

From the office of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey,
Senate office Building 140
CA 4 - 3121 - x 2424

FOR RELEASE: Wednesday A.M.
October 8, 1958

"BROADEN THE FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE!" --- Senator Humphrey

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.) charged yesterday that the Republicans are "trying to disenfranchise the American voter on the most important single issue of the day -- the handling of our foreign policy!"

Addressing the convention of the International Chemical Workers Union in Washington, Senator Humphrey said, "The efforts of the Administration -- the President, the Vice President and others -- to stifle constructive suggestion like those of the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concerning our policy on Quemoy are extremely ill-advised."

"When Administration policies may lead us to the very brink of atomic war -- against the expressed will of our people and in the face of grave protests from our allies -- it is the plain duty of men in public life to take issue with those who are responsible," the Minnesota Senator said.

"We are only too familiar with the tactics of the Vice President; the "new Nixon" is running true to his old 1952 and 1956 form; but it is distressing to have the President himself charging that constructive criticism of his foreign policy gives aid and comfort to the Communists."

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM SENATOR HUMPHREY'S ADDRESS

SHOULD FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSION BE STILLED?

Would the President silence the inquiring, informative and analytical voice of the free press of this Republic? -- Many newspapers have questioned the wisdom of his policy.

Would the President purge the members of his own Party in the Congress? -- For many have quietly and soberly dissented.

Would the President hush the free world allies of the United States? -- For they, too, after sober reflection have expressed doubt, concern and worry over the self-righteous Brinkmanship of Dulles.

These attempts to stifle public discussion of the Quemoy crisis show a disregard, and even contempt, for the opinion of those who are not members of the White House palace guard.

Such political censorship can only lead to one conclusion: that Administration policies can't stand public examination!

An election campaign should be a time of serious discussion of the great issues -- not a time for smears, innuendos, and wild charges; indeed, an election period can be a time of education of our people on the critical problems that face us all: Instead, we are served up a fraudulent set of political scarecrows concocted by the Republican National Committee, as the issues the Republicans want us to discuss in the campaign.

It is time, for example, that the foreign policy discussion take a long step forward -- that it shift from the dramatic trouble spots like Lebanon and Quemoy and concern itself with the broader and deeper problems of which these unhappy areas are only symptoms.

The American people and the American Congress are keenly aware of the nature of the Communist threat. To intelligently debate and inquire into the wisdom of military and political policies designed to restrain Communist aggression is not appeasement. It is American democracy at work -- it is the way a free people arrive at decisions. It is the proven formula for achieving genuine unity with strength and purpose.

To even suggest that exercise of responsible discussion of foreign policy matters might be improper is a colossal assault on the historical foundations of this great democracy. To deliberately confuse such debate with national disunity is to insult the intelligence of our people and our traditions.

It was said long ago that war and peace are too important to be left only to the whim of the generals. In our time -- the age of potential thermonuclear holocaust -- when great cities and the lives of millions hang in the balance of national decision -- constructive discussion and inquiry seem the least that can be expected from our people.

(Humphrey Excerpts)

Let no potential aggressor confuse such discussion with disunity. And let no American President on the eve of a national election distort the reality of current events and the precious traditions of this Republic.

Real Problems of Foreign Policy

While the headlines are on Quemoy, let us not ignore the rest of the world: We need full public discussion and debate on the real problems of our day -- and there are many --

- Settlement in the Middle East has not been achieved although we are in the process of withdrawing our troops;
- The Cyprus issues divides our NATO allies;
- The political stability of American military bases around the world are ever more in issue;
- Tensions and conflict grow over fishing rights near Iceland;
- Economic and political tension in Latin and South America erodes hemisphere solidarity;
- Japan seeks a new treaty to replace the San Francisco agreement;
- NATO allies question the wisdom of nuclear missile bases on their territory;
- Bolivia feels the earthshaking impact of American trade decisions;
- The fiscal and economic stability of India reaches critical proportions;
- Traditional harmony with Canada becomes more uncertain;
- USIA continues to debate the best technique of carrying the American message throughout the world rather than vigorously exploiting the program;
- American persuasion in the United Nations is slowly but steadily dissipated;
- The challenge of the Soviets on the economic, scientific and propaganda fronts.

The Far East

The crisis over Quemoy symbolizes our incapacity to learn from past mistakes, our insistence on substituting myth for fact, and our stubborn unwillingness to change to better positions even when time and circumstance allow us to do so.

For the Quemoy crisis is a replay of an old record. Neither the plot nor the characters have changed since the spring of 1955. The trends were against us in the Formosa Straits in 1955 and they are against us now. This fact has been recognized all along by some of the antagonists involved; apparently it has not been recognized by others. Today, like the return circuit of an old playhouse drama, we have the same combatants locked in a military and diplomatic battle over islands which most of the rest of the world would otherwise ordinarily recognize as simply "offshore": in one corner we have Mao Tse-tung, Chou-En-lai, and Marshall Pen Teh-huai; in the other we have John Foster Dulles, Walter Robertson, and Chiang Kai-shek."

The events have come full circle, and we are back again precisely where we were. It is fair to ask what has this Administration done or tried to do in the intervening three years to rectify the situation.

What have we done to reach a broader area of agreement on a new position which would leave us less exposed, vulnerable, and isolated than the old? What

(Humphrey excerpts)

What have we done in these three intervening years to work out a new position acceptable to our allies and the uncommitted nations of Asia; a new position morally and militarily defensible, a new position which would avoid either appeasement or provocation?

The answer is that nothing has been done. We go from crisis to crisis unashamed and unprepared. Such an answer is intolerable and unacceptable to the American people.

A Program for the Formosa Straits

I do not know whether those whose rigidity and obstinacy have left us in this position are still capable of moving us out of it. If they are, then I respectfully offer these suggestions:

1. They should work energetically, both in the Warsaw negotiations and at the United Nations, for a certain and confirmed cease fire in the Formosa Straits.
2. They should work for a mutual Peking-Taipei agreement, implied or expressed, not to resort to further force to settle the Formosa issue.
3. The jurisdictional question of Quemoy and Matsu should be given to the World Court to decide.
4. The possibility of a future for Formosa as an independent nation under the umbrella of United Nations guarantees and protection should be thoroughly explored as assurance against possible Communist aggression or subversion.

Asian Consultation Imperative

In seeking this new ground, I would especially and earnestly beseech the nations of Asia, represented at the UN, to take the lead in working out a settlement of the Quemoy and Formosa questions. Just as the opposing Arab sides last August at the Special Assembly of the United Nations found themselves getting together as Arabs looking toward the welfare of their region as a whole, so I believe the Asians of varying views could together promote an honorable settlement in Quemoy and Formosa.

If representatives of Japan, India, the Phillipines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma and Thailand, Viet Nam, Ceylon, Laos, Cambodia and Malaya would, despite their differences, meet and discuss the Quemoy-Formosa issue, I am confident that progress could be expedited at the UN. I urge these governments to do so. World peace is the responsibility of all nations and peoples. We would be well advised to share this responsibility with other peace loving States.

The Middle East Still in Ferment

A few months ago American troops were sent into Lebanon in a last minute effort to maintain stability and prevent subversion. By the end of this month, all of these troops will have been withdrawn at the request of the new Lebanese government. The only ostensible change in the meantime has been that the former rebel leader is now the Premier, and that the former President is now the rebel leader. Disorder and instability continue. The only thing on which all parties in Lebanon now agree, according to the New York Times last Sunday, is that United States troops are not needed in resolving Lebanon's current disputes.

When is our national Administration going to plan and act on the real imperatives of the Middle East, rather than on the sensational transitory ones? Above and beyond all the military assistance and assassinations lie the continuing, urgent needs of millions of people. Deeper than the surface challenge of Communism and Nasserism is the age-old poverty, sickness and illiteracy of the people. President Eisenhower belatedly shifted emphasis to these problems in his speech on the Middle East at the United Nations. But when is our commitment to a Middle East Economic Development Agency to be implemented? What specific proposals have we formulated for effective regulation of arms shipments to the Middle East? When are we going to extend our Middle Eastern horizons, as I have often urged, from kings and oil farther out to people and water?

Behind the Shield

More fundamental than specific programs, and indeed, perhaps more vital than a blueprint for the settlement of the specific East-West issues, is for America to recover and to make evident in our foreign policy that generosity, humanitarianism and compassion that in the past has won for us the world's admiration and respect.

To the people of many lands we have been made to appear as a frightening giant -- unpredictable and dangerous. Our boasts of hydrogen weapons and our willingness to use them panic even our friends and allies.

This habit of "boasting and brandishing for domestic political purposes has been developed as a substitute for genuinely effective defense planning, and certainly to cover a vast uncertainty of aim and purpose by the White House and the Secretary of State.

Surely we must have armed forces that can deter, and meet and defeat aggression, but would it not be far better to get on with the job quietly, consistently and systematically?

(Humphrey excerpts)

Teddy Roosevelt advised us to "speak softly and carry the big stick". This Administration tends to speak loudly and has cut off the stick.

And after all, the most effective defense establishment in the world can only buy time for statesmanship. It can settle nothing; it can advance nothing. It is only a shield -- a shield behind which a free world can either stagnate and erode economically, politically and morally -- or grow in strength and purpose while extending the hand of fellowship and progress to those who seek a better life in peace and freedom.

It is in this area -- in the constructive and imaginative use of the greatest of our assets -- our spiritual and political heritage, our food and fiber abundance, our wealth of medical knowledge, science and technology, our administrative techniques, our production know-how, our capital and education -- that American foreign policy must find a new direction, a new purpose, and a new base upon which the security of the American people and the preservation of our liberty can be founded.

10/7/58



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org