

file

TRANSCRIPT OF HUMPHREY
14 MINUTE TV REPORT TO
MINNESOTA
Week of March 10, 1963

This is Washington and this is Senator Hubert Humphrey reporting to the people of Minnesota. The Majority Whip today will discuss domestic and international problems which now face the Congress. Here is Senator Humphrey.

Well, thank you, ladies and gentlemen. It is just about time that we sort of took inventory of what has been happening here on Capitol Hill and what the prospects are for action here in the 88th Congress. I have a rare privilege that is accorded to very few people in our country - the privilege of every Tuesday morning being with the President of the United States and the Vice President, along with the leaders of the Congress - the Speaker of the House, the Majority Leader of the House, the Majority Whip and my colleague in the Senate, the Majority Leader, Senator Mansfield, and the Secretary to the Conference of the Majority, Senator Smathers and myself, sitting with the President and some of his other advisers for the legislative breakfast. Each Tuesday at 8:45 we have from an hour to an hour and a half of a very frank, informal and confidential discussion on the legislative programs and the international developments. I say this is a rare privilege, because it is at these meetings that much of the policy of our country is formulated and ~~discussed~~ discussed. It is from these meetings that we go forth to try to accomplish some of the legislative purposes and objectives of the administration. You have heard much in the newspapers and over the television and radio about the so-called delays in the 88th Congress. Now we have had some but this is not unusual. The first month of any Congress, in fact the

first six weeks of any new Congress, is expended in the organization of the Congress itself. This is a big institution with well over 500 members - 537 members. This means that all of these members must be assigned to their working committees. It is my privilege to serve on the Senate/Committee ^{Steering} which makes the assignments of every one of the United States Senators. Now we have established these new committees and made the assignments of the committee members. The committee size reflects, in part, the ratio between Democrats and Republicans here in the United States Senate. There are some exceptions - in the area of foreign policy we do not try to have an accurate reflection or a mathematical reflection of the majority and the minority. We keep it very bi-partisan, because our foreign policy must be supported on a bi-partisan or non-partisan basis. In the field of finance, when we get to taxation for example, I think it is exceedingly important that the committee be composed of men who are experienced in economics and financial matters and that we approach the problems of fiscal policy, financial policy and taxation in a most prudent and careful manner. In the area of appropriations we ^{want to} have people on the appropriations committee that are very much aware of the many programs and policies of the government and also a sense of ~~prudence~~ prudence, yes of conservatism, about the use of the dollar because our budgets today are very big and they are going to continue to be big. I say that because until there can be some peace in this world, and until we can arrive at some understanding with the forces that seek to destroy us, we are going to have to have a strong military establishment, we are going to have to compete in the exploration of outer space and my fellow citizens these costs sky rocket.

Every year the costs of security go up. Every year the costs of the exploration of outer space go up and almost ~~a~~ in astronomical proportions. The cost of managing our public debt goes up, but may I just say a word about the public debt, it is very large and it surely is not anything we ought to be proud of - the public debt on a per capita basis is lower today than it has been for, I think, forty years. Or at least over thirty years. I say this because our gross national product is almost six hundred billions of dollars, our population is over 185 million and when you distribute the total amount of public debt over the total population, as well as the earning capacity of the people of this country, you will note that in the post war years the per capital indebtedness of the country has actually not gone up but gone down and the overall indebtedness has gone up much less at the federal level than at the state and local level. Now I don't want to be misunderstood. This is no apology ~~or~~ or no rationalization of indebtedness. I merely state that we have an economy that can manage and handle this indebtedness. Now I have heard many people say that what we need in government is good sound business practices. I have heard people say you never heard of a businessman operating a business and hoping to stay in business on a deficit. Well, could I be quite frank with you. We do not build for example, great corporations by the AT&T and General Motors out of current earnings. The AT&T floats bonds and stocks, those are certificates of indebtedness. I once said that if the AT&T had the same budgetary practices as the Federal Government we would still be communicating by smoke signals. The fact of the matter is that the American

corporate structure is built upon debt or upon investment, that is what they call it - investment. But when I buy stock in a company, that is a loan of money to that company and I am hoping that that loan can be redeemed and I am hoping for dividends which is the same as interest. So in many ways we do operate our government somewhat on a businesslike basis, but of course government is not a profit making enterprise, and particularly is it not a profit making enterprise when it has to ~~xx~~ has to give much needed services for highways, for example, or for airports or in the field of public health and social security, for a host of activities that relate to business, commerce, consumers and the public in general and then when you get down to having a budget that runs about \$60 billion for national security and that is what it is in terms of our StateDepartment operations, our military operations, our atomic energy operations - all this related to national security - and then add to that the activities in the field of science and in the field of outer space and you get up to about \$70 billion - \$70 billion in round numbers, now, related to the cost of national security and survival. The other \$28 billion that is left in this budget - some \$10 billion is for managing the public debt - interest paid back, of course, to Americans, since we are in debt to ourselves. You can see then, I believe, that the problems of managing the fiscal matters of this government - the monetary matters - are very big ones and we need good people doing it.

Now at the executive level we have some good people - the Secretary of the Treasury - Mr. Dillon - is a businessman of great reputation - by the way he is a Republican, the President of the United States has an excellent budget director, we go over these budgets with meticulous care and I want

to assure you that Congress is going to go over every Administration budget with a fine tooth comb and we always reduce them somewhat. Now I say this because you ought to see the mail I get about spending and I don't blame you people for complaining about spending because this is a costly operation, but I like to be honest with my neighbors and constituents. Until we can have peace in this world the cost of government will continue to grow. Next year the space program will be much larger ~~than~~ ^{best} that this year unless you want to come in second/to the Russians. Next year the cost of defense will be much larger than it is this year unless you want to have the Soviets overwhelm us. You can't be tough on Cuba. You can't be tough about the situation in Berlin. You can't face up to the communist threat in Southeast Asia. You can't try to defeat Castro and Communism in the Western Hemisphere ~~on~~ on bargaincounter prices. It just isn't in the book. So when I hear people talk about well we have to cut this and cut that and do this and do that, I say now what do you mean. The major cuts that can be made are in defense - that is if you really want to cut a big hunk out of federal spending, but I am not for doing that because I think this country needs defense and security. I don't think you can demand the ousting of the Russians from Cuba and demand the destruction of Castro and at the same time say that we can do it cheaper. It just can't be done. I don't think you can defeat Communism in the western hemisphere, stop it in Eastern Asia, and stand up to the Russians in Berlin and say that you are going to do it at bargain counter prices. It makes good ^{demagoguery} ~~demagoguery~~ to talk about doing it cheaply, but it doesn't make much sense.

Now can I shift quickly to another matter. These matters of the cost of government are surely of prime importance, ~~but~~ ^{and} I want to come back to you again. I want to give you a pledge that as a member of the Appropriations Committee I will scrutinize and examine carefully every single item that comes in that budget and that committee is made up of prudent and conservative men - keep me out of it for a moment - the overwhelming majority of the men there are conservative gentlemen who carefully examine these budgets so that the tax dollar is going to be watched. By the way, we pay taxes down here too. I have to pay them in Minnesota, down here in the District of Columbia, federal and state income taxes and all the other taxes, and I have a family, so I think I understand a little bit about taxes.

Now one of the great issues before us today of course and the great issue is the matter of our survival as a free people and as a nation. We have a terrible burden but one we cannot avoid of ~~making~~ world leadership. Now ~~we~~ either we lead or the Russians will. There isn't anybody in between. Either we try to keep this world free and extend the frontiers of freedom and democracy or the world will ~~be~~ be slowly nibbled to death by communism. I believe it is my duty - moral, spiritual and political duty - to do whatever I can as a citizen and as a Senator to see that this world remains free and to see that the United States bears the mantle of ~~free~~ leadership with dignity and with courage, even if there are sacrifices. Now one of the great issues before us of recent date is whether we should prohibit nuclear testing and have an ~~agreement~~ agreement with the Russians. Some people say that you ought not to do this - ought not to have an agreement because if you agree with the Russians you are going to sacrifice your

security. Let's continue to test, say some of the people. Let's continue to explode these bombs in the atmosphere and the danger of radioactive fallout, let's not worry too much about that, say some people.

But Senator Humphrey says that if we can get a safe guarded agreement with international inspection and control for detection and identification of any possible nuclear tests, that we ought to sign it and I will tell you why, because we today have a superiority in nuclear weapons but every day that goes by and every year that goes by we run the risk of losing that superiority. Testing makes possible the improvement of weapons. Once we had a monopoly on nuclear power, we tried to get the Russians to sign a treaty ~~1/2~~ way back in 1946 to _____ the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the Soviets have refused every year. Now if the treaty to prohibit nuclear testing would violate the security of the United States, would weaken us, would threaten our security, then I ask you, why haven't the Russians been willing to sign one? They would like to see us weakened, yet every day in the press and over the television and radio I hear people say "Oh if the United States agrees to ~~stop~~ stop nuclear testing it will threaten our security, it will weaken our position. Now I repeat that the best answer to that argument is simply this, that if we would sign a treaty to stop nuclear testing and if the Russians would and if we offered this treaty and it would weaken our security, then why haven't the R^Ussians signed it. I will tell you why they haven't because the R^Ussians do not want to stop nuclear testing, the Soviets want to continue nuclear testing and why? Because they are catching up on us, just by the nature of the art, of the science of nuclear energy and nuclear physics. We need in this Congress today a joint committee on national security.

We can't afford to have all these little separate committees operating individually. We need in the Congress what the President has at the White House - he has a National ~~Security~~ Security Council where everything can be considered at once, relating to national security, we need it here in the Congress. Let's bring Congress up to date before it holds back the progress of this country. Well, next week we~~/~~will be with you again and I hope to have a guest. Until then, my good wishes and thank you.



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