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"How Close Are We To War?"

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Democrat of Minnesota

CONGRESSMAN HUGH SCOTT

Republican of Pennsylvania

STEPHEN McCORMICK

Moderator

The Announcer: Freedom of discussion. The freedom of all Americans to hear all sides of important issues and decide accordingly.

The National Broadcasting Company presents America's leading discussion program founded and produced by Theodore Granik, THE AMERICAN FORUM.

Today, THE AMERICAN FORUM presents another timely discussion of importance to you: "How Close Are We to War?"

And here to introduce our speakers is your moderator, Stephen McCormick.

Mr. McCormick—

Mr. McCormick: Hello, welcome once again to THE AMERICAN FORUM. I would like you to meet our guests today. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senate Government Operations and Agriculture and Forestry Committees, and Congressman Hugh Scott, Republican of Pennsylvania, member of the House Judiciary Committee and a former Chairman of the Republican National Committee.

We will begin our discussion in a moment but first this message of importance.

(Announcement.)

Mr. McCormick: For days Washington has been in the midst of a battle of words and nerves, regarding the Chinese offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Reports indicate a buildup of men and materiel on the mainland. Whether this indicates some sort of action in the near future, whether our policy regarding these islands is wise, has caused violent arguments throughout the capitol. The big question is "How close are we to war?" to be discussed today by two veteran legislators, Senator Humphrey and Congressman Scott.

Our panel today, equally divided in opinion, Mr. Aherm and Mr. McDowell, Hazel Markel, neutral member, Mr. Miller and Florence Hoff.

Mr. McCormick: Mr. Miller, I believe you have the first question.

MR. MILLER: Congressman Scott, is the Administration leading us closer to military aggression and possibly a third world war in the Far East in their refusal to take a firm and definite stand regarding Quemoy and Matsu?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: Definitely not, Mr. Miller. The military in power in the Formosa revolution has undertaken to protect us against Communism and the authority extends to Formosa, the Pescadores and other regions if necessary, for the protection of the national security of the United States. No administration has ever done so much for peace as this party.

MR. MILLER: Senator Humphrey, do you agree with that point of view?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I wouldn't want to go so far as to say no administration has done so much for peace. I think the Congressman does realize that following the Formosa resolution we adopted or ratified in the Senate the treaty with the Republic of China. I think it is interesting to note that in the treaty, which is a binding agreement upon us, and not just a resolution which is nothing more or less

than a statement of purpose, that in the treaty, the area to which this country is pledged to defend is Formosa and the Pescadores, period, and it was made crystal clear that any further area to be included within the treaty area would have to come back to the Congress of the United States for further ratification.

I think we have here a situation where on the one hand the resolution did nothing more than what the President was already empowered to do. He did not ask advice and consent, he merely asked consent. And in the treaty, where the Senate has some constitutional responsibilities, we limited the defense of the United States and its military activities to Formosa and the Pescadores.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I think there could well be more danger of war through the attempt of members of the House and the Senate becoming military strategists on where and when to strike, than leaving that in the hands of the President of the United States and his military advisors.

The purpose of the resolution was to leave the decision in the hands of the President who as a military expert is certainly the best qualified person to act.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I wouldn't deny that the President of the United States is always better able, by information—the fact that he does have all information at his finger tips, or at least should have, to make better decisions. But don't tell me for a single minute that as a member of Congress we do not have an opportunity or a right or a duty to discuss this matter. In fact the President has been asking for such discussion. And I go back to what I said earlier, Congressman, that in the treaty which is ratified under the Constitutional processes of our Constitution, the Government of the United States will defend Formosa and the Pescadores. Had they wanted us to pledge ourselves to Matsu and Quemoy we could have included it in the treaty but we excluded it and it is perfectly obvious it is not included.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I think it is a land mark in our foreign relations that the President does ask the advice of Congress and not as in the Korean War to take us into a war in the middle of the night without consultation with either branch of Congress.

MR. AHERN: Do you agree or disagree with the Administration policy of not disclosing what action we are going to take toward Quemoy and Matsu until something does happen?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I do not agree with it and may I go right back to what my friend, Congressman Scott, said a moment ago. He mentioned the Korean War. He said they were not consulted. The truth is that in the Korean War we had to act immediately because of hostilities, but the equal truth is that at that time the President of the United States, and the Secretary of State said that Korea was outside the perimeter of our defense. We didn't say whether we would defend it or whether we wouldn't defend it. We left it in the great area of no-man's land of doubt, and a war broke out. I think we should state unequivocally what we are going to do.

MR. AHERN: Doesn't that tip off our enemy as to what we are going to do before we do it?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think it is a good idea to do that because if we don't we are apt to find ourselves in a situation where if an attack comes from the Chinese Communists, they do not think we are going to defend and because they do not think the power of the United States will be thrown into the balance, they move for an attack. I think we ought to let them know what we are going to do, as we have done on Formosa and the Pescadores.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: You have just made a very damaging admission because you said that Acheson and President Truman tipped off the enemy that we weren't going into Korea so the enemy probably went in.

Now, this time we say we will go into Formosa, the Pescadores or anywhere else where the security of the United States is at stake and we will keep the enemy guessing as to which island or where we will act, if they act first. We will protect ourselves and not give our plans to the enemy as has happened too often before.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: May I say I did not make any damaging confession. All I did was tell what the history tells us to be the truth, namely that we did say about Korea that it was outside the perimeter of defense. We didn't say whether we would or would not defend it. I think that led to some of the hostilities. At least it gave an inducement to hostilities. I don't want to see history repeat itself twice. We can't fight over the Korean War, we ought to learn something about these things.

I say to you if you say in the treaty we are going to defend Formosa and the Pescadores, the world knows that is what we are going to do. What is the difference between the offshore island and Formosa and the Pescadores when it comes to making a commitment. Why play this blind man's bluff game five miles off the Chinese Mainland?

MRS. MARKEL: Are you for defending Quemoy and Matsu or not defending them?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think they are outside the treaty area of the Republic of China treaty with the United States. I say we should not become involved in hostilities on Quemoy and Matsu, five to six miles from the Chinese Mainland. I further say we have no legal right to be there as we have on Formosa. This is a civil war between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists and it is the worst place for us to fight a war five miles from the Chinese Mainland.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: Quemoy and Matsu are the only areas involved which are actually under the sovereignty of the Chinese Nationalist Government by right. Formosa and the Pescadores are in Japanese territories where they are trustees. These territories actually do belong to the Chiang Kai-shek Government. Our obligation is not to defend Formosa, Matsu, the Pescadores, and Quemoy, but any area in the world which is menaced by Communist aggression if that menaces the freedom of the people of the United States.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Why didn't you feel that way in Indochina, then? That was a civil war. Where was the Administration—

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: It did not jeopardize the freedom of the United States.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Indochina was a great deal more important than Quemoy and Matsu. Indochina was the bread basket of all of Asia and this Administration didn't get all excited about that and want to commit American troops. If you want to commit American forces to Quemoy and Matsu, they are involved in a civil war. There was a civil war in Indochina. If you are going to carry out the doctrine that wherever there is Communist hostilities, we should become involved, sir, why don't we get involved in Malaya.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: It is not a civil war. Red China is dominated by the Communists and the legal Government of China holds Formosa, Quemoy, Matsu, and the Pescadores.

MISS HOFF: It was said in a recent press conference that one of the most important things in our stand on the Matsus and Quemoy is to maintain the morale of Chiang's troops. Do you really mean that that is sufficient to start a war?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I am not a judge of what is sufficient to start us into war but I know the steps we are taking are the best assurance that we will stay out of war because the Chinese Communists themselves in the last 12 weeks have changed their propaganda attitudes. They are now talking about the ailing troops of Chiang Kai-shek as if they can wait on them to get old and die and not be renewed.

They are also not talking about mounting an invasion. The President of the United States is not talking—has criticized some members of his military of talking in terms of any plans of the United States to act without the President himself making the decision.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I participated in the debate on the Formosa resolution. I voted for it.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: It was a wise action.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I felt it was a wise decision. I also know at the time we were debating it the whole subject matter of Quemoy and Matsu was before us and this Administration did not say to us in the Congress that they were going to defend Quemoy and Matsu. They said, "We will leave this entirely up to the President. Now, what the President is asking for from the American people apparently is advice and counsel. He is asking from members of Congress advice and counsel. And the President has had to slap down as you have justly pointed out certain members of his own Administration who want to drive us further and further into this whole area of hostilities.

I just want to make it clear. My position, sir, is defense of Formosa and the Pescadores. We have a legal right there under international law. My position is, if you are going to become involved in Chinese civil wars, this is the wrong one to become involved in, or Communist civil wars off Quemoy and Matsu. That decision should have been made when Indochina went down the drain and this Administration stood along side and permitted it to go down the drain.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: Your administration had twenty years of second guessing and you always guessed wrong the first time in these

little "incidents" as you called them and they led to big wars. This time we intend to be right the first time because it may mean a world war if we are wrong. This administration is devoted to the cause of peace and preparedness for that reason.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I don't want us to be wrong, either, Congressman. That is why I say we should be very careful about what we do for two little rocky islands five miles off the Chinese mainland.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I don't think either you or I know as much about the defense of the islands as the President does.

MR. McDOWELL: Senator Humphrey, you are a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the distinguished Senator George of Georgia is chairman of that committee.

Senator George has said that he believes it is not at all inducive to peace to demand that the President disclose his intentions as to these islands. Do you feel, then, justified in this war-like position of yours to demand that the President reveal his intentions?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I don't think it is very war-like to say you should become engaged in hostilities over the off-shore islands. I would say that is just about as peaceful as one can get. And I want to say to you further, sir, as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee I have my own views. I listen to the same testimony. And I am convinced that the Senator from Georgia, Mr. George, is deeply concerned about what policy we may arrive at. I felt as the Senator did at the time of the Formosa resolution. When I had doubts as to that resolution, I reconciled those doubts in behalf of our President, the Chief Executive. But that does not mean I shall hush up my tongue when I believe there are forces in this Administration which will drive our country pell-mell into hostilities over two offshore islands within the territorial limits of the Chinese mainland.

MRS. MARKEL: Does that mean Senator Humphrey, that you think there is a war party, as has been indicated, in this country?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I don't know whether you would call it a war party. I wouldn't want to go that far, but I say there are forces within the Administration and within the Republican Party who are talking plenty warlike and when I hear my friends of the Republican Party say "We ought to have a bipartisan foreign policy," I just simply ask them "Well, what part of the Republican Party do you want us to 'bipart' with?" You can't possibly be with all the segments of the party.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I would like to point out that the record of the Republican Party on staying out of war is pretty good and the record of the Democratic Party is pretty bad. We have never been in but one foreign war in the entire history of the Republican Party and that was the Spanish American War. And this Administration has done more to keep the country at peace than any other administration, in removing tension points all around the world. If you think there is a war party around, I don't see it, but I'll tell you what there is around, there is the pussyfooting appeasement policy as is exemplified by some of the statements you have made, here.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Those are rather difficult and hard words.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: They are not personal.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I realize that.

Are you suggesting that after December 7, 1941, the Democratic President of the United States should have just collapsed? That was World War II.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: Which war would you like to bring up?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: You are bringing up history. Are you saying we should have permitted World War I to go by the board and not have America stand up as she did? Are you one of those Congressmen who raised his voice when we went into Korea? I didn't hear your voice raised.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I am the one member of Congress who did. Now I am going to have to tell you about that. I was at the Committee table that day as Mr. McCormack of Massachusetts brought the matter up while all the Republican leadership was down in the House, and that is how I happened to have the microphone and I said, "Will this mean war or peace and I hope you are not going into this with too little and too late."

SENATOR HUMPHREY: But you didn't say that we shouldn't go in?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: Not after the President brought us in.

MR. MILLER: Speaking of appeasement, has the Administration abandoned plans to help Chiang Kai-shek return to the Mainland?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I am not in the confidence of the military side of the Administration, its plans, strategy or tactics. I would have no knowledge whatever on that. I would say that the President has done nothing which would promote war on the part of Chiang Kai-shek, or of the Reds. He has done a great deal to keep the country at peace and we are nearer peace today than we were a month ago.

MR. MILLER: Then, it is not a part of the policy to put Chiang Kai-shek's troops ashore in China?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I have already said I have no knowledge of the military policies of this country except as exemplified by treaties.

MR. MILLER: How about the political policy?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: The political policy is to keep the country at peace unless menaced by aggression by some foreign force and then we will fight with everything we have.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: You say the political policy is to keep this country at peace unless menaced by some foreign force. Do you consider us menaced if there are hostilities on Matsu and Quemoy? Do you consider that is a menace? Do you think every time there is difficulty in any country we should become involved? I would like to have you clarify that. Now, you boys can't play both sides of the street. Every time you know anything goes bad they say, "That isn't Eisenhower's fault." Whenever it goes good, it is the President's great achievement. When we ask you if this is a policy of the Republican Party to get back on the Chinese Mainland you say, "Well, I don't know," and yet we have heard it said that it is a policy.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I read the Formosan resolution and you read it too and you know the Formosan resolution provides for the

defense of Formosa and the Pescadores and such related regions as the President in his discretion may deem appropriate. It did not go further than that and you can't read anything into it beyond that, and I certainly don't intend to.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I heard the President of the United States say in his press conference he would consider an attack on the Mainland to be aggression. Now, do you agree with that or don't you?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I didn't hear it.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Did you read it?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I did not read it.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: He said he considered an attack on the mainland to be an aggression.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: An attack against us by the Chinese Reds might well be followed by an attack by us on the Mainland. Perhaps if we do that and go up to the Yalu and attacked the Chinese before they came into Korea we might have ended the Korean war and saved a lot of lives which we didn't do under a previous administration and I don't think this administration will make that kind of mistake.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Do you consider an attack on Quemoy and Matsu an attack on us? What "us" are there? How many American forces are on Quemoy and Matsu?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I think, Senator, as you know and I know, there are about 50,000 Chinese Nationalist forces on Quemoy and Matsu. There are no American forces there, any more than there were on the Dotchen Islands. The decision of the President is to protect the United States, if invasion is mounted from the Mainland of China and if it becomes evident that a part of the invasion of Formosa and the Pescadores includes using these two little islands as a stepping stone the idea is to hit them before they do a maximum amount of damage to us, and we've got the Seventh Fleet out there and there are boys and girls there—boys there from Minnesota—the girls are back in Japan, but there are soldiers and sailors and Marines from Minnesota, and from Pennsylvania, and I don't want them to get hurt unless it is in a good cause.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I want to say to the Congressman this Administration brought pressure to bear upon Chiang to evacuate the Dotchens in the group.

If you can evacuate those areas, they are just as vital to the defense of Formosa, and not much further distance from Formosa than the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Why is it that you cannot act in the same peaceful manner, may I say, getting out of an area—they were both occupied by Chinese Nationalist forces—getting out of Quemoy and Matsu, so we can defend our vital interests. Our vital interests are Formosa and the Pescadores.

MR. SCOTT: If I were to call you "Admiral" or "General," then I would have as much confidence in your judgment on Quemoy and Matsu as I have in the President. Since I can't give you either of those titles, I don't think I know what you are talking about.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The Congressman is saying we ought to be there?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: No.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: What are you saying?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I am saying if an invasion from Red China is mounted on the Mainland and it becomes apparent in the course of that invasion that they intend to use these islands as a stepping stone against the Seventh Fleet and against Formosa and the Pescadores, then our President should have the judgment and the power that the Senate has given him, and the House, to strike when and where and with what force he deems fit, and I personally have confidence in him.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Let us assume they are not mounting an invasion on Formosa, they are just after Quemoy and Matsu. Then, what do you want to do, Congressman?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I don't think you would know whether they are going to stop at Quemoy and Matsu, but the President and his intelligence forces and his Chief of Staff would have information which you would not have and which I would not have. Using that information he should act accordingly.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Congressman, I want to say this, that I listened to every one of the joint Chiefs of Staff—Air, Navy and Army—testify. Every one of the Chiefs of Staff. And not one testified that Quemoy and Matsu were essential for the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores. Not one.

Now, therefore, since our commitments are to Formosa and the Pescadores, why become involved in a war five miles from the Mainland of China, just because you may think that something else may happen?

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: The President should have the power of decision, however.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: He has it under the Constitution.

MR. AHERN: Suppose the Islands are bypassed and Formosa is attacked. How far would you go in defending Formosa?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I would go as far as necessary. We have committed ourselves to the defense of Formosa and if there is an attack on Formosa then all bets are off.

MR. AHERN: Could you use the atomic bomb?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It would depend upon what the necessities were. I will go back to what the Congressman said. I am not a military strategist. I do feel, however, that it would be politically unwise in the Asian area to use nuclear weapons. And I am of the opinion that conventional weapons are more than satisfactory. However, may I say that if nuclear weapons were used by the enemy, I would not hesitate to use them. I feel it is very important, however, that we play for the long pull. That we realize that political warfare is as important as military warfare.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: You say if the enemy used nuclear weapons, then we would use them. How many of our carriers would have to be sunk in the Formosan straits by nuclear weapons before we should retaliate, in your military opinion?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: May I point out to you that part of our problem in the Asian area is not just military. Our problem there is to say whether or not we can still win this battle for men's minds, whether or not we can still win friends. I will remind you, sir, that the policy you are pursuing gives you but two allies, Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek. May I remind you there isn't a single nation on the face of the earth that supports the policy you are recommending about Quemoy and Matsu. Even our friends in Canada, even almost our blood brothers in Canada say if we get into that kind of war we will have to go it alone, and I think it is rather peculiar that the Government of the United States is apparently toying with the policy in which they have but two friends, both of whom they support, Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek. The French and the British.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: These nations are committed to join in any resistance against aggression that goes against any of those nations.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Congressman, that is not true, and you know it.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: I know that it is true and I know you are mistaken.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It is not true. The Secretary of State came back from Bangkok, when he met with the representatives of the SEATO powers and was unable to tell the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that a single nation in the Manila Pact would be with us in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu. Not one.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: You would be perfectly willing for us to be attacked by a nuclear force by some enemy and we would wait until we have large areas of the American population wiped out before you would retaliate. Then you would act.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: We are talking about Formosa and the Pescadores.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: How do you know that the war can start in Quemoy or end in Formosa? Where do you get your information?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Do you have any information in the Republican Administration that an attack is being planned on San Francisco by the Chinese Communists, who have no long-range bombers? Now let's not go into the realm of fantasy.

I suggest if you are so anxious to fight a war, sir, let's fight the right one.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: Don't put any words in my mouth. I have enough and I know how to use them.

MRS. MARKEL: We just had a Secretary for Peace appointed, Mr. Stassen. Do you think that might help in developing a peace program, Senator Humphrey?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think so, and I want to say that I believe every sincere and conscientious effort must be made to search out every possible means of honorable peace. I feel, however, that we have to be very, very careful. We must have no unilateral disarmament, we must make sure that whenever we go to a conference table,

we go in a position of strength. And one of the things that concerns me greatly about this whole Far Eastern question is that it splits ourselves and our allies right down the middle.

Now this Administration is talking about a big power conference, a four-power conference. For us to go to that conference, unless every one of our allies and ourselves are united, would be national suicide. At least, it would divide us and it would split us up and give the Soviet great opportunity for propaganda.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: The very purpose of the three-power conference is to discuss our differences. If we were united with all the other nations before we went, why go?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I am talking about our allies. I am talking about Britain, France and the United States, which would be the three allies to go to a four power conference. And Congressman, I tell you very frankly and you know I am telling you the truth, that if we were to go there this month in view of the uncertainty of our Far Eastern policy, we would be riddled. We would be divided and split, because we start off that way.

Now I say we ought to agree upon our respective positions because in this agreement, there is strength.

CONGRESSMAN SCOTT: You are in agreement, then, with what the Senator claims to be the British and French position and you are against the American position?

Mr. McCormick: I am sorry, I must interrupt, gentlemen. I wish we could continue. Our thanks to you, gentlemen, Congressman Hugh Scott, Republican of Pennsylvania, and Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, and our thanks to the panel, today.

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