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I come from the turmoil of your capitol to the tranquility of your campus to speak about the future of your country.

The Presidency is a restless place. It is beset by the clamor of current crisis, the insistence of immediate issues, the demands of developing danger. To steer the nation through momentary pressure toward fixed purpose is one of the highest duties of my office.

But the President has also a profounder charge. He must sense amidst the ~~welter~~ confusion and contradiction of events and prophecies, the shape of things to come. He must look beyond impending hazard to widening horizons, beyond today to tomorrow. ~~And he must set his course so that, in decades to come, Americans will be the masters and not the victims of their times.~~

For from the clarity of our vision, and the courage with which we pursue that vision, will emerge the civilization in which you and your children will live and labor.

I do not now talk of the great issues of foreign affairs. They will consume our energies and concern our leaders for as long as we can foresee. On their wise resolution will depend the future of our country, and the flourishing of ~~the~~ our civilization ~~from which we spring~~.

But we must also remember that we protect the life of our nation and preserve the liberty of our citizens, that we may pursue the happiness of our people.

Our success in that pursuit is the test of our success as a nation. It underlies all our policies, our programs and our prospects for the future.

We stand at a momentous turning point in the pursuit of American happiness.

For a century we labored to settle and subdue a continent. For half a century, we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all our people. Our victory has surpassed our vision. And the wealth of our nation is the wonder of the world.

The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life.

Of course, we have not yet reached the goal of abundance for all. We must strike down unjust barriers which prison men in poverty or offer opportunity according to color rather than capacity. Your government is working at that task. Before this decade is over no American will be handicapped by his race, his color or his beliefs. And every American will have the chance to escape from the despair of poverty.

But once those barriers are down we must make sure that on the other side is a nation where freedom from the wants of the body brings fulfillment of the needs of the spirit.

Your imagination, your initiative, your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, or a society where old values and bright visions are buried under unbridled growth. For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but toward the Great Society.

What is the Great Society?

It rests on abundance and liberty for all. But that is just the beginning.

It is a place where every child ~~finds~~ can find knowledge to enrich his mind and enlarge his talents. It is a place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. It is a place where the city of man serves not only the nedds of the body and the demands of commerce, but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community. It is a place where man can renew contact with nature, where

the claims of charm and calm do not yield to the claims of change and construction. It is a place which honors creation for its own sake, and for what it adds to the understanding of the race. It is a place where men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods. But, most of all, the Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective. It is a challenge constantly renewed. beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvels of our labor.

I want to talk to you today about three places where we can begin to build the great society -- in our cities, in our countryside and in our classrooms.

Many of you will live to see the day, fifty years from now, when there will be 400 million Americans; 320 million of them in urban areas. In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build homes, highways and facilities equal to all those built since this country was settled. It is as if we had forty years to rebuild the entire urban United States.

In the next fifteen years alone thirty million people will be added to our cities -- equal to the combined population of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, and Ann Arbor. And each and every year, in the next generation, your generation, we will add the equivalent of 10-15 cities of 200,000 people each.

Already old cities are combining into huge clusters. The strip of land from Southern New Hampshire to Northern Virginia contains 21% of America's population in 1.8% of its area. And other urban giants are growing along the West Coast, and Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico.

These powerful pressures are coming upon cities already beset by burdens.

Aristotle said: "Men come together in cities in order to live, but they remain together in order to live the good life." It is harder

and harder

and harder to live the good life in American cities.

The catalogue of ills is long: There is the decay of the centers and the despoiling of the suburbs. There is not enough housing for our people or transportation for our traffic. Open land is vanishing and old landmarks are violated. Worst of all expansion is eroding the precious and time honored values of community with neighbors and communion with nature. The loss of these values breeds lneliness and boredom and indifference.

Our Society will never be great until our cities are great. Today the frontier of imagination and innovation is inside those cities not beyond their borders. New experiments are already going on. But it will require the combined energy of an aroused nation to make the American city a place where future generations will come, not only to live, but to live the good life. Only then we can truly say "Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears."

A second place where we begin to build the Great Society is in our countryside. We have always prided our selves on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful. Today that beauty is in danger.

Green fields and dense forests are being ravaged by enlarged commerce and expanding construction. The water we drink, the food we eat, the very air we breathe, are threatened with pollution. Our parks are overcrowded, and our seashore overburdened. A few years ago we were concerned about the Ugly American. Today we must act to prevent an Ugly America. For once the battle is lost, once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recalled.

I was fortunate enough to grow up among the stark ~~loveliness~~ grandeur of the Texas landscape. I wandered its fields and walked its hills. I seek to renew that healing contact whenever I can. For once man can no longer

walk with beauty or wonder at nature it will wither his spirit and waste his sustenance.

If we do not halt the desolation of our land, if we do not guard the bounty of nature, then future generations will have cause to curse those who stripped them of their heritage and their country of a source of its greatness.

This, too is not an easy task. It will, in the words of E.M. Forster, require "men of good will who can continue and work together lest destruction spread and cover the fields and hills with its senseless squalor."

As long as I serve the American people, I will devote myself to protecting the beauty bestowed by God, from the havoc of heedless men.

A third place to build the Great Society is in the classrooms of America.

In today's America, education is not a privilege and a luxury, it is a necessity and a right. Through knowledge men can open the doors to fulfilling labor and fruitful leisure. Without it their talents are imprisoned and their horizons narrowed.

A growing nation cannot dissipate the skills of its people. A great nation cannot deny the fruitful life to which learning leads. Our Society will not be great until every young mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination.

We are still far from that goal.

Today 8 million adult Americans have not finished five years of school -- nearly twenty million have not finished eight years of school -- nearly 54 million have not finished high school.

Each year more than 100,000 high school graduates, with proved ability, do not enter college because they cannot afford it.

And if we cannot educate today's youth, what will we do in 1970 when elementary school enrollment will be five million more than 1960 -- high school enrollment will rise five million -- and college enrollment will increase by more than three million.

In many places classrooms are overcrowded and curricula are outdated. Most of our qualified teachers are underpaid, and many of our paid teachers are unqualified.

We must give every child a place to sit and a ~~person~~ Teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.

But more classrooms, and more teachers are not enough. We must seek an educational system which expands in excellence as it swells in size. This means better training for our teachers. It means preparing youth to enjoy their hours of idleness as well as their hours of industry. It means exploring new techniques of teaching, to find new ways to stimulate the love of learning and the capacity for creation. We must put our own genius to work to find better methods of developing the genius of our young.

Cont P. 7

These are three of the central issues of the Great Society. Your government has many programs directed at those issues. I do not pretend we have the full answer to these problems.

But I do promise this.

We are going to assemble the best thought and broadest knowledge from all over the world to find those answers. I intend to call a series of White House Conferences -- on the cities, on natural beauty, on the quality of education, and on other emerging challenges. From these conferences, and from other studies, we will begin to set our course toward the Great Society.

Nor can the troubles of your time be dealt with only by the tools of tradition. Our problems are not bounded by historic borders, or confined by conventional concerns. They involved private industry as well as public institutions. Their solution does not rest on a massive program in Washington, nor rely solely on the strained resources of local authority. They require use to create new concepts of cooperation ~~and common concern~~ between the national capitol and the leaders of local communties. To develop this creative federalism will require boldness of imagination and freedom of innovation. Some cases may call for national standards for local action. Others may require that costs be shared. Still others will demand that Mayors, Governors and the President cooperate to enlist the energies of private citizens. The development of a creative federalism for our age will require the skills of politicians and the studies of professors. But we know our greatest strength ~~lies in~~ is the diversity of our democracy. And we can only build a Great Society if we find ways to apply this strength to our national goals.

Woodrow Wilson once wrote: "Every man sent out from his university should be a man of his nation as well as a man of his time."

Almost four years ago President Kennedy came here and called upon you to respond to a need of your time through the Peace Corps. Today I come to ask you to be men and women of your nation.

For better or for worse, your generation has been appointed by history to lead America toward a new age.

Within your lifetime powerful forces, already loosed, will take us toward a way of life beyond the realm of our experience, almost beyond the bounds of our imagination. These forces are fraught with somber portent and splendid promise. They threaten the heritage we cherish, and the hopes we have conceived.

You cannot escape the future. You can, with your own hands and your own minds, mold the shape of that future. Here, on this campus, let us now begin to build the Great Society. Let us make of this country, a place where man, after a long and weary way, turned the exploits of his genius to the enrichment of his life.