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OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY
TO MRS. JOHNSON

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON AT THE
OPENING OF HEMISFAIR - SAN ANTONIO

My Friends:

The President asked me to bring you his greetings this morning. He would like to be standing here today -- but the search for healing in our own America and for peace in the world are his first business. No one is seeking that peace and that calm for a troubled nation more than he is.

I have talked to the President and he has asked me to keep the commitments I have made which were undertaken -- to, perhaps in some small way, to contribute to better understanding between peoples. That is what this ceremony is all about.

With the calm and prayerful work of all of us, we will mend our wounds and move ahead. So let us not set the fires of hatred but quench them.

Two years ago, I visited the site of HemisFair. I have a vivid memory of the quaint old German-English school -- a fountain, harmonious landscaping, and a lovely terrace. Now that good taste is evident everywhere here. This is truly a place of life and beauty..... all 92 acres of HemisFair.

What impresses me most about this place is not its size, but its warm, human scale. Hemis Fair is like a small town: intimate, lively and exciting; clearly a place for people.

But there is also something great and spacious in this spot, with its noble theme: a sense that Man, for all his differences and disagreements, has a great capacity for unity and cooperation.

The theme of HemisFair -- "The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas" -- reminds us that we are living in a great age of variety and excitement. What we have become, we owe to dozens of different peoples many different cultures.

Texas is as much a "melting pot" as any place I know. Our history is rich with the contributions of the English, Spaniards, Negroes, Germans, French, Czechs, Poles, and many others.

All our similarities and differences of language and culture and custom -- have flowed along separate courses like rivers from a common lake of humanity.

The marvel and challenge of this place is that here we can see those rivers of man converging.

We live at a spectacular moment of testing. And we are faced with some spectacular, world-wide questions:

-- Can all the rivers of man converge without conflict?

-- Can men share the earth in harmony?

-- Can there be, in short, a golden age of peace?

-- Can our separate heritages be preserved as we move closer together? or must the rivers of man rush together in a confusing, muddy cataract?

Civilized people must answer these in a civilized way.

Let everyone of us look into our hearts and weigh every word and act to heal, not cripple, this America of ours.

In San Antonio, diverse people of diverse backgrounds live together in reasonable harmony.

In San Antonio and throughout the American Southland, ancient barriers between black and white have been falling. They are falling despite cruelly tragic setbacks -- sometimes swiftly, sometimes slowly -- but I believe surely.

And in these troubled tragic hours, we need to remember that we are moving forward. This land is our land. It belongs to all of us. It is ours -- to rend apart -- or to work for -- and to keep strong.

In this old and charming city, citizens live as neighbors -- though their religions may differ, their family trees may differ, their complexions may differ.

And here at HemisFair, the old and the new meet as friends. The architecture of earlier centuries stands, lovingly preserved, beside the stunning architecture of the twentieth century. In San Antonio, one building may suggest old Spain or Mexico, another, America's Victorian heyday.

Here, the cultures of North and South America converge -- and the result is not a clash, but a concord. The outcome, in human and architectural terms, is a warm, surprising and delightful harmony.

I hope that lesson of harmony is carried away by nearly eight million visitors to San Antonio and HemisFair this year.

I hope that essential lesson will be carried from this place to a thousand other places, in the United States, in Europe, in Latin America, in Canada.

A celebration like this can be a great instrument of understanding. Last year, my visit to EXPO was also my discovery of Canada. I came away feeling that I knew our neighbor -- not as an area on the map, but as a great, vibrant nation. I hope HemisFair's visitors will gain the same sense of discovery of our part of the United States.

Several events of this year are symbols of our progress:

- HemisFair, which we launch today;
- Pan-American Day, eight days from today;
- The 1968 Olympics in Mexico City -- not only an athletic, but a cultural celebration.

The future of our hemisphere will be forged, not only in treaties, but in human relationships; in classrooms, in the patient work of private citizens and Peace Corps volunteers; in thousands of chance and friendly meetings between the people of our countries; in places and events like this one: HemisFair, 1968.

But this is far more than a small town. Here, on the banks of the San Antonio River, the separate streams of mankind flow into a city; a city of hope; a city of progress; a city of cooperation.

The rivers of man are many: They are converging today with startling and confusing speed. At this spectacular moment in history, we dedicate this place to the confluence of civilizations.

As we open HemisFair, let us pledge ourselves, our wealth and our talent to making that great confluence creative -- and peaceful.

It's my great pleasure to declare that HemisFair 1968 is officially open! May millions find, in this lovely spot, knowledge, inspiration, and enjoyment.

Thank you.

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