

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 18, 1975

Office of the Vice President
(Washington, D. C.)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT NATIONAL MEDAL OF SCIENCE LUNCHEON
ADAMS AND JEFFERSON ROOM
STATE DEPARTMENT

(AT 1:18 P.M. EDT)

I want to apologize for imposing on you before lunch instead of after lunch. In either case it would be difficult.

(Laughter.)

But I appreciate your letting me say a few words now because, as those of you who work in this town know, it is a complicated community and, if you want to keep up, much less stay ahead of the game, you have got to work quite hard. So I am in that happy position of trying to be useful to the President as a staff assistant.

(Laughter.)

In whatever capacity, I have to keep going. So I would like to just say what an honor it is for me to be here and what a thrill it is to feel the atmosphere that exists in this gathering and to say how much it has meant to me to have the opportunity of working with the President, or for the President in helping to re-establish the position of Science Advisor and Office of Science Advisor to the President, and how grateful I am to so many of you in this room in helping to bring this about.

The legislation has now passed both Houses. It is in conference, and out of it will come whatever comes.

(Laughter.)

Whatever comes, it will be acceptable to the President because he wants to get on with the work and get going. He is tremendously excited about it and I know feels as strongly as anybody here that at this moment in history, that this area of science and technology has got to be the most important for our country in its role in meeting its own problems at home and playing a constructive, creative role in the world and achieving the objective of peace for all mankind. Therefore, he feels that this has the highest possible priority.

Jim Cannon is here who is the Director of the Domestic Council and Special Assistant to the President. I am working with Jim as one of my staff assignments, and we look forward very much to integrating the scientific input, in terms of division and the realizations as to what the great potentials for the future are, integrating those into the economic and social thinking and planning of government.

I think that we have lost a little time in the last few years, but I feel very strongly that this whole

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atmosphere has changed, that we are all back together, and that it can be tremendously beneficial to the people of this country as well as to the world as a whole. So I say that informally just because I am inspired by the friendly atmosphere of this meeting.

Now if I may say a few more formal words, if you will bear with me. Luckily you have had a drink so that will hold you for a minute.

(Laughter.)

If anyone wants to eat their soup or drink it, whichever it is -- I can't see that from here -- I wish you would go ahead, because I am used to talking over audiences that are actively engaged in other activities. That is no impediment to me as a politician.

(Laughter.)

So please don't let your scientific courtesy inhibit you.

(Laughter.)

We have long honored our heroes from the field of battle and the field of sport, but today, fittingly, America honors outstanding heroes in the field of science and engineering. I think the fact the President himself personally made these awards is an indication of his feeling.

I would like to say what a pleasure it is that 19 of the 90 who have already received awards are back today. This all illustrates to me the feeling and sentiment that exists.

The National Medal of Science was established by the Congress in 1959. It confirms officially what has been true historically in America, that as a Nation and as a people, we have a deep respect for science and the scientific mind.

The Constitution gave Congress the power to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts." Our early leaders -- Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and Madison -- were all interested in science. They particularly appreciated the need to protect and reward scientists and inventors through the patent laws.

As a young Nation, we supported exploration, established coastal and geological surveys, and conducted a census.

The establishment of land grant colleges and the Agricultural Extension Service a century ago have been among our most rewarding investments in research and its practical application.

I think we are seeing the harvest that is being reaped, literally, in this country as we move into this period. I was talking to some before lunch about the problem of population growth. Here is a Nation which has

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developed both scientific and managerial and technical skills to produce in the most extraordinarily efficient capacity and manner.

Yet, it was not until after World War II that Federal support of scientific research came to be considered a national policy.

In a special message to the Congress in 1945, President Truman stated: "No government adequately meets its responsibilities unless it generously and intelligently supports and encourages the work of science in the university, industry, and in its own laboratories."

That was really a turning point, that statement of President Truman's and that position of his. His charge to the Congress led eventually to establishment of the National Science Foundation and to broad Federal support for scientific research and science education.

Today, our support of research through the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, the new Energy Research and Development Administration, and other Government agencies, is strong, resilient, and responsive.

The brilliant leaders of those institutions are here present today. I would like to express my respect and admiration to them and all of them who are associated with them.

The latest supportive development is President Ford's proposal to establish an Office of Science and Technology Policy in the White House. I was delighted last spring when the President asked me to study this question and make a recommendation as to the value of such an office.

Both in terms of past experience and current need, the case was clear for a science advisor at the highest level of government. There is widespread bipartisan support for the President's proposal. And we are looking forward to favorable Congressional action.

As a matter of fact, I might say parenthetically, when the President called down the leaders to say that he was sending up a message and outlined it and the leaders suggested that seeing as I had been working on it, I might come up and testify, some question was raised by White House officials as to whether it was appropriate for a Vice President to testify on the Hill. The President said, "Of course he will come up."

I went, and Senator Kennedy, whose committee I testified before first, said that he wanted to note that this was the first time in the history of the United States that the Vice President ever testified before a committee. And it was in the interest of science.

(Applause.)

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I might say they were very cordial meetings in both Houses and that there is now really not only bipartisan support here but even more importantly these days an Executive-Legislative community of interest and effort which seems to have superseded bipartisanship as the problem.

(Laughter.)

That is an aside, not official. Excuse me.

The government's organizational support of science has been matched by financial support as well, although I know that many feel it is inadequate. That is my parenthetical remark.

The Federal funding for civilian research and development will rise in the coming year to \$7.3 billion, an increase of 12 percent over our fiscal 1975 program.

From 1969 to 1975, research and development in energy has grown at an average annual rate of more than 21 percent.

Environmental research support has grown at a rate of 17 percent.

The Administration is also continuing to increase support of basic research, upon which all of the scientific and technological developments depend.

In 1976, funding of basic research will increase by 11 percent. This doesn't make any comment about inflation, but that is something I just think of myself.

(Laughter.)

Excuse my comments about this speech.

(Applause.)

In this period when the number one concern of the American people is the economy, I cannot stress too strongly the value of science to American industry. Industry needs the stimulation of scientific discovery and technological innovation. Industry needs new products and improved productivity. Industry needs new means of meeting competition from abroad. And industry needs new ways of providing us here at home with an improved quality of life for more of our people. I might even say all our people.

Advances in American science and technology can also have a major influence on progress in the developing nations. We have provided generously from our store of knowledge in the past. We will continue to do so in the future.

While we must continue to pursue the sciences that will improve our health, our environment and our economy, we must not overlook the social and behavioral

sciences that teach us about ourselves and our institutions. I must say I agree very strongly with that paragraph.

(Laughter and Applause.)

This is a very friendly meeting.

Finally, we have to support and develop improved science and education to assure a continuing flow of new talent into the world of science, and to prepare a citizenry which is scientifically literate in a world so dependent on science.

But the best case for supporting science is to be found in the contributions of the people we are honoring today. These Medal of Science winners are an inspiration to all of us and to the young people of the country who aspire to scientific careers, to those of us in government who seek continuing support for science, and to the people of America and the world whose lives are made better by science.

We are grateful to all of you who have won these awards. We are privileged to join in honoring you.

I thank you very much. Best of luck. Thank you.

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(AT 1:36 P.M. EDT)