

TRANSCRIPT

PRESS CONFERENCE

SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY
Little Rock, Arkansas
TV Stations KARK and KATV
September 1, 1964

"MEET THE STATE PRESS"

ANNOUNCER: It is indeed Channel 11's privilege to bring before the state tonight Senator Hubert Humphrey, candidate for the vice-presidency of the United States.

Questioning Senator Humphrey will be Lloyd Hobeck, UPI; Bob Starr, Associated Press; Pat Owens of the Arkansas Gazette; and Babby Foster. Your moderator is Bob Hicks.

MR. HICKS: Senator Humphrey, may we, too, welcome you to Arkansas and thank you for appearing on Face the State Press. We have four of Arkansas' top reporters here who are anxiously waiting to question you, so with your permission, will Miss Foster of the Arkansas Gazette ask the first questions?

MISS FOSTER: Senator, I wonder what your reactions were to the statement that was made recently in Arkansas, and this was the statement that any laying down to be done in the streets to block off traffic of legitimate business should be run over?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I would hope that no one would want to run over anybody. There is a necessity, however, of maintaining the public order and in maintaining public peace. It would be the responsibility of local officials to see to it that traffic was not interfered with.

At the same time, people should abide by the law but violence does not get law, and law and order is the only way I know of to prevent violence.

QUESTION: Senator, on the subject of these riots, such as disturbances in our northern cities this summer, how should they be handled or is there a prevention for them?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, first of all, we must all recognize that civil disobedience and civil lawlessness does not mean civil liberty or civil rights.

I think we should also recognize that it is the primary duty of government to maintain the peace and maintain law and order and therefore, measures must be taken to prevent looting, to prevent arrests, violence, and people who engage in violence and disorder and promote general community chaos.

Stern law enforcement, fair law enforcement is the first requirement of a local or state official. I don't believe that we ought to have Federal, should I say, Federal police. I do feel, however, that the investigating services, such as the FBI, can be of help to see whether or not there is a pattern in these acts of violence and disorder and if there is, such a pattern then, of course, there is a possibility of Federal action.

Now, having said all of this, asking for prompt, efficient law enforcement and law observance, I think we also have to recognize that in some instances, there are many social injustices which promote these matters, taking the instance of Harlem, if you will permit me the time.

There are 50 thousand people living in an area of three and one half square miles. If that same density of population were

Press Conference, Little Rock, -2-

applied to the rest of New York City, the entire population of the United States could be put in three boroughs -- three boroughs in what we call Metropolitan New York.

When you have such density of population, school drop-outs, when you have large unemployment among the youth, when you have illiteracy and tenements, crowded housing conditions, inadequate parking space -- all of that, I think, tends to lend itself toward violence.

This does not mean you condone the violence. It means take law enforcement and seek to enforce a better society, to get on with the job of cleaning up cesspools of infection; that is what they are.

QUESTION: Again on civil rights, in the southern states, children go to schools near their homes. In New York City, I am sure you are aware, children are being forced to go further away from their homes. This seems to be inconsistent. Wonder what you think?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I have expressed myself earlier, and I am not for this long range bussing, using children, in other words, to accomplish a social objective and bussing these children from one end of the city to another. What we need to do in America is to build better neighborhoods and it is still true, at least it is in my conviction, that neighborhood schools are better schools because you have closer parental-student-teacher relationship, so we, as we put in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we said that that Act shall not permit, insofar as any enforcement procedures under that Act is concerned, school bussing of children long distances.

QUESTION: Again, on civil rights, do you think, Senator, Fulbright's vote against the Civil Rights Bill will prevent his being appointed to the Cabinet?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I would hope not. I consider Senator Fulbright to be one of the most enlightened, one of the most able Senators in the history of our country. And his knowledge of foreign relations, his knowledge of our economy, his basic sense of fair play and social enlightenment, qualifies him for any office from the President on down.

QUESTION: We have quite a few rumors that he might be appointed Secretary of State. Have you heard any?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I have heard that many times and I don't have anything more to say than I have said. I can say that he is the great Senator from Arkansas and is the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. He is one of the most important and powerful men in the government of the United States.

MR. HICKS: Mr. Owens.

MR. OWENS: Senator, the quotation about running over people that Mrs. Foster read you was made by Governor Faubus who, I believe, has said that nobody else would run a lying demonstration; he would get behind the wheel and do it himself. Now, you are saying that you and the Governor have had past differences.

Do you have differences now with Mr. Faubus and are you, in fact, endorsing his candidacy for Governor of Arkansas?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, I didn't come down here to get into a squabble about what Governor Faubus may or may not have said. I heard somewhere along the day -- and a very busy day I had -- that he made some correction of that alleged statement.

But be that as it may, my purpose in coming here is to

Press Conference, Little Rock

-3-

campaign for a Democratic ticket, Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, as candidates for President and Vice President, respectively. I think Governor Faubus has done some very good things in your state in terms of industrial development, in terms of agricultural progress.

I spoke earlier today to the Rural Electrification Cooperative and it had among them, particularly from the State of Arkansas, enthusiastic support for your Governor on the issue of rural electrification.

The Governor has not asked me to endorse him. I am afraid if I did, it might not help him, so I think about the best thing to do is just ride along.

QUESTION: You expect to see the Governor while you are here?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I would hope to. I don't know just what the plans are. It is possible that they can be defined.

QUESTION: Senator, you said if you did endorse the Governor, you are afraid it might not help him. Would you clarify that, sir?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think that in certain instances being left alone is sometimes a help.

QUESTION: That might because of the civil rights fame. You spent the last two days in states that theoretically are against your position, yet you seem to have gained a new respect in the matter. I wonder if you feel the rights issue will be against you--

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I find that most Americans are not of a one-track mind, and the civil rights issue is an important issue but it is not the only matter we are concerned about. What is more, it is now the law of the land and whoever is President of the United States will have to enforce that law. I would prefer to encourage people to observe it, to make the necessary community adjustments that will help bring respect for the law and I think this is being done. Quite frankly, I am deeply impressed by the progress that has been made in the South.

Sometimes we of the North fail to see what is being done someplace else. We have our own problems in our own areas. Now, the enthusiastic reception that I have had -- and it's been just that -- I think is due to the fact that people are concerned about many things.

We have been in Texas. They are concerned about agriculture. They are concerned about jobs. They are concerned about the attitude and and Senator Goldwater on the matters of nuclear policy and foreign policy. Besides that, I like people and I'd like to think that people like me, and I think that the South has a great future.

In fact, I think that it is developing faster than any other part of America. I am here to encourage that development and I think it is developing educationally, socially, economically, and politically. And anything I can do to help that along, I want to do.

QUESTION: Senator, I understand you yourself have something of a southern background and spent some time, I believe, at Louisiana State University.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Do you think that your youthful experience gave you some understanding of the South?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I haven't heard much about this --

QUESTION: What do you remember?

Press Conference, Little Rock

-4-

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I know it was a very useful experience. Louisiana State University, at the time I attended there, had a very fine School of Government. Mrs. Humphrey and I lived there for a year. Our little daughter, who today is married and has two daughters of her own, was a little baby there at that time.

I met many people I saw on the political campaign. I traveled around the state, but I would like to believe that as an American citizen and as a Senator that has studied his country, traveled widely in our country, that I do have some understanding of the economic and social and political problems, not only of my own state but of other states.

What we really need to do here is try to promote a kind of change of ideas and also a respect for the manner in which we deal with our respective problems. A bit of tolerance and a good bit of understanding, I think, is bringing us a long way.

This is a much better country than it used to be and it is going to get better as we go along.

QUESTION: Senator, when Governor Faubus announced that he would support the national party, was this a surprise to you and President Johnson? Do you feel that would in any way alienate the northern Democrats?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I don't think it will alienate any of the northern Democrats. Arkansas and Louisiana, as I remember, are the two states that have never voted Republican.

Now, from my point of view, of course, that shows a kind of indigenous political wisdom to commend themselves to the attention of the whole nation. We are very pleased to have a unified support in Arkansas, and I think this will help a great deal in the rest of the South.

Let's just say this. The Democratic party and the Democratic Administration, since the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt have gone very good for the South and the South has been very good to the Democratic party. We also depend on the South.

When I look at what has happened in Arkansas, I see a partnership here between the Federal government and the state government and private industry and the rural economy that has literally lifted this state to new levels of economic growth and progress.

The Republican party never tried to help this part of America. It is much more of a restrictive, withdrawal type of governmental philosophy. It does not sense that the government can be a partner, can be a great help in releasing the capacities of a country or a state or of an individual.

MR. HICKS: Miss Foster.

MISS FOSTER: Question: I noticed in your Hot Springs' speech you kept referring to Goldwaterism. What is the distinction you draw between Goldwaterism and conservatism?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I consider conservatism to be to be a responsible political philosophy that has respect for tradition, that also has a recognition of current problems.

I consider Goldwaterism to have a kind of fictional understanding of our heritage, without any regard to the facts of history, and literally no foresight and a heavy dose of irresponsibility in dealing with contemporary matters, and little or no vision about the future.

To put it simply -- Goldwaterism is just not reality. It's a kind of politically never-never land. I think the Saturday Evening Post said of the Senator that he was sort of a "stray".

Press Conference, Little Rock

-5-

By that, he is not in the main stream of the Republican party and he surely isn't in the stream of the main or the tributaries of the Democratic party.

There are thousands of Republicans in any part of the country and I am sure this is true all over everywhere, that they are going to Johnson, not because they are enthusiastic about the Democratic party but because they just worry about their country.

They just feel they cannot trust the judgment of Senator Goldwater and they feel that they can trust the judgment and the experience and the knowledge of the government of President Johnson. They are putting country before party.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen has described you as a modern liberal. What is the "modern liberal"? What is your definition of a liberal?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: That has always been a little hard to define. We all get tags on ourselves. I guess it's easier to deal with somebody if you could put a tag on him or at least identify him.

I would say that a liberal is someone that accepts the facts of change, but seeks to bring those facts of change within a framework of ideals and convictions. And those ideals and convictions are personal liberty of representative government, of the maximum freedom, both political and economic, and of the government being a servant of the people.

I would identify my kind of liberalism as one that supported for example, the broad objectives of the New Deal. I believe strongly in free enterprise; I believe it needs to be competitive. I believe in the profit system. I believe in open political parties.

I oppose conspiratorial apparatus, wherever it may be, domestic or foreign. I consider communism a totalitarian philosophy that debases human dignity. I believe that the difference between the totalitarianism and democracy is the respect for human dignity.

I think that tells what my thoughts and philosophies are. I think I am modern because I know what year it is and I know that we have serious problems ahead of us and a great challenge ahead, and I am not afraid of those problems. In fact, I kind of welcome them. It is with a kind of optimistic desire to get at the problems and do something about them.

QUESTION: I take it from what you said, Senator, you are not afraid of the realignment of departers, such as the matter of Senator Thurmond's defection, and so on.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: As I said about Senator Thurmond, we do believe in freedom of choice in this country, and what I think Senator Thurmond did was to make his votes in the Congress and his political philosophy, which is surely his privilege to hold. He made it legitimate. He went over to, as he said, the Goldwater Republican party.

I call that to your attention because the Republican party in my state would find very little accommodation with the views of Senator Thurmond. The Goldwater faction of the Republican party, and it is a minor faction, that faction or fragment of the Republican party, is temporarily in control of the apparatus of the

Press Conference, Little Rock

-6-

Republican party, and that is why I think Senator Goldwater must be defeated.

I believe in the two-party system and I believe that a two-party system must begin upon basic objectives. They must agree upon goals. They may disagree upon the approach to those goals or the means but they must agree upon ultimate objectives. And it is my view that most Republicans and most Democrats have common objectives.

It is also my view that the forces that support Senator Goldwater do not have those common objectives and common goals.

QUESTION: Are you saying the Democrats are going to take Senator Thurmond back in December or January if he wants to come?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I would seriously doubt that. I hope that I will have a position in the Senate as the presiding officer and therefore will not be privileged to participate in the senatorial caucus but since Strom Thurmond has made his choice, I think he is entitled to move real estate, his desk, over to the Republican side. There is a lot of room over there. I feel there will be more later.

QUESTION: Do you think it is possible there are other Democrats in the Senate and in the House who take roughly the same views as Senator Thurmond does? Do you think it is possible that the Democratic party will ever move -- sort of shove those people?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: No, I have not endorsed the concept of sort of trying to make our party a monolithic thing, structuring the Democratic party as a national party and we have to face up to this fact, that there are different stages of different types of development, economic and social, throughout this great country of ours. I'd like to think I am somewhat a student of government. I have heard many people say, "Well, we ought to have it like they have it in Britain, a Conservative party and Labor. In Norway, you have Labor, a Conservative party and Socialist. Of course, it isn't that simple because in the Scandinavian countries, they have many, many parties. But what we seek to do here is to bring within the basic framework of the Democratic party a rather broad spectrum of political views."

Now, sometimes people stay within the Democratic party because it is convenient for them and in there -- I mean, in this immediate regional or state politics, but I tend to find that many of these people bend towards the platform and the objectives over the long period of time, so I do not endorse the simplified methodology of saying, "Let's have a Conservative or let's have a Liberal party." I think the two parties do quite well.

QUESTION: Do I infer properly from the remark you made a few moments ago, you do hold a fear that if Goldwater is elected, it might mean the end of the two-party system in this country?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I would say it surely would mean the end of the kind of two-party structure we have had. What I worry with more than anything else with the Goldwater movement is that there are those in the advance guard of that movement that are anything but tolerant, anything but flexible. They don't seek to adjust it or compromise or to cooperate. They seek to dominate and they have proven this in state after state and I think the demonstration at the Cow Palace was the evidence that anyone needed, when you watched that on television, the insistence of the Goldwaterites that you do it my way.

Press Conference, Little Rock

-7-

Now, there's been some change on the last, in the last meeting of the two Republican parties at Hershey, Pennsylvania, the Eisenhower party and the Goldwater faction, but I noticed that after Mr. Goldwater got far enough away from Pennsylvania so that he had crossed the Mason-Dixon Line, he went right back to the primitive type, went right back to where he was before.

When he was in Pennsylvania, he wasn't sure he wanted to sell TVA but when he got down in the area where TVA doing the greatest good -- so help me -- he's going to sell again.

QUESTION: Do you think there is also reason for concern about the tenets you Democrats are going to go by? It seems to me you were worrying that one-party government or destruction of the two-party system indicated ill mental health in the Republican party was the problem and what do you think they ought to do about that?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, generally, if one is in somewhat ill health, he really ought to do a little self-examination because his habits may not be too good; his attitude may not be too good; he may well be, in a sense, oh, getting out of line a little too often for his political and economic health.

I think that the Republican party has failed to win elections, primarily because it has failed to sense the role of government in modern society, that it has failed to sense that the American people look upon their government as one of the forces in the life of the nation that gives them a chance, a better chance. It opens up the pathways of opportunity.

I have been trying to analyze what it is what we in politics have tried to do for people. For example, I don't believe that I owe you a living. I mean, I do not believe that a government of this country ought to make sure that you are well off.

I do think, however, that I owe it to you, if I can possibly do anything about it to see to it that you have an opportunity for a job. I think I owe it to you to see that you have an opportunity to train yourself for that job.

No, I can't instill within you the incentive to get up and go, to want to make something out of yourself but I can, through the use of the government, remove these boulders of inhibition, of resistance, so there is a clear track for you to drive on or walk on, if you have a willingness to do this.

I guess that is about as simplified a way as I can think of to speak of it.

QUESTION: Do you see anything unusual -- well, did you ever get an endorsement from the Hurst newspapers for high office?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, the Hurst newspapers, in earlier days, were real crusaders for much of the social legislation for the working man. The Hurst newspapers have shown a great concern over foreign policy. Bill Hurst, Jr. is very concerned about our foreign policy in Latin America.

For example, I think whatever the Hurst newspapers have really decided -- I mean, the decision they made -- it appears to me was based upon, not that they agreed with everything Lyndon Johnson, President Johnson did, and surely not everything that Hubert Humphrey may stand for --

--
but you have to make choices. We don't have the perfect candidate for you and for I and for me, and for somebody else. We have, in a sense, two candidates, two forces at work now in American public

Press Conference, Little Rock,

-8-

life and on the day of November 3rd, most people ought to go, and I think all people that are eligible to vote ought to go and cast an intelligent vote on those choices.

And what Hearst newspapers have done, like others, is to make that choice and I think that, naturally, America is in better hands with Lyndon Johnson as President and Hubert Humphrey as Vice President than it is if Senator Goldwater and Mr. Miller were in similar positions. I think that they have balanced it off. I imagine that the Hearst newspapers could give us a whiplashing . . . on some of our views and maybe we could respond in one case but you make the choice, and you have to make the choice.

QUESTION: Now, Senator --

SENATOR HUMPHREY: May I say we thank the Hearst newspaper for that endorsement. We want to thank all

QUESTION: Do you think the full details of the Bobby Baker case will come out or have they come out?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think that the most recent action of the Senate will surely permit a full explanation of the last allegations that were made in all seriousness to you. The Bobby Baker case is being checked and re-checked by the Internal Revenue Service, by the Justice Department, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and I think it is well known that anytime that the FBI develops sufficient information for a grand jury, that appropriate -- that it will go before that grand jury and seek an indictment.

The Committees of the Congress, the Committee of the Congress handling this has carried on a good investigation. I know some people would like it to be outright razzle-dazzle but this is a political year and he knows that the other day, someone said that we were sweeping it under the rug.

Now, if I were a Republican, I don't think I would take about rugs because the last rug that any one got his feet on was one in the office of the White House, was a Mr. Adams. And it just seems to me that we ought to kind of keep these in reasonable perspective.

This is a political year. I have been in politics a long time. If there is any wrongdoing, it should be exposed and if there is any action, that has been a violation of the law, and it should be prosecuted. It's just that simple.

QUESTION: Would you?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I surely would. In fact, I voted for the Bi-partisan Committee of Equalness of Republicans and Democrats as a sort of committee of surveillance, committee of ethics, a committee of discipline over the entire United States Senate but I don't believe it does very much good to go around shaking-in fear every Senator somehow or other is engaged in nefarious activities. Most of us are too busy.

QUESTION: Senator Goldwater in Memphis charged this week that there were various issues which he felt that the Kennedy Administration should answer. The Bobby Baker case was one, Viet Nam. He also mentioned Presidential policy and postures about Cuba. What do you think that this country should do about Cuba, but to what extent that we should, as a government, either officially or unofficially, do to aid Cuba in any overthrow of

Press Conference, Little Rock

-9-

of the Castro government if it appears the people may want it?

ISENATOR HUMPHREY: I believe what we are doing about Cubs is

the possibility that it should be continued. Mr. Goldwater has made fastastic charges about Cuba in his speech in Seattle, Washington. A short time ago, he charged that President John Kennedy used the whole strife of the missile crises of 1962 for political purposes. This is a shameful statemtnt. ~~It is outrageous~~

He knows it is false. It was outrageous, also to the Committees of Congress that examined all the evidence. All the evidence was pursued about what to do about Cuba. We pursued the Cuban case in the Organization of American states. Every single Latin American country, save Mexico, has broken relations with Cuba.

We imposed an embargo on Cuba. I think we ought to aid wherever they take any clandestine operations, just really activities within Cuba. I think we ought to prevent shipment of arms from Cuba to Latin American countries. I think I have said this on the Senate floor. I think we ought to agree that it is more than a nuisance. It could well be a subversive threat to the entire Latin American hemisphere.

THE ANNOUNCER: We have run out of time. We want to thank you very much, Senator Humphrey, for Meet the State Press.

- - -



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.



www.mnhs.org