

✓ Radio - TV Correspondents Dinner
Shoreham Hotel, March 7th

Bill Roberts
President

Introduction of the Vice President

Our guest of honor tonight, The Vice President, is indeed a Rare Avis... a Number Two who is trying harder than ever to stay out of public opinion polls, but in a future Presidential race. And true to his Roman namesake, Hubert Horatio Humphrey, must stave off seemingly overwhelming problems.

You've heard, of course, of the Credibility Gap. Actually, it is more of an Edibility Gap...caused by eating one's own words. The Johnson Administration has eaten its own words so often that the Edibility Gap stretches from Houston to the New York Times, and from Saigon to the Pentagon.

Who but Horatio could bridge those gaps? The low estate of the Johnson Administration in public opinion has brought from our guest of honor the staunchest sort of defense. Who but Horatio could deplore what they do, but defend to the last their doing it?

Recently, we learned that the Vice President has been assigned another super task --- trying to rebuild the Democratic organization across the country. There are those who say this is like putting the fox in the chicken coop. And what chickens! George Wallace and Adam Clayton Powell; Bobby Kennedy and Mendel Rivers; Arthur Schlesinger and Bill Manchester. Who but Horatio would try to get all those chickens into one barnyard? With one rooster! Almost as difficult as getting George Romney to comment on Viet Nam!

Then there are those CIA subsidies to student groups. On this, our guest has taken the firmest of stands...deploring the subsidies

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while defending the CIA.

Who but Horatio could stand at both ends of that bridge?

Faced though he is with these seemingly insolvable problems, our Happy Warrior has battled them as fiercely as his Roman namesake.

We, who continually incite to battle, but seldom catch the sword of opposition, watch admiringly. And offer to you, Mr. Vice President, honorary membership in the Radio-TV Correspondents' Association. And add some sage counsel from that ancient Chinese Philosopher, Mao Tse Tung. He has written:

OO-NONG, UNG-TEE, WHANG

English translation...Keep the faith, baby.

My dear colleagues, The Vice President of the United States.

my definition of a free
society is a society
where it is safe to
be unpopular

There are no shortcuts
to National Security -
There are only shortcuts
to defeat

The contest with
tyranny is not a 100 yard
dash -
it is a test of endurance

I never refuse
I never contradict
I sometimes forget
(Disraeli - explaining
his success with
Queen Victoria)



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

REMARKS BY
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
AT RADIO-TV CORRESPONDENTS DINNER
WASHINGTON, D. C.
MARCH 7, 1967

Thank you very much. Our good friend, Bill, my fellow members of A.F.T.R.A.: -- I'd like to just make a few observations before I go into my well-prepared remarks (along the line of Senator Mansfield's lack of pre-notice.)

I want to say that after seeing that gag newsreel tonight, I know what is meant by the "other body." (You're a little slow, boys.)

And I would like just to observe that I am mighty happy to appear before all of you in radio and television, live. (I'd like to see what you tape- and film-cutters can do on me now.)

I know our beloved friend, Senator Dirksen, was to be with us tonight, but really what you asked for was the "Minority Leader", and in light of the polls relating to this Administration, I'd just like to say I'm prepared to fill in.

I would like to further comment that I, too, like Senator Mansfield, was asked to "make a humorous 3 to 4 minute speech"; I replied: -- That's the biggest joke of the evening. I can't even make

one that isn't humorous in 3 or 4 minutes. As a matter of fact, I haven't even gotten around to saying hello.

But I do want to thank you for the home movies. They are a good deal better than anything I've seen thus far on the networks.

Now, let me revert for a moment back to my friend, Senator Dirksen. I was going to say a word in his behalf, but I think I'll not. I do think that because he is not here, and I'm privileged to be yielded his time, that you all ought to lean back.

The other evening my dear friend, Everett, spoke at the Republican seance that they had here in Washington and he mesmerized the customers for about 40 minutes (practically up to my standards now).

A Possible "Coup"

I've said a number of times a few things about my office. By the way, I want you to know that ever since the 25th Amendment has been passed, the Marine Band plays when I come in -- you can never tell when there will be a coup in this town. Other Vice Presidents didn't even get the D. C. Police Band, up until then.

Continuity in the Vice Presidency

I told all you folks I was going to do something for this office. I've said on other occasions, in all seriousness, that this nation needed some sense of continuity. History records that John Adams said of the Vice Presidential office, "It is nothing or everything." (It appears at this stage that the latter is not quite realized.) This country does need continuity. Since my dear and good friend, Senator Dirksen, is not here, since Senator Hatfield has spoken, and Senator Mansfield has spoken -- I think that I ought to offer myself as sacrifice to both parties -- I'm available on either ticket, come 1968.

There is so much tension and so much division in our country, it seems to me we ought to have something or someone to unite around. I've become accustomed to coming to these dinners, and I don't know whether you'll ever get a Vice President that will want to come as much as I do.

"Opportunism" to Speak

So, now, let me just observe one or two other things because I do have very serious remarks here tonight. In the words of George Romney, "I am delighted to have this opportunism to speak to you tonight."

I want to say for my friend, George, he's a fair-minded Mr. Clean whose slogan for 1968 is "not a welfare state, but a state of opportunism, for everyone."

This is a time, you know, for fun and games for our Republican friends. Romney said that Percy was an opportunist; Percy said Romney was a gentleman; Barry Goldwater said he was for Dick Nixon, and Dick Nixon said he was leaving the country. I think that sort of takes care of the partisan situation for the evening.

Senator Dirksen and Consular Treaty

I'm very sorry Ev isn't here, because I wanted to indicate why he'd come out for the Consular Treaty. You may wonder what convinced him to do so. Well, there was some very high-level negotiations that were taking place -- the Russians agreed to make the Marigold the national flower of the Soviet Union; Secretary Rusk assured Ev that he wouldn't commit a consulate in Pekin, Illinois; and the Russians agreed to sell copies of "Gallant Men" in the Soviet Union. CBS will finally get there, I guess.

Rebuilding the Democratic Party

I want to make one or two other observations here that I had in mind.

Bill Roberts has really laid down the gauntlet tonight. He mentioned that I'd been given the mission of rebuilding the Party -- and in the presence of John Bailey. I don't think he should have done that. Or even in the presence of Larry O'Brien, I don't think he should have done that either.

In the words of Will Rogers, "Neither John Bailey, nor Larry O'Brien nor Hubert Humphrey belong to any organized Party -- we're Democrats."

For the life of me, I can't imagine why all of these commentators worry about Democratic Party "organization." We never have; what are you worried about it for?

But, Bill, I want to say about my Democratic associates, as compared to the Republicans (even with the list that you gave us) we give real meaning to the immortal words that are found in so many places, "E Pluribus Unum." Because we're a closely knit family; we're literally kissin' and lovin' cousins, compared to Reagan and Rockefeller, Javits and Thurmond, Percy and Tower, Romney and Goldwater, and Nixon and Kuchel. But we really do hope that the boys do get along together for a little while.

Mergers

Tonight, I want to talk about mergers. (I hope that my friend who journeyed with me out to St. Louis is not here tonight from the Anti-Trust Division.)

There are some things that we ought to talk about. I'm not sure that all of these mergers are really helpful. Some are and some aren't. Now you take CBS and the New York Yankees. I don't really know which happened to what or what happened to whom in that one. Then, there was NBC and RCA. That's pretty good; got a lot of citations. There's Time and Life and General Learning; and I want to tell my friends from Time and Life, considering what Keppel's been doing to General Learning, you all better look after your jobs.

Then, there is Westinghouse and Betty Furness -- or should I say the White House and Betty Furness . Then, there is ABC and ITT; I don't know why they want to get together; ITT already owns Avis. But possibly it "Hertz" not to own ABC.

Relations with the President

Ladies and gentlemen, I thought tonight I ought to tell you of my relationship with the White House. Some of my friends have asked, "How are you getting along with the President?" I have always replied, "Just exactly as the President wants me to

get along with the President." But I don't believe that that's enough to convince people who are afflicted with the virus of the credibility gap. I must quote Disraeli who explained his success with Queen Victoria. I want you to know tonight -- whoever may be in this room--whoever aspires to be Vice President, this should be your code; and don't you ever, ever even defect one inch. Disraeli said of his relationship with Queen Victoria and explained his success -- (and this is the secret to the Johnson-Humphrey syndrome, too) "I never refute; I never contradict; and I sometimes forget."

All of that is so helpful.

But in a moment like this I do believe that a word of serious thought is well in line. We've heard from two very fine public servants, a distinguished new United States Senator who honors his state and his office, and from, in my mind, one of the finest gentlemen who ever served in the Senate of the United States, this distinguished Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield.

Controversy, Dissent and Popularity

These are days of controversy and days of dissent, days of division. Needless to say, we worry about these divisions, and we are; at times, concerned even about the dissent. But I would suggest that we remember the words of one who, on other occasions,

has been at your dinners -- now departed, but a great spirit in our national life, never ever reaching the Presidency, but always carrying with him the character and the nobility that would have graced any office.

The man I refer to is Adlai Stevenson who gave the definition of a free society. He said a free society is a society "where it is safe to be unpopular."

With that succinct, concise phrase, the whole story of freedom is embodied. Because it is not always necessary to be popular, but it is very, very important to be free. I can't help but think what Thomas Jefferson said in his first Inaugural as I tried to think what I might say to you tonight that would be worthy of your attention.

Power of Press, Radio-TV

You are the men and the women who convey the news programs and entertainment, cultural life, information and education to the American people.

The power of radio, the power of television are almost beyond our imagination. The integrity of men or women who operate or manage the outlets of radio or television -- is absolutely essential to a free society.

Jefferson recognized that there is always the possibility of human fallibility. He said in his Inaugural Address, "The error of opinion may

be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

Whatever we may think of those who disagree with us, whatever may be the view of those in power and to those who challenge that power, and the decisions of those in power, let it not be forgotten that where there is freedom of reason or where reason is left free to combat any opinion, freedom does prevail.

No Short Cuts to Security

I happen to be one who believes that there are no short cuts to national security. I happen to believe that the struggle with tyranny is not a hundred-yard dash, but an endurance race. And if there are no short cuts to national security, then I think it can be said with equal definiteness and candor that there are only short cuts to defeat.

Speaking Out

So, my message to you tonight is to persevere in respect for the right of dissent and not to yield to the temptation to hush it. Persevere in the path that this nation sets for itself and do not be deflected or diverted to less important duties. Persevere in the cause of freedom and its protection and remember that we are where we are, not because we were indecisive, not because we were weak, and not because we were without principles.

We are where we are, because we stood fast when it was needed; we stood firm when it was required; and we had great faith when the need was there to have that faith.

Salute to TV-Radio

I salute the radio and television correspondents. I salute all of those associated with them in the United States of America. I do it, because I happen to believe that with whatever limitations or weaknesses we, as human beings, may exhibit from time to time, as Winston Churchill said, "Democracy is the worst possible form of government except all others." And what we do with our weaknesses is still the best, regardless of all others.

Thank you very much.

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