

UNITED STATES



INFORMATION SERVICE

U.S. EMBASSY, CANBERRA. U1351

# OFFICIAL TEXT

A radio-received full text on an important  
American statement on world affairs . . .

ADDRESS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

AT

PRIME MINISTER'S LUNCHEON

Canberra, February 19, 1966

Mr. Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Government of Australia; my good friend Mr. Calwell, the Leader of the Opposition, but great Australian, - great citizen, my friend that has been conversing with me during these moments of our luncheon; the great presiding officer of the Senate of the Australian Parliament, Sir Alister McEulloch, - we've settled most of the problems over here; my esteemed friend, the Ambassador of the United States, Mr. Clark, and of course all of the many good friends that we have that are here from other nations; your Excellencies the Ambassadors and Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I must say first of all that I have been touched by the references to the Vice Presidency. I have been told and I was aware of the fact that this is the second time in ten years that Australia has been visited by a Vice President, which shows the gentle nature of the American public and the great consideration that we have for your well-being here. You can only take one of these Vice Presidents about every decade. I also have been reminded as to the uncertainties of the political future of the Vice Presidency and I've been well aware of it, and I've been making the most of every day that I have. I can't help but say, since the other visitor from the office of the Vice Presidency was Mr. Richard M. Nixon, that I have always patterned my life and tried to emulate a gentleman by the name of Richard M. Johnson-- Vice President under Van Buren. And I want you to know that Van Buren was a Democrat: the only partisan reference that I shall feel free to make.

Mr. Prime Minister you have mentioned so many things here that I would like to comment upon that I'm afraid that you've touched the favorite nerve cell in my body, namely--the talking cell. You ought to be aware of that. But I've been told by Ambassador Clark, and by you, Sir, and others, that in Australia you just get up and give forth as much and as long as you want. So lean back my friends and start to enjoy what you haven't intended.

First I want to say to Ambassador Clark that we're very proud of his work here. He's been entertaining a host of visitors from the United States, and he's been able to manage Congressmen and Senators better than he did the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the Presiding Officer of the Senate, and they've come in substantial numbers. Time and Life and Newsweek have arrived to be able to guide you in matters of foreign and domestic policy; and I understand that Ford and General Motors have made their appearance--or will. And you will even have my

good friend George Moore of the First National City Bank of New York.

With this combination, plus the Vice President once in every ten years, you ought to be able to survive. In fact I think you'll do well even if we hadn't have come. But the fact is that we're very, very pleased that we've received the kind of gracious, warm, friendly, home-like reception that you have accord us.

Mr. Prime Minister, you mentioned that I had some responsibilities in the field of Space. Well isn't it good to come and see friends who are with you both in heaven and earth. And you are here in Australia. I recall one of the first flights in our Gemini program. We Americans listened on the radio to the broadcast of how the citizens of Perth were turning on their lights so that the Astronaut might know that he was over friendly territory in Australia. We never had any doubt about that--even if your lights were out we knew that there would be a friend waiting for us with a warm hand of friendship.

I must say that our relationships have made us feel like brothers and sisters. And today you went the extra mile--I just can't tell you how much I've appreciated everything that has happened. Last night when we set foot on your precious soil and I looked about it seemed like the sunset, in the great Mid-West as I would say if I were not under some constraints, but as I would say, as it were, in South-Western Texas.

One can't say in Australia that it was a miniature because this country is so big. This is one of the few countries that make the Texan feel like that he has an inferiority complex. You gave us a beautiful, beautiful entrance to your lovely and dynamic country and then this morning as I awakened and looked out and felt the crisp air I knew then it was almost like Minnesota, my State. And then when I came from the Parliament Building just after the noon hour and I looked out front and there were the placards and amateur sign painters and all the demonstrators, I said; "What this Prime Minister will do to make me feel at home!" I just can't properly and adequately express my profound gratitude to him for this feeling of ease and adjustment that you give me as I stand on foreign shores. But I want you to know that my investigation indicates that while you went to great lengths to get that demonstration--No. 1, it is not as large as we can produce at Berkeley. And, No. 2, the Leader was from America. One of our exports. We do it up well and the exchange program continues.

Next time we find a group of protestors in America I am going to ask if there is an Australian, and if there isn't, why, we are going to have to call off the protest. We believe in quid pro quo--you know, "fifty-fifty".

Now in all seriousness, I do want to say to all of our good friends here, the High Commissioners that represent members of the Commonwealth, to our friends of the Press of Australia and other areas, to the good citizens of this great country, and to my fellow Americans, that it is a very re-assuring and gratifying and energizing experience to be able to exchange views with the Government people such as I've met here today in Australia.

We have been able to talk frankly, candidly, expressing our points of view without any fear or without any concern as to their being properly understood and accepted as the honest expressions of people with an integrity and sincerity of purpose. And I can say that in every free country we have opposition and it is the opposition which in a very real sense keeps us on course. Opposition in a democracy is as vital, may I say, as the seasons in a full year.

And to Mr. Calwell, the Leader of the Opposition, may I express to you my personal thanks for your gracious remarks and for your presence here at this luncheon.

I hadn't quite known what I should say to you today, and I've decided that the best thing to do would be to talk to you as friend and neighbor. Last evening after having had the opportunity to go to the Ambassador's Residence to unpack our cases

and to just settle down, we placed a telephone call to a great and distinguished statesman, not only of Australia but of the world, Sir Robert Menzies, and we had a delightful hour and a half with this remarkable man.

Sir Robert is a friend not only of the people of Australia and a leader in this great nation but he is a friend and leader for all of us. He has come to our country, the United States, on repeated occasions and he is accepted as a brother, almost as a fellow citizen. Yet he is so devoted to his own Australia that he would not want anyone to dilute his patriotic devotion to his own citizenship by even a remark that might be misunderstood or misinterpreted. We respect his judgment. We admire his patriotism, his courage, and we enjoy his wit. President Johnson considers him one of his close friends.

And may I say to the distinguished new Prime Minister, Mr. Holt, that we look upon you, Sir, as a continuing friend. As one whose counsel and advice we welcome and whose friendship we, too, cherish. And we know that in the days ahead that the Prime Minister of Australia--this Prime Minister--will have in the hearts of the American people that abundance of affection and respect which was so evident for Sir Robert Menzies.

So we feel at home, and I want to talk to you now as just neighbors. Australia, as the Prime Minister has so well noted, has been with us in peace and war, and we with Australia and Australians. Our sons and men have come here to meet you and marry your daughters and sisters. Our nations believe in parliamentary democracy.

We have common ideals and in a very real sense common traditions. But our traditions and our ideals are not unique to ourselves. This principle and this belief in human dignity is no monopoly of Americans or Australians or the English. There are people of every race creed and nationality that believe in human dignity. And there are people of every region of this world and of every race, and every ethnic group, and of every persuasion, that believe in freedom. And I believe that most of mankind longs for peace.

So that we have many things in common. And when we speak of consultation amongst ourselves--Australians and Americans, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. We do not speak of that consultation as an exclusive club. But rather we speak of it as one of the approaches to be of help to others, and to broaden that great community of free men and free nations so that we can work together in common cause and common purpose.

The great need today of the freedom-loving peoples of this world is to recognize, No. 1, the problems that confront us, and agree upon those problems; and No. 2, the necessity of united purpose and the united effort in meeting those problems.

A great American statesman and a great human being, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, once said that "We either hang together or we hang separately." And I might say that those words of wisdom, colloquial as they were--have a universal application. And all through Asia and Africa and Europe, Latin America, North America, South America, wherever you go, free men and free nations and those who aspire to freedom had better recognize that there are powerful forces arrayed against them. That there are difficult problems that yet beset mankind--the problems that we spoke of--here of poverty, of illiteracy, of disease, of despair, of hopelessness, of frustration--that these are the common problems that most of mankind and that we should unite in a common effort to overcome them.

We should also recognize that the forces of tyranny which are at work in the world today, while different in their methodology, are no different in their purpose than all of history. Tyrants are tyrants. Despots are despots. The method, however, and the strategy and the tactics of the 20th Century tyranny are far more sophisticated--far more complicated--than those that mankind has known in other centuries.

And it is because of this complexity of both the problems and the opposition, or the enemy, that we sometimes fall apart; that we sometimes have differences

even though there need be none. It's because we haven't as yet quite understood individually and collectively how best to approach this new set of circumstances that confronts us.

President Johnson asked me to journey to Asia, South East Asia, and the sub-continent, and then down under to Australia and New Zealand. Not to tell people what to think, but to let you know what we're thinking about in our country and to try to find some common denominators, and to share in your wisdom, your observations, and to give you some of our observations and our considerations on these problems that affect our world. And I have reported today to this government, as I have to others, on the observations that we have made on this journey.

This distinguished American statesman that is with us--one of our seasoned diplomats--a great public servant--Governor Averell Harriman, Ambassador-at-Large for the President of the United States--we have reported what we have witnessed in Vietnam, in Thailand, in Laos, in Pakistan, in India and we have shared views and thoughts with the leaders of your government.

And how happy I am today to say that we see these things very much the same way. When I listened to the Prime Minister in his remarks, I said, "Well that's what I want to say." This is what I tried to say. But how well he said it.

In my visit this morning with the Ministers and the Prime Minister I believe that I expressed about as clearly and with as much articulation as I am capable of, what was said here today and what I hope now to be able to say to you.

First of all let me say that we must look upon Southeast Asia and the sub-continent as regions. We cannot afford to direct our energies toward individual nation-states if the problems of those nation-states were unconnected with other nation states.

Southeast Asia was looked upon by President Johnson in his memorable address at Johns Hopkins back in April as a region for economic development--regional economic development.

I submit that it is also a region in the conflict which is now under way. In that region we are fighting two wars and we're allies in those two wars. The Australians and the Americans, the New Zealanders and the Koreans, standing alongside of our good friends, the people of South Vietnam, who are bearing the brunt of the battle. Who have been pumelled, who have been attacked, who have been abused, whose leaders have been assassinated, who have been the victims of terror and subversion and propaganda the likes of which few people have ever been able to withstand or to take.

Let me say that we all owe a debt of respect to the people of South Vietnam. For years they have been under merciless attack--not conventional war--not with the rules of war as civilized nations have known them, but a new form of war--the wars of National Liberation they call them--from Peking. What a play-on words! How the communists have destroyed the meaning of words.

They speak of liberation when they mean oppression. They speak of a people's republic when they have no regard for the people and no definition or understanding of the word republic. They speak of the people's democracies and there is not a single democratic thought or institution that's been developed. The communists have polluted and adulterated the meaning of words that decent humanity has known for centuries.

I think it is about time that we understood that fact. They not only fight us with weapons; they not only use every conceivable device that is known for the purpose of human destruction; they destroy the meaning of language. They destroy the meaning of the precious word. Words like "freedom". Words like "democracy". "Words like "liberty". Words like "justice". These are words of the spirit. These are precious words.

The communists not only destroy the village and the hamlet in South Vietnam--he not only attacks established government and tries to discredit it in nation after nation. He destroys the very meaning of life as one interprets it in the written word and the spoken word.

So we have a new war that we battle--that we fight. We're really trying to save the meaning of our language. We are trying to save the legal definition of our constitutions. We're trying to protect if you please the territory and the geography of our land. But above all we are trying to save a way of life.

Not the way of life in terms of the past but a way to approach life where mankind can be liberated from disease and from poverty, and from hunger.

We are the revolutionists--not the communists. We are the liberators--not the communists. We are the agents of justice and reform--not the communists. I for one don't intend to let them get by with claiming the honors that are due to the people that are in this room and other people around this world that believe in freedom and justice and independence.

So, we find ourselves in conflict today in Vietnam. But may I say quite frankly that we've also faced other dangers. The communists would like us out of Berlin. And isn't it interesting that the very same people who advocate that we stand firm in Berlin, deep in the land of communist control, in an area that is militarily difficult to defend--the very same people who would pledge all of our resources, as we said in our Declaration of Independence, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor--the very same people who say we must stand firm in Berlin regardless of the cost, can turn around and advocate that you forget Vietnam?

I guess they may feel that somehow or other, whatever is going on in Vietnam, that the Viet Cong, represents a sort of an international reform movement. Frustrated social workers who believe in human progress!

Well let me assure you that that is not the Viet Cong. There may be those in the Viet Cong that are the victims of frustration and bitterness over the many years of colonialism and the lack of opportunity and justice in Vietnam. But the Viet Cong is no social reform do-gooder outfit. It is made up of a hard corps of disciplined warriors, backed by Hanoi and backed by Peking. Just exactly, may I say, as East Berlin is backed by the Soviet Union.

So we have met the menace of Communism before. We met it in Berlin and we didn't flinch. And because we didn't there's peace in Europe.

We have met the menace of Communism in Greece. And some people said it was just a little civil war. But isn't it interesting that when Yugoslavia broke with the Soviet Union, or Marshall Tito broke with Stalin, closed the border--then the lifeline from Moscow to Belgrade into the hills and the mountains of Greece--when that lifeline was chocked off--that the Greek Civil War came to an end?

It wasn't a civil war as such. To be sure, there were Greeks involved. But it was one that was master-minded in those days from Moscow, it was supplied from Belgrade, and it was fought on the plains and the mountains of Greece.

Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, was the author of the Greek-Turkish Aid Program. General Van Fleet from the United States went to Greece. We met the communist threat in Greece and by the strange developments of international politics over which we had no control the supply line and the efforts of the communist powers were cut off and the Greek Civil War ended.

People say that you should be careful of these comparisons because they don't always add up the same. That's true. There are details that are different. But the fundamentals are the same.

We met communist power in Korea. We did not seek a battlefield in Korea. In fact we have said that we had no interest in Korea, or little interest. And that

was the warning. That was the alert. The communist forces from the North struck South Korea, violating every international pledge and every international agreement. And we met the communist power in Korea.

We met it in Berlin. We met it in Korea. We met it when Mr. Khrushchev tried to put his missiles in Cuba, and now we are meeting it in Vietnam.

It's different this time. A new Communist force. A very militant communist force. An aggressive militant regime in Peking. It has no regard for international law. It speaks with disdain of even its communist associates. It has little or no regard for standards for international conduct.

What you see in Vietnam today is not a civil war, but you see the projection of a massive international communist doctrine at work--wars of national liberation being tested in the test tube of Vietnam. The pilot project of communist strategy. Peking to Hanoi to the rice paddies and the mountains and the valleys of Vietnam.

And we have to meet it. We didn't choose the battlefield. We never will choose a battlefield. We can't as free people. We do not believe in attack. We do not believe in aggression. We do not believe in preventive war. We cannot select the time or the day or the enemy or place. It is impossible. We simply have to meet the attack where it comes.

Now the lessons of history teach us--and surely Australians have known it more than almost any others because even though you are far removed from many areas of the world you were among the first to recognize that the trouble in North Africa was your danger. The trouble in Korea thousands of miles away was your trouble. You have not failed to understand international responsibility and international interdependence. And so today, Australia finds herself in Vietnam. Not only because of Australia, but because it understands that aggression unchecked is aggression unleashed. It understands that the aggressor's appetite is insatiable. It understands that aggression if left without being stopped can become a pattern of international conduct. And there will be no little nations left. The powerful will consume the small and the weak.

So the United States of America and others, our good friends here in Australia, stand shoulder to shoulder. Not because there is an immediate threat to Australia. Not because of an immediate threat to the United States. In our lifetime we could maybe forget this and be buried in the knowledge that nothing had hit us as yet. But men in public life have a greater obligation than to think about the immediate. You must take a look at the future.

And if there is any one lesson in history that should have been drilled into the minds of contemporaries it is this--that you can never let the aggressor have his way. If he has his way then there is no way for free people except the way of despair and destruction.

So, my message to you today is the old simple message that we must work together and we must work together, not only militarily, but we must work together in the good works of mankind. We're not warriors. My country does not want to be known as a nation of warriors. We want to be known as a nation of healers, of educators, of engineers, of builders. We want to be known as strong in spirit, not in flesh. We want to be known as a nation whose wealth and power is not for luxury or self-indulgence, but rather for service and for protection for the weak.

That is the purpose of power, and that is the purpose of wealth. We're blessed in our country with wealth and with power. And I think that the real tribute to the United States of America and to Australia is that with our high standards of living we seek not to keep it just for ourselves. We've abandoned selfishness and indulgence, and self indulgence. And we have recognized that there is a brotherhood that needs us and we need them. So we engage in the good works and that was the purpose of the Honolulu Conference.

President Johnson went to Honolulu to review, indeed, the military situation, but more importantly he went there to work with the leaders of South Vietnam in designing a social revolution for South Vietnam. To help rebuild the villages and the hamlets that had been systematically decimated and destroyed by the Viet Cong--the communists. To give the people hope--the politics of hope. To lift their sights from the battlefields to the construction of new homes and villages and schools and hospitals. And it is in this part of the war, this other way, against man's ancient enemies that we need a great deal to help.

Everywhere I have been I have found Australia. I found Australia in India. I found Australia in the Colombo Plan in the Colombo Plan countries. I found Australia in Pakistan. I found Australia in Vietnam. I found Australia in the generous contribution to the Asian Bank. We have found Australian doctors and hospitals in Vietnam. We found Australian soldiers on the battlefield.

And, may I say to you Australians--we are proud of you--proud of you as friends and allies. You make our hearts grateful and warm and glad because this is real international responsibility. This is the real strength of a nation.

The strength of a nation is not in its armament alone. The strength of a nation is in its people and their purpose. And, you have demonstrated that strength of people and purpose.

Now I come away from this tour with what I said this morning was restrained optimism.

I cannot say that all is going well because all is not going well. But, I can say in Australia that in the year 1942, in the year 1941, you could not say that things were going well either, but you did not quit. As a matter of fact anyone that was looking at the realities of the time in 1940, just the sheer dark realities, would have said we are whipped.

The difference was in spirit and determination. The English did not have a chance after Dunkirk logistically, in equipment and supplies, but they had a chance because they refused to give up.

The Australians did not have much of a chance either after Pearl Harbor, but you did not give up. And we did not have much of a one either but we did not give up.

So, to the doubters--and we have plenty--to those who feel somehow or other that this struggle in Vietnam cannot be won--I say to you it can! What is more important--I say to you it must.

You cannot afford to lose it, because the first time that Free Nations lose a contest with militant communist aggression, the first time you retreat, the first time that you fold up your tents, the first time that a people are sold out--on that day no one will ever believe free men again.

If I seem to be overly enthusiastic as I'm sometimes accused, may I say that I have history on my side. History on the side of human spirit. History on the side of people who love freedom.

If you love it enough and if you stay united; if free nations will understand across this whole underbelly of Asia, and throughout the world, that there are powerful forces that would destroy every institution in which you and I believe, those powerful forces that work the free nations will understand that we have a common cause, and we have a common purpose; that we need each other--those forces of evil and destruction cannot win.

The Indians in India have tasted communist aggression across their borders in the movement of armies from Communist China.

The Thai are tasting infiltration and subversion now as even I speak to you.

The Laotians have been plagued by the Pathet Lao now fortified by the North Vietnamese regulars.

And Vietnam has been going through fire and devastation for years.

What more do we need to tell us that there is a great effort being made on the part of the Communist Chinese to exert its influence and its power and its control over the rice fields, the great natural resources of the sub-continent, and South-east Asia, and the people thereof? Either direct control by conquest or control by fear and terror.

And yet, this force need not win and it will not win and I will tell you why. Because the United States of America, in concert with its allies, will not let it win.

And this is why freedom loving people everywhere have a stake in South Vietnam.

Maybe your contribution will only be a laboratory; maybe it will only be a Doctor; maybe it will only be a few people to help with the refugees. But in South Vietnam there ought to be on the part of freedom loving people some symbol of the unity of free nations on the part of every nation that loves freedom. If that symbolic unity is there, mark my words that Communism, the communist juggernaut, will be halted just as it was in West Europe when free nations banded together when NATO was designed, when the Marshall Plan went into action, when UNRRA was applied, when one operation after another was brought to bear to unite the people to rebuild a continent and to revitalize nations. And it did not bring on a world war--it saved a world from a world war.

I conclude in this thought: Many people have said what we want is peace. May I say to you that the President of the United States is a man who believes in peace with a passion--politically, spiritually, morally.

But we wanted peace in 1939, in 1940 and in 1941. We did not fight Hitler for conquest or Tojo, nor did you. You fought in World War II for peace.

We are not fighting in Vietnam for conquest or for territories. We are fighting there for peace and we are prepared for peace. We have offered peace--negotiations for peace, and conferences for peace. We have offered economic assistance to friend and foe alike if there be peace. We have been rebuked. We shall pursue the course for peace. We shall not be restrained because Hanoi and Peking have arrogantly cast aside our offers of peace. We shall pursue peace relentlessly and we shall also pursue the enemy relentlessly because I happen to believe that you will gain peace when the enemy finds out that he cannot gain his objectives by brutality and force. And as soon as it is crystal clear that force is not to achieve the objective, then the hope of peace is all the better.

Until that day peace will be elusive if not impossible. So may I thank you once again, our comrades in arms and our comrades in peace in Australia. Thank you for what you are. Thank you for what you've been. Thank you for what you will be, because your leadership in the Pacific, your leadership in the Indian Ocean area, and your leadership in Asia, is vital and may I urge upon you to work diligently, ceaselessly with those of like mind, wherever they may be, try to find the paths of peace and make those paths of peace the paths of the hearts of men. 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](http://www.mnhs.org)