

Speech by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

B'NAI B'rith -- May 14, 1962

Ladies and Gentlemen, the topic which you have chosen for your conference--"Securing the Future"--is one that men have debated and meditated upon over the centuries but one which until the present day could never be discussed in terms of imminent reality. The cruel paradox of our times is that only in the present era has mortal man forged the implements which could guarantee him a physically secure future. It is paradoxical because many of these same implements can destroy both man and his dreams of the future in a matter of hours. It is a cruel paradox because man no longer has the

choice of muddling through and hoping that things will somehow come out all right in the end. Now either the forces of peace and progress will prevail or mankind will go down in a crashing Gotterdammerung from which there will be no awakening. Our generation has the awesome responsibility of demonstrating that homo sapiens is indeed a rational being capable on the one hand of sublimating his aggressive instincts and on the other hand of fulfilling his God-given opportunities.

In the past, ladies and gentlemen, dictators and warlords tried in their own way to secure the future for individual

nations, individual empires, individual classes and groups. In the name of Lebensraum and a manifest Teutonic destiny, Adolf Hitler ravaged Europe and strove to liquidate one of the most creative peoples the world has known. In the name of a twisted and alien philosophy today, men from the steppes of Russia are trying to set back human progress a thousand years. At the same time other individuals are blindly clinging to their class privileges despite a world-wide revolt of the masses for opportunity and betterment.

Yet if we are to enjoy a genuinely secure future, we must raise our sights above

the limits of our individual, family, racial, intellectual, and even national boundaries.

We are waging a struggle on a multiplicity of fronts. We are fighting with a bewildering variety of weapons raging from foreign aid and domestic policies to the Minuteman missile and the Polaris submarine. On each of these fronts victory in our time is essential. The man who thinks that the struggle can be limited to only one area--say, that of nuclear weaponry--is the true defeatist. Such people stridently blind themselves to the fact that the enemy appears in many guises and has a way of outflanking supposedly invulnerable Maginot lines. Such people

evidently want to prove the proposition that man is his own worst enemy.

I have come here, however, to proclaim my faith in the proposition that rational man can and must prevail on every one of the battlefields on which he is engaged. We are in for a long fight, and we must expect temporary setbacks and losses. Indeed, when victory comes on one or another of these many fronts, it may not look like victory at all. In some cases it may consist merely in a freezing of the status quo, and isolation and neutralization of the forces of aggression. In other cases, victory might consist in the halting of a process of social

dissolution. In an underdeveloped country like India, or a depressed area like vast reaches of Latin America, a slight annual rise in the standard of living over and above annual population increases might go down in history as an enormous victory. It would at least mark the reversal of a modern opposite trend and would point the way to the achievement of self-sustained growth for these countries. Needless to say, our own financial, material and administrative contribution to this process might be decisive.

To be precise, there are three main areas in which our actions and decisions today will largely determine whether man will live out

his future, if any, in misery or in creative progress. First of all, there is our own homeland. Secondly, there is the entire community of free nations, of free peoples who want to secure and expand their freedom. Finally, there is the area of great-power conflict, an area where the stakes are worldwide and where the ultimate decision of man's fate will be made. In each of these areas the situation is fluid, and the prospects are alternately hopeful and discouraging.

The first area--that of the United States of America--must be strengthened both economically and spiritually. Labor, management, and government have an obligation to lubricate,

to modernize and speed up the grinding wheels of our prosperity. Economists are talking today of the German miracle, the Italian miracle, the European miracle-- anything but the American economic miracle which too many of us have taken for granted. When, I wonder, will people wake up to the fact that our hitherto amazing productivity contains no built-in guarantee, that in fact it could be overtaken and surpassed not by the Communists but even by allies who little more than ten years ago were dependent on us for their economic survival? Under such conditions, how can we waste our time arguing over whether President Kennedy is or

is not a "friend" of business? It should be obvious to all that American prosperity depends upon the cooperation of business, labor and government. But at the same time, how can any segment of American business presume to decide for itself that one or another economic policy conforms with the national interest? Industry has created products and services which are essential to our national wellbeing. Having done so, and having garnered huge profits in the process, it can no longer be the sole determinant of how its actions will affect the nation.

Similarly, the United States has an obligation to reaffirm its respect for law

and for due process of law. Whenever this kingpin of our society has shown signs of loosening, the American character has suffered. Thus, as we try to assert our leadership of the free world, we must at the same time demonstrate our capacity to lead through our treatment of minorities and dissenters at home. We must respect human rights, since under our code every human individual has certain inalienable rights over and against the rights of the collective. Chief among these, in my view, is the individual's right to his day in court. Similarly, the individual must be guaranteed the means of registering his free choice at

the polls, so that he at least has an opportunity to select the men who are to represent him in the state and at the seat of our Federal government. This right must not be abridged by legalistic dodges or artificially high voting qualifications.

Not all men are born equal, but it is a fundamental proposition of our democracy that each man should, insofar as it is possible, have equality of opportunity with the next man. The greatest single instrument of guaranteeing unlimited opportunity is our magnificent educational system. It is incumbent upon us to see that not only children from an upper income group or from

a certain racial majority obtain the boon of a good secondary education followed by college. The heart of the President's aid-to-education program is that every child possessing the necessary intellectual capacity must have access to the road of self-advancement. This is imperative. We should be ashamed that formerly aristocratic England, that totalitarian and undemocratic Russia, have made talent and not accidents of birth the criterion for their childrens' education. In the face of these examples, how can we justify getting bogged down in religious and racial controversy about the role of the Federal government in

guaranteeing minimum standards of education? How can we tolerate for one minute the fact that some school districts only a few hours by car from Washington have been closed rather than open their doors to Negroes? In the north tacit discrimination has been just as effective as massive resistance in the South, though even more hypocritical.

This country, in short, must attack the poverty in its midst. We must have the courage and the foresight to aid our own underdeveloped areas. And we have them-- make no mistake about that. A sizeable area of my own state of Minnesota can be numbered among them. Ironically, were it not for the

steel production from this area, the American war effort in World War II might have been seriously curtailed. Now this productive region is blighted and its inhabitants feel forgotten. I cite this example not to claim special privileges for my constituents, for their plight is reproduced many times over around this great land of ours.

Ladies and gentlemen, we can tackle our own problems and lick them. Look what the Tennessee Valley Authority was able to do once it ignored the selfish objections of short-sighted private interests. Look at the success of "Operation Bootstrap" in the sordid and overcrowded slums of Puerto Rico.

Look at the success of urban renewal projects in a number of our cities. Nevertheless, there exists a vast waste of human resources, festering sores of regional unemployment, of unused plant capacity, of human talent, of water, land, and timber.

Yes, we must secure our own future, and the best way to start is by securing our traditional freedoms, by expanding our once magnificent opportunities, by guaranteeing equal treatment under law for all our citizens regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, and sex.

Since my first days in public life I have been struck by the revolution in American thinking about foreign affairs. Where once a politician went back home to mend fences and talk about local taxes or highway construction plans, today he has to have answers on the problems of Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa. The porkbarrel is no longer first on the agenda.

The fact is that a famine in northeast Brazil, or a lagging rate of growth in some Asian country could have a decisive impact on the health of the free world--and eventually on the security of the United States. The American public is beginning to realize this.

These considerations have lain at the heart of our foreign aid programs since World War II. Through the Marshall Plan and the European Recovery Program, through NATO, through our economic and social and military assistance to dozens of countries around the globe the United States has made economic aid commitments totalling over \$90 billion. This program has been anything but a "giveaway," ladies and gentlemen. About 75 percent of this \$90 billion has been spent--or will be spent--directly in the United States. Not only are aid dollars spent in the United States, but the recipient nations are better customers for normal United States exports. I wish every

American would understand that the foreign aid program--wholly aside from its basic purpose of shoring up the independence of non-Communist countries--is loaded with indirect fringe benefits for the United States itself.

Last Friday the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted to make a sharp cut in our economic assistance program to independent but neutral India. The vote was close, and I am still hopeful that it will be reversed. But it will be difficult to erase the impression that prominent Congressional leaders have adopted a hostile, dog-in-the-manger attitude toward the vital aspiration of a basically

friendly country.

Upon our decision with respect to the great subcontinent of India the world will judge and weigh the maturity and capacity for leadership of the United States. India's need has never been greater. A timely injection of foreign capital could put the Indian Third Five Year Plan over the hump. Without it, the Indian plan will fail. India's dreams of overcoming the vicious circle of growing population and plummeting living standards will vanish into thin air.

The failure of the Indian Third Five Year Plan would be tragic in view of India's great opportunity to show that an under-developed country can achieve planned, self-

sustained growth without cruelty, without mass suffering and repression, without forced collectivization. The whole world is watching the race between free India and totalitarian China. Until recently China appeared to be out in front. But now, with widespread troubles in China, India is making the greater progress. Is this the time to cast our own veto against India's development in freedom? Is this the time to tell the world that American capital always has political strings attached? Is it good politics to slap at India just when the Himalayan border dispute is flaring up anew with China?

Of course it is annoying to have those

to whom we have given substantial assistance disagree with us. Of course it is frustrating to discover that the leaders of neutral nations seem to forget that they could hardly be neutral or independent were it not for the umbrella of our military and economic strength.

Yet where would we be, my friends, if every stirring of national pride, if every nationalization, every ill-considered word makes us retire to our tents--like Achilles--and sulk. If this is our attitude, then we will never take Troy--or outmaneuver the Communists.

I firmly believe that the American people have the guts to stick to a policy of victory in the Cold War. I believe that we

will not permit our emotions to gain the upper hand, that we will not cut off our nose to spite our face. We have the fortitude and perseverance to press forward regardless of namecalling abroad and cries of "appeasement" and "no-win" at home.

Unfortunately, my friends, the hallmark of our times is still the atomic bomb and the intercontinental missile. The bulk of mankind still lives within a half hour of flaming destruction. Thus the basic power conflicts of our age still occupy center stage and cannot be ignored.

I see one solution and only one solution to this all-pervading danger. Ultimately the

confrontation of power blocs must yield to decisions reached at the conference table through negotiations. Otherwise, the future is bleak indeed.

Now negotiations in the nuclear age are deadly serious business. The negotiating parties bring into play all the strategic, military, economic, and ideological power at their command. In the gigantic international chessgame of today, territories and weapons, production figures and populations, trade and aid are all pieces on the board. How they are moved--and whether they are moved--depends upon the total relative strength of the players. The Russians have distinguished themselves at the game of chess for years.

If we are to leave the table still wearing our shirts we have to develop the same prowess.

In large measure we have already successfully passed our baptism of fire in negotiating with the Russians. It is important to note that the difficulties are not all one way. Let us remember the problems which bedevil Khrushchev: 1) his critical agricultural situation; 2) the burden of armaments increasingly difficult for the Soviet Union to bear; 3) the fissures opening up in the "monolithic" Communist bloc; 4) the demand of ordinary Russians for the fruits of their toil and suffering since 1917--for better housing, more consumer goods, more freedom of

expression, greater personal opportunity, guarantees against terror and repression;

5) finally, Khrushchev has to face the imposing economic strength of the Common Market, and the prospect of an Atlantic Community stronger than anything the Communists can muster in the years ahead.

If the Soviet leaders were as responsive to the desires of their own people as they should be, they would see that there is no incompatibility between their desire for security and ours. Having no aggressive plans against them, we are prepared to concede their need for an airtight guarantee against aggression from the West. But in turn we must

have a guarantee against all the varieties of direct and indirect aggression for which the Communists are noted.

Such a wide-ranging agreement may be impossible at the present time. But why not make a start in areas where agreement is obviously in the best interests of both the Soviet Union and the United States? A nuclear test ban treaty is clearly in the interests of both countries. The same is true of an agreement limiting the members of the "nuclear club"--the countries possessing the atomic bomb--and limiting the transfer of fissionable materials for military purposes. Both the United States and the Soviet Union

should have a direct interest in holding an immediate special meeting on means of disconnecting the tripwire of accidental war.

The United States and the Soviet Union could demonstrate their willingness to cooperate for the good of mankind by pooling space efforts in an International Space Cooperation Year modeled on the International Geophysical Year of 1958.

Even more important is an airtight guarantee against the use of outer space for military purposes by either side. For the power which militarily controls space holds the key to eventual world domination.

Finally, even the territorial problems

inherited from World War II might be to some degree susceptible of negotiation. If the Soviet Union and the United States wish to show their ability to cooperate in any aspect of international relations, why not start with an ironclad, two-power guarantee of free communications with, and access to, West Berlin? Why subject access rights to the cumbersome, unreliable control of a multi-nation international body which in reality has no power over the Berlin situation? Joint-U.S.-Soviet guarantees, however, would allow us to maintain occupation and access rights while safeguarding the movement of persons and goods of all nationalities to

and from this bastion of freedom.

My friends, we are, as I have said, faced with enormous dangers and enormous opportunities. Our hope lies in the judicious application of imagination and firmness. We must expend our resources liberally yet keep plenty in reserve for the long struggle that lies ahead. We have good cards in our hands. How these cards are played will determine our future and the future of mankind.



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