

TRANSCRIPT - SPAHR DINNER - CLEVELAND
MAY 6, 1966

Thank you very much my friend, Charles Spahr. Thank you not only for the invitation that you extended to me to join with you and your fellow club members and associates here in greater Cleveland, on this festive and happy evening of fellowship and I thank you for your introduction. I didn't know that you had gotten hold of the transcript of one of my ad lib speeches, but I thank you for editing it and thank you for the selective process that you exercised in reading from it. This is a rare privilege for me to once again come to Cleveland, to be here almost for a full day, to be in the presence of friends, neighbors, and leading citizens, to see my old friend the former mayor of this your great city, and now one who is far removed from the passions and the emotions of politics, the Honorable Judge Anthony Celebrezze. I just want to say Tony, your Honor, it's just wonderful to see you again. Ever since my friend Tony left Washington things have been in more difficulty, we may have to call you back. When he was there with these programs, they just went through Congress like that. The day that he left it became a little more difficult, but I know you are happy to have him back here and very frankly I know that he's very happy to be here and we're proud of him. I'm very proud and happy of our friendship. Today we've been treated with such generous hospitality by your present mayor, Mayor Ralph Locher, and I want Ralph to know that he has been a tower of strength for all of us in this day and we've had I don't know how many public officials in here from the five neighboring states of the Great Lakes Area, about 200-300 or more, and your mayor and your public officials here in this city have been wonderful hosts and been a great help to us all the time, all day. Now there are many here tonight that I want to say a word about but time forbids. I made two resolutions that I kept thus far and I am working on a third. The first one was that I quit smoking, I did that

ten years ago and I kept it. The second one was that I would lose 15 pounds and I did it and I kept it. The third one that no one believes is that I'll shorten up my speeches, and I swear that I am going to do it and with your cooperation this will be done. There are people here this evening that have been very helpful in my life. I want to just select out one for a moment. Charlie Spahr mentioned Plans for Progress. First, Charlie, I should tell the story about how we corralled you as the Chairman of the Plans for Progress. We are very grateful to this fine fellow citizen of yours and when I say we, I mean the country, the government, all of us in this country because Plans for Progress is what it says, planning progress. Particularly in human relations, industrial relations, and it has been a tremendous success. It has accomplished more in voluntary action than we have been able to accomplish in any form of compulsory action and we're very proud of the work of everyone of the people involved. And by the way, the great corporations of this land contribute their best people to this program. So if you're asked sometime to give of yourself or of one of your fellow officials or company officers in Plans for Progress, send us the best, because that's what we need and I know that you will do it. But when I asked Charles Spahr if he'd serve in this capacity he, after a little visiting, said he would and I was extremely grateful and thanked him and told him that it would, of course, take a great deal of his time and it was a sacrifice. I said now, that was the meeting that we had in May of last year, and I said now Charles, if you can just come back now next month so that we can do a little planning and kind of talk this out a little more and get our show on the road, I'd really appreciate it, and he said, Mr. Vice President, I'd like to do that but I hope that you will understand I am the Chairman of the Republican Fund Raising Dinner in Cleveland when the former President, Mr. Eisenhower's going to be there and I thought I ought

to tell you and I may not be able to come back in June. I think this illustrates to you that partisanship is not exactly a part of this program. I hope you weren't exactly too successful Charlie but I'm afraid you were. He just told me he did all right. Over in this part of the room is a good friend of mine and of Charles Spahr's, our friend Hobart Taylor. Hobart Taylor is one of the heroes of my life and I think one of the heroes of our country. He has exercised the power of reason and persuasion rather than emotion and compulsion, and he's a trained, educated man, highly respected in his profession, the law, today a member of the export-import bank board, only recently the executive director of the Plans for Progress and the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities. And I want to tell you I've never met a man that did more and did it so quietly, so nicely, so gently, and yet so effectively. Hobart, I for one salute you in the presence of your friends. Stand up Hobart, take a bow. It's nice to see my old friend, A.B. ^{BOWDS} Barnes here too, of Baldwin Wallace College. A.B. is a LSU fellow along with me. We're both southerners and, of course, I came from South Dakota originally and he's from Arkansas but other than that we worked together and studied together and have been together as good friends for a long time. Now there are people here from the community of the steel industry and I want you to know how much we appreciate your investments in Minnesota. I should act as Vice President of the United States and get over this being so parochial about my home state, but we are very proud of the great work that has taken place in my home state of Minnesota. I think this is one of the best examples what we have been talking about of the cooperation between government and business and the community and we've had more investments in Northeastern Minnesota which was a poverty area, which was a critical area, a distressed area for years.

We've had more investment in the last year in that area than in all of the seven or eight states of Appalachia by the federal government. This is by private investment and today where we had a labor surplus a few years ago, in fact only a few months ago, today we were asking for people to come up there and go to work. It proves what can be done and I would surely be an ingrate if I didn't express to all of you a very sincere note of thanks and I say that without going into the different companies and the persons involved here. I have been discussing this matter with some here at our head table, Mr. Harrison, and others and I wanted you to know how much we appreciate it. Now let me just say a few words to you about your city and your state and our country. First of all, you have a great city here. I was the mayor of a great city and there are at least one ex-mayor and one active mayor here tonight, mayor of the great city of Minneapolis. We don't build a great city by just having a city council and a mayor. I said at the noon luncheon, that cities ought to be the best example of our culture, not the worst. They ought to exemplify the intellectual, technological, scientific, materialistic and spiritual achievements of man. Whenever you see a blighted area in the city, remember its a blight on you because it doesn't need to be that way. And whenever you see disharmony, dissent, distress, injustice, it's a little bit on you too, on me, on all of us. When I say you I include myself in that circle. We have a task before us and that's to try to rebuild in a very real sense our cities. The Romans, the Athenians, the men of great periods of history that we remember that history records, they were the men of the cities. Pericles and his Athens, Tato, Caesar, Augustus or Julius, have roamed, these were men of the cities and today we marvel at the achievements of these men of bygone ages and centuries and we look with wonderment upon the creation of their cities. I'm sure it wasn't all so

beautiful as history now records it, but let's make our cities what they ought to be too. Cities filled with the beauty of life, as well as the energy of life, with industry, yes, but also with art and the humanities, with good living as well as hard work, and you can do that right here and frankly we have to. You can't escape it, we're running away from our problems to be frank about it. This is what has happened in this what we call suburbia and now people are running away from suburbia into sub-suburbia. You can't run any longer, there's no place to hide in the nuclear age, no place at all. We do not want our cities, the core of our cities, to become racial blocks and islands. They must become neighborhoods and I know that I can look to you as I look to others throughout America to lead in the redevelopment of our communities. There are many projects here in your own area that you're giving yourself to. I say this to you for one simple reason. I have sat here talking to your associates and I found out when I came to Cleveland and when I accepted this invitation that if you're a member of the 50 Club you're something in this town and I know and I've heard, not only here tonight but elsewhere, that if a member of this organization is behind a project, it generally works. It's already chartered for success. Whether you like it or not, or know it or not, you have the mantel of leadership on your shoulders. Not as a club, but as individuals. I don't know what your charter is, I don't know what your so-called purposes are, but I know about you and I know that you represent the leadership, the civic leadership, the economic leadership, the cultural leadership of this city and once you take on that mantel that's when you get into trouble, that's when you have to deliver. That's what America has on its shoulders today, the mantel of leadership and that mantel of leadership is not a cloak of comfort, doesn't give you any ease, it doesn't even permit you the

time for the enjoyment of luxury, it imposes new burdens, new duties but everyone of you are working harder than you should in your own business. I know that I am working a little harder than is necessary in my job and my wife tells me time after time. I ask myself as you do, why, because I feel that once one is given this privilege he must give of himself, literally down on the harness if need be and I think that's the way you really feel or you wouldn't be doing what you are doing because there isn't a man here that doesn't give more of himself than either his physical well being or his financial needs require but once that we've established that fact then make up your mind that you are going to leave your mark in this community. Today I had the privilege of meeting some of these young ladies that are in your community that are in your Job Core here. Now this isn't any great profound observation that I am about to make, but we have throughout America thousands and thousands of young people that for the first time are coming into their own, I can use a poor analogy and I mention the steel industry, the iron ore industry. Up in my part of Minnesota we have what we call low grade iron ore and we decided that it had to be upgraded and you put your money in to do it, much of it right out of here. It was for all practical purposes you could have said uneconomic. And some people have said that about our illiterates, some people have said that about our poor people, it's just too much trouble, it's better just to keep them on relief don't worry about it just kind of hope that it will be all right and just kind of pay off. Now we know that we can upgrade humanity just as you can upgrade a product. We know that with proper motivation and incentive that people can improve their place in life and we also know that the promise of America is that every man shall have his chance, every man, everybody, no matter his circumstances, his race, his creed, his ethnic group, he

must have his chance to make something out of himself. So the Job Core is one of these efforts. Now I want to be quite candid with you, if your're going to ask me the question that has it always been successful, the answer is no. Has every project that you tried to perfect been a sales success, the answer is no. If you don't believe so ask Henry Ford the II about the Edsel, but that didn't mean they closed up shop. There even have been a General Motors product or two that didn't make it so well. I can't predict that anything that whatever we start will be a success. But on balance it has been pretty good. There're about 300 young ladies here in your community that are in your Job Core Center. Make sure that they are part of your community and I think you will. That's just a small item, just one or two of you make up your mind that there must be a place for them. Now I just want to say a few words about the role of our free enterprise system in this world leadership responsibility that we have. First of all let me make it clear, I do not think that the United States of America is the world's policeman. I do not think that we have to have our nose in everything that goes on in the world, but I do think we have to be aware of what goes on in the world and we have to and we must be concerned about the world in which we live particularly if it threatens the goal and the objectives that are ours and the ideals by which we guide our lives. I believe that freedom can be contagious. I believe that the cause of human freedom can be more attractive than the cause of totalitarianism. I believe that there is more dynamism in voluntary action, in freedom of choice and free enterprise, in freedom itself than there is in any form of collectivism. I believe this with all of my heart and all of my mind and all of my experience and I believe that the free enterprise system of America is the most progressive economic system in the world and I believe that it's the time,

the time has come for captains of this free enterprise system to understand it too and most of you do. There is no system that has shared the benefits like this one with so many. No system has done so much for so many and so justly. No system has developed such systems of such means of production and distribution. The miracle of the world is not the splitting of the atom. The miracle of our time is not the penetration of our space. The miracle of our time is the per capita income of the people of the United States. I could add on to that and say that, that miracle is in the sense summarized or the aggregate of it can be explained when you know that almost 50% of the world's gross national product is in your hands. We produce almost 50% of the world's gross national product right here in the United States. This is unbelievable and its because we produce this that we have the right to claim without being boastful but humbly grateful, prayerfully grateful, that our system is a miracle, if not a miracle at least it is the wonder of the world and I repeat it not only produces goods but it produces good people. The competition that is here is a competition within rules. There is motivation, there is incentive and there is also what we call social responsibility within this system. Now government and the free system of enterprise and our so-called social structure together have worked out what I believe to be one of the most powerful forces for good and for peace and for justice that this world has known, our economic system. You heard it, but I am an old educator in the sense education is essentially repetition. We have to repeat it again and again. Now what does this free enterprise system mean then to us. Many people have asked questions about what we're up to as a nation. Our enemies and our friends ask the following questions: they ask #1, are we capable of leadership, that is do we have the understanding, do we have the qualities of patience, the qualities

of reflection, the qualities of insight that is necessary, or that are necessary for leadership. To lead other people, to motivate them not just to do it ourselves but to get other people to help do what needs to be done. Do we have in other words, the character for leadership. Only time can answer that question. Time and experience. I think we have shown that we have the qualities that lend themselves to the character for leadership, particularly in this postwar period. The second question is do we have an economy that has the staying power, the endurance power to fulfill the requirements for leadership because it doesn't do any good to give a talk about leadership and tell the world what we ought to do and what they ought to do, if you don't have the muscles so to speak, the substance, the goods, the materials to back it up and not just for the moment. We're not engaged in a 100 yard sprint, we're in a cross country race, gentlemen, and we're going to be in this kind of competition in this world for the foreseeable future. I don't think you can tell your children it will be any easier, even though I must say that our children compared to the rest of the children of the world have had it rather good. I don't think that we can say to ourselves by the year 2000 that there will be no troubles in this world, in fact I think there will be more and I want to say there'd be troubles if there had never been a communist. As a matter of fact many of the troubles in the world today are not directly related to communism at all. They are related to a world in revolution, in change, in turbulence, in violence. People awakening to their own national destiny, people that just want better things. Communication has done a great deal. You cannot have our kind of a society and keep broadcasting it to the world without arousing the appetities of others. My father once said to me never feed a man a nice T-bone if your're going to keep him on a hamburger diet and I think it's better to say when the people

see what modern industry and technology and science can produce even though they may be illiterates they can see the picture, even though they may be ignorant they still have appetites and desires, they become restless. So had there never been a Carl Marx, a Joseph Stalin, a Lenin or a Mao or whoever they may be, there'd still be trouble but there are men like Lenin and Stalin and Mao and others and they add to the trouble and they add to the challenge. Sometimes they've challenged us so much that we've done better. I don't think we'd ever been doing what we are doing today in space had it not been for Sputnik. Scared the living daylights out of us and you know it. I doubt that we'd ever really been as far advanced in the Alliance for Progress if Castro hadn't taken over the Island of Cuba, that just shocked us into action and I doubt that we ever would have understood the importance of collective security had not we suffered the pains of World War II and very frankly gentlemen, I doubt that we'd ever awoken to what's going on in Asia if it were not the troubles that we now have in Vietnam. That's my honest view. I don't know how those troubles are all going to come out, it's one of the most distressing problems, it's one of the most complex, it's one of the most difficult to understand and one of the most difficult to deal with that any government or any people have ever known, but I know this that the two billion people in Asia are going to determine what's going to happen to Hubert Humphrey's children. You can't ignore them any longer and what happens to the people in the subcontinent of Pakistan and India, the six hundred and some million almost seven hundred million population greater than all of Africa, South America, Central America, Mexico, and Canada but what happens on that subcontinent may do a whole lot more to influence my life and the life of my children and their children than anything that happens in Ohio. So we must be alive to

what's going on and we're beginning to wake up and I can say to you quite candidly that we have an awful lot to learn. We're European oriented people most of us know a lot about Europe, we know enough about Europe even to not get too concerned when Charles deGaulle acts up, Oh, we get distressed, disturbed, we get peevish but we know the French, we know the Germans, we know the British, we know the Italians, we know a lot about them, we even know their names. I venture that if I go through this audience tonight, including myself in the audience, we couldn't name ten political leaders in Asia, ten captains of industry, ten political parties, they have them, and I know the men that I'm talking to that you go out to exploit a market or explore a market or develop a market you know all about it. You know everything about your state, you know about your competition, you know about your associates, you know the money market, you know the potential of the retail market, the wholesale market, you know the typography, you know the weather, you know the buying habits, you know the religion, you know ethnic origins of the people. That's the way we move in this country. We make what we call market analysis and I'm sure that before many people came to Minnesota to invest their hundreds of millions of dollars they took a good look. They didn't come up there just saying, look we are the welfare fund, where are your poor people and if they had they surely were unworthy of being entrusted with other people's money. I think the American people and in turn then their government needs to take a good look at that part of the world which is going to be closer to us every day and going to affect our lives. The new markets of the world by the way American industry produces for a world market and more and more it is going to have to produce for world market. And I suggest that we start to learn a great deal about China, a great deal about India, a great deal about Southeast Asia, and when I say

a great deal I mean so much more than we know now that we would look like we were in the kindergarten, before it's too late and I think that out of the pain and the suffering of Vietnam we're going to find out about it as I said to use an analogy the infected finger of Vietnam is going to reveal to us the palm of Asia, because we cannot possibly go through what we're going through today with the cost in manpower, in treasure and resources without at least waking up before it's too late. Now this economy of ours therefore must be prepared for that long ordeal. That's why we're concerned about inflation, that's why we're concerned about investment, that's why we're worried about monetary and fiscal policy or concerned about it and try to view it carefully and judiciously and frankly that's why I have my faith in the enterprise system that I spoke of because I think you have this staying power and I want to make sure that we think it through together. Now I come to you with these general statements, and they are very general, in the hopes that I have aroused your minds this evening for purposes of questions. If you have any questions, on anything that you'd like to ask I'll try to find at least some approach of some answer. I can't say that the answers will always be satisfying or profound but I'd like a little dialogue tonight between you and the Vice President, maybe the Vice President will learn something. Thank you very much.



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