

NOTES

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

RECEPTION FOR AFRICAN STUDENTS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FEBRUARY 7, 1968

(The Vice President is introduced by Secretary Palmer.)

I. OPENING REMARKS.

It is a great pleasure for Mrs. Humphrey and me to be with you this afternoon. Some of you may even have had to cut a few classes. In any event, we are indeed gratified to have this opportunity to tell you of our exciting and, I hope, constructive trip to Africa last month. Incidentally, I hope you have enjoyed the music of Junior Wells and his band.

They have just completed a truly triumphant tour of Africa under the auspices of the State Department. During our visit to the Ivory Coast, they entertained at a reception given by the U.S. Ambassador. It is a pleasure to have them with us again this afternoon.

Without qualification we will remember our trip to Africa as among the most rewarding, satisfying and challenging of experiences since I assumed the office of Vice President. We traveled ^{over} almost 25 thousand miles. We visited nine countries in ¹³ ~~twelve~~ days.

Because of the informality of our gathering this afternoon I thought it might be fun to look very briefly at some film taken on the trip. This is nothing like a finished motion picture; in fact, it's more like Humphrey's home movies. But I thought you might enjoy seeing just a few of the many things we did and a few of the many thousands of wonderful people we met in the nine countries we visited.

I haven't even seen these pictures. So I'm going to ask Ted Van Dyk of my staff to narrate, and I'll interrupt from time to time.

(Begin 12 minute film; Ted narrating, with the Vice President breaking in whenever he wants.)

II. CLOSING REMARKS.

Now I would like to share with you the principal conclusions of my trip.

A. Youth is the prevailing fact of Africa. Over 40 percent of the people are under 14. And 75 percent are under 26. This means a strong emphasis on governmental programs related to the problems of youth:

--education at all levels, elementary, secondary, college and university;

- health programs;
- expansion of job opportunities, in both the private and public sectors (Can trained university graduates find challenging work, etc.?)
- population explosion, i.e., bring growth rate and food supply into balance while the opportunity still exists.
- How can other nations help Africa with these urgent problems related to youth?

B. Sober determination among African leaders to solve internal problems. I found a continent filled with new nationalism, with a pride in freedom, and with a confidence that independent Africa has a bright future. But I also found this exuberance tempered by the sober and proper realization that Africa faces tremendous challenges at every turn--rural development, urban living, economic growth, relations with neighboring states,

regional and continental cooperation.

--Africa today is rightly concerned with its own problems, with developing its own solutions to these problems, of perfecting its own political, economic, and social institutions-- just as America spent almost the first 150 years of its national life concerned with internal problems.

--You, the future leaders of Africa, will help provide these answers. What an exciting and challenging opportunity! You will seek answers that make sense to Africans, that arise naturally from your rich history and traditions.

--We understand fully that your answers may be quite different from the answers which worked for us in America. You are welcome to whatever knowledge or insight we may possess which also makes sense to your particular national situation. And you should reject those ideas lacking this relevance.

C. Within this framework, America hopes to play an active, imaginative, and well-conceived role in African political and economic development.

--You know our resources are limited, that the Congress reduced President Johnson's request for bilateral assistance to African nations. As I stated in Africa Hall, the Johnson-Humphrey Administration will again fight for an expansion of the current foreign aid program.

--At the same time, I urged every African head of state to consider alternatives to direct bilateral U. S. assistance, for example, the World Bank, the Export Import bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, and your emerging regional economic groupings.

- We also see an important role for private investors,
working in close cooperation and under terms
established by the host countries. (For example,
the Tema smelter and port facility in Ghana.)
- Cooperatives, savings and loan associations,
universities, labor unions can all participate
more fully in the economic development of Africa.

D. Africa and America are committed to three essentials
of freedom and human progress:

- independence with a full acceptance of interdependence;
- national security with a firm commitment to international
cooperation for peace;
- national development within the framework of
regional cooperation.

As I stated in Africa Hall, the seat of the Organization of African Unity:

To those who even today try to preserve the colonial past, I say: you tragically misread the will and determination of Africans everywhere. You misread history and fail to understand the future.

To those who still believe that small minorities can indefinitely hold dominion over large majorities, I say: You ignore the most vital and inevitable movement of our time-- self-determination.

I have seen freedom, pride, and self-confidence in the faces of the ordinary men and women in every African country I have visited.

. . . And I have yet to meet one African who would surrender his country's independence for mere economic assistance.

(We recommend that instead of questions and answers, you spend as much time as possible greeting the students informally.)

February 7, 1968

TALK BY VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

AT DEPARTMENT OF STATE RECEPTION

Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Palmer, and welcome all of our friends and neighbors from the many African countries, the students that are attending our universities and institutes here in the metropolitan area of the District of Columbia, and others from wherever you may come. I want to particularly welcome those who have travelled with us on this voyage of discovery into nine countries of Africa.

The first thing I should say is that I apologize for not getting to the other countries. I have already been reprimanded several times by some very delightful people, charming ladies and healthy looking young men as to "why didn't you go to my country?" And the reason is its all due to the State Department. I blame it all on them. I was perfectly willing to go to each and every country, most anxious to go, and Secretary Palmer was my tour director.

Then there was another little matter that intervened, namely that the Congress of the United States was reconvening on the fifteenth day of January and the President's State of the Union message was being prepared and was to be delivered very promptly, and we had a few things we had to take care of, and since my voyage — our voyage I should say — started on the twenty-ninth day of December, there wasn't too much time between then and the fifteenth of January. Then I'll let you in on another poorly kept secret — namely, that I had to be in California on January thirteenth.

Now, I was doing a little vote-counting out there and there wasn't any of those in Africa at the time, as you can understand. But I had promised to come to Fresno, California, and was required to be present in the Senate on the morning of January fifteenth. So if you can figure out how we can get to all

the countries in that period of time, you would be very helpful to me. But I do have a suggestion for Mr. Palmer, we're willing to go again to cover the other countries. Now, I'm sure you know how happy both Mrs. Humphrey and I are to have you here this afternoon as our guests at this little reception. We want you to enjoy it. Its very informal. We are just going to try to mingle with you and visit with you as much as we can, and I hope that the others that journeyed with us will do the same. Some of you may have even had to cut some classes to be here. I'm speaking to all of your deans and administrators and professors so that you'll get an extra mark for what we call this in-service training -- on-the-job training.

We're very happy to be able to tell you a little bit about this exciting trip, and the wonderful experiences that we've had on our visit to your countries. It was a very constructive journey for us, and as I said, it was a voyage of discovery to discover new areas of the world as far as we were concerned -- areas yet unvisited, peoples that I'd heard so much about, and to find out what remarkable and wonderful people lived in these vast stretches of Africa; to learn about that great continent; and to see nations being born, and people struggling for their independence with fierce pride, and with a sense of dedication that should be an example to every American.

I can say quite candidly that we have never met, in all of our days of public life, people that were more kindly, more friendly, that possessed and exhibited better manners or were more hospitable, and were less complaining than those we met in our visit to Africa. That's exactly the way we felt about it.

Mrs. Humphrey, not long ago, had the wives of the Ambassadors that represent the countries we visited and when I saw her that evening after her tea, I said, "Well, how was it, Muriel?" And she said, "Oh, it was just wonderful." She said, "You know, I just fell in love with those countries, and with the people, and when

I saw the wives of the Ambassadors," she said, "I just felt real sentimental." And she is a very sincere person. I try to extract compliments from her, but it is rather difficult on occasion. People tell me that that's one member of the Humphrey family that you can rely on constantly.

Now by the way, you heard some music here today, Junior Wells and his Band. I met Junior Wells and his fellow musicians while we were in Africa. They had just completed a triumphant tour of Africa under the auspices of the State Department. They went to more countries than the Vice President did, I might add, under the auspices of the State Department.

During our visit to the Ivory Coast, they entertained at a reception given by the United States Ambassador, and it was a real good hoe-down reception. I'll tell you the music was good, and it is a pleasure to have them with us again this afternoon.

Now, we travelled about twenty five thousand miles; we visited nine countries; and we did so in just thirteen days. Now somebody is going to say "How could you do it?"

Well, we worked twenty hours a day, and that is not an exaggeration. We literally would be up many times at five-thirty or six in the morning, and seldom did I ever know the chance to get a rest, or to my bed before two or two-thirty or three at night or in the morning.

We worked incessantly and intensively and extensively. Every minute of the day was jam-packed. And because of the informality of the gathering this afternoon, I thought it might be some fun just to look very briefly at some film taken on this trip. Now this is nothing like a finished motion picture. I don't think that we'll get an Oscar for this. And I doubt that Hollywood is going to want to claim the film, even though the photographer, the man that took the pictures, is here with us today, Mr. Jacoby, and I think he would agree with me, though, that

this is more like "Humphreys' home movies."

Now, don't you walk out like most of my friends do when I show my home movies. I've lost about half of my friends showing home movies, but I guess if you've got to lose friends that that's about as innocent a way as you can. I thought you might enjoy seeing just a few of the many things we did, and above all, a few of the many, many thousands of wonderful people that we met in the nine countries that we visited. I haven't even seen these pictures, to they'll be as big a surprise to me as they are to you and I don't know who's edited them, but if they haven't edited out all of the bad shots of the Vice President, there's going to be a change in staff, I can assure you that.

One of the members of my staff that was really the organizer of our visit and was the staff man in charge, one of my most trusted members, is Mr. Ted Van Dyke. Ted is here to narrate. I'm going to interrupt him as I always do from time to time, and when he skips over something that I think we ought to point out, particularly if its something that I like, I'll just push in and shove in. Now, if ... I guess that's the screen ... if you'll all kind of turn that was, we'll look at what's up there.

(The film was shown at this point.)

I hope that you enjoyed those pictures as much as we did. I suppose you couldn't have really, because it gave us such happy and pleasant memories. Let me just say in reference to the very last one that you saw in Tunisia where there was a small business making parts for pre-fabricated housing. Mr. Marshall Erdman is a young friend of mine; he's an immigrant to the United States, and he had done very well out in Wisconsin. One of his closest friends is Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin. He flew over there at his own expense just to show me as Vice President what a little American technology could do when there were people

that really wanted to do something for themselves. And I think I should say here that it took him an awful long time to get any real approval out of our government for this project. I say that because sometimes people don't realize that its quite a job. You have to have a lot of patience, but he kept at it because he was determined.

Marshall told me "I came to America a poverty-stricken boy from poverty-stricken parents, and I have been able to develop a great business in this country out of hard work and all kinds of opportunity." He said, "I want to share that with other people." And for at least two years, this project has cost this man a good deal of money, but now its beginning to pay off. And it is managed by Tunisians and they are expanding it now to build so they have standard frame window sizes, door sizes thereby to improve the number of low-income housing units; to do it at a more rapid rate; to do it at a lower cost.

I was so pleased that he could be there with us. I want to add one other thing. Everyone of us has our own style of doing things. I never have believed that Government people should travel with themselves alone. I think we know each other too well, and there's always this tendency for what I call political-psychological inbreeding. I prefer that we include in our entourage people from the private economy, and I've never travelled either as as Senator or as Vice President without a very wide range of other people outside of Government, because their observations come from a different set of eyes and out of different experiences.

Likewise, they are privileged to meet with different people, so on this visit we had representatives of our press and our media. We had, of course, Mr. Leonard Marks of the USIA; we had Mr. Peter Strauss of our AID Administration; we had representatives of the State Department, Mr. Fred Hadsel, here particularly of the African Affairs Bureau; we had my own professional staff people; we had

people from private journalism in the United States, one of my old friends, Cecil Newman — an officer and a publisher in the National Newspaper Alliance, a newspaper publishers' association, travelled with me, he comes from the Midwest. I wanted him to see with his eyes Africa and to report back, and I want to tell you he does more good for our relationships with Africa than any number of motion pictures we could make.

He's in motion all the time telling about his experiences and explaining to the taxpayers of America and the voters of America out where they pay taxes what this is all about. We had people from private enterprise, big corporations, from finance, one of the men that's right here in Washington now meeting with the Savings and Loan Association. A representative of the International Savings and Loan Association travelled with me and visited with Government officials and private financiers in these nine countries about how you could establish savings, and put it to work for private housing, and for low-cost, low-income housing. This type of broad spectrum, I think, of representation gives us a better picture.

People say, "Well, how did you learn anything in thirteen days?" Because I had with me at least ten pairs of eyes and ears, and ten other minds and bodies that were on the job sixteen hours, eighteen hours a day with their own schedule, working, talking, visiting, seeing, hearing and then I made every one of them give me a report. They didn't get paid for it, but they gave me their own observations, all of which have been placed in the hands of our government. For example, finance reports in the hands of some of the leading bankers and financiers in the United States.

As a result of this visit, we intend to organize and we have underway an African Council just like we have a Latin American Council for private enterprise in the United States to promote private enterprise in Africa. We had a very fine educator along with us, Mr. Proctor, and we have information going back into our

universities and colleges and our technical schools about what we saw there and what we need to do in terms of helping and the educational establishment.

We had one of the outstanding doctors from Johns Hopkins with us who has made a full report on public health and medical problems and health problems as he saw them and what we can do. And already we are getting some action out of the private sector of our own medical association and some of our medical schools. And so on down the line, and I want to say that I feel that this kind of concentrated attention is the sort of a visit that lends itself to constructive results.

No man can do much by himself. That's the one lesson in public life. You learn to do a great deal by the help of others, and this was what we talk about here at home—a partnership between Government and the private sector. This is the way the United States works. The Government alone can do very little. The private sector alone sometimes finds the problems beyond its capacity. But when we put them together, when we put together Government and Business and Labor and Education and the Professions and the different groups, we have a tremendous team, and a great bundle of resources to apply to any particular problem, and that's what we do on these journeys. I practice what I preach. I believe that you have to put into work what you are talking about putting into practice.

Now I want to just share these last few minutes with you, and then we're really just going to socialize around here. I want to really do that. A couple of quick observations: I don't think I need to mention this to you because you know it. But I do it for our fellow Americans. And the one thing I reported to President Johnson and his Cabinet when I came back was the first thing I said: "Youth is the prevailing fact of Africa." Youth, young people, every place. Over forty per cent of the people are under the age of fourteen and seventy-five per cent are under the age of twenty-six.

This means that a strong emphasis of governmental programs, private programs from the foundations, from universities, or whatever it may be, must be related to the hopes and aspirations and problems of youth. And I came back to my Government and said let's take a look at everything that we're doing, and let's see if what we're doing relates to you and you and you and those of your age group and those a little younger, because we've got to think about the future and what kind of future is this great continent, this vast continent of untold treasure and resources and wonderful people what's it going to have. And of course, this means an emphasis on education, and every place we went, we found this consuming desire to improve education.

You know it just reminded me of the early days of our own Republic when Thomas Jefferson said, "You can't be both free and ignorant. You have to make a choice." And I think the peoples of Africa made that choice. They're going to be free. That means they're going to be educated. There is an overwhelming desire for elementary and secondary and higher education, for community colleges and technical institutes, and the best thing that we can do as Americans is to help people educate themselves. And may I say that one of the things that makes me very happy is to know the number of African students that are here in the United States. My plea to you is that you are desperately needed back in your home countries. Don't let your people down. Well, there are so many other things that we could talk about. There's the need, of course, of more intensive health programs, expansion of job opportunities and I think we could learn maybe you while you're here a little bit of what we're going through right now.

We're trying to find job opportunities in America for our hard core unemployed. Many of our hard core unemployed are very much like some of the people in your respective countries that have not had an education; have not had a chance; that

have been the victim of colonialism in the past, and you're trying to find ways to improve your economy so that these people can have and find a job. Together we can learn about this. I learned a good deal over there that's been helpful to us here in our own youth program.

Another observation that I reported to President Johnson was the sober determination among African leaders to solve their own internal problems. I found a continent filled with new nationalism and with a pride in freedom, and with a confidence that independent Africa has a bright future. And I received fewer lectures on what we ought to be doing here, and how we ought to conduct ourselves in the world from my African friends than almost any place I've been.

They were primarily concerned about Africa and about their countries; their problems without being isolationists at all, recognizing that they were a member of the family of nations, and all of them individual members of the family of mankind. But as many of them told me that "the best contribution that I can make," as one man said to me, "is if my country can stand in dignity and self-reliance. That's my contribution to peace and to a better world." What a wonderful, sensible way of approaching the problems of this troubled world of ours. I think Africa has the means and the spirit to devise answers to its own problems. It will need outside help, financial assistance, technical assistance, but I want to say one thing that I've always known, but I'll repeat it to you. There isn't any way that we should try to stamp our culture on others or print "made in the USA." That's not our purpose. What we want to be able to do is learn from others, and at the same time have others learn from us and in partnership, and to adapt what we have to your needs, and we adapt some of the things you have to our needs. There is a two-way street here.

Now within this framework of African independence and freedom and regional development, and by the way, this is tremendous what you see, the beginnings of regional organization — the realization that small countries can't always stand just alone — that they need to join together as old Benjamin Franklin once said: "In our country you either hang together or you hang separately." And I think people in Africa have learned that sometimes in economic matters and some of the political matters that you must affiliate; that you must have associations; that you must join together.

Well within that framework, America hopes to play an active role, and a well conceived role in African political and economic development. Now we all know and you maybe have written back to your folks, your countrymen, that we don't have as much foreign aid this year as we had a year ago, or that we wanted to have. Its a fact of life. And I've learned all my life, make do with what you have. Sometimes things just don't come out the way you want it. I had to tell the leaders that I met with in Africa that that was the case.

I also had to tell them that we were lucky we had any, considering the mood that existed some days in the Congress. But I did say that the President and the Vice President would try to do better this year, which we're going to try to do. But I would be less than honest with you if I didn't tell you that it was a tough uphill fight and when you're here, while we don't expect you to mold our political framework, or our structure, or even our attitudes, sometimes maybe it would be helpful in your friendly association with people if you could indicate whether or not you think some of this aid has been effective, some of this external assistance.

It isn't a matter of pride, may I say, as I told many of my fellow Americans. We Americans here had to roll over our debts several times in the infancy of our Republic. We gained our independence with the help of French soldiers and the French Navy. We had to finance our revolution with foreign loans and what's more, we had to win our battles, often times with the help of foreign officers that came as patriots to help us, the Lafayettes and others. We haven't forgotten that. That doesn't mean that you're any less bold, brave or good because you needed help from somebody else when you're trying to establish your own right.

One of the things I feel very proud about as an American is that practically any experience that anyone else is going through right now, we've gone through, and some of them, we're still going through. We, too, once were a colony. We, too, once had to fight, as I said to President Mobutu, mercenaries. We had a lot of them. Back in those days, they were called Hessians. We, too, had to rely for the first hundred years of our Republic on foreign investment in order to get our railroads built, our canals dug, and some of our big businesses established. It is all the same. It is never quite so, well, life it seems, is a constant replay of what went on before.

Now I had to explain to our friends in Africa that I would hope that they would look to alternatives in some of the aid, to the World Bank, the Export-Import Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, and their regional economic groups, and I also emphasize the importance, as I said, of private investors working in close cooperation, and under terms established by the host country. You saw that, for example, in Ghana. That's a tremendous effort of Government, private cooperation, and the Volta Dam which I worked for when I was in the Senate, and do I remember the bitter criticism that we took. That Volta Dam is helping the people of that part of the world. It's a great power project. It's a Godsend. And there are more of them that need to be built.

Well, now finally, and I kept you maybe too long, I want to note just a few of the things that we said at the Africa Hall. I was so pleased to have been honored by the opportunity to speak there. I pointed out that Africa and America are committed to three essentials of freedom and human progress, and these are the words I used: Independence with the full acceptance of interdependence. National security with the full commitment to international cooperation for peace. National development within the framework of regional cooperation. And I said to those who even today try to preserve the colonial past, you tragically misread the will and determination of Africans everywhere. You misread history and fail to understand the future. To those who still believe that small minorities can indefinitely hold dominion over large majorities, I say you ignore the most vital and inevitable movement of our time — self-determination.

I've seen freedom, pride, and self-confidence in the faces of ordinary men and women in every African country I've visited, and I have yet to meet one African who would surrender his country's independence for mere economic assistance. You see, you educate us as well, and it is very good to educate those who have some responsibility in the affairs of Government. I know that I'm now talking to young men and women that will really guide the destiny of a host of countries.

You are the leaders. Yet untapped in the sense of getting the official title, but as surely as I'm looking at you and you see me, in this room are the future leaders of the countries of Africa and I only hope that all of us will recognize that this world needs cooperation as never before, understanding, tolerance. I'll always remember this: John Kennedy once said that "our aim is to make the world safe for diversity." We're not all alike. Imagine if we were. It would be a dull society, and a very humdrum existence. It is this great mosaic of peoples, this multiplicity of cultures, this pluralistic world society

that gives it vitality and beauty and meaning. Everybody has something to contribute, providing we do not destroy each other, and you can destroy one another many ways.

It can be done in the cruel act of war, but it can also be done through suspicion, and through doubt, and through division, through false pride, through selfishness, and I think all of us are sometimes victim of these human failings. Our task it seems to me as leaders, as privileged people, and we are, any of us that have had an education, is to see to it that those human failings do not gain the ascendancy to recognize that independence with the recognition of interdependence is real patriotism, real patriotism. To know that national development and national security are one and inseparable.

You can't have national security without national development, and you can't have national development without national security. You cannot have development in a wild frenzy of violence and hate and bitterness. And you cannot have national security unless there's an economic base and a social base where people are learning and producing. And yet all of this has to be done within the world framework of international cooperation and international responsibility.

I can't think of any time that it's more wonderful to live than now and more dangerous, in which there are more opportunities and more pitfalls, in which there are more days of hope and prosperity and yet, unless you watch yourself, days of distress and unbelievable misery. It all depends on what we want to do with it. What is our determination; what's our will. I know why you're here; I know why you're in universities and colleges because your will is to make it a better day — so is mine. Your will is to make it a day of opportunity and not of despair. Your will is to make it a prosperous world, not a world of misery and poverty.

It will be a big job, but if it wasn't a big job, we wouldn't be interested in doing it. As a matter of fact, I've always felt the tougher the task, the greater the challenge. And one thing that I've always believed is the only thing that's worth remembering is what was impossible to do. If some people say it's impossible, then get busy and do it. And if you do it, they'll remember the event and they may even remember you. If it isn't impossible, then anybody can do it, and you don't need to be remembered. And the greatness of a nation is not in its size or wealth or the numbers of its peoples, but it's really in what you do with what you have.

What do you do with these things. What do you do with your people; what do you do with your resources; what do you do with what little wealth or great wealth you may have; what do you do with what power or what little power you have; for what purpose? I think that's why we're all here. I want to thank you very much. Now let's have some fun.



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