

STATEMENT

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

ON MR. NIXON'S SECURITY STATEMENT

OCTOBER 24, 1968

Mr. Nixon has now spoken -- in his radio address last night -- on the important and complex problems of our national security.

He has spoken in terms that have been used by no major statesman in this country of either party -- if we except General Curtis E. LeMay.

Mr. Nixon has accused the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations of permitting a "security gap" that could become a "survival gap."

There is no "security gap." There will be no "survival gap" -- unless we follow Mr. Nixon's advice.

Mr. Nixon's statement is among his most irresponsible to date. It does not reflect a concern for our national security, but only for votes.

More is involved here than a Presidential election.

In an effort to catch votes, he is playing politics with our national security ... undermining the confidence of our allies ... encouraging recklessness among our enemies ... and undermining our long and patient efforts to bring a rational end to the madness of the strategic arms race.

Just as he has throughout this campaign, he is advocating an increasing militarization of American life and American foreign policy.

Just as he did in 1952, he is playing a numbers game -- but this time with our national security. And as usual his numbers are wrong.

Let me give you the facts:

Charge: Mr. Nixon has charged that "eight years ago, our numerical advantage over the Soviets in bombers was 30%. Now ... the Soviets are 50% ahead of us."

Fact: Today we have over 500 heavy strategic bombers and over 600 tankers; the USSR has only about 150 heavy bombers and 50 heavy

dual tanker-bomber aircraft. Our bombers have over six times the payload capability of the Soviet force.

Charge: "Eight years ago, in nuclear submarines, we had a 500 percent advantage. Already, it is down four-fifths ..."

Fact: Today we have 75 nuclear submarines, compared with only 18 in 1961. The USSR has only 57 nuclear submarines, compared with 12 in 1961. Thus a 150% U. S. superiority (not 500%) is still 130%.

Charge: "Eight years ago, we had a decisive lead in tactical aircraft. Now the Soviets are ahead not only in numbers but also in quality."

Fact: The U. S. today has over 7,000 tactical aircraft; the USSR has only about 5,400. Our aircraft has over 265% as much payload capability as the Soviet force today, a marked improvement over the 140% advantage we held in 1961.

Charge: "Recently we learned they (the Soviets) are perfecting ballistic missile multiple warheads far more powerful than our own."

**Fact:** The Soviets are at least two years behind us in simple multiple warheads and these have already been made obsolete by our technology.

**Charge:** "The Soviets have vigorously advanced their military effort as we put ours in second gear. They have raised the quantity and quality of their ballistic missiles, and the USSR is approaching 'parity' in nuclear weapons."

At the present time -- and for the indefinite future -- the United States possesses enough nuclear destructive power, based securely underground and in submarines at sea -- to obliterate any aggressor nation or nations. We are the strongest nation on earth.

Today, we have three times as many strategic nuclear weapons in our strategic alert force as we had at the end of the last Republican administration, including a 1500% increase in numbers of ballistic missiles --

-- 1000 Minutemen ICBM's as opposed to 28, then;

-- 41 Polaris submarines with 656 missiles, now, as opposed to 3 submarines with 48 less powerful missiles, then.

These are the facts, and Mr. Nixon's charges are simply not true.

Mr. Nixon also doesn't understand some other facts of our nuclear age. And the three central facts -- grim facts are these:

-- First, whatever the Russians do, now or in the future, they will never be able to attack us without being destroyed -- as a society -- in return. We have maintained and we shall continue to maintain a balanced and stable nuclear deterrent capable of responding successfully to any nuclear strike.

-- Second, nothing we can do ... even building a costly missile defense system -- would ever enable us to attack the Soviet Union without being destroyed in return.

-- And third, we know that every missile ... every nuclear warhead we build that we do not need ... makes it more difficult to stop the arms race ... and brings us closer to the day when we will be unable to stop the plunge to nuclear war.

For 20 years, we have lived with a nuclear balance of terror. It remains our central problem. Maintaining that stable balance is the first task of any American President.

But Mr. Nixon has shown no awareness of this fact. Instead of encouraging efforts to slow down the strategic arms race, he would accelerate it... thereby risking a war of mutual suicide.

An additional fact: without jeopardizing our security in the least, the United States has tried to work for a control of the arms race, and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons around the world.

This effort has had the strong support of Republicans and Democrats, of generals and civilians, and it is acknowledged by all who have examined the problem to be our best long-range hope for peace.

Controlling the arms race is a difficult task, requiring great patience and understanding.

Mr. Nixon has always totally lacked this understanding.

A few years ago he attacked the treaty to prevent the testing of nuclear weapons in the air, calling it a "cruel hoax" and "catastrophic nonsense." It was not. I worked with John F. Kennedy to get that treaty. And today, the world is a safer place.

Our negotiators have worked long and patiently for a treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world ... to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Nassers of the world.

I have urged the Senate of the United States to ratify that treaty this month.

A single word from Mr. Nixon would have ratified it. But he stood silent.

Now, by his statement last night, Mr. Nixon has threatened to bring down the whole fragile architecture of peace ... of retreat from the insanity of the arms race ... that has been so carefully constructed by the Administrations of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson.

Finally, Mr. Nixon has advocated giving military commanders more influence over American foreign policy.

I would remind him that every American tradition, every tradition of free men, maintains the ultimate responsibility of a civilian President, responsible to the people, for the conduct of our foreign policy and the protection of our national security.

America must not, it cannot, and it will not, become a military state.

Mr. Nixon would also destroy patient efforts to reduce the influence of what President Eisenhower called the "military-industrial" complex.

President Eisenhower was right in warning against this danger. Mr. Nixon is wrong in encouraging it.

I call upon Mr. Nixon to withdraw his ill-considered charges. I call upon him to consult with those men, Republicans and Democrats,



military and civilian, who understand the hard demands of our security, our survival, and the pursuit of peace.

He should school himself in the hard facts without which no man should present himself as a candidate for the awesome responsibilities of President of the United States.

America does not need more arms for their own sake. It needs leadership that can match the size of our defense establishment to the demands of our foreign policy and of our national security. There can be no compromise with that security... but neither can there be a needless and a mortally dangerous escalation of the arms race.

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