

Remarks of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
at the  
AMERICAN FOOD FOR PEACE COUNCIL

Western Regional Conference  
Fairmont Hotel -- San Francisco  
Monday, January 29, 1962

Thank you very much, neighbor McGovern. If there ever was a man that fulfilled the promise of the good neighbor, it's the man that just introduced me and has been the Director of these proceedings and is the Director of the Food For Peace Program.

I first of all want to pay my respects to this distinguished governor and his very lovely and charming wife. Governor Brown has been the host for this conference and I think it's a fact that the conference could not have come anywhere near being the success that it has been, or the meaningful demonstration of community cooperation that it is, had it not been for his determination to make the conference a success and for his great desire to show to a South Dakotan like George McGovern and a Minnesotan like Hubert Humphrey just what the farm people of the great State of California can do and what a great contribution they are making to the Food For Peace Program. I don't know -- if I ever had you out home, Governor, I'd just brand you as the farmer's friend, but here you'll have to make up your own slogans. Whatever it is, you're a great governor, and I have considered it a rare privilege to share in your program, and you honored me by requesting that I would attend this gathering.

I want also to extend a special note of thanks to a former Minnesotan -- of course, this is the source of his genius -- his gifts and talents -- to Eddie Albert, who has been the Master of Ceremonies through these proceedings, and has given such a wonderfully friendly and kindly, and also gentle and humorous touch, when it was required, for all of the proceedings. We honor you not only because of your great artistic ability, but, Eddie, more so because of your great heart, your great spirit, and your great dedication to humankind and to the welfare of people.

I want to join with George, too, in thanking Ben Swig for all that you've done, Ben. I want to tell you if you had a heart any bigger than you've got it would have to be outside instead of inside because you couldn't hold it. Of course, if I say anything more about Susie, why, she'll get to thinking that George and I are competing for her affection, which might be true, but I'll tell you, she surely is a persuasive young lady and we want her to know how very much we've appreciated what she's done.

When I heard the invocation this noon, I believe it was Eddie Albert that said to me, or was it the governor -- I think it was Governor Brown, yes -- he said, "Well, Hubert, what is there left to say after you heard the message of the Reverend Father that gave the invocation at noon." And when I heard the invocation tonight, there was the whole lesson -- so concise, so direct, so revealing, that the only thing I can say is that,

possibly, as an old teacher I ought to remember that education is essentially saturation, and most of us learn through the process of osmosis. Just being steeped in it. So I'm going to take as my text all that Rabbi White gave tonight as invocation. Of course, this will be a very poor substitute for the real message that you've had but possibly by replaying it and refashioning it and adapting it to one person's need after another, we can have this message that's been given to us of mercy, of justice, of compassion, of love, of understanding, and of practical good deeds, driven home to each and every one of us.

I'm delighted to be here. I am happy to be at any occasion where people are doing something that's good. I am fed up, as I am sure many other people are, with these harbingers of fear and hate. I feel that what America should stand for in the world is what this conference works for and stands for. We cannot shout as loud as the Communists, and we can't hate with the same vitriol and fervor that they hate, nor can we distort facts and misrepresent the truth, with the same degree of persuasiveness. So why try to compete on their terms? Why try to join the propaganda battle of half-truths, of imagery, when in fact we have the best propaganda, which is the propaganda of our good works, of our deeds, of our accomplishments, of our idealism, that is represented here in this audience tonight, and in the program that we joined together to sponsor, and to improve.

I can't help but think, Governor, that this great State of yours is the host tonight to two groups of Americans, both determined that they have answers to the problems or at least some answers to the problems that confront us. Across the bay of this beautiful city of San Francisco, in the neighboring city of Oakland, a meeting has been held, and I gather another is underway, in which there are people that are determined that they have the answer to the evil of our times -- this subtle, sinister virus called totalitarianism or communism. And they join together, they marshal their resources -- and they're big -- they gather their wealth, they organize their programs -- and if I may use a phrase, they beat their chest, proclaim their patriotism, and denounce communism. And not a single Communist trembles with fear. Not one. But those who do feel the effects are good, wholesome, decent, honest, straightforward, thinking people who become somewhat confused, doubtful, and maybe a little bewildered, over these fantasies of exhibitionism and emotionalism that take place on the right and on the left. The extremes of our time.

I used to be a political science teacher of a sort -- not as good as George -- and I can recall so well those lessons of history when the anti-Democratic forces in France, for example, in 1934, literally met on the middle of the bridge across the river Seine. The Fascist organization of France and the Communists, meeting head-on, and in between stood the democracy of the Republic of France, almost destroyed. The same thing happened in Germany -- the same thing happened in Italy -- and in those instances was destroyed.

Fortunately in our country, and I feel that this can be said very factually, these extremes represent such a minute part of our total population and they do not draw on the great reservoir of the tradition of this country because America is not known for having given vent to its emotionalism and hysteria over any prolonged period of time. So I say to you, Governor, if anyone ever had any doubt as to your judgment, that doubt should have been long ago erased by the fact that you have selected this meeting, of which you are the host, and at which you honor us by your presence. And I thank you.

Well, we've come a long way in these few years. I can remember when I first came to the Congress we were talking about what we called surpluses and we are still, some of us, talking -- some people are talking about what we call surpluses of food -- and others of us have talked about our God-given abundance of food, and others speak, I think, even more factually of resources of food and fiber. I can remember the battles, the struggles in the Congress over trying to design a program that would put to work these tremendous resources of food and fiber that seem to come forth in ever increasing measure. And I want to say quite frankly that the Food For Peace Program was bi-partisan. Men of the Republican Party, of the Democratic Party, joined in making this a reality, and that's exactly what it ought to be. But I say with equal candor that the present President of the United States made the Food For Peace Program more than a pilot project. He has made it an integral part of American foreign policy and American international activities. And that is the way it ought to be, too.

Now, I'm mighty proud of American agriculture. I'm not one that's been going around feeling that somehow or other it's one of our major problems. There are problems in agriculture, to be sure -- economic problems, land problems, and occasionally, I suppose, some problems of water, credit problems, production and distribution problems. But I call to the attention of this audience what everyone of you know -- and I ask you to remember it -- that the greatest single success story of the twentieth century in terms of the application of science and technology, in terms of management, of resources, in terms of production, distribution, and processing, is the story of American agriculture -- from the land to the people that consume it. Never in the history of the world has there been anything like it. And every one of these apostles of the so-called New Order find that they fail, that their Number One failure is in the field of agriculture. Why? Because they have failed to understand that agriculture is more than production. They have failed to understand that part of the story of the success of American agriculture is the fact that the land and the people are as one. From the soil came the people -- the good earth.

And I pay tribute tonight to those hardy souls who have been described so many times as the American family farmer, who has proven himself to be the greatest producer of the highest quality of food and fiber that the world has ever known in all recorded history, and this is an amazing accomplishment in this day and age. This is where our Food For Peace Program comes.

I don't know why we don't tell our success stories once in a while. Mind you, if Mr. Khrushchev could produce corn like we do, we'd never hear the end of it. Why, he would be planting it on the moon if he thought he could get by with it. And yet, somehow or other, we've spent most of our time and much of our copy in the press, much of our commentary on the radio and on television mouthing the half-truths and the misconceptions about the problem that was ours -- the problem of plenty, the problem of abundance -- at the very time, my friends, when we say we're world leaders. If there's any reason to doubt American leadership, and if there has been any reason to doubt American leadership over recent years, it is the fact that we have groped so clumsily, we have been so clumsy in the application of this great abundance of food and fiber to human need.

Oh, we know what to do with money. We're great on checking accounts, drawing accounts, cost accounting, and all too often I've seen our foreign aid programs -- yes, even our Alliance for Progress -- not identified as schools and hospitals, not identified as homes and streets and harbors and ports and railroads and textbooks and health and education, but always identified as \$200 million dollars -- \$100 million dollars -- \$500 million dollars -- which spreads what? A false impression of America as being only a materialistic people; and secondly, doubt and suspicion in the minds of millions and millions of people throughout the world that have been exploited by those who are used to dealing with such large figures. Don't forget it for a moment.

When I came back from my brief trip to Latin America, one of the first things I asked our President to do -- and I didn't need to ask him, he was way ahead of me -- was to start to identify the Alliance for Progress in tangible things, to start to identify it in terms of the thousands of classrooms that we would help build to educate the illiterate, the thousands of farms that we would help build with credit, and supervise credit and agricultural agents, the homes and slums -- the slums that would be cleared and the homes that would be built, the wells that would be put into the ground -- of good clean, fresh water which they know not. Identify ourselves with the needs of people, and quit identifying ourselves with the gold reserves and with the cash balances in a world in which there are too few with any cash, balanced or unbalanced, far too few who understand anything at all about the monetary standards of the gold reserves.

So the Food For Peace Program is doing something for us. You know what it's really doing for the Americans and for you lucky souls who are here tonight, and what it's helped do for me? It brought me back to earth, and I mean it in every sense of the word. Again we begin to appreciate basic resources -- resources of the land, the seed, the hard work, the manual labor, the skill, the science, the technology, that goes into the making of food. It brought us, I think, back to a better understanding of the world in which we live, which isn't a world that is so complicated industrially in most areas, but is quite simple in terms of its agriculture -- far too backward.



I think that we're learning something out of this program. As a matter of fact, most of these programs that are a success generally do the people who carry them out more good than the people that receive them. And I believe this has been the case in this particular program.

I'd like to just qualify the Food For Peace Program as I see it. I know I heard today something about the message of Mr. Sorensen, just briefly -- a remarkable man, and you can plainly see why the President respects his advice and counsel so well. I'm one of those people that likes to be classified a do-gooder. And there's only one thing better and that's a good-doer. I'm not a bit ashamed of it. I like to be classified as an idealist. I don't know why a nation that wants to go penetrate into outer space shouldn't have its head in the clouds once in awhile to get a good look at what's going on. I'd like to be classified as one of those-- yes, that would like to help the needy. I think that one of the most unkind things that's ever been said is when we chastise people for being, as they say, soft on people, too kind, do-gooder, and -- you've heard all of the phrases that have been used.

We've often been told we ought to be practical. Well, I ask you, let's see how practical we've been. First of all, let's see how practical we are with this program. I call Food For Peace America at its best. It's American idealism at work. It's the testimony to American agricultural genius. More importantly, it's a testimony to America's industry, to America's government, the government of the people, to America's voluntary agencies that you represent, to America's churches, its great spiritual institutions that literally breathe meaningful life into these programs, and it's also a testimony to every citizen of this land. Every American can be proud of it.

Every American can be proud of the fact that powdered milk -- distributed by the agencies that you represent, made available by the Government of the United States in which you are proud to be a citizen, produced by the people of this land through hard work and industry -- has saved millions of lives. What is more noble? Or would you rather talk about the next nuclear bomb test, and point with some dubious pride, if you wish, to how big a megatron bomb we can produce. A bigger bang than Khrushchev. I warn you -- there is no guarantee at all that we can produce a bigger bang than Khrushchev. But I can testify tonight that we can produce more and better food than anybody else in the world, and we can deliver it. And we can deliver it with mercy.

And I ask you to think of this, this program that we're a part of. Don't you feel just a little cleaner, just a little more wholesome, just a little more -- oh, I don't know, just "with it" as the youngsters say, when you know that this program exemplifies our real sense of justice, our real basic sense of humanitarianism -- and we're brought up this way in this country -- that this program really represents our sense of compassion. It is the living story of the Good Samaritan.

And this is the good news of our time. The good news is not the hate and the fear -- the good news has been said, as I have pointed out to you earlier, in the invocation. It is the good news of love, which, properly interpreted in more prodigial terms, is understanding, appreciation, concern with the well-being of others. Aren't you happier to know that in your lifetime, because of your efforts, that you've helped change public policy in the United States, that you've helped mold the climate of opinion all over this land -- and by the way, I want to compliment the press of this city for the manner in which they have portrayed the proceedings of this conference -- the stories that they've had, the radio, and the television -- of telling the story of how Food For Peace has become such a very important part of the total policy of the people of the United States in respect to the rest of the world.

And this Food For Peace Program has done something else. Oh, surely, it's relieved us of some of our current production problems. Oh, surely, it has provided an opportunity for many organizations to really improve even their total administrative establishment. But the Food For Peace Program has been a pioneering effort in something else.

American Food For Peace has pioneered a world food bank proposal. So that the initial effort that was made here in this country is today producing greater fruit. At the Food and Agriculture Organization in April, the President's Food For Peace Director, Mr. McGovern, was directed by the President of the United States to take the lead, and later on the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Freeman, attending a second conference at Rome of Food and Agriculture, was directed by the President of the United States to pledge the resources of the United States of America in a stipulated amount to the establishment of a world food bank, of which we would be a part, calling upon the other countries of the world that have advanced production methods in the field of agriculture, to join together to help stabilize markets, to move food into the areas of need, to make food a really viable and important part of the total economic development of the world. We did it. We started it. We pioneered it. And I submit to you that this is much more important than penetrating even outer space because you're penetrating into the minds and hearts of humankind on this earth.

And Food For Peace means something else for me tonight, as I'm sure it has to you as you participated in these conferences today. We, in a very real sense, if we just opened up the full productive capacity of this nation, could of course produce much more than we're producing now. And could feed many more than we're feeding now. But the truth is that the United States of America, along with all of its generosity, all of its capacity, with all of its ability, cannot feed all the people. And therefore, the Food For Peace Program works side by side with the Food and Agriculture Organization, with the United Nations specialized agencies. It works side by side with our aid program, with our Alliance for Progress, with a host of other endeavors on the part of our government to do what?

To teach people how to care for themselves. To improve their agriculture. To modernize their production methods. Oh, what a miracle! What a miracle! Food For Peace -- I think it's the greatest miracle of our time.

You know, the old alchemist, I believe that's what they used to call him, back in the days of the Middle Ages -- they would say that the king or the prince or the duke would get some fellow that was the chemist of his time and they'd put him up in a tower. And they'd say, "Now, take gross base metal and make gold of it, or never come down from the tower." Many a good chemist was lost because of that.

That was impossible, but we have been able, in our time, not even going to the professional competence of a chemist, to take food and fulfill the admonition of both the Old and the New Testament to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, and to clothe the naked. And after we have done that, we have had that same food provide the economic resources to rebuild an economy. I say we've been able to take food and make hospitals of it. We've been able to take food, as George McGovern has shown, in Tunisia to pay workers to build homes, to build schools. We've been able to take food, George, in many parts of the world and get medical research out of it.

One of the amendments that it was my privilege to sponsor in the Food For Peace Program was to have some of the proceeds of Title I sales under Public Law 480 made available for international medical research, for the translation of documents -- historical and cultural documents -- we've been able to take food, my friends, and build community centers, highways, clean out the slums, attack disease. What a miracle! No other product can make so many claims for so much good. And we've done it.

I think once in a while we need to have a catalogue of achievement. I don't think that you can keep a people at work all the time just pointing out their failures. It is important, of course, that we know the mistakes that we've made. It is important that we understand the challenges that are yet unmet. It is important that we see the problems that lie before us. But it is equally important that from day to day we have the sustenance of progress and achievement. And I submit that we have it in this program. Name me any program that has gained so few enemies and made so many friends in such a short period of time with such a limited amount of resources. It's been incredible. All over the world I have seen it. I have been in the classrooms in countries in far-off places to see on the board, "This milk is a gift from the children of the United States." I have watched the school enrollment, in countries where there is little or nothing to do with, vary entirely on the basis of the school lunch program that was made available.

I see my friends here from CARE tonight. I have seen CARE at work, when its program was at work, when the Government of the United States was backing it with the food that was made available, and then I've seen when that food was cut off for some foolish policy decision. And I saw the

schools closed -- the children not there -- the bitterness and the frustration. You know, I've had some people say to me, "Well, Humphrey, do you intend to see that these children get milk from here on out?" I ask this question: Have you heard anybody say to you, Do you intend to see that Government X gets arms from here on out? Why is it that we are so less critical of the billions, and the hundreds of millions of dollars that we have poured out at times in areas of the world in a futile effort to militarize a people who are totally incompetent of handling the modern military weapon -- even if they could, or even if they would. And yet that same person will be highly critical of the fact that we have pledged ourselves to a long-term food program.

I want to see the United States of America make pledges to countries for the next ten years. I want the United States of America to be known as the nation that helped fulfill that line in the Lord's Prayer that says to us: Give us this day our daily bread. I say to you that we can give this world of ours the kind of leadership that will banish from the face of the earth from now until an unknown future the specter of famine. It is within our power, with the science and technology of modern nations, within the power of the people of the United States and our allies alone to banish from the textbooks and the history books for centuries to come the scourge of famine which has taken an untold toll of people throughout the ages. What a day that will be!

I'd like to have it known that America had that much vision. I want to think of the day when the resources of this country will be recognized as having been available for education. I want my America to be known as the teacher, not just the lawyer. I want this beloved country of ours to be known as the provider, not merely the mobilizer. I want America to be known as the doctor, the healer, and not just the one that stood firm against certain forces at work in the world.

I think that we do have something here that is far beyond ordinary politics. If the Food For Peace Program has done nothing else, it has given some sense of moral validity to the American political processes in a day in which there's been all too little of it. It has given us a sense of mission, and we need that sense of mission. We need to become involved in it. It needs to be something more than just something that the government is doing. Thank goodness that this program is not just a government program, because the strength of the government, the strength of America, is not in its government alone. The government in this country is but a part of the strength of this nation, and when we set an objective for ourselves we need to mobilize not only the government, but the people, the voluntary agencies, the private institutions, all of the great resources of this pluralistic society that is ours. And you're in it. You're sensing it. You're a part of it.

Now let me conclude this message to you tonight on one other note. I hope this is not out of place, because I do not want to make this occasion



any more controversial than I may have already. But I sense that we're going through a period in which those who are the victims of frustration, those who are a little too timid for the times, are seeking quick and easy answers to very complicated and long-term problems. We would need Food For Peace if Karl Marx had never been born. We would need Food For Peace if you'd never heard the word Bolshevism, or never the name Lenin or Stalin or Khrushchev. Long before these characters ever paraded on the stage of history there was a prophet Amos, there was an Isaiah, and there was a Jesus of Nazareth, who talked about food and peace. Food for the body, food for the soul. Peace for the mind, and peace for the spirit.

I don't think we need to get our inspiration from the devil. I think that we ought to get our inspiration from the wellsprings of spiritual values that have made this country what it is. And I have a feeling that that's what this program is about. And that's why I think it has a greater meaning than some of us even sense tonight. I want to say that no man could have been better for it than this kindly, generous -- this mature and thoughtful, considerate man, George McGovern, that the President has selected as the Director.

And as we think in these constructive terms, let us also think of the attacks that are being made upon other great agencies and instrumentalities for good and for peace and for freedom and for justice. Because there is no peace without freedom, and there is no freedom without justice.

I sense, for example, that a titanic struggle is being waged now against one of the great instrumentalities that has been created in our time for law and order. Weak, fragile, at times ineffective, imperfect because it's man-made -- and after all, the United Nations is but more or less the mirror of the world of which it is a part. It's a nasty world, in many ways -- it's a cruel world, it's a disorderly world, it's a jealous world, it's a paganistic one at times, too. And all of that is manifested in the councils that mankind creates to represent himself, whether it's domestic or international. But I submit to you that having said all of that, that were there not a United Nations, as President Kennedy said, we'd have to invent one, because we need it. I've heard the critics of the United Nations say, "Oh, it's nothing but a forum for the Communists." It's also a forum for the lovers of freedom!

The only time I've ever feared a public platform is when I thought I had a weak case, or when truth was not on my side. A man need not fear debate, nor need he fear controversy if he feels the right is on his side -- if he feels he has a strong case, a good argument -- and, my fellow Americans, those that are fearful of the United Nations and those that feel that it offers only an opportunity for the propaganda of the Communists are apparently fearful that we do not have the right argument and the right case. I think we have. I think we have the message that the world needs. I don't think that communism or totalitarianism is the way of the future. Oh no, my friends. It is nothing but the sludge of the past.

I welcome the opportunity as a citizen of this country to utilize the United Nations as one of the many instrumentalities that we have for the conduct of foreign policy, for giving the message of democracy to the peoples of the world. It's our one chance for a broad contact with the bright minds and the ablest people of the many new countries that have come into their own in these recent years. And these countries will be here, my fellow Americans, whether there's a United Nations or not. Better that there should be a United Nations where we can contact them on the basis of equality, because if there's any one thing that has cost America a great deal, it is the fact that we have too often been practitioners of inequality. And in many places of the world, people of many different races and color look with suspicion upon the white man and the Caucasian because he has been the victim of his own sickness -- discrimination, intolerance, and bigotry. The United Nations compels us to stand as equals, and it gives us a sense of humility which a mighty, rich, powerful, military, economic power requires.

Oh, I've heard many people say, "I can't stand it. Here is this mighty, great, powerful America -- here's Country X over here with only a million people, most of them illiterate, and we have to listen to them." May I say to you that it is sometimes good to walk in ashes and sackcloth. That it is good to realize that bigness does not always mean that you're right or just. That it is good to listen to the arguments of those that may not represent the mightiest military or financial or economic power in the world. We have nothing to fear if we walk kindly, justly, and uprightly, in mercy, and in justice. So I ask you in the days ahead to weigh the arguments well. Remember this, my good friends, as I said to the students at Stanford today, there are people even in this city that say, "Get the United States out of the United Nations, and get the United Nations out of the United States." There is a fellow in Moscow that says exactly the same thing, and there are editorials written in some of our big city newspapers that say get the United States out of the United Nations -- and they write editorials like that in Pravda and Izvestia, too. Strange bedfellows -- strange bedfellows!

I suggest that we dedicate our time and our efforts not toward undermining but toward building, not toward weakening, but toward strengthening. I remind my fellow Americans tonight that your government has never been defeated in the councils of the United Nations. I remind you that every policy that that great instrumentality has taken for keeping the peace is a policy which your government initiated or supported. And believe it or not -- and I'm sure you do -- the forces of confusion and disorder in this world do not want a United Nations that can keep the peace.

I said to one group, and I say to you, if you want to keep the United Nations from being owned, as some people say, by the Reds, keep the United Nations out of the red! And that means finances. But if you want to make the United Nations the force that it can be, and that it ought to be, for world order and for justice, then we must contribute even more in

terms of attention, of policy, of programing, to its endeavors. Food For Peace does this. The Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, many other organizations -- they're doing great things day after day. The United Nations is not just the veto and the security council. The United Nations is not just the argument over the Congo. The United Nations is not just the bond issue. The United Nations, my friends, is a host of agencies and peoples working together from all parts of the world, saving lives, building countries and nations, educating people, healing people, and planning for a better day.

Some time maybe we'll get over headline history and start to look back into the fine print of the chapters of human achievement. And when that chapter is read and the book's yet to be written, I am convinced, and I am confident, that of all the many things that this country may have done -- its Marshall Plan, its participation in the United Nations, its NATO, its Alliance for Progress -- yea, its Peace Corps, and the United States Disarmament Agency, the Greek-Turkish aid program, the good neighbor policy, reciprocal trade -- name them all -- there will be a chapter in that book that says that these people who were gifted and privileged to have abundance at a time of human need also had the goodness of heart and spirit to dedicate these great resources that came to us from a bountiful and divine Providence, to the welfare of God's finest creation -- people. Thank you.



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