

REAPPRAISAL URGED OF U.S. APPROACH TO GROWING INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS

(Excerpts from Address by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey,  
(D., Minn.), Member Senate Foreign Relations Committee,  
before Los Angeles World Affairs Council, Biltmore Ballroom,  
Thursday noon, September 19, 1957)

Growing world unrest and tension calls for a "total reappraisal" of the United States' approach to international affairs.

At the very outset, we need a good hard look at our own representation abroad.

Too much is at stake to risk our future with honorable but totally unskilled and incapable Ambassadors appointed for social prestige as a political reward, or even with career foreign service personnel more concerned with social niceties than with a dedicated zeal as missionaries of peace and freedom.

Our country's embassies in trouble spots of the world are really general staff headquarters in a struggle for survival, and they must be commanded by men sensitive to the political and economic forces at work in the area in which they are called upon to serve. They must be men and women conscious of the vital importance of aligning our country with the aspirations of the people themselves, rather than just maintaining good relations with any particular ruler or ruling clique. We need to mobilize and make better use of the brainpower, judgment, experience, and understanding of dedicated Americans trained in international affairs to man our outposts in critical areas of the world.

We need more emphasis on development of "regional specialists" in international affairs, and more of a "regional approach" to seeking solutions of complex problems through frequent regional conferences of American diplomatic missions abroad.

But building better international relations involves more than just action by our government alone.

There's an essential role for American business to play, as well as our country's great voluntary agencies and individual citizens themselves.

American businessmen, news correspondents, representatives of voluntary humanitarian and religious organizations, and educators frequently have more contacts with private foreign citizens - and sometimes with governmental officials - than do our official representatives. Each of these people-to-people contacts contributes to the total impression which the United States makes abroad. There ought to be closer cooperation between American businessmen abroad and our diplomats.

We need to recognize that the current contest in the world is being waged for future alignment of great undeveloped areas, and the outcome may hinge more on economic and trade policies than on military alignments.

There will be no peace achieved with the Soviet Union until it realizes it can no longer win over the peoples of Asia and Africa.

As a consequence, our foreign policy must be geared to strengthening the political and social institutions of such underdeveloped areas, and encouraging and guiding their own economic development and progress. But it must be more than "paper" economic development, or even "bankroll" influence wielded arrogantly by our government - it must be soundly-based industrial and agricultural development recognizable to the people of the area concerned, with convincing evidence that our interest is in the well-being of the people themselves, rather than in material advantage for ourselves.

Here is an area where we can challenge the Soviet and win. Here is an area where we can best portray America's vision and enterprise and "know-how" - and America's concern for social justice for all people. We're not a military people - and we're not acting ourselves when we rely on rattling sabres in a jittery world. By character, emotion, and experience, we're better prepared to lead toward progress, than to plan toward destruction.

We urgently need a comprehensive foreign economic policy designed toward fulfillment of such objectives - and then we need to mobilize the forces of American business, American labor, and Americans generally to work hand-in-hand with our government to implement that policy.

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We're fighting a totally mobilized enemy, and we can't succeed by relying on government alone and failing to make the utmost use of our great resources of private enterprise, private initiative, private humanitarian concern for fellow human beings.

There is an urgent role for American business investment in foreign economic development, and it is our job to find ways to make it more effective. American business enjoys a deservedly good reputation abroad. Its use of modern capital, investment, management, and know-how is combined with social values developed on the American scene to tell a better story of America's spirit than can ever be achieved by military bases or guided missiles, however necessary they may be.

Our State Department should take a keen interest in the American businessman abroad if we really want to promote private investment. The businessman himself ought to be consulted for his views on how investment possibilities might be improved. America's business community itself must be encouraged to explore the private role it can occupy in building better foreign relations, and must bring its own influence to bear toward formulation of sounder foreign economic policies by our government.

America's organized labor movement must be encouraged to exert its leadership and influence toward supporting establishment of free labor movements in other areas of the world, rather than communist-dominated labor movements.

We need greater recognition of the tremendous potential for good we possess in our abundance of food and fiber, if it is wisely utilized for the good of humanity in the world. And we must encourage expansion of the people-to-people sharing through our great voluntary agencies sponsored by our churches and CARE, rather than relying entirely on government-to-government dealings in food and other necessities of life.

We must build reservoirs of good will with the peoples of vast areas of the world now vulnerable targets of communist infiltration, rather than putting all our chips on leaders themselves, however friendly they may currently be. Leaders and governments come and go, but bonds built between the hearts and minds of people survive far beyond temporary shifting and swaying of local political tides.

We need a full reappraisal of our commitments abroad. Our commitments around the world have grown like Topsy, with too little self-examination of our ability to fulfill them.

We need to carefully evaluate the extent of our commitments, to make sure we are able to support them economically and militarily. It is little use to negotiate pacts and agreements, if we are not prepared as a people to back up our words with deeds if it becomes necessary.

Turning from the general scene of international relations to the specific problems of one "trouble area", let me suggest four recommendations toward easing the explosive tensions of the Middle East. They include:

1. Leadership in the United Nations toward an outright ban on arms shipments into the Middle East.
2. Creation of a UN Good Offices Commission, comprised of leading citizens of the world, with a mandate to seek both territorial and political settlements between the Arab states themselves, and between the Arab states and Israel.
3. Making permanent an expanded UN Security Force for the Middle East, and other trouble zones that might develop.
4. Creation of a Middle East Development Agency, composed of the states in the region and other states contributing to the Agency's capital, as a catalytic agent which might precipitate solutions for many of the most vexing problems of the region by encouraging a regional approach to developmental projects.

Let me expand on that four-point program.

Shipment of arms into the Middle East may well aggravate existing tensions,

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It may just lead to the explosion we are seeking to avoid.

In rushing arms to Jordan, we are once again merely reacting blindly to Soviet actions rather than projecting any real solution of our own.

The Soviet gains by keeping alive tensions and unrest. They know they can provoke conflicts and tensions, as long as we continue to react as we have to every move they make. They want trouble in the Middle East as an excuse for digging further into that area, and we seem determined to help them draw tighter the lines of conflict instead of asserting our leadership toward avoiding conflict.

Here, if anywhere, is an opportunity to try a limited disarmament move. The Middle East lends itself to both aerial and ground inspection. If negotiations for total disarmament appear deadlocked, let us at least assert our leadership in the United Nations toward negotiating a UN-enforced total arms shipment ban into troubled areas of the Middle East.

A valuable role could be filled by a "UN Good Offices Commission", designed to seek boundary and political settlements in the area. We cannot solve complex problems of the Middle East alone; we are just risking further disrepute as international busybodies trying to tell everyone else what they should do.

Neither can we just dump problems on the UN, and not face up to our own responsibility as a world leader. Instead, we must use the UN as a vehicle to seek solutions by asserting our own leadership within the UN, and seeking to mobilize support of other nations for united action.

Neither we nor the UN can force solutions unacceptable to the Middle East itself, but within the UN we can seek to enlist the cooperation of countries from the Middle East with countries from other areas of the world toward a more constructive approach than now exists.

In my opinion, the Middle East Development Agency I have proposed offers a tremendous opportunity. It should be organized within the framework of the United Nations, a specialized, regional economic program with multilateral participation for multilateral purposes.

Such a Development Agency could undertake projects itself, lend money to either private or public agencies, and participate in equity financing, in the manner of the International Finance Corporation. It could manage projects. It could carry on scientific research in such matters as soil fertility. It could make basic engineering surveys and contribute to the drawing up of over-all regional development plans. Furthermore, it could carry on long-term technical assistance.

Its advantages would be political and psychological as well as economic.

It would help divert the attention of certain Arab leaders from military adventures to internal economic development. Turning these energies into constructive channels would eventually lead to institutional and social changes, such as the growth of a middle class, which would have a beneficial and stabilizing influence.

It would provide a means of channeling Arab oil revenue into productive uses which would benefit the entire area, thus utilizing part of the presently existing hard money resources of the Middle East for the financing of regional development.

It would be an international entity with which the states of the area could carry on bilateral negotiations, and bilateral economic agreements.

It would work out a solution to the whole Palestine-Arab refugee problem. The only long-term solution for the refugees is basic economic development, which will make it possible for the area to support more people at a higher standard of living.

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It could encourage international acceptance of the Jordan River plan, and similar development projects involving more than one state. It could give technical assistance and supervised farm credit to farmers settling on new lands coming into production from the development of the Jordan, the Litani, the Trigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile.

Even a cursory look at the region's resources reveals the absolute economic interdependence of the states of the area, and the necessity of interregional cooperation.

The creation of a Middle East Development Agency along these suggested lines would emphasize the fact that it is in the interests of all concerned to move from intraregional feuding, to intraregional cooperation for development.

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