

SWITZERLAND

COPY
Review of Interview of Swiss Commentator With
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, October, 1961.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Senator Humphrey, I suppose you have read the speech of Khrushchev?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I have only scanned through it. Frankly, I have been so busy talking to you good Swiss today, I haven't had time to even read a letter. I read the headlines about it in the New York Herald, the New York Times.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: And Senator, have you seen this appeal of the White House concerning this superbomb.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, I read that.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Is there anything you would care to say on the White House appeal?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, it is a threat to the well-being and the health, and indeed, possibly, to the life of its people to continue these atmospheric tests in the degree and measure that they have been conducted. The 50-megaton bomb, if it were to be tested or exploded in the atmosphere would add substantially to the radioactive debris and the radioactive fallout, and thereby, I think, be a real serious hazzard to life and health. I would hope that not only the White House make the request, but it appears to me that the United Nations itself should insist that this kind

COPY
of mass explosion should be stopped. Actually, the Soviets have had disregard for the welfare of the nations of people in this entire series of tests. I fully approve the White House statement, and I hope it will be favorably acted upon.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Do you see any military use in building bombs like these?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: None whatsoever. It has been well known in our country, and I am sure in others, for a number of years that you could build a bomb of 20 megatons, 30, 50, a hundred or more.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: The United States could build one too?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, we knew that two years ago. I recall very well that when I returned from the Soviet Union in 1958 discussing with the Atomic Energy Commission some of the nuclear developments at that time. And the information as to the capacity or the ability of our nuclear scientists to build a bomb of almost unlimited proportions was well established. A hundred megaton bomb is no secret, but it has no military value. As far as military value is concerned, ^{ten}/10-megaton bombs would have much more military value. And all that a large 50 or a hundred megaton bomb could do would be to assure total and mass destruction of an unbelievably large area of civilian population and civilian facilities.

COPY
SWISS COMMENTATOR: Why do you think that Khrushchev announces this explosion of a bomb that has no military value?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Mr. Khrushchev is a master at propaganda. His system came to power by the use of force, by the application of force; and Mr. Khrushchev knows how to use power. I am convinced that this announcement was just another one of Mr. Khrushchev's spectacles. He would have done very well in Hollywood. He would have made an excellent Hollywood press agent.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: There is quite a different subject. I know you visited our Federal President, Mr. Wahlen in Berne yesterday.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, I did. I had a very pleasant and informative visit with President Wahlen.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Was it a pure courtesy visit, or did you have any concrete things to talk about that you could tell us?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It was both. I felt that as long as it was my privilege to be in Switzerland that if the opportunity could be made available to me I would like to visit the President of the Swiss Confederation -- which I did. The President was most gracious. And I was accompanied by our Ambassador, Mr. McKinney, and my Associate on this trip, Mr. Connell. We went to the President's office. We exchanged formal greetings and courtesies and then settled

COPY
down to a very good, frank discussion of some of the economic developments in Western Europe -- all of which are encouraging, and not only encouraging, are dramatic developments; and also the Common Market; the possible membership of Great Britain in the Common Market; the Swiss participation, if this comes about, either as a member or an associate or whatever manner in which Switzerland and other countries, and particularly the neutrals, might be associated ^{with} ~~in~~ the Common Market.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Did you talk about watch tariffs?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I did not get that.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Did you talk about the problem of United States tariffs on imported watches?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Not particularly on watches. No. Maybe each country seems to feel its own important problems. I was more concerned about the impact of the Common Market upon American agricultural commodities. And we did discuss primarily the problems that -- political problems, for example, that a country such as Switzerland with its historic neutrality -- the problem that it would have in association with the Common Market. We did discuss the economic challenge that the Common Market would offer the United States, because surely this is a great productive ^{here} unit/in Western Europe. We did discuss agricultural policy both in Switzerland and in the United States, other countries.

COPY

We discussed most every economic problem, but we did not get around to Swiss watches except to say that a very large number of them are sold in the United States. We like them very much. In fact, I have one on right here. Yes, it's a Swiss -- And there are very few American watches left.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: As you know Switzerland is one of the great capitalist exporting countries, did you talk anything concerning Swiss loans.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Not with President Wahlen.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Anybody else.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, today I was privileged to visit with Dr. Speckler, the president of the Central Bank, and then with a number of your private Swiss bankers. These visits were most illuminating to me. I learned a great deal. We discussed the problem of balance of payments insofar as the United States is concerned in other countries; we discussed the flow of capital into the Swiss market, into the Swiss area. We discussed the export capital of Switzerland, the many monetary problems that come up with the uncertain conditions of the world in which we live; capital moving from one part of the world to another. And, indeed, I was much impressed with the fund of knowledge over financial and monetary matters that all of these men exhibited. Of course, we knew that when we came here. I don't suppose there is

COPY
any place in the world where there is a greater knowledge of international finance, monetary policy, fiscal policies than in Switzerland. In the few hours that I have had to discuss these discussions, I have taken elaborate notes, and I think I have learned a great deal.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Now, coming back to Khrushchev's speech, what do you think is the single most important statement or announcement which he made in his speech? The Berlin one -- the atom bomb one?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The atom bomb announcement was apparently an offside reference. There were indications that this was not a prepared script. I believe, from our point of view, that his formal announcement on the delay in signing a treaty with the GDR, with the East German machine was most important. I want you to know that I had felt that this would be the case. In fact, you may recall that Mr. Khrushchev had informed the Foreign Minister of Belgium, Paul Henri-Spaak, at the time of Mr. Spaak's visit to Moscow, that insofar as any deadline on the German Treaty was concerned, that this had been suspended -- that such a deadline had been removed. I think that this is maybe the most spectacular announcement. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Mr. Khrushchev always gives you a sort of taste of things to come in his earlier announcements. I really stand in ^{utter} amazement of his propaganda capacities. I repeat that he would put most of the public

COPY
relations firms right out of business if he should ever enter the capitalist society.

SWISS COMMENTATOR: Has he any chance for it?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I don't think he is going to be looking for a new job. But in case he did, he would surely be a mighty good competitor -- and I am afraid he would be a monopolist in short order when it comes to propaganda. When it comes to propaganda, he's the best.

... (Announcer mentioned time, etc.)

SWISS COMMENTATOR: No, you go ahead, which statement you thought was most important.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, well, I repeat, from our point of view, from what I think is the international point of view, and surely from America, his statement on Berlin. The statement on the bomb was not ~~surprised~~ unexpected at all; and insofar as his general comments on the developments of the Soviet-Socialists/^{the} Communists Economy -- this you could have expected too. Mr. Khrushchev has, of course, laid before the 22nd Party Congress a review of things that have transpired in recent years, outlining what he considers to be the successes of his system and projecting his 20-year program into the future. But again, as I say, all of this has had some preliminaries. We sort of knew this was going to happen. What he is really doing at this Party Conference is reasserting his own leadership. This is the real development. If you are interested, I might just digress for a moment about that. When I was in Europe in July, I went on

COPY

fact finding tour, after which tour I reported to the President of the United States my observations on Germany and Berlin, particularly Berlin and France, Great Britain. I indicated in that report that we could well expect Mr. Khrushchev to be very arrogant, belligerent, noisy, demanding and threatening for several months; that he was building up to the 22nd Party Communist Party Congress in Moscow. It is quite obvious for some time that Khrushchev has been having problems of leadership in the Communist world. The first, there was the defection under Stalin of Tito. In more recent years the Chinese Communist have been challenging Mr. Khrushchev's philosophy of Communist leadership. Mr. Khrushchev may be looked upon in the Communist world as a more liberal Communist and not a strict constructionist as compared to Stalin. The Chinese Communist, however, would be rather new in the business of governing a nation or of dictating policies or even more Stalin than Stalin. They are the latest in the Communist world of dictators and, therefore, they are contesting Mr. Khrushchev every step of the way. The Chinese are using strict, inflexible, disciplinary policies plus the manpower of China to try to overshadow Mr. Khrushchev and the Soviet Union. Khrushchev makes his appeal on the economic progress of his country, and the fact that he has been able to get along a little better in the West and make some arrangements that have aided the Communist society. I have felt that Khrushchev would take

COPY

literally to the brink of war over Berlin without ever intending to go to war, using threat, blackmail or intimidation. I believe that these atomic tests have all been a part of it. They have had scientific value, military value. But I think that was secondary. I think that what Mr. Khrushchev was really doing was just phasing these atomic^{tests}/in on his overall political policies, of relating to Berlin. And secondly, and maybe more importantly, relating to his own position of leadership. I am quite convinced that the Berlin crisis was contrived by Mr. Khrushchev to tighten up in his empire, to bring the recalcitrant members that were getting a little out of line back into step -- such as the Poles, for example and the Czechs or anybody else. I am also convinced that he has used the Berlin crisis to demonstrate that he is in command and that he can threaten the West, that he is the powerful leader. In the meantime he knows that he has serious problems in Albania. There's another split in the Iron Curtain. The Chinese Communist are in Albania on all forms. They are conducting relations of foreign policy, lending credits, giving economic assistance. There are problems in Bulgaria. There are other problems. So that what Mr. H.Khrushchev(Senate Recording Studio indicated that the tape ran out on Part 2.)



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