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ADDRESS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL BEFORE TOWN HALL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, AUGUST 21, 1963

THE LOWER COLORADO RIVER PROJECT---A FIVE-STATE REGIONAL APPROACH

I welcome this opportunity to appear before Town Hall and preview the Department of the Interior's proposed new Pacific Southwest Water Plan. The plan, which will be printed and released within the week, will be submitted to the governors of the five States involved--California, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Nevada. Within 90 days we expect to have their comments and the views of other interested parties. Then we will be in a position to perfect the plan and present it to the Congress.

Let me say at the outset that as a native Arizona son of a political family, I grew up in the 30's listening to candidates for public office attempting to outdo each other in "saving" the Colorado River. For some 40 years there has been a prolonged, divisive and bitter fight between the States of Arizona and California. This controversy now threatens the future growth of the entire region--it is, in my opinion, a luxury we can no longer afford. A water crisis is upon us, and the welfare of all will suffer if there are untoward delays.

The Pacific Southwest, for the purposes of our study, is defined as a region of about 190,000 square miles embracing parts of five States. It is the Nation's fastest growing region, and its most arid. After the people themselves, water is the region's most vital resource. Today the region has 11 million people and some 16½ million acre-feet of available water. Twenty years ago there were only about 5 million people--and by the year 2000 there will be 30 million people in the region--more than now live in the States of New York and Pennsylvania combined. Even twelve years ago when the historic Arizona v. California lawsuit began a condition of water surplus prevailed, but intervening events have drastically altered the picture.

Three factors combine to change conditions. First, in many areas of southern California and Arizona, we have been overpumping our ground water supplies and seriously depleting our water assets. Second, as of this year the Lower Basin is getting less water from the Colorado because of the filling of the Glen Canyon, Flaming Gorge and Navajo reservoirs. Third, the San Juan-Chama, Fryingpan-Arkansas and Central Utah transmountain diversions have all been authorized to take water out of the mountain headwaters of the Colorado. Heretofore the Lower Basin had virtually the full resources of the Colorado to draw upon. Now the Lower Basin is having to share with the Upper Basin, and with each passing day, month and year the diversions and consumption to which the Upper Basin is entitled will take more water out of the river before it reaches the lower basin.

Water supplies in this region are inadequate to sustain the level of development that already exists. They cannot, under any circumstances, provide for future growth. Unless additional water is made available, the economy of the region will decline, with serious consequences not only to the region, but to the Nation. Therefore this becomes a national problem. How, as a Nation, we cope with this water crisis will be a severe test of our conservation foresight.

Let me state the needs generally, and then specifically, in terms of acre-feet of water.

Arizona urgently needs the waters guaranteed to it by the Supreme Court. Without this water Arizona will face a slowly withering economy as her ground water bank account shrinks.

At the present time, California's consumption of Colorado River water exceeds the amount which, under the Court's decision will be available to her as the water supply of the Colorado is diminished by other authorized depletions. Thus, California will have to seek new sources of water to replace her limited Colorado diversions and will face water supply problems similar to those Arizona faces today.

Western New Mexico needs upstream water conservation and control facilities to expand her historically water-restricted economy.

Southern Utah needs water conservation and control facilities to overcome seasonal shortages of surface water, and to meet the increasing needs of population expansion and irrigation.

The greatest new water requirements of the region will be for municipal and industrial uses, caused by the Nation's most rapidly expanding population. Other important needs are for irrigation, power and flood control. Nor can we overlook the requirements for recreation, fish and wildlife, and outdoor recreation--all essential to the well-being of an expanding population.

Unfortunately, it does not appear that there will be enough water available in or to the region at economic cost to provide for an expansion of irrigated acreage, except on Indian reservations and limited areas having local water supplies. However, because of the importance of agriculture to the region, a major objective of our water plan will be to maintain irrigated agriculture as close as possible to present levels. Many crops grown in the Pacific Southwest meet seasonal market demands which cannot be met from sources elsewhere in the Nation.

To repeat, today the Pacific Southwest has a total developed water supply of about $16\frac{1}{2}$ million acre-feet. This is about 1.3 million acre-feet short of meeting present demand. And demand will increase by some 7 million acre-feet by the year 2000. In the meantime, as I have noted, the flows of the Colorado River available to the Lower Basin will diminish steadily because of continuing Upper Basin development within its Compact entitlement. The California State Water Plan will provide 1.8 million of the nearly 7 million acre-feet that must be added by the year 2000. This balance will have to come from improved water management and new sources.

I am convinced the water needs of the region, both present and future, can be met. Further, the water development programs required can pay their own way within the traditional payout period for water projects. They can be met without depriving any one part of the region in order to benefit another part. They cannot be met, however, individually by the States or communities involved, but only by strong leadership by the States, new Federal programs and a fully integrated State-Federal effort involving new forms of conservation cooperation.

The precepts under which the Department of the Interior has historically acted have never encouraged the development of one area to the detriment of another. The diminishing of an existing economy or the retarded development of another carries nationwide implications. Here in the Pacific Southwest it is incumbent upon the Department of the Interior, in any plan of regional water development, to preserve, protect and promote the economy and water programs of all the affected States.

The recent Supreme Court decision on the Colorado River case, if it remains substantially unchanged, will resolve the entitlements of the several States to Colorado River water in the Lower Basin. Thus it provides a base starting point for development of a comprehensive plan to solve the water needs of the region.

These needs can be met in one of two primary ways, or a combination of the two: large-scale importation of water, or desalting plants. Either will be expensive. The era of low-cost water is coming to an end in the Pacific Southwest; the era of waste of water must also come to an end!

Therefore, either or both of these methods must be accompanied by the most efficient water management programs, including conservation, re-use, salvage, quality improvement and water exchanges. I can tell you that our study shows that:

Lining or sealing of canals can save seepage losses of as much as 500,000 acre-feet per year.

Channelization can save up to another 190,000 acre-feet.

Eradication and control of prolific water-using shrubs and trees--phreatophytes--can save 100,000 acre-feet or more per year.

Ground water recovery projects can salvage another 220,000 acre-feet.

Urban return flows, estimated at 2,700,000 acre-feet by the year 2000, can be drawn upon for various purposes through the treatment of sewage water for re-use.

Perfection of evaporation suppression techniques by research could save a substantial part of the more than 1,000,000 acre-feet now lost each year from surface waters of the region.

I cite these figures to illustrate the tremendous opportunities and need for a vigorous, intensified water conservation program.

It would not be appropriate for me at this time to give you all of the details of the regional plan. However, I can sketch in for you, in broad outline, the main elements and alternatives of the regional water plan which we will submit to the five States for discussion and comments:

1. It will recommend that Congress establish a Pacific Southwest Development Fund which would receive the water and power revenues required to pay for specific projects. Once established, this fund could underwrite future water projects needed over the long haul for the entire region;

2. It will recommend the authorization by the Congress of an initial group of projects to include:

a) Construction of such mainstream dams and power plants as are needed to provide pumping power and power revenues for the projects to be authorized by Congress;

b) Enlargement of the California State Water Plan aqueduct to enable it to deliver an additional 1,200,000 acre-feet per year to southern California;

c) Construction of the key elements of the Central Arizona Project;

d) Construction of Hooker Dam in New Mexico, the Dixie Project in southern Utah, and the first phase of the Southern Nevada Water Supply Project.

3. It will recommend that intensified studies be made of the feasibility--under either Federal, State or local financing--of the construction of very large desalinization plants along the seacoast in southern California.

4. It will recommend that after payout, the existing mainstream dams on the Colorado--Hoover and Parker-Davis--provide some power revenues to support needed water projects within the basin;

5. It will recommend that several alternative projects in the region be studied in detail by the Bureau of Reclamation for possible future authorization by Congress;

6. And, finally, and let me underscore this, the plan, will, as required by basic reclamation law, recognize the water rights laws of the respective States, and will envision whatever integration the State of California desires with its State Water Plan.

In my opinion, the leaders and water officials of the respective States should have as much say about the final shape of this plan as the officials in Washington--and, naturally, the Congress itself will have the final say on the Federal part of any plan that is recommended.

After long strife in Congress, on the political front and in the courts, we have now, in 1963, come to the final crossroads. The big question today in the Pacific Southwest is "Where do we go from here?" From what I have seen and heard since the Supreme Court handed down its decision last June, it is clear that, broadly speaking, there are two groups who represent two schools of thought in the States of the Lower Colorado Basin.

The first group consists of those leaders who are ready and willing to discuss regional approach as a possible pathway to cooperation. I am confident that a strong majority of the leaders and public men in the five States belong in this category.

The second group is composed of those men I would call the bitter-enders. Judging by appearances these men choose to regard the decision of the Supreme Court not as a signal for discussions that might lead to new avenues of cooperation, but as a salvo which should send us all back to the dead-end trenches of dispute and distrust.

On the Arizona side of the fence, the captain of the bitter-enders, I am sorry to say, is our junior Senator, Barry Goldwater. His quarterback is publisher Pulliam of the Phoenix newspapers. Before the ink was hardly dry on the Supreme Court's Opinion, these two men put forces in motion designed to reactivate the controversy on the same old battleground. For them the congressional decision of 1951 that sent the whole issue to court was nothing more than a cease-fire, and they are already firing the old guns of acrimony and discord.

If you want to sample the thinking of the Arizona bitter-enders, listen to this editorial which appeared six days ago in one of the Phoenix newspapers:

"The Central Arizona Project, which this State desperately needs and wants, won't fit in with Secretary Udall's plans, therefore he has sought to move heaven and earth in an attempt to block the Arizona project. By so doing, he is playing into the hands of the California water lobby, whose spokesman happens to be Undersecretary of the Interior James K. Carr."

Secretary Carr and I have only one reply to such rancor, which is that we took an oath of office to represent all of the people of the United States, and intend to do our level best to work with all parties in an effort to find compromise ground that will produce a broad program of action instead of a widening futile dispute.

Regrettably, the Arizona bitter-enders have attempted unsuccessfully to make Senator Carl Hayden their spokesman. In my opinion, Carl Hayden is the outstanding conservation statesman in the Congress. He is outstanding because his whole career in the Congress of the United States, spanning a record period of more than half a century, has been a career of cooperation for the development of the Nation's resources in the North, the East, the South--and the West. Senator Hayden has always taken the national view of resource development. For example, in his long service in the Senate he has helped shape and pass appropriation bills which included many times more funds for California than for his own State. His whole personality and career have been based on compromise and cooperation, and there has never been a bitter-end element in his thinking, or in his actions at any time.

California, I regret to say, also has its bitter-enders. They will identify themselves in the coming months, for they, too, have a death wish to return to the old trenches. The main argument these men are preparing to make is that Arizona won a futile victory in the Courts because there is insufficient water left in the Colorado River to make a major Arizona project feasible. Despite Arizona's victory in the Courts, these dog-in-the-manger men are convinced that, using this argument, California's strength in the Congress can be mustered to block any of Arizona's hopes to transport its water inland.

These men are as wrong as the Arizona bitter-enders--and in many ways they are more selfish. I would strongly advise them today to abandon their stance of blind opposition. Arizona already has a water crisis on its front doorstep, and its situation becomes more desperate by the day. I know the temper of my own State. I know its needs. I predict without any hesitation whatsoever that if Arizona's legitimate aspirations are unfairly frustrated in the Congress, State leaders will emerge who will take a leaf from California's own book, imitate your State Water Plan, and enable Arizona to build an aqueduct system to carry its Colorado River water to its central cities and valleys.

Finally, let me make it plain that I am optimistic about the water futures of the Pacific Southwest. My optimism relates to a conviction that the bitter-enders are a misguided minority who will not prevail. It relates also to the fact that the key leaders in the States and in the Congress are constructive men who know that only compromise and cooperation can open the door to the achievement of large resource development objectives. Among them are Senator Hayden, your own two Senators Tom Kuchel and Clair Engle, Governor Pat Brown, the Nevada and Utah and New Mexico Senators, and a great majority of the members of the House of Representatives.

We can meet the water needs of our region if enough of the leaders and molders of public opinion, are willing in the weeks ahead to carefully evaluate the elements of a sound regional plan, and to dispassionately consider all alternative courses of action. The issue must be decided, and each of you here today can have a say in its resolution.

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