

VICE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS  
to the  
Travel Advisory Committee  
November 16, 1965

I do deeply appreciate, Mr. Black, the chance to appear here and get this little priming, so to speak, as to the whole subject of travel.

I am about to visit our most famous visitor for some time, Princess Margaret and her husband. Mrs. Humphrey and I are going to the British Embassy for the luncheon for Princess Margaret, and I want to be sure that we are on time for that.

By the way, I might add that this is the fulfillment of the dream of the United States Travel Service to have a very distinguished renown personality such as Princess Margaret and her husband visit the United States. It gives us a chance to show to a very significant person the wonders of this great country, and to get the advantage of all the constructive publicity that comes with it.

I will take just a very few minutes, and I wish that I could spend much more time with you, but I have asked Ted Van Dyk of my office if he would remain here and, if need be, to answer any questions that might be raised by you.

But I am here for one purpose in particular, to thank the Travel Advisory Committee for its cooperation with the United States Travel Service and to thank private industry for its genuine cooperation with the government, and to encourage the government to extend the fullest of cooperation with private industry.

There are two or three matters that I would like just to set straight and maybe one or two suggestions that might be helpful.

First of all, it is a fact that we have yet to really exploit and develop our tourism. We have our problems. Our country is not as skilled in this matter as some others because our livelihood has not depended on it. But there is a good deal of talk these days, as there has been for some time, about our payments deficit, and some people have been fearful that there would be more restrictive legislation passed that relates to travel.

I think the answer to this is to stimulate the positive message, to get our travel program from other parts of the world into the United States in high gear, rather than to apply restrictions upon the movement of persons from the United States to other places in the world.

There isn't any doubt but what travel is the bridge, at least one of the most significant bridges, between cultures and nations and

ideologies, and we have much more to gain from this than anyone else; and therefore, it is to our advantage to promote travel in all of its meaning and all of its ramifications--travel from other countries to the United States, travel within the United States by our own people to get better acquainted with the many sections of our own country.

And this, of course, is what the program "Discover America" is all about. It is well under way.

And then travel in the very true sense by our own people to other parts of the world.

I think to cut off travel, to cut it down, would be sort of cutting off your nose to spite your face. It would not really lend any constructive good in the long term.

Our Travel Service, because I know some of you may be concerned about its limitations, is limited. Its authorization was four million, seven hundred thousand, wasn't it?

MR. BLACK: That's right.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Your budget -- how much did they give you?

MR. BLACK: Three million.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Gave you three million. Well, an extra million or half or so could have meant a great deal, and I believe that it is to the advantage of private industry to ask for the full authorization. There isn't any reason that your voices shouldn't be heard.

This is not a competitive system. The U. S. Travel Service is not designed to take over your job. It is in a real sense designed to help you with your work and to increase the flow of visitors and to increase the volume of tourism. The need, therefore, of money and staff is evident.

The positive message of encouraging travel is the philosophy and policy of this government as of this date, and I hope that it will continue to be so, and I think it shall be if you insist upon it. But if you are going to hide back in the weeds and then just come out crying when the damage is done, why, you will have to pay the consequences and suffer the consequences.

This is a representative government, and you are entitled to representation, you are entitled to be heard; and I do believe that if your

voice is heard on the value of tourism, the positive message of promoting tourism, that you can have a decided impact upon the ultimate decision of the Congress and the Administration. So I encourage you to do that.

Now just one or two other suggestions.

I mentioned that I am soon to go to the British Embassy to pay our respects to this very charming and important guest that is visiting the U. S., Princess Margaret and her husband. We ought to not only develop this great event or this significant visit in terms of our own domestic publicity, but to do it abroad.

I was home in Minneapolis yesterday morning and the Swedish Government presented me with a proclamation of "Homecoming Sweden 1966," because it was a hundred years ago the first big migration of Swedish people came to the United States, and the Government of Sweden has representatives here in the United States now going to every known Swedish community in the United States promoting, and effectively promoting I might add, a return of people in the United States of Swedish descent to Sweden to spend the summer, to spend three weeks, two weeks, a month, and they are making headway. I was out at the Twin Cities, and it doesn't take too much to promote the return to Sweden out there in Minnesota.

But they are making headway in state after state. And they had this very lovely young lady that was representing Sweden. The Swedish Government had representation from its tourism, its airline, and so forth.

This is the kind of promotion that one can't help but take notice of.

Now, Prime Minister Erlander was here a short time ago and he was my guest down at the Greenbrier, and I talked to the Prime Minister about the two-way traffic in terms of tourism and suggested that it wouldn't be a bad idea if when he got back to Sweden he would tell the people the wonders of the United States, that possibly some of those affluent Swedes might want to pay us a visit. And I think in a very real sense just by talking to him about it we made some impact.

But I was somewhat concerned -- this is the first time I have mentioned it -- about the lack of interest on the part of many of our own public relations people about promoting just this single visit. There was only one photographer that we got around ourselves down at the Greenbrier to take any pictures at all about the Prime Minister of Sweden being there at one of the greatest resorts of America in one of the great tourist areas of America, and see to it that that material was shipped back into Europe. There was little or nothing about it in the United States.

I don't know what you have to do in this country to get some interest developed in terms of the tourism prospects that are here.

Now this Prime Minister was traveling over here on a Swedish export program. He was here to sell goods. I was thinking about how we could sell something, too. I guess I was the only one -- I will be right blunt about it.

So I get right down now to our own promotion efforts. I don't see why we have to be so reluctant to want to put our best foot forward and to make the best of everything that comes our way.

I wonder what the USIA is doing abroad to promote tourism. I would be interested in finding out. I suppose they are.

I wonder why American industry hasn't really gotten on the ball about having books about America spread all over the world, about the beauties and the wonders of this country, so that tourism is excited and incited. It is very important to do so. There is country after country in which there is a dearth of American reading material, picture books about our country. This all relates to tourism.

I wonder whether or not there is a real concerted program when the U.N. is filled, as they were recently, with 70 foreign ministers and 40 prime ministers. They are here, they came here, and these people didn't get to be foreign ministers or prime ministers without something. Some of them were elected, some of them got there other ways. But they are the leaders of their countries; and I don't see any reason why they should stop in New York or we should wait for sometime for the State Department to find a way that they can work them into a busy schedule of some official here in Washington. They are here, the best public relations media is right here -- the person. And it is to our advantage to see to it that they travel from one end of this country to the other, even if we have to work it out between government and industry to help finance it.

They will leave a few dollars along the way, but more importantly, they will go back with some idea about this country. It is not only good international relations -- it is good business.

Now I suppose maybe this is being worked out. But if it is, it is the best kept secret of the government.

I just can't imagine having anybody come to my old home town where our drugstore is as important as those prime ministers and me not getting them in the store. I will guarantee you if they will walk the full length and width of that store we will get a dollar out of them before they get out of there. If we don't, we will change clerks.

But we have so many things going for us that sometimes we forget that with a little extra effort we can really make something of it.

So I just jotted down here quickly that the U.N. -- it is a facility that is in our own country, a great international institution. This nation has conference after conference, international conferences, and yet I have the feeling that somehow or other we do not truly exploit these conferences for the purposes that we have in mind in terms of our Travel Service and our tourism.

USIS is supposed to be an information service for our government, and I wonder whether it really realizes it could also have some commercial benefit for the United States. There isn't any reason that just philosophy and culture are taught. There is not a thing wrong with blending economics with learning. In fact, it makes learning much more enjoyable. And I would hope that it would tie in with our "Visit USA" program, with the "Discover America" program, "Festival USA." These are all efforts that I believe can be tied in more closely, John, than they have been.

Now I just conclude on this note: that the "Discover America" program needs to have a director. It is an achievement to obtain the cooperation of so many segments of private industry in the travel service under one banner. This is a highly competitive industry, and most people have their own ideas what they want to do. But I want to suggest to you that it is pretty much like many other areas of foreign trade and foreign competition, that unless Americans learn how to unite on some things they are going to be pretty much like what Ben Franklin said to the Constitutional Convention, "we either hang together or we hang separately."

We need to have this industry working together, and it is beginning to show the desire to do that, and in the process of working together it is beginning to develop many more, I think, satisfactory and adjustable programs to the travel needs of the people.

I am going to run along. I wish I could stay with you a good deal longer. This is not a passing interest of mine, I want you to know.

I hope that during the coming year, and particularly in the next two to three months, that we can work together a little more closely because I think there is much more that can be done. If we can be as ingenious figuring out how to get people here as we have had some people figuring out how to prevent Americans from going there we will be on the right track.

I want to make my position clear: I am not for restricting travel. I don't think that is the way you build a world of understanding, a

world of peace, and I don't think you educate and develop a more cosmopolitan attitude about the world in which we live.

I do think that travel, like most things, ought to be reciprocal, and I do believe that our industry ought to be given the fullest help by the government without its domination. I don't think we need to subsidize you, to be frank about it. At least I have seen nothing to date to indicate so.

I would kind of forewarn you that subsidization sometimes does bring with it a degree of regulation which you may not want.

I do think it is better for you to have the cooperative endeavors of the U. S. Travel Service working alongside of you, supplementing and not supplanting, seeking your advice and seeking your cooperation, but in turn the U. S. Travel Service extending to you the fullest cooperation without dominating your industry. And that is the present philosophy of this government, and that is the philosophy which I think will yield the best results in the long run and the short run.

Thank you very much.



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