[Sept. 17 & 24, 1961]

Program #19 "Briefing Session"

IS DEMOCRACY OBSOLETE -- PART I

GUESTS: Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota

Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Historian of Harvard, Special Assistant to President Kennedy

ANNOUNCER: From Washington, D.C., National Educational Television presents BRIEFING SESSION, the facts behind the issues in the world today. The funds for the production of this program have been provided equally by the AFL-CIO and the National Educational Television and Radio Center. Your Host, the noted Washington correspondent of the American Broadcasting Company, Edward P. Morgan.

MR. MORGAN: Welcome to another edition of BRIEFING SESSION. Let me pose you a question: Is democracy obsolete? This is what we are forced to ask ourselves these days. Suddenly the question comes: Can we endure, can our system endure? I am not talking about surviving and prospering without one.

We Americans have never lost a war. Yet now we seem to be slipping everywhere. Our power, prestige and influence are battered abroad, our motives are questioned, even, our security threatened, and even our institutions are brought up for debate and under attack by conscientious Americans themselves. Does what we read in the headlines every morning really reflect a kind of modern Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire?

When the Russians orbited a man in space not so very long ago a friend of mine remarked, "This is 'their' era." Is it? Is democracy actually obsolete?

We have asked two distinguished products of the 20th Century to explore these questions with us: Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota and the majority whip in the Senate, and Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historian of Harvard and now Special Assistant to President Kennedy.

We will go into these questions in detail in a moment after a briefing session on some history by John MacVane.

MR. MAC VANE: On May 5, a Redstone Rocket lifted off the launching pad at Cape Canaveral carrying aloft the space capsule Freedom 7 with its precious cargo -- the first American to be shot into outer space. Millions across the country watched on television and heard the calm clear voice of the astronaut, Commander Alan B. Shepard, Jr., as he reported: "Everything A-Okay." A daring gamble had paid off.

Three weeks earlier Russia's Major Gagarin had soared through space on a longer flight -- but his historic achievement was shrouded in secrecy until an official announcement of its completion. Some skeptics still wonder if the flight actually took place. As the London Daily Telegraph put it: "Technically, the Americans were runners-up. Morally, the cup is theirs. Nobody can doubt that Commander Shepard really did it."

At a press conference the day after Shepard's flight President Kennedy had this comment on the world-wide publicity spotlight focused on our first attempt to put a man into space:

PRESIDENT KENNEDY: I think everybody ought to understand that we are not going to do what the Russians did, of being secret and just hailing our successes. If they like that system, they have to take it all -- which means that you don't get anything in the paper, except what the government wants. But if you don't like that system -- and I don't -- then you have to take these risks.

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MR. MAC VANE: In the 172 years since our Constitution was signed, our free democratic system has conquered a vast wilderness, has created the mightiest industrial power and the highest standard of living the world has ever seen, and has emerged the victor in two major world wars. At the same time, our Government has responded to the wishes of the American people with sweeping measures to help the average man: Restraints on Big Business, encouragement of organized labor, minimum wage and hour laws, unemployment insurance, flood control and irrigation projects, public power, aid to education.

The vast social changes symbolized by these measures took place within the framework of an open society where anyone can say what he thinks, where any reporter serving the free press can poke his nose, his microphone, or his camera into anyone's business. But now this happy, relaxed, free way of life is rudely challenged.

The harsh, restrictive Communist system of Soviet Russia has in little more than one generation changed an impoverished land of ignorant peasants into the world's second greatest industrial -- and atomic -- nation.

In late 1957, the beeps from Russia's Sputnik I, announced that Soviet technology had rivaled the United States for world leadership. Earlier that year, Nikita Khrushchev had flung down the full challenge: "I can prophesy that your grandchildren in America will live under socialism."

The Soviet challenge to democracy is three-fold: First, of course, it is military. While the U.S. Strategic Air Force now has the nuclear power to destroy any attacker, many experts question as to how long this will be an effective deterrent. As we move into the missile age, Russia already has a rocket more powerful than anything of ours; that same rocket that recently put a five-ton space ship into orbit could as easily carry a hydrogen warhead. And when it comes to the so-called brush-fire wars that seem to be the greatest threat at the moment, Russia stands ready for conventional and guerrilla conflict with four million highly trained men under arms compared to 2.5 million for the U.S.

Secondly, in the economic field, the Russian threat is equally alarming. And it is here that Mr. Khrushchev says he really means to bury us. Statistics in the field are controversial but in general the rate of industrial growth of the Soviet Union for the past decade has been larger than that of the U.S. -- roughly six per cent a year compared to four per cent for us.

If Russia's total industry, which is now about forty to forty-five per cent the size of ours, continues to grow at its present planned rate and if we continue our present rate expansion, Soviet industry will equal ours sometime between 1975 and 1980.

The Soviets set a production goal and then achieve it. And they are not concentrating on tail fins, washing machines or TV sets. The following production figures show the tremendous gains they have made compared to the U.S. in the areas where they are bearing down.

In the three years between 1956 and 1959 steel production in the Soviet Union rose twenty-five per cent while in the United States production went down nineteen per cent. In the same period of time, electric power in Russia rose thirty-seven per cent compared to a gain of sixteen per cent in the United States. Oil production in Russia increased fifty-five per cent -- in the United States it went down two per cent. Production of cement in Russia up fifty-six per cent to only sixteen per cent in the United States.

The third element of the Soviet challenge lies in Communism's appeal to the minds of the people in the underdeveloped, uncommitted countries.

It's true that the Soviets have enslaved millions of satellite residents and put Russian citizens under rigid personal discipline in the process of smashing ahead to military and economic power. But to the nations emerging from colonialism, the food, housing, and goods the Soviets promise them -- sound more attractive than democratic liberties they have never experienced.

Are we realistically identifying ourselves with the hopes and aspirations of the people in the new nations? In recent years, the United States has poured billions of dollars of aid into needy countries overseas. The pay-off has not been exactly A-Okay. We have seen ourselves reviled, insulted, around the globe.

In addition to our troubles overseas, there is distressing evidence that here at home we have not yet provided equality of opportunity for all of our own people.

We remember the shame of Little Rock, where the bayonets of Federal troops had to clear the way for a few Negro children to attend their school.

Lately in Mississippi we have seen state authorities arrest white and colored citizens who were asserting their right to use the same facilities in a bus station.

And in a land of plenty, five million persons are still unemployed. In some places like this West Virginia coal town, hunger has moved in as a permanent resident. Meanwhile, across the country a million migratory workers slave at pitiful wages and live in unbelievably squalid conditions. In our cities, other millions of citizens inhabit disgraceful slums.

Yes, we can ask: Is our democratic system obsolete in the competitive, explosively demanding world of today? For some thoughtful answers to this big question, let us turn back to Ed Morgan and our guests.

MR. MORGAN: Gentlemen, I assume we do agree that we are in some trouble at this juncture in history both at home and abroad. The record of ourselves as a free nation in war -- at least in our lifetimes -- is very good.

Professor Schlesinger, do you think that we have to have another war in order to excel, in order to pull the best out of Americans that we can?

DR. SCHLESINGER: I think America has shown itself historically capable of meeting great challenges in times of peace as well as in times of war. I think in the 1930's, for example, when we were faced with a great depression or indeed, in the first decade of this century, at the time of the progressive period when we were faced with an accumulation of smaller and less tangible problems we showed capacity to respond to a great sense of public purpose. I think we can achieve that same capacity without the spur of war.

MR. MORGAN: Do you agree, Senator, and if so, how would you suggest that we get ourselves out of the rut of trouble that we are in?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I have a feeling that what Mr. Schlesinger has indicated is true, that we have shown the ability to lift ourselves, so to speak, out of difficulties, but we generally understood those difficulties and by the understanding of the difficulty we have been able to respond.

One of the things that disturbs me in the current period is the lack of understanding of the nature of the attack upon us, or the Communist challenge, and the lack of understanding of the kind of a war in which we are engaged.

Now we are engaged in a war. I think we have to get that quite clear. That has to be well understood. The trouble is that in the past the wars in which we have been engaged have been wars in which the violence and the disorder were the result of gunplay, so to speak, the traditional historic kind of war where men and armies and guns or instruments of destruction were used in an organized manner. Today our war, the war in which we find ourselves, is a much more subtle and yet equally devastating kind of struggle. It is an ideological war, it is a propaganda war. We see our nation and other nations threatened by economic warfare, by subversion, guerrilla warfare tactics, they call it paramilitary -- that is the new word that has come into our vocabulary of late -- and so I think if we understood the nature of the war, Mr. Morgan, that we will respond, but up to date we haven't understood it -- that is, when I say "we," there is not a consensus of understanding.

MR. MORGAN: If we haven't understood it, I wonder Professor Schlesinger, if it is possible that we have made some wrong conclusions. The President has said very pointedly on more than one occasion that man, since his invention, has been against tyranny and that one of the basic things that he has fought for through years of history is freedom.

Do you think it is possible that we have overestimated man's desire for freedom, that what he really wants in the era that we are living in is security over freedom?

DR. SCHLESINGER: I don't see evidence of that. I think the problem has to be construed according to the level of different societies. I think societies which have never known freedom but which have known poverty and deprivation, that in these societies the desire for some form of economic opportunity, of some desire for a square meal, and a decent hut in which to live and so on, are going to be very great, and since they have never known freedom, the passion for freedom will not be marked.

But in societies which have achieved a certain stage of economic development, where the primitive needs of subsistence and shelter and clothing are beginning to be met, in such societies, then man's instinct for freedom begins to express itself. I see no reason to suppose that this won't even be true of a totalitarian society like the Soviet Union.

MR. MORGAN: I was just going to ask Senator Humphrey to take that up where you left off, based on your own observations of the Soviet Union, and your talks, long and short, with Mr. Khrushchev. I was astounded when I was in the Soviet Union to see a mixture of what I thought an interplay of forces both for security and a sort of restiveness for more freedom, but I couldn't quite identify which force was the stronger.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, can I just pick up where Mr. Schlesinger left off? I believe I am going to start calling you Arthur. This "Mister" business is a little too formal for me.

I believe that even in the more, well, should we say backward societies from our standards, that the desire for freedom is there. Freedom of colonial rule, for example.

DR. SCHLESINGER: Yes.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It may be a different expression of freedom, but it is a freedom at least to manage their own affairs, even if the management is under a type of indigenous or local dictatorship. But to be free of the foreigner, so to speak. And I thoroughly agree with what Arthur has had to say in reference to the growth -- I mean the desire of people in some societies for security and for what they call economic opportunity even above what we call civil liberties. But now speaking of the Soviet Union, the one thing that impressed me with what was developing in the Soviet Union -- and I know a very

little bit about it except I am an interested student, I have tried to study the situation -- my own personal observation in a very limited trip or visit was to the effect that as the economic wealth of the Soviet Union develops, as they become stronger, as they become richer -- and the Soviets are one of the richest nations in the world today -- it seems that there is an expression of a greater degree of personal freedom.

There are groups within the Soviet Union that want to express themselves, and within the limits of their society that expression is quite active. I believe that you find this amongst the young people. I think that the Soviet Government, the Communist Government, has recognized this at the university level where they permit wider reading, for example, on the part of some of their students than they did 20 or 25 years ago. Where American books -- in fact, the Encyclopedia Brittanica can be found at the University of Moscow and it isn't just there as a museum piece, it is actually used by certain students. There is a control over it, but by certain students.

MR. MORGAN: All these things are relative, of course.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, they are all relative, very much, and you wonder whether or not these are going to blossom forth into a greater expression of either group, or individual freedom. I don't think we ought to let this be interpreted that in the Soviet Union there is what we call civil liberties or democratic practices as we know them, but there are indications of a degree of freedom within the confines of the Communist revolution.

MR. MORGAN: As we confront them and as we confront the world at large there is a problem, it seems to me, that grows bigger and bigger. In a figurative sense, and in some respects almost in a physical and literal sense, the world is shrinking. We've got communications that are instantaneous, we've got jets that can catapult Secretaries of State and Presidents around the world, White House experts, and Senators, and even journalists. But as this shrinkage occurs, the problems of government to deal with them as the intimacy gets into populations, the problems get bigger and government itself, it seems -- our government, for example -- has to get bigger too.

Now the problem that bothers me and I suspect bothers all of us, that even with the best of motives, in the bigness of the government as it increases to take care of these problems, isn't something of individual freedom destroyed and isn't this one of the equations that we've got to work with?

DR. SCHLESINGER: Individual freedom is destroyed by bigness. Bigness can take many forms. Individual freedom, I would say, is threatened by bigness. Bigness can be private as well as public. I think the evolution of government in this country has a response to private bigness as the only means of preventing private bigness from having a really destructive effect on individual freedom and that in the system of countervailing power which exists in our society, the strength of the national government is one of the greatest sources of individual freedom.

Take business. The state governments would be powerless against business large enough to operate over state lines unless the national government were prepared to interpose itself. It is the activity of the national government which guarantees freedom for the small business man in this country. Similarly civil rights. Now obviously if the national government were not to do anything about civil rights then the chances of progress in civil rights could be very limited if they had to rely upon the states. I think it is a great mistake to pose government and freedom as opposites. Bigness and freedom, yes; but bigness is private as well as public, and public instrumentality is sometimes the only way to offset the bad effects, the threatening effect for freedom of private bigness.

MR. MORGAN: In other words, we get a sort of a necessary stand-off between the bigness of government, the bigness of labor, the bigness of business, and hopefully the individual breathes within that -- I am afraid I am going to have to call it "squeeze," even so.

MR. SCHLESINGER: If you look at it historically, Ed, the first bigness to develop was big business and this was followed at about the same time by the response of big government and big labor, and big labor was the only way in which the working man was able to defend himself against big business, and government was the only way that the public could defend itself against the threats created by big business and by big labor.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: And in government, in a representative government, the individual does have something to say. He has something to say primarily through his elected representatives who, under our system, are responsible back to the electroate in periodic elections. So government isn't as if it were just a third force put in to be an umpire and an umpire that had no responsibility to any segment of the society.

As a matter of fact, what government really does is to represent, we hope at least, the popular will, against some of the great private groups and private forces that represent a special interest. Government interests are not necessarily just the bad ones that you hear about, sometimes they are the ones that you like.

DR. SCHLESINGER: The government gives an expression to a sense of public purpose. I have never understood why anyone in the United States should be ashamed of government. George Washington did not feel that way, Alexander Hamilton did not feel that way, Jackson did not, and Lincoln did not. Government has always been one of the most vital instruments by which a free people achieves its objectives.

MR. MORGAN: I wanted to interject here at this point -- I mentioned in the beginning that some sincere Americans themselves were challenging some of our institutions. I had in mind such groups as we are coping with today. The John Birch Society. Now presumably these people are all sincere and dedicated people. But they are attacking big government. That seems to be the thing that is their main target. Now you have answered that in part, Professor Schlesinger, with your statement that government has to be big in order to cope with other elements. But getting it back to the main question with which we are trying to wrestle, here -- Is Democracy obsolete? -- the question, I suppose, could flow out of that as follows: Is big government in the way that we conceive it, efficient enough, sensitive enough to the individual freedoms as they were conceived by our founding fathers, to compete meaningfully with a totalitarian system?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, can we take a whack at it?

MR. MORGAN: Take a whack at it.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I believe this will depend in great measure upon the spirit that motivates a government and those that are in government. It appears to me that if a big government is one which is directed towards the improvement of the living standard of its people, towards the enlightenment of the citizenry, towards the redress of injustice and of abuses within the society, and if there is a spirit, a drive, a sense of public purpose within big government, then big government which we have definitely can meet the challenge of the totalitarian, the monolithic state, the disciplined state.

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I would add, however, that in order to meet this challenge properly there must be leadership that arouses within the citizenry an understanding of the goals and objectives of our society and of our philosophy. Also that leadership must call upon the people for the proper utilization of the resources, both physical and human resources. This requires some planning.

The greatest complaint that I have, or the most sincere disagreement that I have with many of my contemporaries is the role of government in the direction of or in the cooperative use of the great physical and human resources that are ours in this society. I don't think that big government just by itself can compete against the totalitarian. I do think, however, Ed, may I say, that if there is a sense of purpose, if there is a set of goals and objectives that we seek to accomplish or fulfill, and then if there is some degree of cooperative planning -- not direction, not mandatory, but at least the urging of the proper use of our facilities and of our resources, that we not only can compete, but that we can surpass.

MR. MORGAN: Now bringing us down to goals and objectives, that puts on the plane of the government's relationship with the people and vice versa. And this is another troubling thing: Have we become in our high standard of living, the material largess that we enjoy, too smug and complacent as a people? I am speaking now specifically about us Americans, what do you think?

DR. SCHLESINGER: I think it is impossible to generalize. I think some of us are too smug and complacent and others of us aren't, and in a great country you are bound to have a large range of opinion. I think the question of a moment ago which Senator Humphrey was discussing -- I fully agree with his remarks. It seems to me that it is easy to compile a catalogue of the defects of a democracy and it is easy to say in such and such respect the efficiency, or unity, or something like that of totalitarian governments are always going to be more effective.

But I am always reminded of the remark of Winston Churchill who once said that democracy is obviously the worst form of government, except for all others. And I think that the significance of this remark was the extent to which, in spite of these apparent superficial defects, a democracy has a capacity for mobilizing and enlisting the distinctive contribution that free people can make, and that is a contribution in the way of initiative, sacrifice and zeal which is far better than the coerced contributions of people in the authoritarian states.

MR. MORGAN: In that framework, Senator, how would you improve the communication between the people and their elected representatives?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, this is one of the most serious problems I believe that we have because of the competition for what we call the news. There is a limit to how much people can take or absorb in any one period of time and there are a tremendous number of people that are seeking to gain the attention of the electorate. But since our President is an elected officer and is the head of state as well as the chief political officer of the government, it seems to me that by the proper use of the mass media that a great deal can be done and more can be done than is being done to communicate with the people and to bring them into a better understanding of what are the goals and objectives of a particular government or administration. Now this doesn't mean that people are necessarily going to accept these goals and objectives unless they find them to be desirable. But at least there is a chance for communication. And may I say most respectfully that while I think the news conference and the press conference is an integral and a fundamental part of this communications system, that equally important

is the use of radio, television and the press in an educated manner, in a directed manner.

MR. MORGAN: We've got to interrupt here. We are going to continue this dialogue, or trialogue at our next session.

If you would like a transcript of this program, may I invite you to address a postcard to "Democracy"-- BRIEFING SESSION, Box 3536, Grand Central Station, New York 17, New York.

Next week on BRIEFING SESSION, for our final program in this particular series, Senator Humphrey and Professor Schlesinger and I are going to try to carry on from this point. I hope you will be with us then when we continue to explore the question, "Is Democracy Obsolete?"

PROGRAM #20 - PART II - BRIEFING SESSION

IS DEMOCRACY OBSOLETE

GUESTS: Senator Hubert Humphrey (D.,Minn.)

Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Historian of Harvard, Special Assistant to President Kennedy

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Your Host, the noted Washington Correspondent of the American Broadcasting Company, Edward P. Morgan.

MR. MORGAN: Welcome to another edition of BRIEFING SESSION, the last, actually, in this series.

In the last session and in this one, we have been grappling with the question, "Is Democracy Obsolete," and the experts who helped us in the other session were, as they are now, Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, and Majority Senate Whip, and Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., eminent Harvard Historian and now a Special Assistant to President Kennedy.

I am not going to waste a great deal of time recapitulating what we talked about last week, but with your rights of veto preserved, gentlemen, I am just going to briefly go over a couple of points.

My mind is not orderly enough that I can give them off the top of it; I have had to write them down.

It seemed to me that the biggest point in the first session was a quotation of Winston Churchill, made by Professor Schlesinger which went roughly in this fashion.

"The democracy obviously is the worst form of government except all the others."

This is a good thing to keep in mind.

That second, that bigness is not a sin, particularly when it has to do with government because government has grown big in order not to gobble up or squeeze the citizen, but to protect him from other forces.

And third -- and this is one near the end of the half-hour session -- that some of us people in the United States in all ranks of life have indeed been made smug by our material progress at largess and that we do indeed need better communication between the government and the people whom it represents.

With that said, gentlemen, if you have nothing to add or subtract from that very, sort of, shall we say, pinheaded summation, I would like to go on to this:

The American revolutionary idea is one of the most dynamic, I believe, in history, and yet we seem to have a great deal of difficulty in getting

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that idea across, not only to our own people, but to people in other lands.

The ideal, the dynamism of Communism, seems to have more of a swift impact. Why is that so? Will you tackle that, Senator?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, the first observation I would make, Ed, is that we haven't always lived up to our own ideal in our own country. We have great problems of human relations right here in our own nation, what we call civil rights problems or the abuses of civil rights.

I think we have to understand as a people that the fulfillment of the promise of democracy at home is in essence our best weapon for extending our influence abroad, or to put it another way, that you can't export something that you are short of.

And when you run a little short of democracy on your home grounds, it's rather difficult to tell people in South Vietnam and Korea and the Middle East that they ought to have social reforms before we can help them when in fact there is a great need of social reform in our own midst. And then I would add too that the dynamism of our way of life or of our democracy requires that we give everyone an opportunity to participate within it. This means, as some people put it, full employment. It means expanded production. It means higher goals of both economic and social activity. We haven't done this. We have become somewhat willing to accept five or six million unemployed as a sort of a pattern that you have to live with.

I noted the other day where the Soviet Union is producing as much steel as we are -- I never thought I would live to see that day. The only reason this is the case is because they are producing over capacity and we are producing forty per cent under capacity.

Now, these are some of the reasons I think that our revolutionary spirit hasn't taken hold as well as it should.

DR. SCHLESINGER: I would like to add a particular point which I think is important to keep in mind and that is the great appeal of Marxism, of Communism to the world today as essential to the underdeveloped countries. Communism doesn't have great appeal in countries which are already industrialized.

MR. MORGAN: Actually it has diminished somewhat since the war, has it not, in the super-industrialized nations?

DR. SCHLESINGER: Yes, it has, very much, and the appeal of Communism is precisely as an instrument, as a technique for economic and social modernization. Countries which have lived for centuries in squalor and oblivion and depression see in Marxism a means by which they can get into the 20th Century in a single leap.

I think that is where the whole question is of the underdeveloped world -- the question, for example, of our programs of foreign aid are so critical for the whole future of the country. Because, unless we can show that it is possible to achieve economic growth and social progress through democratic means, a means consistent toward the democratic direction, then we lose this great uncommitted part of the world to Communism because of the potent appeal of Communism precisely as an instrument of development.

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MR. MORGAN: I wanted to pick up a point that Senator Humphrey made and ask you about it, Mr. Schlesinger, and that is this: That we can't export something that we have in short supply, meaning our beliefs, our convictions in our own open free society.

Does this mean, Professor Schlesinger, that we have got to pause, not for station identification or a commercial, but to really re-convince ourselves of the value of the kind of government that we've got?

DR. SCHLESINGER: No, I don't think so, and I am sure Senator Humphrey doesn't mean that. These are concurrent activities.

What is involved is a renewal of our democratic faith and we don't get that by exhortations and slogans and rhetoric, and by words. We get that by deeds. I think our foreign policy has been effective in this century, our leadership has had influence on the world when our activities abroad reflected our performance at home.

The men who have had such impact have been the leaders like Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt and they got it because they earned the right to talk to the world in terms of splendid aspirations. It was Wilson's New Freedom which validated his fourteen points and it was Roosevelt's New Deal which validated his four freedoms and when we go before the world and talk about equality of opportunity, when we have the background of Little Rock and Montgomery, when we talk about equality -- about economic growth at a time when our own economy is lagging behind -- when, in other words, our performance at home undercuts our professions abroad, then obviously no one is going to believe us.

It's only as our foreign policy expresses the visible realities of our performance at home that we are going to have impacts in the world.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Could I add something to this, Ed?

MR. MORGAN: By all means.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It seems to me also that all too often we fail to identify the message of our society, of our country, with the people that it ought to mean the most to. In other words, the Marxist, the Communist, he keeps identifying himself with the poor, with the needy, with the hungry, with the sick. This is his line; when in fact these are the very people whom they exploit all too often.

Here we are a society that has afforded more people the opportunity for the benefits of modern technology than any society in the history of mankind, and yet we down-play this.

To put it another way, we are not identifying ourselves with the peasant or the farmer overseas. We are not identifying ourselves with the working man, either organized or unorganized.

We fail to identify ourselves all too often with the student, with the teacher, with the university, with the arts and the humanities. We have constantly talked in America in terms of our foreign aid and many of our great national goals, in terms of the high and the mighty, of industrialization, of wealth. We all too often deal with the privileged classes.

Now, I recognize that there has to be balance in this, but it seems to me that we ought to interpret our democracy as being the message of hope for the masses and not just the message of opportunity and privilege for the few.

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MR. MORGAN: This is fine and I can't quarrel with either one of you on a single point of your past answers, but both of you please answer me this: How do we keep this large and wonderful polyglot society with all its tensions within itself, how do we keep it at a high degree of, shall we say, intellectual responsibility, so that we won't undercut ourselves, as you said that we do sometimes and are in some degree doing now?

How do we achieve what we haven't achieved enough?

We've got all of the technical qualifications, we have the brains, we have the material, we have the communications and so forth, and we don't seem to be getting across to ourselves, even, as well as we should.

DR. SCHLESINGER: Well, we do it in the usual way that free societies do this. That is, through a combination of national leadership on the one hand and I will put it this way, national popularityship on the other. That is, we have elected a President and a Congress. The President and the Congress are commissioned in a sense to determine and articulate our national aspirations. They should do so in a way that is convincing to the people, and everyone in every community throughout the country who cares about the future of our nation has a responsibility on his or her part to carry out, to carry forward the information and the ideas and the interpretations required to have the kind of informed citizenry which is the basis for national policy.

MR. MORGAN: I would hope we were doing it in a tiny way ourselves right now, and that leads me to this point, Senator Humphrey: Is it possible that we have scared ourselves a little too much in terms of the toughness and the efficiency of the totalitarians?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I have often felt that sometimes we interpret these Russians to be ten feet high when in fact they are ordinary men. They are not giants, but they are dedicated people. That is their government, and their society calls upon them to fulfill certain goals and objectives, and I believe it is fair to say that the Communist of today is a dedicated person and a ferocious competitor.

I don't believe that we have frightened ourselves at all. We try to; we talk about it a little bit, but I wonder if we are really frightened. I think we might well ought to be.

MR. MORGAN: Do you think we have been frightened of the wrong things?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I think we have tried to talk ourselves into it without realizing just exactly, as I tried to indicate, the nature of the competition.

I think we have every reason to be deeply concerned and in a sense frightened, but I would hope that we would do what we ought to do simply because it is the right thing to do and not merely because there is a Communist or a Marxist or somebody else standing around frightening us into it.

I don't really believe that enough Americans take this challenge of the Soviet Union seriously. I think they are primarily concerned about the fact that the Soviets have big armies and powerful weapons when in fact that is only part of the Soviet challenge. Their example of production, their propaganda ability, their ability to subvert, all of these things surely should give us cause for concern. And I think if we understand what we are up against we will do a whole lot better, and this is where I go back to what Arthur Schlesinger was saying.

It is right that a President and the Congress are elected and that they should give leadership. But sometimes I wonder if the call to leadership is broad enough, if it is deep enough. I wonder if we are really being alerted as much as we ought to be alerted.

For example, does the free world have any way of competing against Soviet dumping of goods? We have none. We haven't organized any mechanism for it. We don't even have in the free world today any kind of understanding how we will compete against Soviet propaganda. We haven't as yet in the free world decided to pool our efforts economically in terms of economic aid for the underprivileged areas.

We are still operating somehow as if this whole thing were going to fade away and that it was a bad dream.

MR. MORGAN: This gets back in a larger measure to the question that I put to you both a while ago. We were talking then about our own American response, but now you have broadened it quite properly into the response of the non-Communist world as a whole.

We know, or we think we know, that these are sensible measures to take. The unification of the Western European economic and, hopefully, political community, and yet we don't take them, we quarrel among ourselves; we can't afford it and yet there we are. What do we do to motivate that, Mr. Schlesinger?

DR. SCHLESINGER: I don't think there is any mysterious magic formula which we can suddenly get hold of that is going to transmute all the motives of man. It is the usual way in which any society operates which relinquishes the brutality of coercion and command and that is through the processes of persuasion and any kind of move like the unification of Europe is something that has to operate against a whole series of vested interests and prejudices. It takes time to dissolve those interests and prejudices, and actually considerable progress has been made in the years since the war, much more than one might have anticipated in moving in those directions.

MR. MORGAN: Yes, I sometimes think that we shortchange ourselves on that. We have talked incessantly and properly about the menace that we face in terms of a different kind of system, the totalitarian system, the concept of Engels and Marx. I assume you both would agree that even if that fell into the middle of the earth, or went out to Venus and stayed, that we would still have a great deal of problems to solve internally and externally.

Now, this may sound like a little bit of Sunday supplement, but I am raising it anyway. Is it possible that as these African and Asian nations emerge and the great enigma of China comes out, that what we are faced with is a Caucasian versus a colored challenge? Not necessarily a challenge of political ideologies, but a challenge of white versus brown, black and yellow?

DR. SCHLESINGER: I would certainly not think so. I think it would be a great mistake to construe the world conflict in any such terms as those. I think there are all sorts of problems in the world, but I think the direction in which the world is moving is not toward that kind of two-party conflict. I think the direction in which the world is moving is toward much more of a plural world, a world with a multiplicity of nations and interests.

And I think one of the great developments in the underdeveloped world is not toward the sort of racist unity of Africa or Asia; the great development in the underdeveloped world is toward the freedom and independence of a whole series of separate new nations.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Could I interpose there that it seems to me this is the most important development within the last two to three years. I mean it has come into sharper focus. It has always been here since the post-war period, and the Communists, and Mr. Khrushchev and company are attempting to resist this very development.

Mr. Khrushchev has made it quite clear that insofar as he sees this world the way he would like it, it is a world more or less divided up between himself and the United States and in which there are no neutrals, in which there is no pluralistic society.

He'd like to divide it up that way because he thinks he can win the whole world that way, and I say that one of the most encouraging developments in our foreign policy and in the understanding and the progress of free nations is the fact that we are now willing to recognize that so-called neutralism is not a sin, that we accept a world in which there is a pluralistic society, in which there are many customs and traditions and peoples and that we are seeking not to put it either into one or two compartments or into a monolithic structure, but rather into -- let it develop on its own, and I think this is all to the advantage of what we seek, namely freedom. That is what our objective is; not domination, but freedom.

MR. MORGAN: What you both seem to be saying to me is that we should look ahead to the development of the world not in terms of the pigmentation of skin, but in terms of a large collection of different kinds of neighborhoods, some of them quite different from others, and I suppose then that our problem is how best we can deal with these neighborhoods, deal in the best sense.

We've got about ten minutes left to discuss it and I would like to concentrate on your answers to begin with, on how we could perfect our approach to the other countries of the world so that we can prove to ourselves and to them that democracy as we understand it in terms of a free society is not indeed on the decline and obsolescent.

DR. SCHLESINGER: Well, the first step is this -- and I think it is something we shouldn't neglect -- is that just that we reject the notion of remaking the world in our image, we equally reject the idea of the world being remade in the image of any other power. And therefore, the first thing that is necessary to preserve the capacity in other countries for development according to their own genius is to make sure that they remain independent, and this means inevitably a military dimension in our efforts, an effort which will provide a shield behind which the constructive purposes of these nations have a chance to unfold.

MR. MORGAN: I think that is an excellent point and I assume, Senator, that you agree.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I do. I strongly agree, but let me go one step further, that I think as long as we want to have a world in which there can be independence of peoples and nations which can lead to their freedom and their emancipation, that we need a larger framework in which this independence can be preserved over and beyond just the military shield that we can give to them, and this is where I would come to the United Nations again, and the important role which the U.N. is designed to serve and can fulfill.

Now, the Soviet understands that the United Nations is the milieu, is the environment in which this mosaic of neighborhoods and of free people and independent nations can find a way of communicating and of developing in concert policies for their own betterment, and therefore the Soviet has tried to interpose now this massive veto, their veto.

In other words, "If I can't have it my way, we will destroy. We will stop. We will stop all progress.

That seems to be the immediate design.

It's to our advantage, it seems -- and when I say "our" I don't mean just the United States, but I mean the advantage of people who love and cherish freedom -- to have an international frame of reference or an international environment in which these independent nations, these neighborhoods that you speak of can grow, can find communication, can agree upon certain political, economic and social developments. And I feel that the U.N. is just coming into its own.

Many people have said, "Well, it's weakening. It's being threatened." It's being threatened at the most critical time in the history of new peoples. I mean of new nations. And that is why it's very important that we need not permit the United Nations to be eroded either in its strength or in its influence.

MR. MORGAN: At the same time, the United Nations has operated in these last months somewhat in a straightjacket in terms of its problems in the Congo and elsewhere and it's quite plain that the Soviet Union has been trying, since Mr. Khruschev's visit to the Glass House on the East River last September, trying to emasculate its strength even more.

Is it smart under those terms, do you think, Professor Schlesinger, to continue to use the U.N. not only as a symbol but as a machine, as a piece of machinery to get our foreign policy across?

DR. SCHLESINGER: I don't think you can make any general statement about that. I think obviously the existence of the U.N. does not for a moment suspend the requirement on the part of the United States to have its own national policy. The U.N. is one of the media through which that national policy is expressed. As to when you use the machinery of the U.N., you use it when you think it is going to be effective. There is no point in overburdening that machinery and thereby setting back the whole cause of the United Nations.

MR. MORGAN: Now, that brings us back somewhat to a question of this nature: We admit that we have great strength, both material and in terms of minds. Is that strength enough and can we apply it with sufficient point to say that we can answer the question, "Is democracy obsolete" in the negative?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I want to say democracy is not obsolete. I further say that we must, as a democratic people, conduct ourselves within the moral framework of our democratic institutions.

DR. SCHLESINGER: And that we must be faithful to our own ideals.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: And not try to imitate or ape this Communist totalitarian, and I feel furthermore that if we, even by the contest with the Soviets, we in a sense help ourselves and help others because we are bringing the Soviet into more and more economic contact with many areas of the world, causing them to pour in some of their resources and some of their talent, which if these areas of the world can be guarded from being gobbled up, they will blossom all the more readily and all the more quickly. So it isn't all bleak; it isn't all dark.

MR. MORGAN: Well, if that's the case, then isn't it true that we have got to talk much more candidly with ourselves than with each other in this country? Haven't we got to admit that we've got excesses in terms of prejudice in the racial area, that we've got excesses in terms of

extravagance in the expense account area perhaps, that we simply can't afford. If, as I presume it is, your answer is in the positive, then what do we do? How do we fit ourselves into the framework that the President put eloquently, I thought, at his Inaugural Address in January about asking not what the country can do for you, but what you can do for the country.

DR. SCHLESINGER: I think one thing we must do is to understand that sacrifice is not sort of a dramatic, one-shot effort. I think a lot of people think of sacrifice as something which is done in a moment of glorious excitement and preferably by someone else, and do not understand that in a peacetime democracy, sacrifice is a long, irritating, weary, sustained commitment, and when we understand that, we will understand much better the context in which we can do things for our country.

MR. MORGAN: Getting back to this eloquent and pointed and Churchillian comment about democracy being the worst except for all the others, it just occurs to me this, Senator Humphrey: Isn't it possible that we have forgotten to remind ourselves that democracy is such a very difficult form of government because we all have got to take part in it?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, it is a fact and may I add we ought to remind ourselves that this very delicate and yet vibrant force of democracy does not come quickly into new societies. You have to earn democracy. You can't superimpose it; you don't paint it on with stencils. It is something that must have deep roots, it must literally come from the social fabric and the understanding and the experience of people. This is why, as some of us have said, that we start the development of democracy in some of the emerging societies, not so much by the superimposition of parliamentary government as we do maybe by a credit union, a cooperative, a trade union, public education, working at it in the soil of humankind, working at it at the grass roots.

I believe that we are going to have to recognize that we are going through a period of basic readjustment in the whole social structure of the world that is ours. This is a reformation; it is a renaissance, it is in fact a thirty years, a hundred years war. We've gone through these things before and I would hope that we are prepared for the agony and the trouble and the travail of a decade or a generation, and not lose faith, not to give up, because there is hope if you keep at it.

MR. MORGAN: Professor Schlesinger, what do you answer when you get a letter at the White House, as I am sure you do, from an earnest citizen who says, "I think the future looks very black and things may go down the drain?"

DR. SCHLESINGER: I answer that in critical moments in civilization the future has always looked black but that nonetheless mankind has survived and the only way in which we can defeat ourselves is to assume that our efforts aren't going to produce anything.

MR. MORGAN: Somehow, gentlemen, these two sessions on the question of "Is Democracy Obsolete" has made history, to me at least look a little less black, and thank you both for your efforts.

If you would like a copy of this program, please address a card to "Democracy, BRIEFING SESSION, Box 3536, Grand Central Station, New York 17, New York."

Now that, unfortunately, brings us not only to the end of this program, but to the end of the session of BRIEFING SESSIONS as a whole for now. However, we would very much appreciate hearing your views on the series as a whole. Thank you and goodbye.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

[Sept. 17, 1961]

815 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON 6, D.C. NATIONAL 8-3870

July 12, 1961

The Honorable Hubert Humphrey
Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Hubert:

You might be interested to know that "Briefing Session's" programs #19 and 20 in which you appeared will be televised in the Washington, D.C. area on WTTG-TV, Channel 5, Sunday, September 17 and 24 at 12 noon.

I want to thank you again for your great help in making this program successful.

Sincerely yours,

Al Zack

Albert J. ~~Zack~~, Director
Department of Public Relations

AJZ:et

Enclosures (2)

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