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Speeches Given Elsewhere

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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I came here this afternoon by plane. It is a very pleasant flight. It is mostly over Democratic territory--in Maryland and in Delaware. Not that you can recognize Democrats from the air. But you can see the hallmarks of the Democratic Party--smoke rising from busy industrial plants and fine crops on rich farmlands.

I was also going to claim the beauty of the Delaware beaches for the Party. But there are limits to partisanship--even at a Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner. This lovely stretch of sand, sea and inlets is above politics. Nevertheless, Delaware's Riviera does give point to the President's suggestion that we spend some travel dollars in the United States. So far as I can see, these beaches have just about everything that you find on the French Riviera except, perhaps, Bridget Bardot.

If there are any travel dollars to spare here--after this dinner is paid for--I urge you to visit Montana--the nation's Treasure State. We have magnificent mountains and lakes and great plains and a lot of democrats. We do not have an ocean but we do have more ocean-going admirals per capita in the Navy than any other State in the Union.

We are drawn together, tonight, in a political gathering. It honors two of the great historic figures of the National Democratic Party. But, in a sense, it honors all party members--those who are elected and those who work to get them elected. Here in Wilmington, this dinner honors
your distinguished governor, your able Congressman, your outstanding mayor and the many other Democrats who lead this State in consonance with the great national democratic tradition.

And this dinner honors all of you democrats who are in attendance, even if you have to pay for it. For, in all seriousness, in the end there is no Democratic Party here or anywhere else, in the sense we know it, unless there are men and women in great numbers who are prepared to give their time, their energy, their devotion and their money for the cause of decent and honorable and effective government in the United States.

As we meet tonight, when the nation is at a pinnacle of economic prosperity and the Democratic Party at a pinnacle of political prosperity, I ask you to think of an earlier period. It used to be, not so long ago that many of us cannot remember, that these Jefferson-Jackson Dinners were occasions, primarily, for mutual commiseration and reassurance. We knew, or rather, we hoped that some day the people of the nation would again turn to the Democratic Party for national leadership. That hope was just about all there was to hold the national party together. That period was--as the present era is--an era of great prosperity for the nation. There was one big difference: It was also an era of Republican Party prosperity. It was 1929. To the Republicans of that time there was not a cloud on the horizon.

And then look what happened. Look what happened to them again in November last year. I ask you not to laugh at the Republican experience
but rather to learn from it. Don't deride their predicament but concentrate on seeing to it that we do not fall into it.

In short, I urge you--as Democrats--to learn to live with political prosperity, not on it. As Democrats, it is more important to preserve the public confidence which we have earned than to entrench the political power which it has brought.

We have had great public acceptance for three decades. It is greater now than in many years. Why did we emerge from the November election with a massive Democratic victory? Not because our electioneering or electronic gimmicks were better. Not because our candidates were more photogenic than Republicans, although that may have been incidentally true. Certainly not because we had more money for campaigns.

The fact is that this nation has been in a period of general Democratic ascendancy which has persisted through three decades. There is one key reason for that persistence. The nation has turned to our party because we learned or rather relearned, one thing during the twenties. The opposition knew it at an earlier time and began to forget it even as we began to relearn it. We learned and we learned the hard way, that beyond all else, it is a sincere and dedicated service to all the people that counts with the people.

We learned in the long years in the wilderness that political ideals without organization and unity are not enough. And we learned that organization and unity without dedicated ideals are not enough. We learned to put the two together and to put both to work for the people of the nation.
Through these years of Democratic ascendancy, the political problems which have confronted us have changed, even as the needs of the nation and its people have changed. And through the years, the Democratic Party has had ideals rooted in the welfare of all the people with which to meet these changing problems and these needs. And through the years, we have found the dedicated leadership to supply the initiative and the energy to overcome the problems and the needs. In short, we have met the responsibilities of party government in this nation. We have not been without shortcomings, not without failures, not without imperfections. The truth is—and it is as true at a Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner as it is on a Lincoln Day picnic—that there are no pre-packaged perfections, no guaranteed successes in the political life of the nation. We have made our mistakes. We will make more.

But for the past thirty years, as a party in the majority and in the minority, we have met our responsibilities to the people of the nation and we have met them well. The people of the nation in increasing numbers have recognized that this party, whatever its shortcomings, is their party. And whether it be in Montana or Delaware or Washington we mean to keep this party, the party of all the people and of all sections of the nation.

You know, as do I, that for a time, for eight years, during the past three decades, the people turned away from Democratic Administrations in the search for national leadership. I will not go into the reasons.
They are many and complex. But I do know that when a young man out of Massachusetts, vibrant with a great human vitality and intelligence, full of decency and good sense gave renewed expression to the great traditions and finest ideals of the nation, the American people turned back to the Democratic party for national leadership. And when Lyndon B. Johnson lifted the nation out of its hour of profound tragedy, when he acted with a sure hand and an immense dedication—the people underscored their restored confidence in the Democratic Party by giving him one of the greatest political victories in the history of the Presidency.

What have we done to retain the restored public confidence which began in 1960? We have applied ideals of the party to the problems and needs of the people. We have acted to carry the nation to the highest level of economic prosperity in history and we have kept it there for the longest continuous period since World War II. To that end, an $11.3 billion tax cut was passed last year. That legislation and many other legislative acts of the past four years have acted as health stimulants to growth and without significant inflation. In the not-too-distant future, moreover, we shall move to reduce and to repeal various excise taxes on consumer goods, dating from the Korean War, as a further stimulus to expansion of the economy.

Times, indeed, are good for most Americans and in most parts of the nation. It is not only the function but the determined intention of the democratic national leadership to see to it that they stay good. To that end, the balance of payments—the gold-problem, the still-obscure implications
of automation, of price and wage movements--of all the clear and not so clear forces which shape the nation's economy are being watched with great care by this Administration. This Administration will not take national prosperity for granted. The Leadership of the nation will not act unnecessarily but it will not hesitate to act, as necessary, to keep the nation's economy in full momentum.

By the same token, the Administration is not going to overlook in Washington the fact that, for millions of Americans elsewhere, the times are not so good. This party cannot, should not and will not now, anymore than in the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt, accept the proposition that nothing can be done about Americans who are outside looking in on this great national prosperity. This party is determined now as it was then that something can be done about this situation, that something must be done about it.

And it is doing something about it.

Since 1961, the National Leadership has sought to open wider economic opportunities through many programs for those who have been left behind in the great economic surge forward. About a billion and a half dollars will be appropriated this year alone for training and for other special aid to Americans who need help so that they will be able to help themselves.

In the nearby Appalachian region, where vast impersonal economic forces have produced appalling human wastelands, a great effort of economic
restoration is under way. In thirteen states, over a billion dollars will be spent to encourage new industry, to provide better access, to inject modern skills and techniques—to do all of the things which are necessary to bring this region into the mainstream of American material progress. There are hundreds of thousands of Americans in this region, Americans without hope, Americans fearful of tomorrow. That situation, we will strive to change and we shall persist in this effort until it is changed.

What is learned in Appalachia, moreover, will tell us much of what needs to be done elsewhere in the nation in similar situations. What is done successfully in Appalachia will be done elsewhere. We shall continue until the map of a prosperous America is no longer pock-marked with areas of economic blight. We shall continue until mass poverty and serious deprivation are banished from the land. We shall continue until, not one-third, not one-fourth, not one-fifth but until no part of the people of this nation shall go ill-clad, ill-housed or ill-fed.

That is a major aspect of the current responsibility of this party. If we are to learn to live with political prosperity and not on it, we will neglect no longer in this time of economic prosperity those who have been for too long neglected. We will not forget those human needs of the few which are too easily forgotten in the midst of a surfeit of satisfactions for the many.
We will keep our concern for the nation's economy and we will also keep and deepen our concern for the old, for the young and others in need of special help.

We will spur the nation's industry and agriculture and we will also act to clean up its rivers and harbors and the air above it. We will act to preserve and extend the nation's open spaces and wilderness, its lakes and shores for the benefit of a growing population. We will see to it that the nation's cities not only remain great centers of commerce but are restored as places in which people can live in decency and in safety, and sciences as places in which the arts are cultivated and encouraged.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy expressed these changing needs of the nation and he pointed the Democratic Party in the direction of meeting them. President Johnson has underscored, reiterated and elaborated this direction when he has spoken of a great society.

It does not much matter what we call the objective. But we move in the right direction when we pass, as we shall pass, this year a program of health care for older citizens. The time has come—in this session of Congress—to put an end to the crocodile tears over the plight of older people who are faced with the devastating costs of illness and, often, with an income no larger than a social security cheque. It is time to insure a dignified and decent attention to the health needs of these people. It is time to insure that attention, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of hard-earned right.
We move, too, in the right direction when we expand as we have expanded and will continue to expand, through legislation, the research and treatment facilities for the mentally ill and the retarded and for those who suffer in the whole range of diseases and illnesses to which the human species is heir.

We move, too, in the right direction when we provide, as this Congress and its predecessor have provided, for a vast increase in the educational facilities of the nation at all levels, when we act to bring the nation nearer to the goal of an equal access to education in excellence for every child in the land.

And we move in the right direction when we act as we have acted and will continue to act, to the end that we shall fulfill the purpose and the promise of the Constitution--when we act to the end that all Americans without regard to race, color, creed or origins shall share the public responsibilities of this nation and shall have equitable access to its opportunities.

We move in the right direction when we bring federal cooperation to the hard-pressed states and municipalities--as we have done and will continue to do over a whole range of community and urban needs--for better water supplies, for cleaner air, for recreational facilities, for decent housing, for better transportation and, yes, for a little beauty along with the highways that knit the nation together. These are some of the needs of the nation which must be met and which your party's national leadership is working to meet.
And beyond all those proper demands of the people on the party in which they have reposed their confidence, there is one other which is over-riding. It, too, is a most proper demand. The people did not elect this party to office to lead them to a great war, even if there are some who would goad it in that direction. The people elected this party to order the defense and the international policies of this nation in such a fashion as to safeguard the nation's freedom in peace. They elected this party to work for peace, to work for it soberly, responsibly and relentlessly, through all the machinery, national and international, which is open or might be opened.

And yet I would be less than honest with you if I did not say that we work for peace, today, under a cloud and the cloud has darkened. It is in the nature of world-wide events that no single nation can control their flow. It is in the nature of foreign policy that it does not begin afresh with each change of administration. There are no cheap solutions in this realm. There are no easy solutions. In this era, we live every moment of our lives in great danger of the end of life as we have known it. We work and we build in terms of years of dedicated effort and all of it can be reduced to ashes in one blinding instant. And, what applies to us, to every man, woman and child in America applies to every other nation in the world.
So let there be no glib talk of quick and painless military solutions to the situation in Viet Nam or in the Dominican Republic, or anywhere else, however remote, where military force is in use or may come into use. These situations are cause for deep concern. That concern is felt by the President and by all who are in positions of responsibility—democrats and republicans alike—in the government. The President has not placed American military forces in Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic because he seeks a great war. He did not put them there because he seeks to demonstrate that the American military muscle is strong. He put them there because, on the basis of the facts available to him, he saw no alternative if he was to meet his responsibilities for the safety and freedom of the nation. And there is every expectation that he will take them out just as soon as a satisfactory alternative is found.

I can assure you that the search for such an alternative goes on, in the Presidency, in the Congress and in all available diplomatic channels. It is right and proper and, in the last analysis, essential, that this search go on. We are even now in the Dominican Republic, preparing to reduce our unilateral effort as the organization of American states, for the first time, moves an inter-American force into that situation in an effort to safeguard the bystanders and to insure the free choice of the Dominican people as to their political future.

That the American states have agreed to act in this fashion is a development of great significance. For the responsibilities of peace are such that they cannot be borne by a single nation acting alone. The
responsibilities of peace, whether in Southeast Asia, in the Caribbean or in Africa or anywhere else will be discharged successfully in the end only if they can be discharged in concert and in understanding with many other nations, whether within the United Nations, through regional organizations or through the traditional channels of diplomacy.

Your Administration will not be goaded by the voices of an impatient arrogance either at home or abroad. It will do what must be done for the safety of the nation. But it will continue the search in concert with other nations which was begun in earnest and with firmness and dedication, under the late President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, for a secure peace. It will seek this peace not only in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean but throughout the world. For, in the end, it is only in a secure peace in the world that this nation's own existence and freedom will be secure.
Commencement Address by Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)
Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa
May 29, 1965, 2:00 p.m.
CDST

Before I begin my remarks to you, I should like to pay tribute to the one person who, more than any other, is responsible for my being here today. I refer to Maureen Hayes Mansfield--who spent 7 happy years at Clarke, who has so many friends here and who is responsible for my being referred to, on occasion, as the 3rd Senator from Iowa.

It is not too difficult for a man in public life to gain recognition, provided he is lucky enough to share his private life with an exceptional wife. All too often, the women who stand with public figures go unnoticed and unsung. But I know and I am delighted to acknowledge that if I had not had Maureen Mansfield by my side through the years, these years of public life would not have been possible. If I had not drawn strength from her patience, if I had not found courage in her understanding--if I had not had access to her wisdom, I would not be with you today. You would not have had occasion to invite me, for the simple reason that I would not have had anything very much to say to you.

So, for making it possible for me to be here, for her enormous assistance to me in a life of public service which has brought me much personal fulfillment, I should like to add to the public honor which you have bestowed on Maureen Mansfield, a public expression of my deep affection and gratitude to her.
Ladies of the graduating class of 1965, distinguished members of the faculty, parents, relatives, and friends, I am grateful for the privilege of sharing in this graduation ceremony.

It is a pleasure to return to Clarke College. The campus does not look exactly the same to me as on my visit here eight years ago. I detect the presence of buildings which were not around then and I note that the college has expanded its facilities and curriculum.

There is, however, a striking similarity between the graduating class I addressed in 1957 and the graduating class of 1965. The product of the earlier class was—and the product of today's class is—a fine and alert looking group of graduates.

To you graduates, your diploma is the capstone of your college career. It is for you, at once, the beginning and the continuance of what might be called "Women's Journey in the United States."

That journey began with the very beginnings of the nation. And through the years it has been marked by change. In the earliest days, it was slow and scarcely perceptible change. But in what historians eventually will record as a relatively brief period of time, three factors have been instrumental in creating startling change in the role of women in our society. These factors are expanded educational opportunity, expanded economic opportunity, and expanded political opportunity.

Almost from the beginning, an elementary school education has been available to both boys and girls in this country. But the door to a secondary
school education for a girl opened more slowly. Nevertheless, by the end of the 19th century, twice as many girls as boys were being awarded high school diplomas because, for work reasons, males constituted a higher percentage of school dropouts.

At the higher education level a real distinction between educational opportunity for males and for females has existed until very recent times. It was almost 200 years after Harvard University was founded to provide higher education for men that Oberlin College in 1833 broke ranks to provide instruction at the advanced level to what was referred to as "the misguided and neglected sex." In spite of this breakthrough, it was a long time before the concept of free choice for women in educational pursuits received any general acceptance.

Even fifty years ago, for example, it would have been pointless for a girl to prepare for a career in politics or international affairs. As soon as women were given a fair crack at educational opportunities, they proved that they did, indeed, possess brainpower equal to that of men.

Nowadays, women earn one-third of all B.A.'s, one-third of all M.A.'s and one-tenth of all Ph.D.'s. Virtually no profession is closed to a woman who is capable and trained. What is of the essence, of course, is this nation's general and growing recognition that an equitable educational opportunity should be available to all, regardless of the individual's color or sex or the station in life in which he or she was born.

And as with educational changes, expanded economic opportunity has also brought a significant transition in the role of women in our society. In the relationship of women to work outside the home, statistics reveal that in the span of sixty years—from 1900 to 1960—the number of American women earning paychecks increased almost fivefold. Today, more than half of the women who are working are married, and one in every three workers in the United States is a woman.
It is clear that some women must work to support themselves and dependents. And some women work to supplement family income. But increasing numbers of married women are working because they find they can successfully blend the responsibilities of family life with those of a part- or a full-time job. After her children are grown up many a married woman has virtually a second adult lifetime which may be dedicated to self-development, the use of talents and skills, and service to family and to community, in its broadest sense.

A third factor to bear in mind as instrumental in the changing nature of women's journey in the United States is expanded political opportunity. Remember, woman's universal right to vote dates back only to 1920--when the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally approved. As you know, Congress now has before it a bill which seeks to secure this fundamental right irrespective of color. It is a good time to note that just a few decades ago about half the entire population did not have this right just because they were women. That is a measure of the distance we have come in a relatively short time.

I will note parenthetically that in the field of political rights, a great change in the status of women has occurred not only in this nation but throughout the world. Of the 119 nations that currently are members of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, 106 countries give women full and equal political rights to vote and hold office; six countries grant women partial rights; and in only seven countries are women accorded no political rights.

The forces that have revolutionized the role of women in our society are forces that are simmering or stirring beneath or above the surface in the developing nations of the world. In all change there is potential for good or evil. The crux of the matter is the direction change takes. In the explosive and complicated world of which we are a part, there is ideological confrontation
between the Communist world and the free nations over the direction change is
to take in those newer nations engaged in a search for identity. We cannot
afford to ignore nor to neglect the winds of change. It behooves us--in fact
it is essential for us as a nation--to help to shape change in a fashion so as
to create those conditions under which all peoples can live and prosper in peace.
The women of this nation should be willing to contribute in that undertaking
and their contribution should be welcomed.

One area in the United States where a change in the role of women has
been particularly significant is in the field of politics. Today--only 45 years
following ratification of the Suffrage Amendment--women occupy political offices
at all levels of government. They serve as mayors and on town and city boards.
They are members of state legislatures and occupy state elective and appointive
posts.

Women are also active in political party councils. As you have
doubtless noticed on television, women are much in evidence at political con-
ventions where they act as delegates, speakers, contributors to party platforms,
and, last, but not least, occasionally as a Vice Presidential or Presidential
candidate. As a Democrat, I do not wish to be in the position of advising the
Republican Party but it is no secret that I favored Senator Margaret Chase Smith
as that party's candidate for the Presidency in the last election. The
Republicans did not heed my advice and you know what happened last November.

My State of Montana sent the first woman to the United States Congress
in 1917. Since then, the role of women has continued to expand in national
politics. Over sixty women have been members of the House of Representatives,
and ten currently serve in that body. Ten women have been members of the Senate.
Currently, Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican from Maine and Maurine Neuberger,
a Democrat from Oregon, make a great contribution to the Senate and the nation.
They do so because they are intelligent, wise and immensely skilled Senators and equally because they are charming and gracious women.

The scope of politics is broad. It covers a wide range of activities—from doorbell ringing or "getting out the vote" on election day to waging a political campaign or serving in public office. How effectively small tasks are performed often can mark the difference between a victory and a defeat for a candidate.

Anything men can do in politics, women can do, and in many instances, better. Through participation in politics, you graduates can make your voices heard and your views felt in our democratic system of government. Politics offers you a way of helping to promote good candidates for office, to keep good officials in office, and to ensure good government across-the-board. Politics offers you a way of translating into political action your own ideas and thoughts. Politics offers you a means of influencing public attitudes, governmental policies, and world events. I trust you will accept those offers and make them at least a part of your contract with life.

Women's journey in the field of international affairs, like that of politics, is of rather brief duration. The first American woman to become a Foreign Service Officer was appointed in 1922 and assigned to Bern, Switzerland, as Third Secretary of Legation. Today over 250 women serve as Foreign Service Officers and close to 75 as Foreign Service Reserve Officers. Women comprise 6.6 percent of the total Foreign Service Officer complement. This is a small but significant proportion when it is considered that most of a Foreign Service employee's career is spent in assignments overseas. It is a career difficult for a woman to combine with the responsibilities of marriage, and most women, at least at the last count, are still interested in getting married.
Franklin Roosevelt was the first President to nominate a woman to a high diplomatic post. During his first administration, he appointed as Minister to Denmark Ruth Bryan Owen. Our first woman diplomat to attain the rank of ambassador was appointed by President Truman, and the first woman ambassador chosen from career ranks was nominated by President Eisenhower. At the present time there are two women ambassadors, Margaret J. Tibbetts, a career Foreign Service Officer serving in Norway, and Catherine White, Ambassador to Denmark. I anticipate Senate approval soon of President Johnson's recent nomination of another outstanding Lady Mrs. Patricia Roberts Harris to be Ambassador to Luxembourg. Mrs. Harris, a lawyer, would become our first Negro woman to serve in an ambassadorial post.

Our natural inclination is to associate foreign affairs primarily with the Department of State and Foreign Service. Yet many women also work in other agencies of government which have important responsibilities in the field of foreign affairs—the United States Information Agency, the Agency for International Development, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Peace Corps.

Some of you graduates may be considering the Peace Corps. It is a wonderful opportunity to serve your fellow man and to enrich your own experience. Women volunteers from Iowa have been dispatched to such faraway places as Turkey, Brazil, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. They have been teachers of music, English, general science, mathematics, or physical education. They have been nurses or home economists or social, community development, or agricultural extension workers.

I might allude at this point to the Peace Corps' domestic counterpart known as Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA, in short. That program is attracting its share of qualified young women volunteering to join in trying to put an end to poverty in the United States.
No resume of women's accomplishments in the field of international affairs is complete without mention of women who have served this country with distinction in various United Nations posts. Eleanor Roosevelt was the first chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Mrs. Roosevelt's place in history will be measured not only by her tangible achievements and distinctions such as that one, but by the intangible contributions she made through her outpouring to others of sincerity, warmth, conviction, and understanding.

Two other women have ably represented this nation on the U. N. Human Rights Commission--Mary Pillsbury Lord and Marietta Tree, whose appointment by President Johnson carried with it ambassadorial rank.

I have called attention to some of the noteworthy attainments of women in the field of international affairs. But I do not want to leave you with the impression that you graduates cannot make a significant foreign policy contribution unless you are a Peace Corps volunteer, an expert on foreign aid, or an Ambassador. In every community there is a genuine need for citizens who take an interest in and acquire comprehension of foreign policy problems. It is fallacious to assume that foreign policy problems are too complex for anyone but the expert to grasp. It is wrong for any individual in this twentieth century to assume that his concerns end at the county, state, or national boundary line.

What are some of the ways in which you increase understanding of the world in which we live and enhance other people's understanding of us? You can keep yourself informed on international affairs. You can become an active participant in one or more of any number of volunteer or professional organizations that study specific foreign policy issues or engage in other activities related
to foreign affairs; you can communicate to your elected representatives any ideas you have; you can take foreign visitors sightseeing or invite them to visit your homes.

Most important, you can make intelligent use of the unparalleled sources of information which are available in this nation, particularly the press. Newspapers, large and small, those printed in the metropolitan centers of our country and those that abound in smaller cities, have done an outstanding job of supplying facts and informed opinion on national and international developments. They have helped to keep government on its toes. They have served to bring to the public an independent picture of our national policies at home and abroad.

And while I am on this subject, I want to say a word of praise for the American men and women who report the news. They do an excellent job even if I may sometimes suffer personally at their hands. The reporter's job is to turn the light on, regardless of the inadequacies in government which may be exposed. Management of news by government can never be squared with our continuing and growing need for a fully informed and alert public. It can never be squared in other words, with the needs of a democratic society.

And in no aspect of this nation's public affairs is a press contribution more essential than in foreign policy. The function of the newspapers is to point up the facts as they see them—the strengths and weaknesses, the consistencies and inconsistencies, the reasons for and reasons against our policies and our posture.
We will never safeguard this nation by deprecating, in the name of national policy or of a superior governmental wisdom, the free press which is one of the principal institutions by which freedom is maintained. Government officials are almost always inclined to think—and understandably—that they know better than the press what is transpiring in the world or any segment of it and what to do about it. But time and again events have indicated that on many occasions they do not. In this connection, I think, for example, of the work of American correspondents in Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic which has been outstanding in every respect. One sometimes has the impression that the accuracy of the press reporting and some of the press analysis in both places may very well have been greater in many instances than the great flow of information which has come to Washington through official channels.

I want to say, too, that over the years as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, in secret or public sessions, the flow of information from the Executive Branch to the Senate on the international situation is more copious but many times no more revealing or lucid than that which has been carried in the great newspapers of the nation.

In short, I want to stress to you the indispensable service which the press of the nation performs in our society. It must continue to reflect with its own eyes, the truth as it sees the truth, directly, and not as it is reflected in the retina of "official positions." The two may be and often are identical. That is fortuitous when it is the case. But when it is not, there must be no forced convergence in the name of a national unity. For that kind of unity can never be more than skin deep. It is not a source of strength. Rather, it is a source of a dangerous and delusive weakness.
The basic work of the Press leads to the asking of the incisive questions which in a democracy need to be asked by the people and answered by their government. And, so, as in the case of the situation in Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic, the press provides the impetus and stimulus for a searching and continuing public debate which is likely to go on and should go on until there is a satisfactory resolution of critical national questions.

The other day I read a magazine description of the composite American woman. She was portrayed as "good-looking, youthful, energetic, capable, independent, restless, confused, frustrated, spoiled--lucky."

I shall reserve comment on that characterization on the grounds that were I to do otherwise, I might incriminate myself. But I think you graduates and I would both agree that you have been lucky in having the opportunity to attend this institution of higher learning where the pursuit of excellence is emphasized and the quest for truth is encouraged.

Moreover, I think you are lucky to be living in the twentieth century, a century of unfolding opportunity, unprecedented demands, and unparalleled hope. Of you women, much will be asked. You will be expected to possess capacity for change, clarity of thought, and courage of conviction. You will be expected to work hard. You will be expected to have purpose and to be willing to commit yourself to service in useful articulation of the needs of your family, your community, your country and the world.
Your church, family, friends, community and schools have influenced your development into what you are. What you become and what you do in the future is your challenge in the years ahead. What you become and what you do can make a difference in shaping the face of the future world. Responsibility for our nation's survival in freedom and for the future of all mankind is a responsibility all Americans share.

I should like to leave you with my hope for your part of the women's journey in the United States which you start today, a hope expressed in an old Gaelic blessing:

"May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind always be at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
And the rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And, until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand."
It was my honor and privilege to participate in the commencement exercises held at Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa, on May 29th. It gave me the opportunity to meet new friends and to renew old friendships. More important, it recalled for Mrs. Mansfield the years she spent in high school and college at Mount St. Joseph's as Clarke College was then called. These were happy years, fondly remembered years, and, added to the recollections, Clarke College awarded to her the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. For me, it was a most happy and auspicious occasion and it constituted literally a thrill in a lifetime.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may insert at this point in my remarks a copy of the commencement address which I gave on that occasion.