

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

EVANS-NOVAK FORUM

Washington, D. C.

March 31, 1976

To launch our discussion this morning, I would like to make some brief remarks in four areas that I think you will find of interest -- Presidential politics -- the so-called anti-Washington mood -- economic prospects and their political implications and detente.

(1) Presidential politics -- Despite North Carolina, President Ford still is riding the crest of his popularity. Five consecutive victories over Ronald Reagan, a general improvement in the economy and the outlook for the economy, and no major crises domestically or internationally, all make Gerald Ford's prospects for nomination and re-election look good these days.

I do not believe, however, that President Ford will stay on the crest until November. I think he is at his high point right now. Keep in mind that once the Democrats have nominated their candidates, the President will have to answer for eight years of Republican control of the White House -- eight years that have seen two recessions, the highest unemployment rates in decades, the highest rates of inflation since World War II, and the highest interest rates since the Civil War.

I don't believe that anyone is going to run away with this election.

On the Democratic side, I think it simply is too early to have much of an idea about which candidate will emerge to receive the Party's nomination. The key primaries are approaching; Wisconsin, New York, and Pennsylvania. When these have been concluded we will have a much better idea about relative candidate strength.

(2) The Anti-Washington Mood -- It is not difficult to understand why the American people are in many ways fed up with their government. A lot of things have contributed to this, not the least of which has been a general deterioration of the economy. All those who claim a share in the nation's political and economic leadership are confronted with the challenge of convincing the American people that our institutions are healthy, that they can be reformed to be more responsive and democratic.

But the so-called "big government" argument is not the real issue. The real issue is good government and quality government. There is a great temptation today to run against Washington. There is a great temptation to make the Federal government the whipping boy, to appeal to the dissatisfaction that exists in the nation.

It's stylish today to say that all of the old programs from FDR through LBJ are worn out and no good. Now I won't claim that every program we have adopted should stay on the books. But if we hadn't had many of these programs during the last year, our country would have been flat on its back in a massive depression.

Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, Medicare, Food Stamps, and even Aid for Dependent Children played a major role in averting a national disaster.

We cannot restore confidence in our political system if we all become anti-government zealots. The answer is not self-abuse, and it is not necessarily less government. It is better government -- a government that works to serve the nation's needs.

Responsible public officials must do their best to make government better.

(3) Economic prospects -- While we are making progress toward economic recovery, the condition of our economy continues to be a serious problem. Despite improvements, seven million people remain out of work by official count, and the real figure is closer to 10 million people.

The problem of unemployment, as you know, is especially acute in the case of young people. In January, 3.7 million persons under the age of 25 were unemployed. In city after city around the country, the unemployment rates are 10, 12 and 15 percent. In the minority communities, the rate is in many cases double the national average.

The recession of '73-'75 dwarfs all previous post-war recessions in both depth and duration. Two and one-half years after the recession began, the economy had not yet returned to its 1973 income levels. By 1980, this recession will have cost our economy in excess of one trillion dollars.

The long-awaited recovery from recession is less assured than the President and his economic advisors would have us believe. Although I am bullish on the economy in 1976, I am quite concerned that recovery could flounder in 1977.

I am convinced that unless there is some "economic miracle" -- and I don't expect one -- the President will not be the beneficiary of the economic issue. Frankly, the Administration has a lot of explaining to do to the American people.

(4) Foreign policy and detente. It's clear that foreign policy issues are going to be discussed and debated this election year. Many of the issues which have been at the top of the Congressional foreign policy agenda -- arms sales, the powers of the President, CIA -- will find their way into the campaign. One of the most important of these issues focuses on a very controversial word: "detente."

The most critical foreign policy issue we face is to define our relations with the Soviets in a way that will have the support of the American people.

I would be less than candid if I told you that I felt the candidates this year -- Democrats and Republicans -- were handling this issue in a totally responsible and frank manner. The candidates have played on the public's confusion which has stemmed from a combination of the overselling of detente by the Nixon Administration and recent Soviet adventures in Angola.

The American people deserve the truth on one of the most critical issues at the heart of the Soviet-American relationship. There is no turning back from the principles of arms limitations and arms reductions established in the SALT process. Any man who implies that we can sacrifice this process to momentary pique or disappointment does not understand the nature of power in the world and the danger we face from an unchecked nuclear arms race. I earnestly hope that a successful SALT II agreement is not lost because of election year politics.

Beyond SALT is the goal of obtaining Soviet cooperation in the Middle East. We cannot have a true Middle East peace without the help of the Soviets. There is nothing wrong with linking Soviet cooperation in the Middle East and elsewhere with their need to have an expanding commercial relationship with us. But I am opposed to threatening a termination of grain sales to the Soviets every time we are unhappy with their behavior.

On the subject of grain sales to the Soviets, we must let them know that if they are going to be preferred customers they cannot ignore their responsibilities as a significant element in the international food system. We cannot tolerate continued disruption of world grain markets because the Soviets have a penchant for secrecy or if they fail to cooperate in the establishment of international food reserves. Food is of critical importance to the Soviet-American relationship. I have no doubt that Soviet behavior has and will be moderated by their dependence on us for food.

One final word about the defense budget and the Soviet military build-up. There is no doubt that the Soviets are determined to maintain parity with the United States with their conventional and strategic forces. However, we still have a considerable lead in the capability to conduct very advanced research and development. This advantage should allow us to maintain our lead in the development of weapons systems needed to combat growing Soviet capabilities.

I believe it important, however, not to confuse Soviet defense spending with the acquisition of a defense force able to obtain a first strike capability or to "Finlandize Europe." These goals are not obtainable for the Soviets in the near future.

I frankly believe that we confuse quantity with capability. Let me give you an example.

The Soviet navy has been growing at a rapid pace. However, in most areas of the world -- especially those vital to our interests -- it cannot offer a serious challenge to the U.S. Navy. The Soviet Navy is rife with serious difficulties. Its replenishment capabilities are feeble. It has serious choke point problems in the deployment of its submarines, which we do not face. The Soviets lack naval aircraft and cannot project power ashore as we can. And their ability to sustain a long term naval action is limited by their lack of logistical capability.

I am not proposing that we shouldn't continue to modernize our navy. But let's not scare ourselves into second place status. And let's not permit the Soviets to think that we think they have a superior defense establishment -- because they don't, and the American intelligence community will support this assertion.

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MARCH 31, 1976

↳ TO LAUNCH OUR DISCUSSION THIS MORNING, I WOULD LIKE TO
MAKE SOME BRIEF REMARKS IN FOUR AREAS THAT I THINK YOU WILL
FIND OF INTEREST -- PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS -- THE SO-CALLED
ANTI-WASHINGTON MOOD -- ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND THEIR POLITICAL
IMPLICATIONS AND DETENTE.

↳ (1) PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS -- DESPITE NORTH CAROLINA,
PRESIDENT FORD STILL IS RIDING THE CREST OF HIS POPULARITY,
↳ FIVE CONSECUTIVE VICTORIES OVER RONALD REAGAN, A GENERAL
IMPROVEMENT IN THE ECONOMY AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE ECONOMY,
AND NO MAJOR CRISES DOMESTICALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY, ALL
MAKE GERALD FORD'S PROSPECTS FOR NOMINATION AND RE-ELECTION
LOOK GOOD THESE DAYS.

I DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT FORD WILL STAY ON THE CREST UNTIL NOVEMBER. I THINK HE IS AT HIS HIGH POINT RIGHT NOW. KEEP IN MIND THAT ONCE THE DEMOCRATS HAVE NOMINATED THEIR CANDIDATES, THE PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR EIGHT YEARS OF REPUBLICAN CONTROL OF THE WHITE HOUSE -- EIGHT YEARS THAT HAVE SEEN TWO RECESSIONS, THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN DECADES, THE HIGHEST RATES OF INFLATION SINCE WORLD WAR II, AND THE HIGHEST INTEREST RATES SINCE THE CIVIL WAR. *Plus walogeli*

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANYONE IS GOING TO RUN AWAY WITH THIS ELECTION.

ON THE DEMOCRATIC SIDE, I THINK IT SIMPLY IS TOO EARLY TO HAVE MUCH OF AN IDEA ABOUT WHICH CANDIDATE WILL EMERGE TO RECEIVE THE PARTY'S NOMINATION.

L THE KEY PRIMARIES ARE APPROACHING; WISCONSIN, NEW YORK, AND
PENNSYLVANIA L WHEN THESE HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED WE WILL HAVE A
MUCH BETTER IDEA ABOUT RELATIVE CANDIDATE STRENGTH,

(2) THE ANTI-WASHINGTON MOOD -- IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO
UNDERSTAND WHY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE IN MANY WAYS FED UP
WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT. L A LOT OF THINGS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO
THIS, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH HAS BEEN A GENERAL DETERIORATION
OF THE ECONOMY. L ALL THOSE WHO CLAIM A SHARE IN THE NATION'S
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP ARE CONFRONTED WITH THE
CHALLENGE OF CONVINCING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT OUR
INSTITUTIONS ARE HEALTHY, THAT THEY CAN BE REFORMED TO BE
MORE RESPONSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC.

↳ BUT THE SO-CALLED "BIG GOVERNMENT" ARGUMENT IS NOT THE

REAL ISSUE, ↳ THE REAL ISSUE IS ^{Responsive -} ~~GOOD~~ GOVERNMENT AND QUALITY

GOVERNMENT, ↳ THERE IS A GREAT TEMPTATION TODAY TO RUN AGAINST

WASHINGTON, ↳ THERE IS A GREAT TEMPTATION TO MAKE THE FEDERAL

GOVERNMENT THE WHIPPING BOY, TO APPEAL TO THE DISSATISFACTION

THAT EXISTS IN THE NATION.

↳ IT'S STYLISH TODAY TO SAY THAT ALL OF THE OLD PROGRAMS

FROM FDR THROUGH LBJ ARE WORN OUT AND NO GOOD. ↳ NOW I WON'T

CLAIM THAT EVERY PROGRAM WE HAVE ADOPTED SHOULD STAY ON THE

BOOKS. ↳ BUT IF WE HADN'T HAD MANY OF THESE PROGRAMS DURING THE

LAST YEAR, OUR COUNTRY WOULD HAVE BEEN FLAT ON ITS BACK IN A

MASSIVE DEPRESSION.

SOCIAL SECURITY, UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION, MEDICARE, FOOD
educ, health.

STAMPS, AND EVEN AID FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE
IN AVERTING A NATIONAL DISASTER.

Joint
to
Secret

WE CANNOT RESTORE CONFIDENCE IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM IF WE ALL
BECOME ANTI-GOVERNMENT ZEALOTS. THE ANSWER IS NOT SELF-ABUSE, AND
IT IS NOT NECESSARILY LESS GOVERNMENT. IT IS BETTER GOVERNMENT --
A GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS TO SERVE THE NATION'S NEEDS. Management

RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC OFFICIALS MUST DO THEIR BEST TO MAKE
GOVERNMENT BETTER. (Federal Council -
Cabinet.

(3) ECONOMIC PROSPECTS -- WHILE WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD
ECONOMIC RECOVERY, THE CONDITION OF OUR ECONOMY CONTINUES TO BE A
SERIOUS PROBLEM. (DESPITE IMPROVEMENTS, SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE REMAIN
OUT OF WORK BY OFFICIAL COUNT, AND THE REAL FIGURE IS CLOSER TO
10 MILLION PEOPLE.

↳ THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT, AS YOU KNOW, IS ESPECIALLY ACUTE
IN THE CASE OF YOUNG PEOPLE. ↳ IN JANUARY, 3.7 MILLION PERSONS UNDER
THE AGE OF 25 WERE UNEMPLOYED. ↳ IN CITY AFTER CITY AROUND THE COUNTRY,
THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ARE 10, 12 AND 15 PERCENT. ↳ IN THE MINORITY
COMMUNITIES, THE RATE IS IN MANY CASES DOUBLE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

↳ THE RECESSION OF '73-'75 DWARFS ALL PREVIOUS POST-WAR RECESSIONS
IN BOTH DEPTH AND DURATION. ↳ TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS AFTER THE
RECESSION BEGAN, THE ECONOMY HAD NOT YET RETURNED TO ITS 1973 INCOME
LEVELS. ↳ BY 1980, THIS RECESSION WILL HAVE COST OUR ECONOMY IN
EXCESS OF ONE TRILLION DOLLARS.

↳ THE LONG-AWAITED RECOVERY FROM RECESSION IS LESS ASSURED THAN
THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ECONOMIC ADVISORS WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE.

↳ ALTHOUGH I AM BULLISH ON THE ECONOMY IN 1976, I AM QUITE CONCERNED
THAT RECOVERY COULD FLOUNDER IN 1977.

L I AM CONVINCED THAT UNLESS THERE IS SOME "ECONOMIC MIRACLE" --
AND I DON'T EXPECT ONE -- THE PRESIDENT WILL NOT BE THE BENEFICIARY
OF THE ECONOMIC ISSUE. FRANKLY, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS A LOT OF
EXPLAINING TO DO TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

L (4) FOREIGN POLICY AND DETENTE. IT'S CLEAR THAT FOREIGN POLICY
ISSUES ARE GOING TO BE DISCUSSED AND DEBATED THIS ELECTION YEAR. L MANY
OF THE ISSUES WHICH HAVE BEEN AT THE TOP OF THE CONGRESSIONAL FOREIGN
POLICY AGENDA -- ARMS SALES, THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT, CIA -- WILL
FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE CAMPAIGN. L ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE
ISSUES FOCUSES ON A VERY CONTROVERSIAL WORD: "DETENTE."

L THE MOST CRITICAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE WE FACE IS TO DEFINE
OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS IN A WAY THAT WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I WOULD BE LESS THAN CANDID IF I TOLD YOU THAT I FELT THE
CANDIDATES THIS YEAR -- DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS -- WERE HANDLING
THIS ISSUE IN A TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE AND FRANK MANNER. THE CANDIDATES
HAVE PLAYED ON THE PUBLIC'S CONFUSION WHICH HAS STEMMED FROM A
COMBINATION OF THE OVERSELLING OF DETENTE BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION
AND RECENT SOVIET ADVENTURES IN ANGOLA.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE THE TRUTH ON ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL
ISSUES AT THE HEART OF THE SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP. THERE IS
NO TURNING BACK FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF ARMS LIMITATIONS AND ARMS
REDUCTIONS ESTABLISHED IN THE SALT PROCESS. ANY MAN WHO IMPLIES THAT
WE CAN SACRIFICE THIS PROCESS TO MOMENTARY PIQUE OR DISAPPOINTMENT
DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF POWER IN THE WORLD AND THE DANGER
WE FACE FROM AN UNCHECKED NUCLEAR ARMS RACE.

I EARNESTLY HOPE THAT A SUCCESSFUL SALT II AGREEMENT IS NOT LOST
BECAUSE OF ELECTION YEAR POLITICS.

BEYOND SALT IS THE GOAL OF OBTAINING SOVIET COOPERATION IN THE
MIDDLE EAST. WE CANNOT HAVE A TRUE MIDDLE EAST PEACE WITHOUT THE
HELP OF THE SOVIETS. THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH LINKING SOVIET
COOPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ELSEWHERE WITH THEIR NEED TO HAVE
AN EXPANDING COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US. BUT I AM OPPOSED TO
THREATENING A TERMINATION OF GRAIN SALES TO THE SOVIETS EVERY TIME
WE ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR BEHAVIOR.

ON THE SUBJECT OF GRAIN SALES TO THE SOVIETS, WE MUST LET THEM
KNOW THAT IF THEY ARE GOING TO BE PREFERRED CUSTOMERS THEY CANNOT
IGNORE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN THE
INTERNATIONAL FOOD SYSTEM.

WE CANNOT TOLERATE CONTINUED DISRUPTION OF WORLD GRAIN MARKETS

BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE A PENCHANT FOR SECRECY OR IF THEY FAIL TO
COOPERATE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL FOOD RESERVES.

FOOD IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SOVIET BEHAVIOR HAS AND WILL BE MODERATED BY
THEIR DEPENDENCE ON US FOR FOOD.

ONE FINAL WORD ABOUT THE DEFENSE BUDGET AND THE SOVIET MILITARY

BUILD-UP. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE DETERMINED TO

MAINTAIN PARITY WITH THE UNITED STATES WITH THEIR CONVENTIONAL AND
STRATEGIC FORCES. HOWEVER, WE STILL HAVE A CONSIDERABLE LEAD IN THE

CAPABILITY TO CONDUCT VERY ADVANCED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS

ADVANTAGE SHOULD ALLOW US TO MAINTAIN OUR LEAD IN THE DEVELOPMENT

OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS NEEDED TO COMBAT GROWING SOVIET CAPABILITIES.

AND THEIR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN A LONG TERM NAVAL ACTION IS LIMITED
BY THEIR LACK OF LOGISTICAL CAPABILITY.

I AM NOT PROPOSING THAT WE SHOULDN'T CONTINUE TO MODERNIZE OUR
NAVY. BUT LET'S NOT SCARE OURSELVES INTO SECOND PLACE STATUS. AND
LET'S NOT PERMIT THE SOVIETS TO THINK THAT WE THINK THEY HAVE A
SUPERIOR DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT -- BECAUSE THEY DON'T, AND THE
AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WILL SUPPORT THIS ASSERTION.

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