

The New York Times  
Times Square

ORVIL E. DRYFOOS  
PRESIDENT

May 20, 1958

To Americans of 2008:

In May 1958 the democratic systems of the world face the most powerful challenge to the very premise of their existence since they arose in the 18th century.

By May 2008, the challenge will have been resolved and the answers we so earnestly seek today will have been written in the pages of history.

What will the outcome be?

Barring the unthinkable war of mutual extermination, the democracies can and will prevail if --

If they can demonstrate that the resolution and inner conviction of free men can match the arbitrary will of dictators.

If they can preserve undiminished at home the principles of law and individual rights and stir the imagination of the uncommitted nations abroad by a way of life based on peace and liberty.

If they can effectively share their great resources and productive power with the poverty-stricken masses of the world and help lift them to levels of dignity and decency.

If their actions are based on sound knowledge, on universal academic freedom and freedom of the press -- which is all-important to the democratic process.

If they enjoy vigorous, clear-headed, unifying leadership.

This is written on May 20, 1958, in the confident expectation that these large requirements for victory will be fulfilled and that the cornerstone of the new building of the University of Chicago will be opened on May 28, 2008, in a world in which peace, freedom and decency prevail.

Faithfully yours,

*Orvil E. Dryfoos*