

Address of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
at the Section Meeting on Disarmament
at the Conference of Organizations on
the United Nations, called by the
American Association for the United
Nations, February 27, 1956, Washington, D.C.

Chairman Bolte, Mrs. Roosevelt, Governor Stassen and friends.

It is a particular pleasure to be here today with you and to share this platform both with the President's personal representative in the field of disarmament and with the leaders of the great organizations throughout this country that are dedicating their talents and energies to these problems of overriding international importance. I see many friends in this audience; representatives from every area of American life -- labor, business, agriculture, the professions, and our great organizations of fraternal and religious faith. Regardless of your particular interests, you are here because you believe that our country and its freedoms would not survive without a citizenship that was well informed. You are here to inform yourselves through your own deliberations and then to take that information back to the groups you represent. I know that you do not have to be recommissioned for that assignment, but it seems to me tremendously important that the flow of information to your constituency be most certain and most comprehensive. The job of our government would be far more difficult if it were not for people with a sense of community responsibility -- people who are at work constantly alerting and informing the public. Just as you have helped to inform others, including Senators and appointees of the President, it is the obligation of your government to provide accurate and detailed information on all matters of foreign policy, national security and disarmament.

I say this in connection with all the manifold problems of national and international policy which now confront us. During the past few days you have been canvassing the broad issues of economic development, collective security, atoms for peace, and colonialism. Today we are turning our attention to the opportunity and the challenge of disarmament, but in doing so, I know we will not forget how interrelated all of these problems are.

This interrelationship was frankly recognized ten years ago at the birth of the United Nations in San Francisco. The new world organization was dedicated not only to a peaceful world, but to a better world. Everyone acknowledged that security alone was not enough, even though progress in the long run would be impossible without it. Thus Article 1 of the United Nations Charter spelled out the two major goals of the United Nations as follows:

- (1.) "To maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace."
- (2.) "To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character."

Thus, there was an early admission that security alone was too hollow an objective. The delegates to the founding conference at San Francisco in 1945 knew in their hearts that security has meaning primarily for those who have something to preserve.

Therefore, as we concentrate on this subject of disarmament, let us never forget that there are other immediate everyday problems that are simultaneously stirring the hearts and hopes of men and women throughout the world. If disarmament itself is to make any headway, people everywhere must have a clear idea of the kind of world that a disarmed world might be. There must be a great incentive. If the net effect of disarmament would be to freeze the status quo, to stifle change, to prevent the correction of existing abuses, much of its attractiveness would fade away.

Actually the pathway to disarmament may very well involve utilizing the great international agencies such as WHO, UNESCO, FAO, the technical assistance programs, capital development programs -- all of which have a way of firming up the economies of the nations of the world -- so that our international mental health is more conducive to a sane, sensible discussion of the problems of disarmament.

We must always remember that we live and labor in a world of revolution. Protecting and enlarging the freedom of the two-thirds of the world which is still outside Communist control will take more than military alliances to which we seem to be unduly addicted. It will take more than a stockpile of bombs, and more than threats to use them. It is a false notion though widely held, that today's tensions and torments are entirely caused by the Soviet drive for expansion and that military deterrents, therefore, are the chief answers.

Aggressive Communist designs are, to be sure, in the forefront of our current foreign policy predicament, but this Communist threat occurs in the midst of a world-wide revolution for freedom and for material progress. In the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and South America, forces are now at work which will rank among the great movements of history, as important as the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution.

More than a billion people are on their way to political self-determination, economic development, and human dignity. They are the so-called "underdeveloped nations" and many of them happen to be uncommitted to either side in the cold war.

The Communists have now recognized this Twentieth Century revolution and have sought to turn it to Communism's advantage. They have sought to preempt it, to claim it, to own it, and to direct it. We, on the other hand, are today running grave risks of failing to take it adequately into account, and of failing to identify this revolution with our own historic tradition and continuing ideals.

Many of us have been deeply disturbed over the inadequacies of public understanding and of official policy on this new challenge now facing us.

I am convinced, for example, that if we are to match the new Soviet political and economic offensive, we must re-examine and liberalize our approach to the underdeveloped -- the uncommitted -- nations of the world. In those nations the demands for self-government, human dignity, and economic progress are now irrepressible. We had better face up to that. Our own national history symbolizes these self-same demands. We will be faithless to our tradition if we neglect this new opportunity to help other nations reassert our common principles.

I am sure that the uncommitted peoples of the world have been impressed during the last few days with the President's dramatic step forward in sharing "atoms for peace". Let us hope, however, that our approach to peaceful atomic assistance to other nations will proceed within the framework of the United Nations. The President himself, in his famous "atoms for peace" speech to the General Assembly in December 1953, said that he "would expect that (an international atomic energy agency) would be set up under the aegis of the United Nations". We all know that bilateral arrangements may be helpful and at times essential. But I think it would be a mistake to concentrate on these bilateral arrangements as an exclusive pattern for atomic assistance. Too much bilateralism can detract from, and ultimately erode, the multilateral concepts which are the foundation of the United Nations.

The atoms for peace proposals are important to disarmament too, because they foreshadow the kind of life that a peaceful, disarmed world would allow to mankind.

In turning to a discussion of disarmament itself, therefore, let us remember that neither it, nor the other problems that we have just mentioned, can be pursued in a vacuum. This is what is meant too by the warning which we frequently hear, that large-scale political settlements are the prerequisite to progress on disarmament.

It is a legitimate question to ask whether it is possible to think seriously of disarmament so long as the great powers find no ground for agreement on the basic issues that divide them. It is tempting, of course, especially after the many disappointments that we have suffered, to answer "No" to this question at the outset and let it go at that. We have had ample disillusionment in the past when disarmament negotiations have had to be broken off during the tension-ridden periods of the Berlin blockade and the Korean War.

It is quite true, therefore, that chances for disarmament may depend in part on the climate of the world political situation. It may be true, as some say, that no disarmament agreement can possibly be negotiated without a political settlement of the German question or the Formosan Straits question.

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But to this question, as to most important questions, there is no simple answer. Undoubtedly the prospects for disarmament are curtailed by the presence of thorny, unanswered political problems. It is equally true,

however, that there are crucial divergencies of interests, important diplomatic conflicts, that cannot be solved either as long as the armament race goes on. It can be argued that they, in turn, cannot be brought close to a solution until the framework of a disarmament agreement is firmly established. I know that every person in this room is acutely aware of the danger of war which continues to confront us. I think we know or sense that another war, if it comes, may well destroy our civilization. Is it any wonder that people in this country are united in a deep revulsion to war? This revulsion is shared by people in Europe, and Asia, and elsewhere. I believe that it is shared by the peoples of the Soviet Union. It may be that an awareness of this revulsion has even penetrated the walls of the Kremlin. Mr. Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party indicates that he is beginning to appreciate the fact -- one which was not, may I say, recognized by his predecessor, Mr. Stalin -- that it will not be capitalist countries alone which will be blown up in an atomic war.

This universal abhorrence of war gives us a base to build on. It does not, however, guarantee that we shall avoid a tragic conflict. We must come to grips with the specific problems which lead us to war. One of these problems is the rapid increase of armaments and the incredible increase in their destructive capacity.

It was a concern with this aspect of the problem that led me to introduce Senate Resolution 93, which set up a special Subcommittee on Disarmament. The challenge of this undertaking is enormous. I do not have any simple answers, any more than do Mr. Stassen and the dozens of other people in the Executive Branch of the Government who are working on this problem. The work of the Subcommittee has just begun. Certain fundamental principles, however, have already started to emerge. They are the principles which I believe should govern our approach to the problem of disarmament.

First, any disarmament agreement or proposal must, of course, protect the national security of the United States and other nations. It cannot have loopholes which give a potential aggressor the advantage he needs to start a war and to win it. Each proposal must be carefully examined before we can be sure that our national security will be preserved. And what we do ourselves, we must expect others to do. Protection of the national security is a function of all governments. We can expect others to pursue it at least as zealously as we do ourselves. I do not question their right to do so. I simply stress that we must be equally aware not only of our right but of our duty in this respect.

The protection of national security leads us directly to the second principle which must operate in disarmament negotiations. It is this. No proposal, no matter how good it looks and regardless of who proposes it, should lead us to let down our guard. Until the agreement or agreements are signed by all the necessary parties, until they can go into effect -- and prove their effectiveness -- the United States and its allies throughout the free world must maintain their proportionate defensive strength.

We cannot let the lofty words, our own or anyone else's, tempt us to think that now is the time to reduce essential expenditures for national defense when there is no armament reduction agreement. The time to disarm is after the agreement to disarm, and not before. No matter how appealing a balanced budget, it must not be pursued, as it appears to me it is now being pursued, at the risk of jeopardizing our capacity for defense or weakening friendly nations abroad.

I might add here that the actions of the United States in all of these areas -- economic, military, and political -- tend to set the pace. If allied nations see us thinking and acting primarily in terms of economy, they are likely to follow suit. If we shirk our responsibilities, they will do the same. Leadership imposes responsibility to lead -- to set the pace -- to establish the standards and the guidelines by clear and unmistakable policies and performance. I have yet to see the clear outlines of American policy on many vital subjects.

The third principle has to do with perhaps the most vital element in the maintenance of a democratic and self-governing society. This is the principle of an informed public. I know and you know that the men who are conducting disarmament negotiations, and planning military, atomic and foreign policy are loyal citizens who have the interests of their country at heart. But they are not omnipotent. They are men with all of the limitations and weaknesses of men. They are not the sole judges as to what facts we should have and what developments might disturb us and discourage us from thinking that all is not well in the world. I have never thought that I needed to be spoon-fed by public relations men and neither do the American people feel that they need to be spoon-fed. Possibly we can't know everything that is going on, but we do need to know a lot more than we know now. There is a tendency here in America today, not only on questions of disarmament, but in virtually every activity of our Government to clamp the secrecy label on far too many items, to keep facts bottled up even after they are revealed and known in many other parts of the world.

The special Senate subcommittee on Disarmament, of which I am Chairman, hopes to conduct virtually all of its work in full public view. There are far too many executive sessions in this city, ladies and gentlemen. There needs to be more open discussion. As Chairman of this Subcommittee, I intend to do everything I can to see to it that the important facts, the legitimate information on all phases of this subject are published and made available and understandable to all members of the Senate, and through them to the American people.

The fourth principle which must guide our approach to disarmament is sincerity -- sincerity of purpose. By its very nature, the Soviet system of Communism produces men fanatically clever in the art of deception, hypocrisy and duplicity. There is always a danger that as a result of our frustrating experience of trying to deal with them, some of those responsible for carrying out our policy may tend to take on some of these same characteristics. In our struggle against Communism we must be careful not to ape the totalitarian. In our efforts to win this great struggle against forces of

tyranny, let us not take on the manners and the habits of the tyrant. Psychological warriors are not going to win either a war or a peace. They may win skirmishes, but they do so at the risk of losing for us the great issues. I should not like to see the day when this country begins to use words in matters of life and death in the fashion of the advertisers. There is no brand name for peace; it can't be spelled backwards. The peace and disarmament proposals which this country makes must be supported by the full conviction that they are workable, plausible, and that they will genuinely contribute to a solution of the basic problem.

As I see it, therefore, the efforts for disarmament are being advanced on three fronts: in the United Nations, the Executive Branch of our Government and the Congress of the United States. All of these are essential, if our hopes for effective control and restriction of armaments are to be realized as a practical achievement. The details of what is going on within the first two fronts come to me, as to you, from published reports, statements of our official representatives and through the newspapers. Many of you have also had reports from your own official observers at the United Nations and your legislative representatives here in Washington. So if I concentrate the rest of my remarks on the Senate work and my views of what we may do, I hope you will understand why, because you have possibly much more information about the first two fronts than I have myself. I would hope that my good friend Governor Stassen would see to it that the Executive Branch does a little more proposing for us and for the world in this field of disarmament. Because after all the Executive Branch conducts the foreign policy of the United States and the Senate would have little opportunity to dispose if the Executive Branch never proposed.

With respect to the role of the United Nations, I am saying nothing new to this group when I say that we would not know nearly as much as we do today about the problems of disarmament and the efforts required to attain it if it were not for the United Nations.

But I am here in my capacity as a member of the Senate. It is well to remember that even if the Executive Branch came forth with brilliant plans, unassailable in their logic, and even if they were accepted by all of the members of the United Nations, they could not come into effect without the participation of the Congress of the United States. Now this is not to try to overawe you with our importance. It is merely to point up an essential feature of our constitutional system. It is also to remind you that the Senate cannot act effectively unless it is fully informed and has sufficient information to render sound judgments. This is the principal reason why last June, I introduced Senate Resolution 93 setting up this special subcommittee on disarmament.

The Senate cannot do the negotiating with foreign powers on the subject of disarmament. But we are a vehicle to make certain that the agreements reached will fulfill the needs of the American people and meet the test of acceptability by them. Furthermore, we in the Congress are a means through which the American people have an opportunity to express their views, their

hopes, yes, even, their doubts of disarmament, and through which they may learn how present disarmament proposals can affect their future lives.

Now, a few words about this Special Subcommittee. It is bipartisan: twelve members, six Republicans and six Democrats. It would be premature to speculate now on the conclusions we may reach. But at the present time the subcommittee has three lines of approach.

First we intend to have members of the Executive Branch discuss at public hearings the government's policy on disarmament and to give us their appraisal of the possibilities of reaching a solution. Governor Stassen led the witnesses with his opening presentation on January twenty-fifth. He will be followed on Wednesday of this week, February 29th, by the Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles. On March 7th, Admiral Lewis Strauss, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Mr. Theodore Streibert, Director of the United States Information Agency, will appear. On that same day, one of my colleagues, Senator Flanders of Vermont, will testify before the Subcommittee. He has, as you know, dedicated much of his life to the disarmament cause. On March 15th these gentlemen will be followed by Secretary of Defense Mr. Charles E. Wilson, who will bring to us the critically important views of the defense establishment.

Then the Subcommittee's second line of approach will be to hold hearings both here and outside of Washington so that we may have the benefit of the views of experts and informed, interested private organizations and citizens. These hearings, I believe, will be somewhat unique. They will be in two parts. The first part of the hearing will consist of testimony from experts, largely men and women at our universities who have made a special study of disarmament. They will be asked to summarize the results of their research and study and pool their knowledge in an effort to assist us in our work. The second part of the hearings will be devoted to those individuals and groups who wish to present their views to the Subcommittee. We need to have a good cross-section of the ideas of the people of the United States on this question in all parts of the country and we intend, if possible, to go out and get it.

The third approach of the Subcommittee is to commission a series of Staff Studies. Each will present an aspect of the problem of control and reduction of armaments. We hope that these studies will assist us and other interested Americans to understand more clearly the dimensions of the disarmament problem and the issues which arise from it. The first of these studies has already been published. It deals with the organization of the Executive Branch to handle disarmament questions. That study itself revealed some of the problems.

For example, I came to sympathize with Governor Stassen in his responsibility. In addition to the Governor's office, three Executive Departments with numerous sub-bureaus, two Agencies, one Commission, one mission, one council, and two boards are involved in disarmament matters.¹

¹ Department of Defense, State and Justice; Central Intelligence Agency; United States Information Agency; Atomic Energy Commission, United States Mission to the United Nations; National Security Council; Planning Board and Operations Coordinating Board of the National Security Council.

I hope that while you follow the work of this Subcommittee you will also help us. I hope you will make known to us the conclusions that you reach here at this meeting, and I solicit these conclusions and recommendations. As leaders of some of the most important organizations serving the public interest, there are contributions you definitely can make to peace and security of the world.

First, you can help by continuing to keep informed. I want to emphasize again that there are no shortcuts. There is a good deal of homework that has to be done by the American people in these crucial areas of national security, foreign policy and disarmament.

Second, you can help bring a sense of realism to the consideration of disarmament by reminding your members of the real dilemma posed by this question. One horn of the dilemma is that we cannot hope to have real peace so long as we and the rest of the world race to build more deadly weapons. The other is that we must not be led or tricked into unilateral disarmament which leaves us and the other free nations defenseless against a potential aggressor.

A third contribution you can make is to caution patience. Disarmament is as hard a problem as we have in the entire field of foreign policy. We Americans have often tended to believe that each defined problem carries with it a possible solution. In the disarmament field, that might not be true even if each nation would define the problems the same way. A difficulty with disarmament, however, seems to be that definitions are often as lacking as solutions.

Patience can be helpful in this process. Perhaps patience will help in connection with the President's aerial inspection plan. The Government first talked about this in 1946.¹ In 1952 our deputy representative on the United Nations Disarmament Commission, described the use of aerial survey in a working paper submitted to the Commission on "Proposals for Progressive and Continuing Disclosure and Verification of Armed Forces and Armaments." Now the idea has been brought back to life in a somewhat different context. Perhaps patience will gain acceptability for it. That remains to be seen.

But patience is not an excuse for inaction ^{or indifference} ~~ineir343nd3~~. You are going to be discussing disarmament later on in small groups. I'd like to pose some questions for you to consider. They won't necessarily be easily answered. Perhaps some cannot be answered at all at this time. But they are questions which I have been asking myself, which my mail reveals, and which I would like to share with you.

Take, for example, the President's aerial inspection plan.

Can aerial reconnaissance alone detect each and every military maneuver of another country? If it can't, are we in possible trouble by proposing it or our accepting it? Should aerial inspection include the

¹ Description of aerial inspection contained in the First Report of the UN Atomic Energy Commission, 1946.

entire area in which a potential enemy has control or has bases or has alliances? Even if we reach agreement on the principle of aerial inspection, some commentators contend that it is not fool-proof since there is no ostensible difference between a flight of bombers taking off on a training mission and one taking off with a load of H-bombs in the bomb shafts.

It has been suggested that progress on an over-all plan for the reduction and control of armaments must be suspended until a way can be found to detect nuclear weapons which have been previously manufactured and then hidden. Does this mean we have to give up on trying to reach agreement on armed forces and conventional weapons too? The aerial inspection plan is called a beginning. I believe it was said to be a "gateway". Is this the only beginning that can be made? Are we to stand with this one proposal committing ourselves almost entirely to this one to the exclusion of others? We are told some of the best brains in the Government are working on this problem, but we have no plan except a proposal which is said at best to prevent a surprise atomic attack between two countries. And I want you to ponder that for a moment. The plan that we have today, which seems to be the core of the American disarmament proposal, if you can call it disarmament, is one merely of being able to ascertain what the participants may do to apprehend an attack.

The world applauded the President's initiative in making the "open skies" proposal at the "summit conference". But there have been indications since that the world is somewhat worried about our sense of follow-through. For instance, the distinguished French representative on the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Mr. Jules Moch, has flatly stated: "Never have I believed that a formula for control without disarmament would receive the unanimous support of the governments -- any more than a formula for disarmament without control".

Mr. Moch himself has proposed a three-point objective for further disarmament conversations: (1) no control without disarmament; (2) no disarmament without control; but (3) step by step, disarmament over all activities that can be controlled.

It is my personal conviction that the situation requires a reexamination at least on the part of the Western representatives at the new London Conference, of all of the major proposals put forward by President Eisenhower, Prime Minister Eden and the then Premier of France -- Premier Faure -- at the "summit conference" last July.

If we ever expect disarmament to come, we need the world working with us. We do not seem to have the world working with us now, as hard as it might. In all humility, I do not think we are pushing ourselves on this issue as hard as we should.

The Picasso peace dove symbolizes the beguiling success which the Soviet peace campaign has had in many areas of the world. Strangely enough among many millions of non-Communist people, the popular impression today is that

the Soviet Union, not the United States, has been most insistent on halting the arms race. No impression could be more damaging to America's prestige abroad. And, of course, no impression could be more false. But, as one who has been in politics, I have found much -- sometimes to my sorrow -- that what people believe is not always the truth.

Since 1947 when the Soviet threat of aggression and subversion became fully evident to us, American policy makers have assumed that its nature and dimensions were equally evident to others. This led us seriously to underrate the effectiveness of Russian propaganda on peace and disarmament. The fact that much of the world has forgotten our own early imaginative proposals for atomic energy control and disarmament -- and we were the first nation to make these proposals -- is indicative of a major failure of our information program in recent years. It may also be indicative of the fact that louder and more strident voices have talked about dropping bombs and using massive retaliation rather than constantly emphasizing the potentialities of peace.

Let us reassert our leadership on this matter all along the line. We need the overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations with us on this great issue of disarmament. I don't think we can make real progress without their help.

We are reassured that other nations are with us because they voted overwhelmingly in the United Nations General Assembly for the United States Resolution on aerial inspection. But what are they themselves doing on this question? Have we encouraged them to make as full a contribution to the solution of this problem as we might? These questions are not rhetorical. They are asked in a most earnest search for help on this key issue. I shall be interested to see what your discussions produce.

In military language defense is often spoken of in terms of the long pull ahead. Well, I want to close on the theme of the long pull ahead for peace.

It is a mistake, in my judgment, to say that we are going to get disarmament this year or next year or the year after. It is a mistake to paint a smilingly optimistic picture of the prospects for peace. The disarmament problem, much less the total problem of peace, is not going to be solved either by wishful thinking by advertising or by half-hearted attempts. It will require hard work -- sacrificial labor -- at many points. It will require some fresh bearings for our foreign policy. I am confident, however, that if all of us in all sincerity devote our efforts to this question -- if the people whose stake in this matter is life itself, if you who represent so many groups who have devoted years to the problem of world peace, if Governor Stassen with the boards and agencies of the Executive Branch, if the Senate and last but not the least, the United Nations -- if all of us pull together we can begin to frame our hopes for peace with the realities of peace. We can give substance to the words of a man with whom I have not always agreed, but with whose words I should like to close.

In his remarkable speech before an American Legion convention in Los Angeles a year ago, General Douglas MacArthur forcefully stated the central challenge ahead. He said: "We are in a new era. Old methods no longer suffice. We must break out of the strait jacket of the past. There must always be one to lead, and we should be that one. We should now proclaim our readiness in concert with the great powers of the world to abolish war. The result might be magical."

~~Indeed~~ it might.



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