

Excerpts from Remarks of
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NEW DIMENSIONS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The space age, which has brought great change in our existence, has also brought new dimensions to public life -- new problems -- new demands upon those having public responsibility, -- but new opportunities for great accomplishments, as well.

We are experiencing major breakthroughs in technology, accompanied by a sharpening of basic world conflict. We need no Geiger Counter to detect the steady sweep of change in world-wide political, economic and cultural patterns. All of this adds up to a tremendous impact on the full range of American public life from the precincts to the Presidency.

Traditionally the desire of responsible citizens has been for honest and efficient government. Those are virtues which still are, and will always be, a basic necessity. Constant vigilance is needed to preserve them. But honesty and efficiency in public life today are not enough. Beyond these, there must be dynamic leadership, capable of shaping programs in which government can work effectively to meet the needs,

whether local, national or international, that present themselves. Many of the old, well-beaten paths we have followed no longer lead anywhere. We do not need museum guides, we need explorers in public life today.

American has excelled in imaginative long-term planning and innovation on a grand scale. Our Constitution set the pattern and has proven time-worthy. Because we have a free society, our goals have not been pre-determined. This places a special obligation on those in public life to make the most of this free, open-ended system in seeking goals for the common good.

Our political system is organized to give elected representatives an opportunity to exercise judgment and follow their inclinations, subject to periodic election day accountability for results.

This is the basic distinction between a democracy and a dictatorship. Those in totalitarian public life have no obligation to think for themselves. In fact, to do so can be fatal in a very literal sense.

A second new dimension in public life must be recognized to a greater extent than ever before, public officials must be "Architects of Consent." They must be able to bring conflicting interests and pressures into

focus on a common objective.

This task is infinitely more difficult than in the past, because most issues today are vastly more complicated and bear very short fuses.

There is still an unfortunate -- and it could become tragic tendency for the public, and I am sorry to say, some in public office, to see in politics nothing more than the petty brokerage of small favors. Until politics is generally recognized to be, as it must be, the very life blood of our democracy, dedicated to noble and large ends and demanding the best talent and effort, this land has to offer, we shall be living in peril with our very survival hanging in the balance. It is only through politics, properly understood, that people and ideas can be joined as an effective force for good and for lasting progress toward mankind's goal of a society in which the individual can achieve the broadest possible personal development.

There is a third dimension in public life closely related to the first two I have mentioned.

While practicing the "Art of Equilibrium" those in public life must not merely "ride the waves." A responsible public official today must put the good of

the community /ahead of any thoughts of personal advantage/
or personal security, /for neither opportunists nor
fearful stand-patters /have any place in public life in
times as perilous as these.

I know of no time in our history /when it has been of
greater importance /to weigh proposals and actions /in
terms of long-range consequences /and goals. Nothing
would be more disastrous /than decisions by public
officials /on the basis of day-to-day calculation of
personal /advantage and personal political /survival/
Anyone in public life /must be willing to sacrifice /his
prestige /and his career /for what he believes to be the
common good. American has achieved greatness /because ^{these} men
in its public life /have repeatedly shown themselves
willing to make this sacrifice, /and in some cases have
been called upon to do so. Numbered among these /are not
only national /figures but numberless local officials /who
have stood firm /in their convictions on issues /which they
felt were important to the welfare of their communities.

The new dimensions of public life /extend beyond
public officials to embrace the entire community. In a
free society /the responsibility of public life falls upon
everyone.

At the very moment of the greatest need and opportunity for vast physical renewal and improvement, our American cities are faced with the most serious problems in their history. Rising government costs outstripping local sources of revenue, traffic strangulation, rising crime rates, and mounting health, welfare and safety needs all demand attention.

Progress in this situation demands bold and vigorous plans on many fronts, a mobilizing of community interests, resources and people behind such plans, and leadership which will place community goals ahead of personal advantage.

There has been a tendency since Yalta to "Meetings at the Summit" for the solution of the gravest world problems. I suggest to you today that the true summit for the solution of mankind's problems, whether between neighbors or nations, is within each one of us. It is a meeting with our conscience.

There are no issues that people of good will, who have been to that summit, cannot settle. America's great strength is in its ideals, however, imperfectly we may at times realize them, and in its tradition of self criticism. A healthy awareness and acceptance of both is

essential in public life.

The new dimensions of living which confront all of us/ are a basis for optimism rather than gloom. We have every reason to be counseled by faith/ in ourselves/ and in the American ideal/ rather than by uncertainty and fear.

We have had over two hundred years/ of practical experience/ in self governing public life/ in America. We have met numerous severe tests/ and passed them with flying colors. We have reason to come/ to what is perhaps our supreme test/ with the confidence and maturity that only experience can give.

The next fifty years can be the most glorious, exciting/ and rewarding in the history of mankind. Advances in science and medicine,/ methods of production, and in opportunities for recreation/ will make possible a longer,/ richer and fuller life. We must match these/ advances/ with equal progress in solving the basic problems/ of living together. We must adhere to the rule of law./

May our experience in public life/ be marked by dignity,/ humility, and the awareness/ that we are privileged to take part in mankind's greatest adventure.

I offer no sweeping recommendation for curing the

ills and evils of the world./ I will not offer an instant panacea /for the current controversies that trouble our communities /and the world.

I will present some ideas /that will hopefully give you a new perspective /on our world /and some new yardsticks /for measuring the challenges that confront us at home and abroad.

This is an age of explosive growth /and change.

This is the age in all history /when tensions and pressures are greatest, when challenges are greatest, and fortunately, when opportunities are greatest.

This is the most exciting, most exhilarating, most stimulating, most frustrating and frightening hour in the history of mankind.

This is an age /when we move /towards /solving the mystery of the highest heavens /and of the deepest oceans.

We have broken the shackles /that bound us to earth /and for the first time in all history /we poke and probe at the stars. We touch the face of the universe.

We have harnessed the might /and magic of the atom /and hold destiny in /the hollow of our hands. We have unlocked doors /that have opened the way to tremendous power /power for good or /power for evil.

We have - in truth / discovered instant death, / the ability to devastate entire sections of the globe.

In one lifetime we have made greater strides in science, / physics, / and medicine, / and engineering / than did all of our forebears / in a thousand generations of struggle up the ladder of civilization. / The question is, / will all this be used for the advancement of our civilization or its destruction -- the answer is in our hands.