#### REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

#### AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR INFORMATION SCIENCE

#### BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

#### Washington, D.C.

#### April 12, 1976

I am very pleased to be here today. This conference represents an important opportunity to underscore the significance of information and information technology in the public and private sector.

I note that for this unique program leaders from every facet of the information community have been willing to give their time and their talents to the many information specialists assembled here. This conference of professionals in the academic, research and governmental fields is of great significance in addressing an increasingly complex and urgent problem: that of assessing the role of information in national policy formulation and governmental management.

As our Nation begins its Third Century, the tasks and responsibilities of national and world leadership multiply more rapidly than ever before. The challenges of the future can be met only through effective use of information and the varied capabilities of its technology. Above all we need to remember that the most vital factor in this process is people.

I am reminded of something President Johnson used to say: "A man's judgment is only as good as his information." This is a message we all need to remember in the age of the computer, mass media and instant analysis.

There are two important elements in this statement. One is that reasonable solutions to the problems which confront us can be formulated only on the basis of accurate and timely information. Secondly, regardless of the accuracy or volume of information, regardless of the sophistication of the information transfer techniques, the decisions affecting our lives ultimately are made by informed men and women.

Intelligible communication of vital information, however, is the absolute foundation stone in building the structure of knowledge that leads to human progress. Failure to master the scientific revolution in information control contributes to unknown duplication and tragic, intolerable wastes of men, money and material. Despite major accomplishments in the sphere of information, I regretfully find all too frequently that my criticism still stands.

For example, the Federal government over the years has increased significantly its investment in biomedical research and in finding the causes and cures of major diseases. It has been my belief consistently that this investment should be multiplied. At the same time, however, the effective interpretation and transmission of the information gained from this widespread research remains an elusive goal.

Moreover, we have not moved very far toward sharing this knowledge beyond national borders.

Over the past decade, we witnessed significant improvements in the international sharing of information in various science disciplines. Certainly, to promote these networks is to strengthen the bonds of international peace.

But the harsh facts remain -- widespread malnutrition, even starvation, and disease affecting major sectors of the world's population; and international scientific research communication too often is at a rudimentary level. The crisis in food affairs in recent years has demonstrated again the inadequacy of information available to U.S. policy makers. Both Congress and the executive branch have been caught short of knowledge about world supplies and prospective demands.

.

1 . . .

The conflicting responses and approaches of the many interests involved have made clear the need for a national food policy, a government structure to effectively coordinate its implementation, and the need for improvements in the United States and in international food and agricultural information systems.

This subject has been under study by the Office of Technology Assessment under the direction of its supervisory board, of which I am a member. The food, agricultural and nutritional information need of Members of Congress reflect the problems faced throughout our government in developing a national food policy.

Jurisdiction over this important area is split among a host of Congressional committees.

During the 93rd Congress, over 1800 bills and resolutions dealing with food, agriculture and nutrition were introduced. Less than half of this legislation was referred to either the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry or the House Committee on Agriculture. The remainder was referred to 32 other House and Senate committees having jurisdiction over the particular issues addressed in the bills: Finance, Labor and Public Welfare, Judiciary, Public Works, Foreign Relations, and Post Office and Civil Service, to name a few.

I long have believed that the effect of committee jurisdiction on Congress as a policy-initiating institution is crucial. We need to eliminate much of the overlap and fragmentation which now exists and see what else must be done if Congress is to reassert a strong role. I am pleased that the Senate recently agreed to do just that.

As Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, I am acutely aware of the vital need for effective and comprehensive analysis of complex statistical information -- economic indicators such as the amount of business investment, the level of inventories, the total national output, the volume of retail sales and the percentage of unemployment.

Very often we fall into the trap of selecting one number where a range of numbers would be a more accurate reflection of the state of the economy.

The unemployment statistics which the Committee reviews each month are the best example of this. The official national rate of unemployment shows that about seven million people are out of work. When discouraged workers are reflected, however, this number rises to 10 million people. Discouraged workers are in the same financial boat as those included in the official number.

Last month we were told that the official unemployment rate was 7.5 percent, showing a continued decline. Yet in Minnesota 24,000 additional persons were added to the unemployment insurance rolls.

What we really need is a series of statistics compiled on a regional and local basis using standardized criteria so that more effective policies and programs to meet the varying needs of this nation can be implemented.

To the extent that all numbers are guides to public policy it is crucial that they be compiled and analyzed in an objective, factual and informative manner. The code of ethics demanded of the information specialist and the statistician must be above question.

The surest way to ruin confidence is through distortion or manipulation of statistics for political or economic reasons. Only through accurate, objective statistics and information can we then have meaningful debate on what course of action to take. A 20th century Congress cannot be content with employing 18th and 19th century techniques.

.

1. 1.

The quality of Congressional information and communications has a major direct bearing on the decisions we make. Perhaps the most glaring deficiency has been our failure to keep abreast of the innovations in the field of communication, a field so basic to the duties of a Congressman. Large organizations have benefited from modernized technical facilities, and such changes in Congress are long overdue.

Advances in the field of video recording offer great potential to Congressional offices. An Office of Communications would include a video library of news programs, documentaries and other appropriate broadcasts. It could establish a network of television facilities within the Capitol itself and in Members' offices to allow monitoring of Congressional hearings, floor proceedings and other Congressional business. News wire service facilities also would be available.

Such innovative measures hopefully would make the Congress a better informed body, better able to make the important decisions we continually face.

Better and more effective review of current government programs also is needed. Some have outlived their usefulness, some have been abused, some need to be restructured to meet new needs.

But effective legislative oversight and program evaluation require accurate and timely information so that the existence and extent of problems may be assessed and corrective action may be taken.

There is one more thought I would like to leave with you today. We hear a great deal about the problems of big government. But what America needs is not an endless debate on "big government" versus "small government," but a firm commitment to better government:

-- government that offers America a full employment policy -to assure decent jobs and decent wages for all Americans;

-- government that will reform our welfare mess so that help goes only to families who actually need it;

-- government that encourages the creation of a national health care system that provides quality health service for all at the lowest possible cost;

-- government with a housing program designed to replace slums with sound, low-cost, high quality housing with interest rates that make home ownership a reality for working people once again;

-- government that makes it possible for all Americans to pursue excellence through improving the quality of education and the way it is financed.

-- government with a tax system which eliminates the glaring tax loopholes that make it possible for the super-rich and the giant corporations to pay little or nothing, while the middle-income taxpayer bears the major burden of government expenditures;

-- government with the wisdom to design a transportation policy to meet the needs of urban and rural people alike; and

-- government with the determination to pursue an energy program that will guarantee energy resources at reasonable prices to American industry and families for decades to come.

We need a process which makes more explicit all the facts needed to make these decisions and achieve these objectives.

But all this takes information -- good information in the hands of men and women with compassion and understanding and whose vision of America includes a commitment to the well-being of all America's citizens. We have made a great deal of progress in this regard. This conference represents an important opportunity to look to the future and provide options for a national information policy which strikes a reasonable balance between the public's right to know and the individual's right to privacy.

The founding fathers of our great country have left us a priceless legacy. It is most appropriate that as we celebrate our Nation's birthday we engage in a searching discussion of the role of information and information change in national policy formation and government management.

We have accomplished a great deal.

We have much more to do.

1.00

11.1

# # # #

## REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

# AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR INFORMATION SCIENCE

## BICENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 12, 1976

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY. THIS CONFERENCE REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSCORE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR. I NOTE THAT FOR THIS UNIQUE PROGRAM LEADERS FROM EVERY FACET OF THE INFORMATION COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN WILLING TO GIVE THEIR TIME AND THEIR TALENTS TO THE MANY INFORMATION SPECIALISTS ASSEMBLED HERE. THIS CONFERENCE OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND GOVERNMENTAL FIELDS IS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN ADDRESSING AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND URGENT PROBLEM: THAT OF ASSESSING THE ROLE OF INFORMATION IN NATIONAL POLICY FORMULATION AND GOVERNMENTAL MANAGEMENT. As our Nation begins its Third Century, the tasks and RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL AND WORLD LEADERSHIP MULTIPLY MORE RAPIDLY THAN EVER BEFORE.

-1-

THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE CAN BE MET ONLY THROUGH EFFECTIVE USE OF INFORMATION AND THE VARIED CAPABILITIES OF ITS TECHNOLOGY, ABOVE ALL WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THE MOST VITAL FACTOR IN THIS PROCESS IS PEOPLE. I AM REMINDED OF SOMETHING PRESIDENT JOHNSON USED TO SAY: "A MAN'S JUDGMENT IS ONLY AS GOOD AS HIS INFORMATION," THIS IS A MESSAGE WE ALL NEED TO REMEMBER IN THE AGE OF THE COMPUTER. MASS MEDIA AND INSTANT ANALYSIS, There are two important elements in this statement. One is THAT REASONABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT US CAN BE FORMULATED ONLY ON THE BASIS OF ACCURATE AND TIME and I maly Information INFORMATION.

-2-

SECONDLY, REGARDLESS OF THE ACCURACY OR VOLUME OF INFORMATION, REGARDLESS OF THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE INFORMATION TRANSFER TECHNIQUES, THE DECISIONS AFFECTING OUR LIVES ULTIMATELY ARE MADE informed BY INCORNED MEN AND WOMEN INTELLIGIBLE COMMUNICATION OF VITAL INFORMATION, HOWEVER, IS THE ABSOLUTE FOUNDATION STONE IN BUILDING THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE THAT LEADS TO HUMAN PROGRESS FAILURE TO MASTER THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION IN INFORMATION CONTROL CONTRIBUTES TO INTOLERABLE WASTES OF MEN, MONEY UNKNOWN DUPLICATION AND AND MATERIAL DESPITE MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE SPHERE OF INFORMATION, I REGRETFULLY FIND ALL TOO FREQUENTLY THAT MY CRITICISM STILL STANDS. low used In abstracting callations.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OVER THE YEARS HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY ITS INVESTMENT IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AND IN FINDING THE CAUSES AND CURES OF MAJOR DISEASES. IT HAS BEEN MY BELIEF CONSISTENTLY THAT THIS INVESTMENT SHOULD BE AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION MULTIPLIED. AND TRANSMISSION OF THE INFORMATION GAINED FROM THIS WIDESPREAD RESEARCH REMAINS AN ELUSIVE GOAL. MOREOVER, WE HAVE NOT MOVED VERY FAR TOWARD SHARING THIS KNOWLEDGE BEYOND NATIONAL BORDERS. OVER THE PAST DECADE, WE WITNESSED SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS

IN THE INTERNATIONAL SHARING OF INFORMATION IN VARIOUS SCIENCE

DISCIPLINES, CERTAINLY, TO PROMOTE THESE NETWORKS IS TO

STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE.

-5-BUT THE HARSH FACTS REMAIN -- WIDESPREAD MALNUTRITION STARVATION, AND DISEASE AFFECTING MAJOR SECTORS OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION; AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIELC RESEARCH COMMUNICATION TOO OFTEN IS AT A RUDIMENTARY LEVEL. THE CRISIS IN FOOD AS IN RECENT YEARS HAS DEMONSTRATED AGAIN THE INADEQUACY OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO U.S. POLICY MAKERS, BOTH CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAVE BEEN CAUGHT SHORT OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WORLD SUPPLIES AND PROSPECTIVE DEMANDS. THE CONFLICTING RESPONSES AND APPROACHES OF THE MANY INTERESTS INVOLVED HAVE MADE CLEAR THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL FOOD POLICY, A GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE TO EFFECTIVELY COORDINATE ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS. USSR. China.

THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN UNDER STUDY BY THE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ITS SUPERVISORY BOARD, OF WHICH I AM A MEMBER, THE FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS REFLECT THE PROBLEMS FACED THROUGHOUT OUR GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPING A NATIONAL FOOD POLICY. JURISDICTION OVER THIS IMPORTANT AREA IS SPLIT AMONG A HOST OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES. DURING THE 93RD CONGRESS, OVER 1800 BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS DEALING WITH FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION WERE INTRODUCED. LESS THAN HALF OF THIS LEGISLATION WAS REFERRED TO EITHER THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY OR THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

-6-

uplication

THE REMAINDER WAS REFERRED TO 32 OTHER HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES

HAVING JURISDICTION OVER THE PARTICULAR ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE

BILLS: FINANCE, DABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE, JUDICIARY, PUBLIC WORKS,

FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE, TO NAME A FEW.

I LONG HAVE BELIEVED THAT THE EFFECT OF COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

ON CONGRESS AS A POLICY-INITIATING INSTITUTION IS CRUCIAL. WE NEED

TO ELIMINATE MUCH OF THE OVERLAP AND FRAMENTATION WHICH NOW EXISTS

AND SEE WHAT ELSE MUST BE DONE IF CONGRESS IS TO REASSERT A STRONG

ROLE. I AM PLEASED THAT THE SENATE RECENTLY AGREED TO DO JUST THAT.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

OF THE VITAL NEED FOR EFFECTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPLEX

STATISTICAL INFORMATION -- ECONOMIC INDICATORS SUCH AS THE AMOUNT OF

BUSINESS INVESTMENT, THE LEVEL OF INVENTORIES, THE TOTAL NATIONAL

OUTPUT, THE VOLUME OF RETAIL SALES AND THE PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

VERY OFTEN WE FALL INTO THE TRAP OF SELECTING ONE NUMBER WHERE A RANGE OF NUMBERS WOULD BE A MORE ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY. - Inta base upo THE UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS WHICH THE COMMITTEE REVIEWS EACH MONTH ARE THE BEST EXAMPLE OF THIS THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT SHOWS THAT ABOUT SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE ARE OUT OF WORK. WHEN DISCOURAGED WORKERS ARE REFLECTED, HOWEVER, THIS NUMBER RISES TO 10 MILLION PEOPLE. DISCOURAGED WORKERS ARE IN THE SAME FINANCIAL BOAT AS THOSE INCLUDED IN THE OFFICIAL NUMBER. LAST MONTH WE WERE TOLD THAT THE OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 7.5 PERCENT, SHOWING A CONTINUED DECLINE. YET IN MINNESOTA 24.000 ADDITIONAL PERSONS WERE ADDED TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE notinat ROLLS.

-8-

Ren -9-HAT WE REALLY NEED IS A SERIES OF STATISTICS COMPILED ON A REGIONAL AND LOCAL BASIS USING STANDARDIZED CRITERIA SO THAT MORE EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO MEET THE VARYING NEEDS OF THIS presen I: NATION CAN BE IMPLEMENTED. TO THE EXTENT THAT ALL NUMBERS ARE GUIDES TO PUBLIC POLICY IT IS CRUCIAL THAT THEY BE COMPILED AND ANALYZED IN AN OBJECTIVE, FACTUAL AND INFORMATIVE MANNER. THE CODE OF ETHICS DEMANDED OF THE INFORMATION SPECIALIST AND THE STATISTICIAN MUST BE ABOVE QUESTION THE SUREST WAY TO RUIN CONFIDENCE IS THROUGH DISTORTION OR MANIPULATION OF STATISTICS FOR POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC REASONS. NLY THROUGH ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE STATISTICS AND INFORMATION CAN WE THEN HAVE MEANINGFUL DEBATE ON WHAT COURSE OF ACTION TO TAKE.

A 20TH CENTURY CONGRESS CANNOT BE CONTENT WITH EMPLOYING 18TH

AND 19TH CENTURY TECHNIQUES.

THE QUALITY OF CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

HAS A MAJOR DIRECT BEARING ON THE DECISIONS WE MAKE. PERHAPS THE

MOST GLARING DEFICIENCY HAS BEEN OUR FAILURE TO KEEP ABREAST OF

THE INNOVATIONS IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION, A FIELD SO BASIC TO

THE DUTIES OF A CONGRESSMAN. LARGE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BENEFITED FROM

MODERNIZED TECHNICAL FACILITIES, AND SUCH CHANGES IN CONGRESS ARE

LONG OVERDUE,

ADVANCES IN THE FIELD OF VIDEO RECORDING OFFER GREAT POTENTIAL TO CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES. AN OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS WOULD INCLUDE A VIDEO LIBRARY OF NEWS PROGRAMS, DOCUMENTARIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE

BROADCASTS,

IT COULD ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF TELEVISION FACILITIES WITHIN

THE CAPITOL ITSELF AND IN MEMBERS' OFFICES TO ALLOW MONITORING OF

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, FLOOR PROCEEDINGS AND OTHER CONGRESSIONAL

BUSINESS, NEWS WIRE SERVICE FACILITIES ALSO WOULD BE AVAILABLE.

SUCH INNOVATIVE MEASURES HOPEFULLY WOULD MAKE THE CONGRESS A BETTER INFORMED BODY, BETTER ABLE TO MAKE THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS

WE CONTINUALLY FACE.

ALSO IS NEEDED. Some HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR USEFULNESS, SOME HAVE BEEN

ABUSED, SOME NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO MEET NEW NEEDS.

BUT EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION REQUIRE ACCURATE AND TIMELY INFORMATION SO THAT THE EXISTENCE AND

EXTENT OF PROBLEMS MAY BE ASSESSED AND CORRECTIVE ACTION MAY BE TAKEN.

Jun momenting rel

THERE IS ONE MORE THOUGHT I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE WITH YOU TODAY.

We hear a great deal about the problems of big government. But what America needs is not an endless debate on "big government" versus

"SMALL GOVERNMENT," BUT A FIRM COMMITMENT TO BETTER GOVERNMENT:

-- GOVERNMENT THAT OFFERS AMERICA A FULL EMPLOYMENT POLICY --

TO ASSURE DECENT JOBS AND DECENT WAGES FOR ALL AMERICANS;

-- GOVERNMENT THAT WILL REFORM OUR WELFARE MESS SO THAT HELP

-- GOVERNMENT THAT ENCOURAGES THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL HEALTH

CARE SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES QUALITY HEALTH SERVICE FOR ALL AT THE

-- GOVERNMENT WITH A HOUSING PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REPLACE SLUMS

MAKE HOME OWNERSHIP A REALITY FOR WORKING PEOPLE ONCE AGAIN;

-- GOVERNMENT THAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL AMERICANS TO

adac

PURSUE EXCELLENCE THROUGH IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND

THE WAY IT IS FINANCED.

-- GOVERNMENT WITH A TAX SYSTEM WHICH ELIMINATES THE GLARING

TAX LOOPHOLES THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE SUPER-RICH AND THE

GIANT CORPORATIONS TO PAY LITTLE OR NOTHING, WHILE THE MIDDLE-INCOME

TAXPAYER BEARS THE MAJOR BURDEN OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES;

-- GOVERNMENT WITH THE WISDOM TO DESIGN A TRANSPORTATION POLICY

TO MEET THE NEEDS OF URBAN AND RURAL PEOPLE ALIKE; AND

-- GOVERNMENT WITH THE DETERMINATION TO PURSUE AN ENERGY

PROGRAM THAT WILL GUARANTEE ENERGY RESOURCES AT REASONABLE PRICES

TO AMERICAN INDUSTRY AND FAMILIES FOR DECADES TO COME.

WE NEED A PROCESS WHICH MAKES MORE EXPLICIT ALL THE FACTS NEEDED TO MAKE THESE DECISIONS AND ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES.

BUT ALL THIS TAKES INFORMATION -- GOOD INFORMATION IN THE HANDS OF MEN AND WOMEN WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING AND WHOSE VISION OF AMERICA INCLUDES A COMMITMENT TO THE WELL-BEING OF ALL AMERICA'S CITIZENS,

WE HAVE MADE A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS IN THIS REGARD. THIS CONFERENCE REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE AND PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR A NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY WHICH STRIKES A REASONABLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW AND THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF OUR GREAT COUNTRY HAVE LEFT US A PRICELESS LEGACY. IT IS MOST APPROPRIATE THAT AS WE CELEBRATE OUR NATION'S BIRTHDAY WE ENGAGE IN A SEARCHING DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND INFORMATION CHANGE IN NATIONAL POLICY FORMATION AND GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT.

WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED A GREAT DEAL.

WE HAVE MUCH MORE TO DO.

# # # # #

# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.

