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I congratulate you on the theme of this Conference - "The Decade Ahead" -- and I am grateful for the opportunity to express to you some of my views on that most interesting period. At the same time I cannot help recalling a presidential candidate, some years ago, who staunchly proclaimed his conviction that "the future lies before us". His opponents assailed him, accusing him of having once again presented a partial and distorted picture. He had to admit, in the end, that the present is with us and the past lies behind us.

Today I shall try to say something of the future. But I shall also say something of the present -- where we are -- the past -- how we got here.

The next ten years will surely be a time fraught with danger and, simultaneously, a time rich with potentialities of great achievements. What can we do not merely to live through it, but to break through its dangers?

The basic content of the decade will be the threat, the persistent possibility of atomic destruction. It is a threat which covers the world like a tent always in danger of collapse. We have come to harness the atom; it is not yet clear that we shall be able also to harness the wild horses and stupid oxen of our political immaturity to its peaceful use. In another ten years the young adults of that time will be persons who have been born and bred to the nuclear age, who will never have gone to bed at night without the possibility that their home, their city, their country, their world, might not exist the next morning. I fervently hope that mankind will unwaveringly seek a break-through
from this horrible reality rather than "adjust" itself to it. We shall probably also see a continuation of international tensions. While some diminution in the "cold war" appears possible, the world situation as a whole will be far from stable, far from static. Tension, however, may disappear somewhat faster than I have just stated, if universal, scientific and technological developments can at last succeed in making the absurdity of political hostility more apparent than seems possible today. A recognition that technological means of abolishing scarcity can do more towards that end than political systems of managing it seems to be on the agenda of the future. And there are some indications in the Eisenhower-Khrushchev talks that the future, in that respect, may not be too far beyond the decade that is your theme.

A major and continuing development will be the ever strong efforts of subdued peoples everywhere to throw off the political yoke of colonialism and the economic yoke of under-development. In this struggle, the United States will be faced with urgent tasks in her position as world leader, with increasing demands for flexibility and for ability to appraise the course of events realistically and to participate in them in such a way as to further the political and economic freedom of peoples throughout the world -- not, however, in a mesianic or indoctrinating role, but as free people, showing what freedom can do, including the freedom of other peoples to be different.

There is still a tragic feeling of difference between peoples of different colors; and the majority of the new developing nations
of today and tomorrow consist of what are known as colored people. Understandably, they see in the arrogance of so-called white supremacy their greatest barrier. For, as long as this exists they know that they cannot reach, in a full, unhampered way, their goal, which is freedom, dignity and equality in all their manifestations.

We in the Western World have played a prominent role in giving birth to the desire for freedom in the field of politics as well as that of economics. In Puerto Rico we have made a constantly deepening contribution to the sense of human equality beyond any consideration of race or color.

The very achievements of the advanced industrial countries, politically and economically, their genius for perfecting the system of mass communications through which people everywhere have been told that freedom from domination is possible, that freedom from hunger is possible, that it is possible to walk with dignity and nourishment, and that this is better than to walk in dignity and hunger -- these facts have made four fifths of mankind aware that their poverty exists in the midst of plenty; or perhaps, that the plenty of the other one fifth exists in the midst of their poverty.

They have been told of the modern methods of production and of how they can live if they make wise use of these methods. In communicating this message we of the Western world (specially the United States, but not excluding Japan in the East) have destroyed the historical basis of colonialism, which relied in the backwardness of the great masses and on the acceptance of a two-level world society.
Mankind has been aided by the United States in its efforts to organize blocs of solidarity -- not merely against the negative aspects of their past (of slavery and suppression) but also in favor of positive, realistic goals for self-improvement. The fight against the barriers to progress, the fight for the improvement of conditions of life for the living and their children, and their children's children, gives focus for new loyalties, for identification with each other and with the group as a whole; such loyalties give strength and create the will to be united in action. The movement towards African union, the progress towards Central American union and towards Latin American union itself, are manifestations of this trend.

The West, or part of the West, living in plenty -- certainly in comparison with the rest of the world -- is challenged to re-evaluate its values and goals in order to find new points of union and identification as bases for renewed strength, in order to accomplish in cultural and spiritual development what has been accomplished in the areas of economic living. There is no need for the United States, or for the West as a whole, to give up its position of leadership, although it may be wise increasingly to share it.

The degree of wisdom which motivates and directs the participation of the developed nations in the world struggle will of course be of the utmost significance. The road from under-development to an increased sharing of the world's resources and production is not an easy one: increases in the material standards
often produce, as we know, most difficult social problems and spiritual perplexities. And hand in hand with the decline of colonialism we find the rise of nationalism -- to my mind the most energetic obsolescence that struts the world stage today. The question which the United States faces today is essentially simple, much simpler than the manner of answering it: can the American genius, with its strong temptation to isolationism, be adapted to participate fully in the world's drive for bread, liberty and dignity?

In the United States itself swift changes are occurring. Prosperity has not yet become a plateau. Americans know and enjoy freedom of mobility as do no other people in the world. I need not tell this audience the problems that this creates, specially for metropolitan urban complexes, wherever they exist. Within the last twenty years, in the mainland, millions of people who could afford it have moved out of the core city into outer suburbs; business followed these economically prosperous people, so as not to lose the clientele of these migrants to the suburbs. Finally, specially within the last five years, industry followed this move, locating plants and offices in the outer areas of the cities. Part of the people work in the city but live in the suburbs. But the people who cannot, because of limited means, or because of color prejudice against them, move into suburban communities, must travel every day to their working places in the suburbs. With regard to the industrial mobility, I should
mention here that the industry which has found its way to Puerto Rico, although of great importance to us, is an insignificant minority -- and will continue to be, even at the height of its projected development for 1975.

Basic to a well functioning community is its stability leading to an intimate relationship between the individual resident and his community or neighborhood; that relationship is in danger of being limited -- and even eliminated -- by constant changes and exchanges of community.

In consequence of the prolonged life span and the successful dealing with infant mortality, population is growing all over the world. Automation results in greater productivity per man hour. It liberates man from many kinds of manual labor faster and better done by machines; education for the creative use of leisure time is one of the pressing needs.

Most of all, -- so it seems to me -- planning ahead, before crisis occurs, must be the slogan of today and tomorrow. Proper planning in New York City twenty years ago would have provided much better conditions today for the masses of migrants from all parts of the country which it needs to run itself - and therefore much better social conditions for the whole vast community.

A start was made recently to apply the principles and methods of planning, to search for ways out of the chaos of our communities; we cannot but extend these principles and methods to become part of our thinking and practices with regard to every part of the United States and even to international developments. Planning
means more than the creation and improvement of facilities where they are most needed and may serve their purposes most effectively; its focus must be people, its aim to lead to conditions for meaning-ful living wherever there are people. Such planning also of human relationships will lead to a new coherence of the family as well as identification with it and other social units such as the com-munity, it can thus counter-act the feeling of so many of our youth almost everywhere -- and not only the few who come in contact with law enforcement agencies -- that they live an un-related life, not belonging, really, anywhere.

These, it seems, are the major elements that are to inhabit the decade we are thinking about: the reality of nuclear ennergy; the end of colonialism; the rising aspirations of people every-where; the need to close the economic gap, the social consequences of economic growth; a growing sense of group-identification with a great potentiality for development or destruction.

Against this macrocosm, let me now turn to a microcosm: a small island where obsolescent nationalistic attitudes have been by-passed; where colonialism came peacefully to an end seven years ago, and where the struggle to abolish scarcity and poverty is proceeding more rapidly than in most other places.

I do not turn to Puerto Rico because it should necessarily be considered a model for any other country, but because the past and continuing processes of our development have surmounted and still face barriers common to historically underdeveloped areas
in the mid-twentieth century; because, also, our immediate past is the present for many countries, and the immediate future for others.

While all we have done and are doing has been directed to meet the specific and particular problems of Puerto Rico, we have in this process learned, or perhaps it would be better to say re-learned, some lessons which are no doubt applicable everywhere. We have learned that man's creative genius can and must be used not only to solve scientific and technological problems, but socio-economic and political ones too. We have learned not to permit ourselves to be shackled by the "either-or" approach for there are as many ways to resolve a problem as man's genius can create. We have learned not to become frightened by new social or political ideas; not to mistake means for ends and to keep our ends very much in mind as we create our means, lest our means become our master and not our creature. We have learned to respect the values of the past, modifying them where necessary, discarding those which can no longer serve us, and to create new ones where needed, for the destiny of the living must not forever be determined by the dead. We have also come to realize that values that are good for others are not necessarily good for us; that difference means only another way—not a better or worse one.

In short, we have relearned the wisdom of the old folk-saying, "there's more than one way to skin a cat." This lesson, we are convinced, must be relearned by all who have forgotten it, even
as we, in Puerto Rico, had to relearn it, if we, in the world, are to meet the challenge of the decade ahead.

Like so many others, our political history was a colonial one; four centuries under Spanish rule; a half century as a possession of the United States.

And our economic history was one of poverty.

Puerto Rico had developed what was substantially a one-crop economy. We found ourselves almost wholly dependent on sugar cane, with few other significant crops and with no industry to speak of other than hand needlework done in the home. Wages and productivity were low, unemployment high. Modern manufacturing methods were not in evidence.

The year 1940 marked the beginning of our breakthrough on both the economic and political fronts.

For many years before 1940, our political struggle centered on the ideas of independence and statehood. This dichotomy could hardly have been more unrealistic. The Puerto Rican economy could not withstand, without a tragic collapse, either the economic and fiscal conditions of independence or the fiscal conditions and uniform federal legislation involved in statehood. Both abstractions -- statehood and independence -- were inimical to the solution of our many other problems. But the premise was that aside from either of these "solutions", there was only the indignity of colonialism. Would you choose to eat your bread in shame or proclaim your dignity in hunger?
Was it necessary fatalistically to accept either? Why not find another answer -- create one -- one in which we could eat our bread in the dignity of freedom.

It was in this spirit that in 1940 the Popular Democratic Party, with which I am associated, began its work. It began by declaring that, so far as it was concerned, political status would not be an issue until substantial economic and social programs had been set in motion. This turned out to be a profoundly realistic method. Energy was concentrated on industrial expansion, agricultural modernization, and educational development — all these in terms of social responsibility and justice. This is the program which has come to be known as Operation Bootstrap.

The creative energy released for the economic drive began to work on the political side too, culminating, on July 25, 1952, in the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Commonwealth provides for self-government in Puerto Rico, while traditional ties with the United States are maintained. It is based, not upon a unilateral grant of authority by the United States, but on a compact entered into voluntarily between the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress representing the people of the United States. The structure and functioning of the Commonwealth are delineated in the Constitution of the Commonwealth drafted by our Constitutional Convention and approved by the Congress and by the Puerto Rican voters.

What is the measure of our progress?
Much of the evidence is around us. This very hotel, the jobs it provides. The many factories which you can see throughout the island. The new office buildings, modest homes, public housing projects. The schools, the Universities, the hospitals. Electric power plants, oil refineries, a center for exploring the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Statistically, the picture is this: Over 550 new factories have been established, directly creating 40,000 new jobs, and about the same number indirectly. Productivity has more than doubled. Net income has quadrupled (in terms of 1940 dollars, more than doubled.) Per capita income has risen to the second highest in Latin America.

Life expectancy has increased to 68 years, approximating that on the mainland. The death rate is down to seven per 1,000 population, lower than the United States average. School enrollment has more than doubled, and we now have 85 per cent of our children accommodated in schools (practically 100 per cent so far as primary schools are concerned); in 1940, it was only 51 per cent. Literacy has reached 87 per cent, reversing the situation which existed in 1898.

These achievements have not been easy ones, and the long, uphill struggle continues. Still with us are two major problems; over-population and an almost complete lack of natural resources.

Nor can a large host of outside factors be controlled. Our hand needlework industry, for example, has declined partly as a result of the movement of workers into new, more productive and
higher paying factory jobs, which is highly desirable, but at the same time it has declined partly because of competition from other parts of the world. Other changes affect us, too.

With respect to population, rising educational and economic levels are usually correlated with a decreasing birth rate, but the immediate effect, following the rapid introduction of modern public health programs -- and one which we have experienced -- is a much more rapid decline in the death rate than in the birth rate, which means increasing population pressures.

These are among the crucial problems that almost every developing country will face during the next decade.

The population of the world has grown by one-third in only the past thirty years; in the next fifty or less it is expected to double. This growth will be further complicated by the rapid movement of persons from rural to urban areas as industrial opportunities are created, and from one urban area to another as employment patterns change.

These problems are not confined to the underdeveloped areas, although they will tend to be more pronounced there. Even in the highly developed United States, for example, five million Americans move from one state to another every year primarily in response to better job opportunities in the area. This is, of course, the same motivation that prompts the migration of persons from Puerto Rico to the United States mainland, who constitute something less than one per cent of the total interstate migration.
It is shown clearly by the fact that migration rises and falls with corresponding changes in employment patterns in the States. When the need for workers expands, as it does during times of prosperity, migration rises. During recessions, it falls. To the data which has already been analyzed on the Puerto Rican migration since 1908, there has recently been added a new analysis by the New York City government, concluding, similarly, that migration "fluctuates widely depending on the conditions of the labor market." It is not only that the migrant seeks the job, but that the job seeks the migrant.

I said earlier that the Western world had succeeded in raising the level of aspiration of mankind. This does not apply only to far-off corners of the earth. It also applies to the Southern sharecropper, to the miner in the worked-out hills of West Virginia or Kentucky, to the New Engander in a depressed mill town. It applies, too, to the Puerto Ricans who move to the industrial centers of the mainland, for these are most often persons whose horizons have been widened by the progress we have made here, who have risen in their jobs, who now seek more opportunities than we can yet provide. They have been called, appropriately, "mid-century pioneers." But I would not limit this designation to Puerto Ricans; it should properly be applied to all industrious and ambitious people who seek a better life.

The implications of a better life, -- the good life -- go far beyond the fulfillment of material needs, though this is a
requisite of it. Similarly, industrial development has profound implications not only for economic change but for social and cultural change, as well.

Cultural change would occur even if industrialization meant nothing more than a change from working in the field according to the sun, to working in a factory according to a clock; a change from the rhythm of nature to the rhythm of the production line. But it means much more. It frequently includes movement from the openness of the country to the crowdedness of the city; from singing in the hills to singing beneath a neighbor's window; from calling to a friend across the fields to calling to a friend across a crowded bus at rush hour. It means that while six strong children may be a valuable asset to a farmer, they become an inevitable problem to a city worker.

In broadest perspective, industrialization, development, change, progress, means, or has historically seemed to mean, exchanging something of the quality of being -- of joy of life, of an acceptance of nature, of a feeling of awareness of being alive -- for the quality of becoming -- of urgent activity directed toward the achievement of goals, be they money, material wants, education for future achievement.

Both qualities have their positive and their negative aspects; both are necessary components of life. Yet it is easy to see the extremes. On the one hand, the man who sits all day, every day, in the sun with no thought of the morrow; on the other, the man
who strives with feverish urgency for a car with six tail-lights instead of four.

This is more than an individual problem. In the developed countries, it seems almost a natural outgrowth of their very development. For it is the emphasis on becoming that has led to the technological advances that are reducing working hours, that are providing more leisure. And leisure, by its very essence, demands a sense of being for its enjoyment. It is well to ask ourselves: At what point in "becoming" do the economics of consumption cease to have validity and the economics of freedom, of learning, of depth in living, take precedence?

We are aware of these considerations in Puerto Rico, and we are attempting to proceed on the basis that industrialization is for the people, not the people for industrialization; that education is also for the enrichment of life, not only a preparation for making a living. These are aspects of what I have called Operation Serenity. A society in which Operation Serenity was successful would use its growing economic power, not for a rapid multiplication of wants, but, increasingly for the extension of freedom, of knowledge, of the understanding imagination.

To you who are in the field of inter-group relations, the decade ahead will bring new complexities and increase manyfold the ones you now face. You will have to bridge the distance between what is, and what could be; what is possibility and what must be actuality.
In our Commonwealth government we have a saying that the purpose of a great political movement is to create hope and then to convert hope into history. This need not, and indeed cannot, be limited to political movements.

Therefore, let me congratulate you for the topic you choose as your theme for this your thirteenth annual convention and for the good judgement you showed in selecting San Juan as the location of your deliberations.

October 13, 1959.