

Step across that stream. The rocks may be slippery, but they're not there to trip you. They're there to help you get to the other side.

# # # # #

- Seet Kissinger

- Carol Laisé

- Ambassador Bunker

- Susie Mahoney - Fairmont

- Diane Egner - Lakefield

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FEBRUARY 8, 1974

Rosalie Stewart

1968

close



THERE ARE PESSIMISTS AROUND THE WORLD WHO WOULD TELL YOU  
YOUNG PEOPLE THAT YOU MIGHT AS WELL THROW IN THE TOWEL RIGHT  
NOW, DROP OUT, GIVE UP, SLOW DOWN, THE FUTURE IS BLEAK, TO GO  
OUT INTO A WORLD THAT SOMETIMES LACKS SUCH THINGS AS UNDER-

STANDING AND ORDER AND GASOLINE IS A MOST UNPLEASANT PROSPECT,

THEY SAY. *See how far I've Peered into the future it won't work -  
Bob Hope - 1945*

BUT I SAY THAT KIND OF AN ATTITUDE IS WRONG WE MAY BE  
FACING AN ENERGY CRISIS OF ONE TYPE TODAY, BUT THERE'S PLENTY  
OF ENERGY AROUND TO OVERCOME IT. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT SOLAR  
ENERGY OR NUCLEAR ENERGY OR THE KIND THAT COMES FROM COAL. I'M

TALKING ABOUT THE KIND THAT COMES FROM THE MINDS <sup>Hearts</sup> AND DEDICATION

OF ~~YOUNG~~ *young people* PEOPLE. YOU ARE THE *of young people* SOURCE OF THE ENERGY THAT WILL MAKE

THIS PRESENT CRISIS SEEM LIKE A LIGHT THAT JUST FLICKERS A  
LITTLE AND THEN COMES ON AGAIN, BRIGHTER THAN EVER.

THE REAL ENERGY CRISIS IN THIS COUNTRY, THE ONE THAT WE  
MUST ALL LIVE IN DREAD OF, IS THE ONE THAT WILL BE CREATED IF  
YOUNG PEOPLE LOSE <sup>+He will</sup> THE DESIRE TO HELP SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS.

↳ GOD HAS GIVEN US VAST RESOURCES. AND ONE OF THE GREATEST  
OF THESE RESOURCES IS THE DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT OF YOUTH.

HERE'S SOMETHING TO REMEMBER! IT HAS TO DO WITH THE  
ATTITUDES OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE ATTITUDES OF NATIONS. IT HAS  
BEEN PROVED TIME AND AGAIN BY HISTORY AND IT IS NO LESS TRUE  
TODAY. ONE INDIVIDUAL OR NATION WILL LOOK UPON A PROBLEM AS A  
BIG STUMBLING BLOCK BUT ANOTHER WILL SEE IT AS A STEPPING STONE.  
THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER. BUT THE END RESULT  
OF THESE TWO ATTITUDES IS WORLDS APART -- THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
SUCCESS AND FAILURE.

DID YOU EVER WATCH TWO BOYS OR TWO GIRLS CROSSING A LITTLE  
STREAM? MAYBE THEY HAVE TO STEP ON ROCKS THREE OR FOUR FEET  
APART TO KEEP FROM GETTING THEIR FEET WET. YOU MAY HAVE DONE IT.  
WELL, USUALLY THE ONE WHO FEELS PRETTY SURE OF HIMSELF GETS ALL  
THE WAY ACROSS WITHOUT FALLING IN. THOSE ROCKS ARE STEPPING  
STONES TO THAT PERSON. BUT MANY TIMES THE ONE WHO APPROACHES  
THOSE ROCKS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF TIMIDITY AND FEAR SLIPS, FALLS  
IN ~~AND HAS TO WRING OUT HIS SOCKS.~~

I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU THAT THIS COUNTRY WASN'T BUILT BY  
THAT TIMID KIND OF PERSON (~~THAT I JUST DESCRIBED~~). AND IT HASN'T  
SURVIVED ONE CRISIS AFTER ANOTHER AND GROWN STRONGER BECAUSE  
IT HAS BEEN FILLED WITH THE WEAK AND THE PESSIMISTIC.



THIS COUNTRY WAS BUILT ON THE CONCEPTS OF FAITH AND CONFIDENCE  
AND DESTINY AND PURPOSE.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS DIDN'T PLAN ON THE CITIZENS OF THIS  
COUNTRY JUST LEADING A BLEAK, DAY-TO-DAY EXISTENCE. RECALL THE  
WORDS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:

"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL  
MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR  
CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE  
ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. . ."

WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MANY OF OUR CITIZENS DOWN THROUGH  
THE YEARS HAVE LED LIVES THAT WERE PRETTY BLEAK, WHEN YOU COMPARE  
THE RECORD OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THAT OF OTHER COUNTRIES  
YOU CAN'T FIND ONE THAT HOLDS A CANDLE TO IT.

THERE IS ALWAYS A TEMPTATION TO LOOK AROUND YOU AND TO  
DECIDE THE PROBLEMS WE ARE FACING TODAY ARE THE WORST IN OUR  
HISTORY. BUT CONSIDER A FEW PROBLEMS THIS COUNTRY HAS OVERCOME.  
WE ALL KNOW THE STORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND THE TERRIBLE  
DEPRIVATION OF THE SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT IN IT AND THE OTHER  
CITIZENS WHO SUPPORTED IT.

THAT WAS A MILITARY AND SOCIAL PROBLEM. BUT THERE HAVE BEEN  
MANY, MANY PROBLEMS OF ALL TYPES THAT THIS COUNTRY HAS OVERCOME.  
IF YOU THINK THAT THE RECENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THIS NATION  
ARE UNIQUE, CONSIDER THIS.

AARON BURR, THE MAN WHO WAS THOMAS JEFFERSON'S VICE  
PRESIDENT DURING JEFFERSON'S FIRST TERM IN OFFICE, LATER WANTED  
TO FORM A NEW ENGLAND CONFEDERACY.

AND WHILE BURR WAS STILL POLITICALLY POWERFUL, HE WAS  
DEVELOPING GRANDIOSE PLANS FOR AN EMPIRE IN THE WEST.

✓ SKEPTICS BACK IN THOSE EARLY YEARS OF OUR NATION HAD PLENTY  
OF EXAMPLES OF CHICANERY TO POINT TO, ✓ BUT THE SYSTEM WAS GOOD,  
AND IT WAS STRONG. PEOPLE LIKE JEFFERSON HELPED FORM THE SYSTEM  
AND WERE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, ✓ WHILE SOME  
OF THOSE DESTRUCTIVE PLANS MAY HAVE BEEN FORMING IN BURR'S  
MIND, ✓ JEFFERSON WAS ALREADY SENDING LEWIS AND CLARK TO EXPLORE  
THE VAST WESTERN TERRITORIES THAT LATER BECAME PART OF THE  
LOUISIANA PURCHASE. ✓ BURR SOUGHT TO TEAR DOWN THE POLITICAL  
SYSTEMS OF THE YOUNG COUNTRY. BUT WE ALL KNOW THAT JEFFERSON'S  
POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS PREVAILED. HIS NAME TODAY IS ASSOCIATED  
WITH THE HIGHEST OF AMERICAN IDEALS. BURR'S IS BLURRED BY SHAME  
AND DISGRACE.

↳ THERE HAVE BEEN MANY OTHER GREAT ISSUES THAT HAVE TESTED  
THE ABILITY OF AMERICANS TO TURN STUMBLING BLOCKS INTO STEPPING  
STONES. ↳ WHAT WOULD YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS COUNTRY HAVE BEEN  
IF YOU HAD BEEN A TEENAGER IN THE 1860'S INSTEAD OF THE 1970'S?

↳ YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN MORE THAN SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND AMERICANS  
DIE IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR. ANOTHER MILLION WERE SERIOUSLY ILL  
OR WOUNDED DURING THAT WAR.

↳ WHAT WOULD YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS NATION HAVE BEEN  
DURING THAT TERRIBLE TIME? EACH SIDE MAINTAINED IT WAS FIGHTING  
FOR THE AMERICA ENVISIONED BY THE FOUNDING FATHERS. ↳ YET, AS THE  
YEARS WENT BY, THE HATE AND MISTRUST CAUSED BY THAT WAR MELLOWED.

OLD SOLDIERS OF BOTH SIDES GATHERED AT THE BATTLE SITES AND

RELIVED DEEDS OF COURAGE AND TRADED COMPLIMENTS WITH THEIR

FORMER ENEMIES. NO NATION EVER FOUGHT A CIVIL WAR AND 100 YEARS

LATER HAD AS MANY TIES OF BROTHERHOOD AS AMERICA. LINCOLN CALLED

AMERICA "THE LAST <sup>Best</sup> ~~GREAT~~ HOPE OF EARTH." HE COULD MAKE THAT

STATEMENT IN SPITE OF THE GREAT DIFFICULTIES OF HIS TIME. HE

SAW THE STEPPING STONES, NOT THE STUMBLING BLOCKS.

A VICE PRESIDENT, THRUST INTO THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE

LAND BECAUSE OF THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT, HAS A DIFFICULT TASK!

YET, MOST VICE PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN THRUST INTO THE HIGHEST

OFFICE IN OUR LAND HAVE SERVED WITH DISTINCTION. IN THIS CENTURY,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT PROVED TO BE A STRONG CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

[ HARRY TRUMAN SAID HE FELT "AS IF THE SKY HAD FALLEN IN"  
ON HIM, YET HE WAS A GREAT PRESIDENT. [ LYNDON JOHNSON ASKED FOR  
THE PRAYERS OF THE NATION, AND HE ACCOMPLISHED THE FINEST CIVIL  
RIGHTS RECORD OF THIS CENTURY.

[ THESE MEN ALL MAY HAVE SLIPPED OFF THE STEPPING STONES  
INTO THE WATER ONCE IN A WHILE, BUT THEY GOT RIGHT BACK ONTO  
THOSE STONES AND MADE IT TO THE OTHER SIDE.

[ THE LIST OF INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS COULD GO  
ON AND ON.

[ THOMAS EDISON'S INVENTIONS WITH VERY LITTLE FORMAL  
EDUCATION;

[ ORVILLE AND WILBUR WRIGHT'S AIRPLANE DEVELOPED FROM A  
BOX KITE;



L DOCTOR SALK AND DOCTOR SABIN'S POLIO VACCINE.

I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT <sup>we</sup> I LIVE IN A COUNTRY THAT HAS  
FOSTERED THE FREEDOM NECESSARY FOR SUCH MEN TO MAKE THEIR  
CONTRIBUTIONS. AND WHEN I FADE AWAY, AS OLD SENATORS DO  
OCCASIONALLY, I WOULD MUCH RATHER THINK THAT I HAVE LIVED IN  
A COUNTRY THAT WAS FREE TO EXPRESS ITS GENEROSITY TO OTHER

NATIONS *- than to garner onto itself all  
power and massive wealth*

L I'D RATHER BE ABLE TO SAY THAT I HAVE WORKED IN THE  
SERVICE OF A COUNTRY THAT HAS KEPT MILLIONS ALIVE OVERSEAS  
THAN TO THINK THE UNITED STATES HAD LET THOSE MILLIONS STARVE  
OR DIE OF DISEASE.

SURE, THERE HAS BEEN SOME CORRUPTION AND WASTE AND INEFFICIENCY.

BUT WHAT OTHER COUNTRY COULD SAY THAT IT SAVED EUROPE FROM

STARVATION AND ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AFTER WORLD WAR II? WHAT

OTHER COUNTRY HAS SENT ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF AID TO VICTIMS OF

NATURAL DISASTERS AROUND THE WORLD?

L THESE ARE ALL ACHIEVEMENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE  
PAST. STUMBLING BLOCKS, IF YOU WILL, THAT HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO  
STEPPING STONES.

*Future*  
*Today*  
*Tomorrow*

L WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY AND ITS INDIVIDUAL  
CITIZENS? THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE

SOLVED. L THE STUMBLING BLOCKS ARE OUT THERE, IF YOU CHOOSE TO

LOOK AT THEM THAT WAY. WELL, I'LL TELL YOU, I'D RATHER BE A

*or woman*  
YOUNG MAN TODAY THAN ANY OTHER TIME I CAN THINK OF.

✓ THINK OF THE OPPORTUNITIES. YOU ARE GOING TO BE PART OF  
THE GREATEST RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORT IN THE ENERGY  
FIELD THAT THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN.

✓ YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO BEYOND THE  
MOON TO OTHER NEIGHBORS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.

✓ YOU ARE GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
OCEAN'S RESOURCES TO A DEGREE WITHOUT HISTORICAL PRECEDENT.

✓ YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE THE  
POLLUTION OF OUR STREAMS AND OUR <sup>air</sup> ~~land~~ AND THE OTHER ELEMENTS  
OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, WHILE YOU ARE WORKING ON DEVELOPMENT OF

THESE NEW ENERGY SOURCES and expanding our economy

International organization  
travel

YOU WILL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF ACCESS TO MORE INFORMATION  
IN EVERY SCIENTIFIC FIELD THAN ANY PREVIOUS GENERATION EVER  
HAD -- A BODY OF INFORMATION THAT HAS GROWN BY GREAT LEAPS  
DURING EVERY DECADE IN THIS CENTURY.

L AND AS THE WORLD GROWS SMALLER BECAUSE OF BETTER  
TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES, AND AS ITS PEOPLES  
GROW MORE INTERDEPENDENT, YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
DEVELOP BETTER SYSTEMS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

I ~~THE~~ THE CONSERVATION AND INTELLIGENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
WORLD'S RESOURCES OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR COOPERATION IF  
PEOPLES AND NATIONS CAN BUT RECOGNIZE IT.

YET NONE OF THESE THINGS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY YOUR  
GENERATION OR ANY OTHER GENERATION WITHOUT AN ATTITUDE BUILT  
AROUND FAITH AND CONFIDENCE AND DESTINY AND PURPOSE.

↳ WITHOUT THESE QUALITIES MIXED WITH KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY,  
ALL THE TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORLD IS WORTHLESS.

↳ SO COUPLE YOUR DRIVE AND AMBITION WITH THESE FINE QUALITIES  
OF <sup>spirit</sup> MIND AND YOU WILL GIVE THIS NATION AND THE WORLD AN ERA OF  
PEACE AND PROGRESS, ~~LIKE NONE HAS EVER SEEN BEFORE.~~

↳ STEP ACROSS THAT STREAM. THE ROCKS MAY BE SLIPPERY, BUT  
THEY'RE NOT THERE TO TRIP YOU. THEY'RE THERE TO HELP YOU GET  
TO THE OTHER SIDE.

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