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REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY
MEETING WITH U.S. CITIZENS IN UN SECRETARIAT
USUN - JUNE 7, 1966

Ladies and gentlemen, this experience is perhaps unusual to you, and I can assure you it is unusual and important to me. I believe this is the first time that the American citizens in the United Nations Secretariat have visited the United States Mission as a group. I am very happy to be here to join Ambassador Goldberg and his staff in welcoming you in the name of the United States of America. I welcome you both as fellow Americans and as servants of the United Nations-- bearing in mind all that the United Nations represents and symbolizes in the minds of the American people and in our country's relations with the world.

As a Senator, I served for twelve years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I was a member of its Subcommittee on International Organizations. In 1956 and '57, I was a delegate to the General Assembly, and I remember our discussions on such perennial Secretariat issues as recruitment, geographical distribution, permanent tenure, et cetera -- although I might not pass an exam in that subject any more.

But one thing I remember very clearly -- a point on which we in the United States Government are under no confusion whatever. Secretariat members, of whatever nationality, are required to be impartial. You take no instructions from any member state. You serve the Organization as a whole, and your only chief is the impartial Secretary General.

If I remember history correctly, when the Charter was written in Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco, the United States was among those nations most insistent upon an explicit provision for the impartiality and truly international character

of the Secretariat. That character has been vigorously defended and upheld by three great Secretaries General -- Trygve Lie, Dag Hammarskjold, and U Thant.

↳ I might interject that I had the privilege today of being U Thant's guest at lunch, and when I told him about our plans for this reception he was very pleased. He is a great international servant, and it is no secret that the United States Government is among those who hope he will be available for reelection as Secretary General this fall.

↳ By and large, with some exceptions, I think the impartiality of the Secretariat has been respected by the member states. Certainly the United States not only respects it but insists upon it, regardless of the nationality of any particular Secretariat member. And that will continue to be our position.

↳ We have taken this position not because we are more
saintly or high-minded than the other fellow but because we
believe our national interest demands an effective UN.

We do not think an effective UN is possible without a
Secretariat that is strong, upright, impartial, resists all
partisan pressures, and maintains high professional standards.

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fact, it requires of member states more than the negative
virtue of forbearance. It also requires that member states
make positive efforts. For one thing, Secretariat salaries
and working conditions must be adequate to attract and
hold the talent that is needed. The United States has upheld
that view, and will continue to do so.

Equally important, the United Nations must be enabled
to recruit the people it needs from among the best qualified
citizens of member states. Here too the United States has

taken steps to do our share. We are justly proud of the fact that you and many other unusually qualified Americans have served in the Secretariat both here and abroad. But we know too that this country, and particularly the New York area, is a highly competitive market for professional talent, and we don't want to take the UN's recruitment needs for granted. As people retire and vacancies occur, we want to be sure that Americans of high professional qualifications continue to be available to fill the jobs that open up. That point was emphasized by President Johnson in a policy directive dated August 15, 1964, concerning the availability of United States citizens for service in the secretariats of international organizations. I quote his words:

"The capacity and efficiency of these organizations depends, in the end, upon the quality and the motivations of the international civil servants who administer them. These organizations -- and our national interest in their fortunes--

deserve the services of some of the ablest citizens of the United States."

Sometimes these services, especially in technical fields, must be given on a fixed-term basis. Fixed terms may also be necessary for nationals of some other countries, especially those with severe shortages of highly trained people. But such assignments are no substitute for the permanent career employment that has been, and must increasingly be, the typical pattern of the impartial Secretariat.

The United States, therefore, will continue to do its best to assure the future of such a career civil service of the highest caliber for both the UN and the Specialized Agencies. To this end, as vacancies occur, we will encourage the recruitment of able Americans who can maintain the high standards you have set. I understand the United Nations itself has taken steps to improve its recruiting of Americans, and we hope this effort too will be continued and expanded.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize this one thought. The United Nations is nearly twenty-one years old. As institutions go, that is very young. It is still an experimental, pioneering institution. It has performed magnificently in certain areas; in others, it has not been able to perform at all. But we are working, as Dag Hammarskjold once put it, "at the edge of the unknown". From one day to the next, we are dealing with the effort to help two governments get off a collision course that could cost many lives. We are dealing with seed-corn projects designed to help more than half the peoples of the world lift themselves out of poverty and disease and take their rightful place in the modern world. We are dealing with the effort to extend and uphold human rights, to improve the status of women, to teach millions of people to read. In places like Cyprus and the Gaza Strip, and quite recently the Congo, we are literally and physically interposing men of the United Nations between armed adversaries. It is a world full of danger and full of hope, and the UN has its

share of both.

Many of you have served in the field, and you have seen and participated in some of these United Nations operations. I have seen them too in my travels, and I know something of their value. But whether you serve in a headquarters office or in the field -- whether your work is concerned with policy or is entirely technical -- my great hope for you is that you will never lose the sense of adventure and of breaking new ground that makes the United Nations such an exciting phenomenon in this world.

Wordsworth wrote of the revolutionary times of the late eighteenth century:

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

But to be young was very heaven!"

This too is a time of revolution -- one which we all pray will prove to be peaceful and creative. Whether we are young in years or not, we still live in the morning of hope in which the United Nations was conceived and born.

We Americans are said to be impatient. I think a little impatience is not a bad thing. The millions of Americans who come flooding through the United Nations year after year may not understand everything you do, but they surely realize that something important and urgent is going on here. They don't ask you to wave the American flag to prove you are in favor of freedom. They know that the work to which you contribute from day to day, with your professional talents and your personal devotion, is vital to us, to our freedom, and to the future of the human race.

I think I speak the thoughts of the vast majority of Americans, from San Francisco to the East River, in expressing admiration for your talents and pride in the fact that Americans such as yourselves are serving with such distinction as international civil servants -- and in wishing you Godspeed.

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UNITED STATES MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 7, 1966

PRESS RELEASE NO. 4871
JUNE 7, 1966

Remarks by Vice President Hubert Humphrey at a Reception
Held at the United States Mission, Tuesday, June 7, 1966

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE NO. 4871/Rev.
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Remarks as delivered by Vice President Hubert Humphrey
at a Reception held at the United States Mission, Tuesday,
June 7, 1966

My fellow Americans and good friends:

You have had an announcement by our Ambassador to the United Nations that I know brings a very good measure of pleasure and joy to your hearts because for far too long the American nationals that have been employees of this great international organization, the United Nations, have been treated in a rather discriminatory and segregated manner, when it came to Social Security (applause).

I must say that you couldn't have had a better bargaining agent than the former Chief Counsel of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., of the United Steelworkers and a few other organizations, who was able to bring some of the giant corporations of America around to terms of good pay and social justice. When he went to work on the State Department and the Government of the United States, it was like a giant dealing with children. He immediately -- well, not immediately -- but in reasonable time brought around an understanding, which will be relayed to you in more specific terms, that will relieve you of punitive taxation, you see, and give to you the benefits of all of your Social Security that you are entitled to under the law, without having to be treated, so to speak, as self-employed since you are not self-employed.

I am not going to go into the details, except to tell you that it will be about as half as burdensome as it is now (applause). I use the word "about". Arthur, you can clarify that (laughter). I have learned a great deal from this eminent lawyer, I want you to know, and Ambassador and diplomat.

I was going to say now in all seriousness -- but we have been very serious with you on this matter of personal importance to each and every one of you -- you know, it's like coming home to me to come back to the United States Mission to the UN and to be

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at the United Nations, in the hall of the General Assembly, in the room of the Security Council, in the offices of the Secretary General and, indeed, in any of the facilities of this great international organization.

I had the opportunity today to dine with the Secretary General and some members of the Secretariat and some members of our Mission here. It was a very informal, unofficial, friendly, sociable luncheon, but during that period of the luncheon I was able to express to the Secretary General some of the thoughts very dear to my heart and close to my public life.

I might interject that Secretary General U Thant is a great international servant and it is no secret that the United States Government is among those who hope he will be available for re-election as Secretary General this fall.

I served here at the United Nations as one of the Representatives of the Congress in 1956. That was a very turbulent period, without recasting history again. You may recall it. A period of great international tension. Yet I saw then the United Nations literally save the peace and spare humanity from what could have been a terrible conflagration. I have never enjoyed public service more than those few months when it was my privilege to serve as a member of the Congress on the United States Delegation to the United Nations.

Our Ambassador then was Henry Cabot Lodge. He served with distinction and ably. I must say that the respect of the Government of the United States for the United Nations is, I think, attested to by the quality of the people that we have asked to represent our country in this great international institution.

I have had people say to me -- well, you know, every once in a while, when you are out on a platform, you get a question or two so that you kind of wish you hadn't made the trip -- but one of the questions that sometimes is cast my way is: What is the United States' attitude, or the attitude of the Government of the United States towards the United Nations? And my answer has oftentimes been in a very personal vein. I, of course, state our commitment to the Charter, our affiliation and relationship with the many UN organizations and many UN-sponsored and affiliated groups, but then I say that the real test of our dedication to the United Nations is the quality of the representation that our Government sends here.

I ask you to keep in mind such names -- and I will forget some -- as Warren Austin, Ambassador Gross, Eleanor Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, Ambassador Wadsworth, Adlai Stevenson, and then, to reach into the Supreme Court, where a man has a position that is one of the cherished positions of American public life, where a President asks an old friend to give up that lifetime position of honor and distinction, to come and serve his nation as Ambassador to the United Nations, and that Justice, lawyer, citizen, says, "Yes," I think that we have given the living testament as to the respect that America has, as American citizens, and as American Government, to the United Nations, by the quality of the Mission that is here and the quality of the head of Mission that is here in Ambassador Arthur Goldberg (applause). We couldn't have done better.

Now, my friend Ambassador Goldberg has told you that we are very proud of the American citizens that serve in the Secretariat, in the many institutions of the United Nations and offices of this great body. You serve, yes, as citizens of the United States but, more importantly, as impartial, objective dedicated international servants.

Let me refresh your memory from history. When the United Nations was being thought of, when there was but what we called a United Nations Organization Committee that was meeting in Dumbarton Oaks, during the days of World War II and immediately following, and when the Charter session was gathered in San Francisco, it was the United States of America that insisted that there be an international civil service, an international secretariat, where the nationals of any member state might serve, but that they should serve as not merely nationals of a member state, but that they should serve with objectivity and impartiality, that they should serve as representatives of an international organization.

We want you to be proud, of course, as you are of your citizenship, but we want you to be equally proud of your relationship to this great institution of peace and justice in the world. You are needed. May I say that we need as vacancies occur and as the competition from private life and from universities and from local and state and federal government draws upon the personnel of the United Nations, we need a good, competent, able Americans who will offer their services and talents to this great international body.

So I salute you for sacrifices that you make. I salute you for the experience that you have. And I compliment you on the fact that you have bet on the future, because when you work for the United Nations, above all you place your faith in the future, a better day, a day when there can be peace in this world, a day when social justice is more than a phrase, when it is a concept that is universally respected and accepted.

You know, among international institutions or any kind of institution, the United Nations is a young organization, twenty-one years old, just really coming into its maturity. I was present at the Tenth Anniversary at San Francisco and I remember very well how pleased the member states and the representatives of the member states were that this organization had survived ten years. It has not only survived, it has grown and expanded in these twenty-one years. It has done many great things. Some things it hasn't been able to do at all, but this was to be expected.

I think Dag Hammarskjold once characterized the work of the United Nations as touching on the edge of the unknown. I believe I am only paraphrasing it. But I recall that he reminded us that this was an experimental body, this was a pioneer body and you are like pioneers. When I see these western TV's, you know, and we are always sort of romanticizing about the days of the covered wagon, the days of the pioneer pushing towards the new frontiers, well, you are doing the same thing.

I am sure that twenty years from now when columnists and historians look back on this year 1966, they will recount how little we were able to do in this year compared to what we are able to do in 1986 in the United Nations.

This organization has strength. This organization has what they call viability. This organization has purpose. It has promise. It has everything that the world needs today. It has the machinery to work out the difficulties between peoples and nations. It has life-giving power. The one thing I like about the United Nations, it takes no lives. It gives lives. It is a life saver not a life taker. (applause) It is a builder and not a destroyer. It helps create nations, not take away their national independence or their national existence.

So I want to compliment you. I almost am envious of you, except to say that Ambassador Goldberg and myself are in public life not because of the joys of it but because of what we think are the requirements of it and, indeed, the privilege of serving not only one's self but serving others.

I want to bring you now not only the greetings, because that word is so misused in this country, it sometimes means so little, the greetings of our President, but I want to bring you his commitment. Needless to say, he knows I am here. (Laughter) And he not only knows I am here, he in a very real sense urged me to come, told me that he regretted that he did not have some of these opportunities to move around. But that's one of the privileges of a Vice President. He has very little authority but lots of mobility, you see - (Laughter)

But let me just say to you as international servants and yet as very, very responsible Americans, who understand that freedom is indivisible and so is justice, let me tell you that your government -- your President is not merely sort of a mild passive supporter of the United Nations -- he is a vigorous supporter of it. He seeks to help build this institution into what the Charter envisioned it to be, one that would protect and defend human rights everywhere -- in America as well as abroad.

I cannot help but reflect, as we are a bit critical of the failure to defend human rights abroad, that we have a few excesses here at home. The shock and the shame of the violence yesterday on a road in Mississippi, where a fellow American was seeking only to exercise his just rights as a citizen -- I could not hold my head very high last night. Only today do I feel better because I know that the American people are outraged. I know that out of this abuse and violence will come some soul-searching and will come a better America.

But the United Nations has a duty and it has a responsibility to see to it that human dignity and human rights, in America and elsewhere, are respected. You are in a very real sense the defenders of those human rights, and that is what we are really talking about, the rights of individuals. So stand a little taller, if you please, be a little prouder, in a very humble and grateful way, for the fact that you are privileged to serve in a great international peace movement, and international movement of justice, peace, independence and freedom. What greater privilege is there?

I am sure that history will remember very few lawyers, but from here on out, from the nuclear age, from the day that that atom was split and man unleashed that terrible power, I am confident

HUMPHREY

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that history will want to remember and will record the peacemakers and those who were the aides and the helpers in the vineyards of peace. And that is what you are. So I commend you and compliment you.

Thank you very, very much. I am glad to be with you.

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