

[Feb. 20, 1964]

From the Office of:
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY FOR RELEASE: At 6 p.m., EST
1313 New Senate Office Building Sunday, Feb. 23, 1964
Washington, D.C.
Capitol 4-3121, Ext. 2424

TV INTERVIEW WITH CARL ROWAN, NEW USIA DIRECTOR

The following are excerpts from the transcript of an interview of Carl Rowan, new director of the United States Information Agency, by Senate Majority Whip Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.). The program was filmed for Minnesota stations: (Confirmation hearings on Mr. Rowan's appointment have been scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.)

SENATOR HUMPHREY: You hear a lot of talk and we read in the papers, Carl, that the cold war between the United States and Russia has gone into a period of a thaw - a kind of easing off. Now whether that is true or not - I just want to ask the question - does this make the United States Information Agency any less necessary?

MR. ROWAN: Senator, I think it makes the Agency more necessary than ever. If you will recall Khrushchev's statement about peaceful co-existence. He made it clear that there isn't going to be any ideological co-existence. This means that we've got to be prepared to get our story told with perhaps more zeal than ever before.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, I'm of the opinion that when the Soviets are being real tough and ornery, as we say, that it's easy for us to tell our story because then people can readily see the difference and the Soviets have a way of being able to anger people on those occasions. But when they get a little more sociable and as we say, the thaw is on, then the differences are blurred somewhat.

MR. ROWAN: That's exactly right.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: And the USIA has a more difficult job than ever.

(MORE)

MR. ROWAN: Well, one of the things I've pointed out to people is this that if it is true, as some people think, that awesome nuclear weapons have ruled out force as a way of solving this conflict between our society and Communist society, then obviously the battle is going to be won on some other ground and I happen to think that it's in this area of ideas - it's the question of winning the most minds and the most hearts of the people around the world. And we've got to be prepared to wage that battle just as zealously and with just as much of our resources as we are prepared to wage a hot war, if that should be thrust upon us.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: You've surely stressed what I think is the important message that the struggle to win the peace requires every bit of much sacrifice and courage and steadfastness as the struggle to win any war. And yet it isn't quite as, it doesn't seem to be quite as dramatic and doesn't seem to be quite as patriotic to be in this peace struggle. Nevertheless, it is the real battle, isn't it?

MR. ROWAN: That's right. Some people think that you're patriotic only if you're mad and cursing somebody, but there's a tremendous measure of patriotism in going out into a village seeing if you can't make a few friends.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Exactly. Carl, you are going to supervise and are supervising a very big agency. Just the other day, you had your first experiences as a Cabinet officer, so to speak, you were at the President's Cabinet meeting, is that right?

MR. ROWAN: Yes, and it's quite an experience.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: That is some experience, I can well imagine. I know how the President relies on you. Mrs. Humphrey and I were fortunate to be visiting one evening with President and Mrs. Johnson at the White House and he told us then before you were appointed, that he was considering appointing

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you and I know of his fondness for you and his great respect for you. As a matter of fact, you traveled with the President, didn't you when he was Vice President.

MR. ROWAN: Yes, I took two long trips with him and, as you can imagine, I'm greatly honored by the confidence he has shown in me and now I've got to get out and prove that he's right when he says I'm the man to run this agency.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I don't want you to comment on what I'm about to say, Carl. But I know a little something about those trips and I didn't hear it from you and I'm not going to tell you who I heard it from. But I know that on one or two occasions when you were handling the Vice President's news conferences and his public relations as the Vice President of the United States representing then President Kennedy and our country in these sensitive areas of the world, such as India for example, that you just spoke right up and spoke your mind and said what ought to be done even if the Vice President didn't agree with it and then I recall that I heard a little later the Vice President said, "You're right." But I was told that out of this kind of frank and friendly exchange came this great warm respect the President has for you. And I won't let you say a word about it. Now listen, what does your agency consist of? How many operations do you carry on?

MR. ROWAN: Well, we've got over 12,000 employees and in well over 100 countries.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: They're not all here in Washington.

MR. ROWAN: No, happily not. In fact the great bulk of them are overseas. In fact, about 7,000 of them are local employees in these countries. We have, of course, the Voice of America. We put out a daily summary of news events over a wireless file. We send out motion pictures. We pick the people to

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go overseas on Leader grants because Ed Murrow believed, as I do, that face contact is tremendously important. He used to say you can send a piece of information 10,000 miles just like that, but it's getting it that last three feet to the man you want to reach that's crucially important.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: There's a development taking place overseas that I've heard about - namely, television spreading something like it did here in America in the 1950's. Here in the 60s in many areas of the world, television is expanding. That's a powerful instrument. What are you doing about it? Are you adapting your agency to it?

MR. ROWAN: It is indeed. It is a tremendously powerful instrument and to the extent that we've got the resources, we're trying to use that instrument. Last year for example, and I'm not talking about the U.S. and Canada now, but in the free world alone, there was an increase of more than five million TV sets. There was an increase of almost 300 television transmitters. Well, you can imagine what this means to people in the underdeveloped areas. They want to see this to the extent that they're getting sets. We want to have something to say about what they see because this is one way of selling this message of freedom.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: You provide film for example, then for television?

MR. ROWAN: We provide film, indeed, you'd be amazed at the number of hours of television viewing that we provide for stations around the world. For example, in Finland on many occasions we provided film which was used by both the commercial station and by the state TV network. Things like the President giving the State of the Union Address or some other event of that kind. Or maybe some commentary on a civil rights event. It's simply a way of letting the people see first-hand what's going on.

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SENATOR HUMPHREY: Now, Carl, you may say that you provide a news service. Now I'm going to put it right to you. Is this a doctored news? Are you trying to present the truth as it is recorded here in America as it happens or does your agency try to fluff it or puff it up so that it's really like propaganda.

MR. ROWAN: No, I feel that the best way to wreck USIA is to have it put out phony reports because the world will catch on in no time and then nobody will believe us and if they don't believe you, you're wasting your time and your money.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: We've got about one minute left and this is the way we hand you these hot questions. Now the trouble spots in the world these days seem to be concentrated in Africa and in Latin America, and in one minute tell us what you are trying to do about that and what, if anything, is USIA doing in these areas.

MR. ROWAN: Well, in the last couple of years, we've increased about nine-fold the amount of short-wave radios broadcasting into Latin America. We've increased greatly our broadcasts into Africa. We've built new facilities in Liberia and elsewhere in order to hit Africa south of the Sahara.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Can I interrupt? Your broadcasts go in the native language?

MR. ROWAN: Oh yes, we're broadcasting in 36 languages.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Are you stepping up any on USIA activities beamed into Cuba?

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[Feb. 20, 1964]

Start on Page 3

TV SCRIPT

February 20, 1964

BOB COAR: This is Washington and this is Senator Hubert Humphrey, the Assistant Majority Leader of the United States Senate. Today, in reporting to the people of Minnesota, he has a distinguished guest. This guest has been appointed by President Johnson to be the Director of the United States Information Agency. And now, here is Senator Humphrey.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, thank you. Yes, our guest today is a very distinguished Minnesotan and he's a gentleman who has been a dear friend of mine for many years. I hope that he'll let me say that and that he'll admit it. And he is Mr. Carl Rowan, who has just been appointed by President Johnson to head up one of our most important government agencies, the United States Information Agency. I first met Carl when I was Mayor of Minneapolis. He was a graduate student at the University of Minnesota just after the war. That was before he joined the staff of the Minneapolis Tribune and went on to become an internationally famous prize-winning reporter and author. I am not going to ask him how many books he has authored but I know they run into several. Carl was brought to Washington by the late President Kennedy in 1961. And he served for two years as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs in our State Department. And then, as you recall, he was named Ambassador to Finland, a very important post in a very important and sensitive country. When President Johnson selected him to succeed Edward R. Murrow as Director of the United States Information Agency, he said of Carl Rowan and I quote that

"he is a man most eminently qualified to supervise this vital program of telling America's story abroad." Those were the words of President Johnson and I can say unequivocally that I agree with President Johnson because this is a gifted and talented man. Well Carl, I say Carl - I should be more respectful of a distinguished government servant but you are a dear friend. We welcome to this program and through this program, we have a chance to say a few words to our friends and neighbors out in Minnesota. I am going to start right off by asking you a question that is on the tip of the tongue of every one of our viewers, How did you like your assignment in Finland?

MR. ROWAN: We had a marvelous time in Finland. You will recall that just before I left, we went up to Virginia, Minnesota, and Elmer Kivimaki and all the people there gave me a big send-off. Well the Finnish people tried their best to outdo the Finns of Minnesota. They tried to give me a warmer welcome there than I had as a send-off in Minnesota. It was just marvelous.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Any saunas up there in Finland?

MR. ROWAN: Not only did I have a lot of them but I had the nerve to build one in the Ambassador's residence which nobody for some reason had the nerve to do before.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Oh, for goodness sakes, not the nerve, the good judgment, Carl. I remember that the folks up in the Iron range in Virginia gave you one of these special stoves for saunas. Is that right?

MR. ROWAN: They sure did.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: And we had quite an experience up there together

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I think that we've had some Minnesotans that have been on these Leader Grants going overseas, reporting their observations to the people of America and to the President and to the State Department. I recall that many of them - we've had the former Mayor of Minneapolis who ran against me for the Senate - Kenneth Peterson, we've had Governor Rolvaag before he was Governor, we've had Don ~~Reisack~~ ^{WOZNIAK}, the former Majority Leader of the Minnesota State Legislature who made a very important trip - going to places behind the Iron Curtain - Germany, Berlin and other areas:

MR. ROWAN: And don't leave Finland out. ~~Reisack~~ ^{WOZNIAK} came to see me.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: That's a very important part of your program then.

MR. ROWAN: Yes, absolutely.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: There's a development taking place overseas that I've heard about - namely, television spreading something like it did here in America in the 1950's. Here in the 60's in many areas of the world, television is expanding. That's a powerful instrument. What are you doing about it? Are you adapting your agency to it?

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~~SENATOR HUMPHREY: You know the old BBC, the British Broadcasting Corporation news was always respected around the world because that while it was a little dull once in a while - it didn't have much razzle-dazzle to it - it was factual wasn't it? That's what you're trying to do, isn't it?~~

~~MR. ROWAN: That's exactly what I'm trying to do.~~

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SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, we could keep you on this television show for a long, long time. But our time is running out and I want to say that on behalf of the people in Minnesota, we're very, very proud of you [#] proud that the President of the United States saw fit to appoint you to this sensitive and important post and I want to commend you on your fine record of public service, of personal sacrifice that you and your family have made. We'll see you next week. Mr. Rowan: Thank you very much.

[Feb. 20, 1964] 1

My guest today is a distinguished

Minnesotan who has been a dear friend of mine

for ~~more than 17~~ *many years* years. He is Carl Rowan,

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to head the United States Information Agency.

I first met Carl when I was Mayor of Minneapolis and he was a graduate student at the University of Minnesota just after the war. That was before he joined the staff of the Minneapolis Tribune and went on to become an internationally famous prize-winning reporter and author.

Carl was brought to Washington by the late President Kennedy in 1961 and served for two years as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the State Department, before being named our Ambassador to Finland.

When President Johnson selected him to succeed Edward R. Murrow as Director of the U.S. Information Agency, he said Carl Rowan is the "man most eminently qualified to supervise this vital program of telling America's story abroad."

I agree with President Johnson's
praise.

Questions for Carl Rowan

You hear a lot of talk and read in the papers that Cold War between the United States and Russia has gone into a period of thaw.

Does this make the USIA less necessary?

Is it as vital now as it was when the Cold War was hotter?

The trouble spots in the world these days seem concentrated in Africa and Latin America. What is the USIA doing in these areas? Are we doing more than we used to?

I understand there is a big boom in television construction throughout the world now - something quite comparable to the boom this country had during the early 1950's.

Is the USIA doing anything to adapt its programs to this new boom?



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