

Remarks Of

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

Rochester Junior College
Rochester, Minnesota

October 25, 1974

The two major ingredients in today's raging inflation are food and petroleum prices. I would like to discuss these two critical problem areas briefly with you. Unless we take action to keep supplies of these two basics up, and their prices at reasonable levels for our consumers, inflation will not be controlled.

On the food side, it is a disgrace that we have no National Food Policy. And, under the present free-enterprise "bucaneer" policies of the Department of Agriculture, we will not have one.

We must have a comprehensive National Food Policy if we are to maximize production, provide fair and stable incomes to our farmers, and assure adequate supplies of food at reasonable prices to American consumers.

Agriculture is one of the most complex production systems in our modern economy. It must operate within a comprehensive national policy. It cannot respond satisfactorily to the hurky-jerky, seat of the pants, ad hoc signals that today emanate from U.S.D.A. We have seen this demonstrated time and time again and I am fed up with this approach.

A good example of this kind of thinking was the U.S.D.A. decision to open up all farm land for maximum production, without telling the fertilizer industry a thing about its plan. As a result, fertilizer supply for the new land wasn't available and fertilizer prices soared. Of course, this did not help the farmers' income at all, but it did push the price of food way up.

A National Food Policy would treat agriculture as a system and see to it that these kinds of foul-ups are minimized or eliminated.

Such a policy would also include an export licensing system for agricultural commodities determined to be in critically short supply. I have always been a free trade advocate. I remain one today. But, it is lunacy to permit the official swashbucklers of the free market system in U.S.D.A. to close their eyes to deals that cost American consumers millions, fatten the bank accounts of the speculators, don't benefit our farmers, and cause malnutrition and starvation for millions of human beings in countries that rely on our bounty for the very life of their people.

If it is a crime to want to prudently manage our nation's abundance for the greatest good for all our people, I plead guilty.

We must also establish a national and international food reserve program to protect both consumers and farmers. Today, world food reserves are at their lowest level in 25 years, we can only meet food needs for about 27 days, before the cupboard will be bare.

We have huge stockpiles of bombs, planes, fuels, minerals, and many other so called strategic materials for protecting our national security. I ask you, is there a more serious threat to our security than starving people - I think not.

We must also establish - now - a National Energy Policy. It must be based on a major short and long-term energy conservation program. We need to set specific energy conservation goals and then do what we must to reach those goals.

Except for the period of severe gas shortage last winter, we have had no serious national conservation program. In fact, we have done nothing to reverse some very anti-conservation practices.

For example, we have all vented our frustration with the utility companies. When we turned our thermostats down, they rewarded us by pushing our utility bills up. How can we expect our people to take conservation seriously when this kind of behaviour is condoned.

I will be introducing a comprehensive energy conservation measure when Congress reconvenes in November.

The second prong of our energy policy must be an expanded energy research program. So far we have had a lot of rhetoric about "Project Independence," but virtually no action.

The only promising development has been passage by Congress of my Solar Energy Research, Development and Demonstration Act. The President has signed this landmark legislation which calls for a \$1 billion solar energy program. Having studied this area rather closely, and having pushed for more funding since 1962, I am convinced that the most economical energy investment today is a massive investment in solar energy for tomorrow.

As I see it, the price of oil will only come down - or stabilize - when the Arabs are convinced that we are going to be self sufficient. They know we have the capacity to do it. They know that if we succeed, all the industrialized nations will follow our lead.

As yet, they have not seen us show the will to be self-sufficient.

I believe that a tough conservation program and a massive energy research program will give the shieks the message. But, if we continue to have our nation's leaders give nice little sermons that equate energy conservation with closing the doors, and putting on an extra sweater, the Arabs will not get the message that America is serious about self-sufficiency.

And we will not get the fuel price cut that we need.

While on the subject of energy, I would like to point out that it was state and local government initiative that really helped get our nation through the "energy crunch" last winter. In fact, state legislators and local officials mounted the most successful energy conservation programs, devised the odd-even days gas sales scheme, in some areas they staggered gas station hours, developed the emergency fuel supply programs, and made the priority users allocation programs work as well as they did.

When you couple this kind of role with the growing responsibility of state and local elected officials for "people" programs, the need to elect progressive minded people to these positions becomes obvious.

Today you need persons to represent you who care about people -- not only in Congress, but in the Governor's mansion, in the state legislature, in city hall, and in the town hall. This is where government meets the people, understands their problems, and responds to them - or it fails.

We face many serious problems in America today. But, we have had them in the past, too. America's greatness lies in the ability of its political system, and more fundamentally its people, to overcome problems - be they war - depression - or scandal. And this basic strength can only be maintained by a conscientious electorate that chooses its leaders wisely.

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REMARKS OF
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ROCHESTER JUNIOR COLLEGE
ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA

OCTOBER 25, 1974

THE TWO MAJOR INGREDIENTS IN TODAY'S RAGING INFLATION ARE FOOD AND PETROLEUM PRICES. I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THESE TWO CRITICAL PROBLEM AREAS BRIEFLY WITH YOU. UNLESS WE TAKE ACTION TO KEEP SUPPLIES OF THESE TWO BASICS UP, AND THEIR PRICES AT REASONABLE LEVELS FOR OUR CONSUMERS, INFLATION WILL NOT BE CONTROLLED.

ON THE FOOD SIDE, IT IS A DISGRACE THAT WE HAVE NO NATIONAL FOOD POLICY. AND, UNDER THE PRESENT FREE-ENTERPRISE "BUCANEER" POLICIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WE WILL NOT HAVE ONE.

WE MUST HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL FOOD POLICY IF WE ARE TO MAXIMIZE PRODUCTION, PROVIDE FAIR AND STABLE INCOMES TO OUR FARMERS, AND ASSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FOOD AT REASONABLE PRICES TO AMERICAN CONSUMERS.

AGRICULTURE IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX PRODUCTION SYSTEMS IN OUR MODERN ECONOMY. IT MUST OPERATE WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL POLICY. IT CANNOT RESPOND SATISFACTORILY TO THE HURKY-JERKY, SEAT OF THE PANTS, AD HOC SIGNALS THAT TODAY EMINATE FROM U.S.D.A. WE HAVE SEEN THIS DEMONSTRATED TIME AND TIME AGAIN AND I AM FED UP WITH THIS APPROACH.

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS KIND OF THINKING WAS THE U.S.D.A. DECISION TO OPEN UP ALL FARM LAND FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTION, WITHOUT TELLING THE FERTILIZER INDUSTRY A THING ABOUT ITS PLAN. AS A RESULT, FERTILIZER SUPPLY FOR THE NEW LAND WASN'T AVAILABLE AND FERTILIZER PRICES SOARED. OF COURSE, THIS DID NOT HELP THE FARMERS' INCOME AT ALL, BUT IT DID PUSH THE PRICE OF FOOD WAY UP.

A NATIONAL FOOD POLICY WOULD TREAT AGRICULTURE AS A SYSTEM AND SEE TO IT THAT THESE KINDS OF FOUL-UPS ARE MINIMIZED OR ELIMINATED.

SUCH A POLICY WOULD ALSO INCLUDE AN EXPORT LICENSING SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES DETERMINED TO BE IN CRITICALLY SHORT SUPPLY. I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A FREE TRADE ADVOCATE. I REMAIN ONE TODAY. BUT, IT IS LUNACY TO PERMIT THE OFFICIAL SWASHBUCKLERS OF THE FREE MARKET SYSTEM IN U.S.D.A. TO CLOSE THEIR EYES TO DEALS THAT COST AMERICAN CONSUMERS MILLIONS, FATTEN THE BANK ACCOUNTS OF THE SPECULATORS, DON'T BENEFIT OUR FARMERS, AND CAUSE MALNUTRITION AND STARVATION FOR MILLIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS IN COUNTRIES THAT RELY ON OUR BOUNTY FOR THE VERY LIFE OF THEIR PEOPLE.

IF IT IS A CRIME TO WANT TO PRUDENTLY MANAGE
OUR NATION'S ABUNDANCE FOR THE GREATEST GOOD FOR ALL
OUR PEOPLE, I PLEAD GUILTY.

WE MUST ALSO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL AND INTER-
NATIONAL FOOD RESERVE PROGRAM TO PROTECT BOTH CONSUMERS
AND FARMERS. TODAY, WORLD FOOD RESERVES ARE AT THEIR
LOWEST LEVEL IN 25 YEARS, WE CAN ONLY MEET FOOD NEEDS
FOR ABOUT 27 DAYS, BEFORE THE CUPBOARD WILL BE BARE.

WE HAVE HUGE STOCKPILES OF BOMBS, PLANES, FUELS,
MINERALS, AND MANY OTHER SO CALLED STRATEGIC MATERIALS
FOR PROTECTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY. I ASK YOU, IS
THERE A MORE SERIOUS THREAT TO OUR SECURITY THAN
STARVING PEOPLE - I THINK NOT.

WE MUST ALSO ESTABLISH - NOW - A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY. IT MUST BE BASED ON A MAJOR SHORT AND LONG-TERM ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM. WE NEED TO SET SPECIFIC ENERGY CONSERVATION GOALS AND THEN DO WHAT WE MUST TO REACH THOSE GOALS.

EXCEPT FOR THE PERIOD OF SEVERE GAS SHORTAGE LAST WINTER, WE HAVE HAD NO SERIOUS NATIONAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM. IN FACT, WE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO REVERSE SOME VERY ANTI-CONSERVATION PRACTICES.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE ALL VENTED OUR FRUSTRATION WITH THE UTILITY COMPANIES. WHEN WE TURNED OUR THERMOSTATS DOWN, THEY REWARDED US BY PUSHING OUR UTILITY BILLS UP. HOW CAN WE EXPECT OUR PEOPLE TO TAKE CONSERVATION SERIOUSLY WHEN THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOUR IS CONDONED.

I WILL BE INTRODUCING A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURE WHEN CONGRESS RECONVENES IN NOVEMBER.

THE SECOND PRONG OF OUR ENERGY POLICY MUST BE AN EXPANDED ENERGY RESEARCH PROGRAM. SO FAR WE HAVE HAD A LOT OF RHETORIC ABOUT "PROJECT INDEPENDENCE," BUT VIRTUALLY NO ACTION.

THE ONLY PROMISING DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN PASSAGE BY CONGRESS OF MY SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMONSTRATION ACT. THE PRESIDENT HAS SIGNED THIS LAND-MARK LEGISLATION WHICH CALLS FOR A \$1 BILLION SOLAR ENERGY PROGRAM. HAVING STUDIED THIS AREA RATHER CLOSELY, AND HAVING PUSHED FOR MORE FUNDING SINCE 1962, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE MOST ECONOMICAL ENERGY INVESTMENT TODAY IS A MASSIVE INVESTMENT IN SOLAR ENERGY FOR TOMORROW.

AS I SEE IT, THE PRICE OF OIL WILL ONLY
COME DOWN - OR STABILIZE - WHEN THE ARABS ARE CON-
VINCED THAT WE ARE GOING TO BE SELF SUFFICIENT.
THEY KNOW WE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO DO IT. THEY KNOW
THAT IF WE SUCCEED, ALL THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS
WILL FOLLOW OUR LEAD.

AS YET, THEY HAVE NOT SEEN US SHOW THE WILL
TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT.

I BELIEVE THAT A TOUGH CONSERVATION PROGRAM
AND A MASSIVE ENERGY RESEARCH PROGRAM WILL GIVE THE
SHIEKS THE MESSAGE. BUT, IF WE CONTINUE TO HAVE OUR
NATION'S LEADERS GIVE NICE LITTLE SERMONS THAT EQUATE
ENERGY CONSERVATION WITH CLOSING THE DOORS, AND PUTTING
ON AN EXTRA SWEATER, THE ARABS WILL NOT GET THE MESSAGE
THAT AMERICA IS SERIOUS ABOUT SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

AND WE WILL NOT GET THE FUEL PRICE CUT THAT WE
NEED.

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF ENERGY, I WOULD
LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT IT WAS STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE THAT REALLY HELPED GET OUR
NATION THROUGH THE "ENERGY CRUNCH" LAST WINTER.
IN FACT, STATE LEGISLATORS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS
MOUNTED THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ENERGY CONSERVATION
PROGRAMS, DEvised THE ODD-EVEN DAYS GAS SALES
SCHEME, IN SOME AREAS THEY STAGGERED GAS STATION
HOURS, DEVELOPED THE EMERGENCY FUEL SUPPLY PROGRAMS,
AND MADE THE PRIORITY USERS ALLOCATION PROGRAMS
WORK AS WELL AS THEY DID.

WHEN YOU COUPLE THIS KIND OF ROLE WITH THE GROWING RESPONSIBILITY OF STATE AND LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR "PEOPLE" PROGRAMS, THE NEED TO ELECT PROGRESSIVE MINDED PEOPLE TO THESE POSITIONS BECOMES OBVIOUS.

TODAY YOU NEED PERSONS TO REPRESENT YOU WHO CARE ABOUT PEOPLE -- NOT ONLY IN CONGRESS, BUT IN THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION, IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE, IN CITY HALL, AND IN THE TOWN HALL. THIS IS WHERE GOVERNMENT MEETS THE PEOPLE, UNDERSTANDS THEIR PROBLEMS, AND RESPONDS TO THEM - OR IT FAILS.

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WE FACE MANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN AMERICA TODAY,
BUT, WE HAVE HAD THEM IN THE PAST, TOO. AMERICA'S
GREATNESS LIES IN THE ABILITY OF ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM,
AND MORE FUNDAMENTALLY ITS PEOPLE, TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS -
BE THEY WAR - DEPRESSION - OR SCANDAL. AND THIS BASIC
STRENGTH CAN ONLY BE MAINTAINED BY A CONSCIENTIOUS
ELECTORATE THAT CHOOSES ITS LEADERS WISELY.

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