

3 January 1969

From: Price

To: RN

Subj: Inaugural

1. Enclosed is a draft, plus a collection of Supplementary Notes.

2. The draft is only a tentative stab at one possible approach, which doesn't quite hang together; it doesn't pretend to be an actual framework for the speech.

3. I'll be trying over the week end to pull together, in a more structured way, some other thoughts re themes and approaches. I was caught rather short when the deadline was moved up from Monday.


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Price: Inaugural: Draft 1B

Only a few weeks ago, we all were spellbound witness at one of the transcendent moments of history -- watching, waiting, as man made his pioneer journey to the moon and back.

In later centuries, that voyage will be remembered as a milestone in man's exploration of the heavens. But for us here today, Apollo 8 carries a more immediate lesson.

As they flew over the moon's gray surface on Christmas Eve, their voices so clear across the lunar distance, we heard the astronauts speak of the beauty of Earth and invoke a blessing on its goodness. Their view from the moon moved poet Archibald MacLeish to write:

"To see the earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold -- brothers who know now they are truly brothers."

Thus, in this moment of surpassing technological triumph, men turned their thoughts toward home and humanity -- telling us that however far we reach into the cosmos, our destiny lies not in the stars but here on Earth itself, in our own hands and our own hearts.

As we think of Earth from that far perspective, we see more clearly than ever that man's destiny is not divisible.

Today, we in America approach what may prove the decisive test of our national maturity -- called on to lead in a tortured world while uniting a divided people; to make peace abroad and restore peace at home; to calm the anxieties and meet the aspirations of a time of social upheaval.

As we approach these tasks together, the most urgent things we can do are simple things.

It's a curious paradox of our age that as the awesome becomes commonplace, we so often lose sight of the simple. The things closest to us are hardest to see. Yet it's precisely these simple things that are most needed if we're to master the complexities we live with.

For one, we can lower our voices.

In these difficult years, America has been suffering from a fever of words: from inflated rhetoric that promises more than it can possibly deliver; from angry rhetoric that fans discontents into hatred; from bombastic rhetoric that postures instead of persuading.

We can't learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another -- until we make language once again not a barricade, but a bridge -- until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard, as well as our voices.

In public life, passion too often drives out reason. The problems we face today cannot be solved by confrontation. In the real world, answers seldom fit neatly into slogans;

they defy the rigidities of dogma; they have a way of deflating the arrogance of certainty.

If we are to find these answers, we need resources drawn from deep within us: the forebearance, the considerateness of others, the devotion to justice, that are the mark of civilized man.

✓ In the long run, our strongest bulwark against the arbitrary restraints of tyranny is the self-restraint of free men.

To live as part of a community is to yield something of ourselves: to practice those internal disciplines that make it possible for people to live together. Without order, there is no freedom -- and unless it maintains order, a free society fails.

Unless it maintains a humane order, it also fails.

If ours is to be a humane order, there are other simple things we must do.

We must listen.

We must learn to listen in new ways -- to the voices of quiet anguish, the voices that speak without words, the voices of the heart -- to the injured voices, and the anxious voices, and the voices that have despaired of being heard.

Those who have been left out, we must strive to include in.

To those haunted by fear, we must offer safety.

To those caught up in uncertainty, perplexed by the confusions of change, we must offer direction -- beacons to be guided by, and elements of stability that can put change in perspective.

To those torn by the wrenching moral conflicts of an age of involvement, we must offer a compassionate hearing -- and respect for the demands of conscience, even if we disagree with where it leads.

Our nation was born in a ferment of anger and frustration, committed to a new concept of freedom as man's natural condition and his inalienable right.

As we approach the 200th anniversary of that birth, it falls to our generation to fill out the concept in its full dimensions -- recognizing freedom as not only the absence of restraints, but the presence of opportunities. We have learned that the right to choose is empty when there is no choice; that freedom is hollow without the chance for its exercise.

✓ No man can be fully free while his neighbor is unfree.

The hungry among us are not free -- and it's time we moved at last to eliminate the scourge of hunger from this most bounteous nation on earth.

More than a century after Lincoln proclaimed emancipation, the freedom of the black American is still incomplete. It can't be completed by more of the old public charities that so dis-

mally perpetuated dependency. Rather, it requires helping the black American into the fullness of human dignity; helping build the base of economic power that can support independence and in turn sustain pride.

✓ The fearful are not free -- and we cannot cast off the shackles of fear until we bring order to our cities and safety to our streets.

✓ Neither is any of us fully free while assaults on our increasingly man-made environment go uncontrolled. For too long we have let forces build haphazardly that oppress the spirit, poison the body and imprison the soul. Ours will be a new commitment to the quality of life in America -- and crucial to this commitment is the quality of our environment as a place for man to live in.

As we seek to make these added dimensions of freedom real, and to meet the vast array of other problems confronting us, our reliance will not be on government alone.

✓ America's greatest resources are not those of government, but those of the people -- individually, and through business, unions, churches, voluntary organizations. Many of these already are in the vanguard of social advance, and others stand ready, waiting only the call.

✓ Only by enlisting these resources can we say that America itself is fully committed. But with these enlisted, there is no task confronting us that we cannot master.

The discords in our own society mirror discords in the world -- and yet as distances shrink, as weapons multiply in both numbers and power, the need intensifies that we go "forward together" not only in fellowship here at home, but together with people everywhere. There is no longer room on this small planet for nations to live in angry isolation, or for the old rivalries that have made history a dismal chronicle of wars.

Forward together has to mean all together -- Americans, Europeans, Russians, Chinese -- the peoples of Latin America and Africa, of Asia and the Middle East -- together at last in a fraternity of man.

It will not be easy to fashion the cords that can bind us together, and in our lifetimes we may not fully succeed. But unless we begin -- unless we weave them strand by strand, patiently, persistently, cautious of the dangers but confident in the ultimate promise of man, we will have failed in the most sacred trust that rests on our generation.

Both here and abroad, the tasks we face are immense. But they should stimulate, not frighten, us; they represent those peaks to be scaled that can give us a mountaintop experience.

No people on earth has ever had so great an array of resources to meet its challenges with -- not only in terms of material wealth, but more importantly in our vast treasury

of trained intelligence, tested experience and aroused conscience. Conscience, concern -- these are deeply rooted in our heritage, products of that basic human goodness that has inspired America's idealism ever since first we came together as a people. This has been our strength, and it will be our salvation.

I don't promise miracles. I do promise effort -- and I pledge that effort to the cause of justice, and decency, and freedom, to the end that we in America can be true to our destiny, true to our trust and true to ourselves.

To those who would stop time in its tracks, I offer disagreement. To those who seek sanction for acts of revolution, I offer discouragement. To those who seek orderly progress, who seek to restore domestic tranquility, to promote justice under law and to make the world safe for decency -- to you, I offer my hand and I ask for yours.

As we stand on the threshold of this final third of the twentieth century, the years that open ahead promise to be the most exciting, and the most humanly fulfilling, in all man's history. The cup history offers us is not the cup of despair, but the chalice of opportunity. So let us sieze it, not in fear, but in gladness -- and go forward together, firm in our faith, steadfast in our purpose, clear in our conscience -- and confident that we at last can learn to be "riders on the earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold -- brothers who know now they are truly brothers."

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