

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

NEW DEAL DINNER  
MAYFLOWER HOTEL

Washington, D. C.

March 4, 1977

On August 25, 1935, while on a trip to Washington, I wrote the following to Muriel, who was back in Huron, South Dakota, and who had not yet become my wife.

"I simply revel and beam with delight in this realm of politics and government...I shall prepare myself for the task by reading and thinking always as a liberal. Roosevelt is a super-man. His speech last nite surely baffled the Republicans; in fact, they are lost in a sea of uncertainty as to how to attack him."

I share this with you to emphasize one point. I still am inspired by this realm of politics and government, even though it has been 42 years since I wrote that letter.

I still see my role as a hard-working public servant, an advisor and a prodder. For the under-privileged of this country and elsewhere, I will continue to push and shove a little, continue to prod and ask a little more than the times and conditions supposedly will permit.

We have moved from the challenge and revolution of the New Deal Days, through the quiet confidence of the Eisenhower years, to the excitement of the New Frontier and the Great Society. Then we went through the tragedy of Vietnam, and the Watergate era which plunged us into a national crisis of spirit.

But now we are back on track.

It is time to get working in this country again. These are exciting and vibrant times. The challenges are many; the problems are immense.

But we are rekindling that spirit of firm determination to make this a better country and a better world. We are regaining our confidence. Once again, we are reaching for those unreachable heights.

And why not? Are they really that impossible to achieve? I have no patience with those whose reflex action is to say, "it can't be done."

A nation which has overcome so many technological barriers; a nation which can make a national commitment to send a man to the moon and do it -- that nation, without question, can do more.

But the greatest frontier we must now cross is the human frontier. This is where our real challenge lies. We must work to overcome the tremendous human problems that face people throughout the world.

This should be our most exciting endeavor. And, this can be our most exhilarating accomplishment.

Let's get on with the revolution of achieving the opportunity for all people to enjoy lives of hope, of promise, of freedom, and security.

We thrive when we confront challenge. We do not retreat. It is not in our national character.

But it demands commitment.

Let us use this opportunity tonight to pledge our full efforts to cross this human frontier.

Let us commit ourselves to unified action, dedicated to the principle that no problem is too large, and no individual is too insignificant, to give less than our best effort.

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WROTE THE FOLLOWING TO MURIEL, WHO WAS BACK IN HURON,  
SOUTH DAKOTA, AND WHO HAD NOT YET BECOME MY WIFE.

"I SIMPLY REVEL AND BEAM WITH DELIGHT  
IN THIS REALM OF POLITICS AND GOVERN-  
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TASK BY READING AND THINKING ALWAYS AS  
A LIBERAL. ROOSEVELT IS A SUPER-MAN.  
HIS SPEECH LAST NITE SURELY BAFFLED THE  
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A SEA OF UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW TO ATTACK  
HIM."

I SHARE THIS WITH YOU TO EMPHASIZE ONE POINT. I  
STILL AM INSPIRED BY THIS REALM OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT,  
EVEN THOUGH IT HAS BEEN 42 YEARS SINCE I WROTE THAT LETTER.

I STILL SEE MY ROLE AS A HARD-WORKING PUBLIC SERVANT,  
AN ADVISOR AND A PRODDER. FOR THE UNDER-PRIVILEGED OF THIS  
COUNTRY AND ELSEWHERE, I WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH AND SHOVE  
A LITTLE, CONTINUE TO PROD AND ASK A LITTLE MORE THAN  
THE TIMES AND CONDITIONS SUPPOSEDLY WILL PERMIT.

WE HAVE MOVED FROM THE CHALLENGE AND REVOLUTION OF  
THE NEW DEAL DAYS, THROUGH THE QUIET CONFIDENCE OF THE  
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OF VIETNAM, AND THE WATERGATE ERA WHICH PLUNGED US INTO  
A NATIONAL CRISIS OF SPIRIT.

BUT NOW WE ARE BACK ON TRACK.

IT IS TIME TO GET WORKING IN THIS COUNTRY AGAIN.

THESE ARE EXCITING AND VIBRANT TIMES. THE CHALLENGES  
ARE MANY; THE PROBLEMS ARE IMMENSE.

BUT WE ARE REKINDLING THAT SPIRIT OF FIRM DETER-  
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WE ARE REGAINING OUR CONFIDENCE. ONCE AGAIN, WE ARE  
REACHING FOR THOSE UNREACHABLE HEIGHTS.

AND WHY NOT? ARE THEY REALLY THAT IMPOSSIBLE TO  
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ACTION IS TO SAY, "IT CAN'T BE DONE."

A NATION WHICH HAS OVERCOME SO MANY TECHNOLOGICAL  
BARRIERS; A NATION WHICH CAN MAKE A NATIONAL COMMITMENT  
TO SEND A MAN TO THE MOON AND DO IT -- THAT NATION,  
WITHOUT QUESTION, CAN DO MORE.

BUT THE GREATEST FRONTIER WE MUST NOW CROSS IS THE  
HUMAN FRONTIER. THIS IS WHERE OUR REAL CHALLENGE  
LIES. WE MUST WORK TO OVERCOME THE TREMENDOUS HUMAN  
PROBLEMS THAT FACE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THIS SHOULD BE OUR MOST EXCITING ENDEAVOR. AND,  
THIS CAN BE OUR MOST EXHILERATING ACCOMPLISHMENT.

LET'S GET ON WITH THE REVOLUTION OF ACHIEVING THE  
OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL PEOPLE TO ENJOY LIVES OF HOPE, OF  
PROMISE, OF FREEDOM, AND SECURITY,

WE THRIVE WHEN WE CONFRONT CHALLENGE. WE DO NOT  
RETREAT. IT IS NOT IN OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER,

BUT IT DEMANDS COMMITMENT.

LET US USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TONIGHT TO PLEDGE OUR  
FULL EFFORTS TO CROSS THIS HUMAN FRONTIER,

LET US COMMIT OURSELVES TO UNIFIED ACTION, DEDICATED  
TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT NO PROBLEM IS TOO LARGE, AND NO  
INDIVIDUAL IS TOO INSIGNIFICANT, TO GIVE LESS THAN OUR  
BEST EFFORT.





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