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Interview of Vice-President Elect  
Hubert H. Humphrey  
By: Raymond L. Scherer, NEC News,  
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Mr. Scherer. Senator, first of all congratulations on your good fortune of last Tuesday. What do we call you now, Vice-President Elect? Would that be the proper term?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Well, Ray, I hope that some of the names that I was called during the campaign period may be forgotten, except Horatio. I wouldn't want them to forget that. You know, when I was elected to the United States Senate, my constituents in Minneapolis still called me Mayor. And I have a feeling that I will be called Senator by many, many people. And that is a very honored title, one that I love very much. But maybe we better wait until January to see what they call me, because I will still be United States Senator until January.

Mr. Scherer. Senator, what we have brought you here to talk about is your new role. We understand that President Johnson has talked to friends about his Vice-President being a kind of assistant president. What does that involve? How does that change the present concept of the vice-presidency?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Well, I have read in one or two columns some of the observations of the President relating to the office of Vice-President. And we have had a very brief visit about it, but not in any depth. Of course, a vice-president will do what the President wants him to do. That is his first obligation, to be loyal to the President and to be a faithful servant, a faithful partner to the President and his program. But President Johnson has indicated to some of his journalistic associates and friends, and you men in the news media that he wants his vice-president to be active, to be of help to him in the legislative process as well as some coordination work with the departments of government.

Of course, the Vice-President of the United States will have responsibilities with the National Security Council, with the Space Agency, with the Committee on Equal Opportunity Employment Practices, that is the government contracts with defense industries. So he will be busy. Plus the fact of presiding over the Senate. And I hope to do more of that than has been customary.

And also working with the members of the Senate on matters of some concern to our government.

Mr. Scherer. You have always been a man who has immersed himself in foreign affairs. Can you take a look at your role in international affairs. Will there be a lot of traveling?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. I think there will be, because President Johnson, you may recall, was asked to do a good deal of traveling by President Kennedy. And the Vice-Presidency, as an office, has been developing this past 25, 30 years, a great deal. When Mr. Wallace was Vice-President under Franklin Roosevelt, you may recall that he did a good deal of traveling for President Roosevelt, acting as the eyes and ears of the President. But more significantly -- well, President Barkley did some, too, for President Truman -- or Vice-President Barkley, I should say. But under the Presidency of General Eisenhower, Mr. Nixon was called upon to do a good deal of traveling abroad, and then President Kennedy really expanded the role of the Vice-President by asking his Vice-President, Lyndon Johnson, to go to Africa, to go to Europe, to go to Asia, to Latin America, and I have a feeling that President Johnson will want to do the same with his Vice-President. And of course this would please me very much because I thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to work in the field of foreign relations, and I hope that I can be of help to my country and to the President.

Mr. Scherer. Is it fair to say, then, that Mr. Johnson's experience as Mr. Kennedy's Vice-President has given him a special insight into the way that he would like his Vice-President to operate?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. I think so. As I recall, President Johnson has indicated from time to time that he felt that President Kennedy did a great deal in developing the full meaning of this office of Vice-President, and I have a feeling that President Johnson will want to even go further. I mean to use the Vice-President to be of help to him.

And I think a Vice-President can be of help to a President. He must remember that he is the Vice-President. He ought to have a sort of passion for anonymity, as a matter of fact. And some people have wondered whether I can have that, and I think I can. I worked with the Majority Leader of the Senate as a lieutenant, and I hope as a faithful lieutenant. And I will want to work with President Johnson exactly that way.

And I repeat, the scope of the office of Vice-President, it will be determined by the design of the President himself. But President Johnson is a busy man. He is a can-do man. I have

worked with him a long time. And I have a feeling, Ray, that I am going to be a very busy person, knowing our President.

Mr. Scherer. On that point, how would you describe your relationship with Mr. Johnson? I ask this in the context of the knowledge that he is a man who likes to make most of the decisions himself.

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Yes. And he should make the decisions as President. But he likes to discuss these matters before the decisions are made.

I have worked closely with him for 16 years. I think that amongst the senators from the northern states, in the days when President Johnson was Majority Leader, that I was about as close to him as anyone. And I worked with him not only in terms of the legislative program, but I spent many hours in his office with him talking, as a personal friend. My relationships with the President are just about as warm and friendly as they could ever be, and he is always considerate of me, very helpful to me, he always has been; he broadened my horizons when I was in the Senate. He brought me into contact with men that I ought to know in the Senate. He helped me bridge some gaps between what you might call the liberal forces and the conservative forces. And so I really look forward to it.

We have a good time, as a matter of fact; when we get together we really enjoy one another's company, and I think we will do very well together.

Mr. Scherer. Doesn't it get down to this -- that you and the President, then, look on the Vice-President as not a man who sits and waits, but as an activist.

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. I must say, if I may make a prediction, that President Johnson will see to it his Vice-President earns his pay. President Johnson believes in a day's work for a day's pay. And he will see to it that anybody that is around him is an activist, because he is an activist himself, and he knows that I like to be an activist.

So I have a feeling that my work will be cut out for me, but I want to make it clear, it will be in the design and the dimensions that he wants it. And I think that will keep me plenty busy.

Mr. Scherer. Mr. Vice-President, could we look back on the

campaign for just a minute. There seems to be a feeling that it was not a particularly elevated campaign, there were too many cats and dogs thrown around. What would be your feeling?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Well, I must say that there were many days that I was disappointed in the tone of the campaign. Our opposition saw fit to be a little too personal it seemed to me. But that is over. We did, both the President and myself, try to discuss matters like education, foreign policy. The President made two or three very good addresses in the field of foreign policy. Dedicating a new university in Florida, he made a splendid address upon education. I tried to discuss even the role of the Presidency, the history of the office of the Presidency, the problems relating to our cities.

So we did lay out many areas of discussion that will project us into the future. It wasn't a campaign that was just about the past. Frankly, there were many things said that I think tell you of the future and what we hope to do.

Mr. Scherer. Everyone of course is still pondering what it means. Did it mean that the American public will not elect a conservative as President?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. No, no, because I really don't believe that Mr. Goldwater is a conservative in the true sense of that meaning -- of that word, and that concept.

Speaking at the University of Georgia, in Athens, Georgia, I discussed the role of the conservative in American politics. And men like Alexander Hamilton, Chief Justice Marshall in the early days of our American history, were conservatives. And yet they believe in an effective, positive role for Federal Government. They rejected the doctrine that Mr. Goldwater was preaching, namely, that there ought to be very limited Federal Government activity.

Conservatives are people who conserve the best of the past, who respect it, but patiently build on it. They are not people that pull things up by the roots.

The word "conservative" means just what it says, to conserve what you have gained, and to build on it.

So I would not want to say that this election represented a repudiation of conservatism, because I don't really believe that the philosophical conservatism in the sense of the American

experience of conservatism was being debated in this campaign.

Mr. Scherer. What did the election of 1964 prove?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. I think it proved that the programs and the accomplishments of the past 30 years that we have hammered out and refined, both by Democrats and Republicans, that those programs have acceptance, and that these programs represent a sort of a floor or plateau from whence we move to higher ground, carefully, prudently, but that we move ahead.

I think what the electorate was saying to us is build and go ahead, but go ahead carefully, but keep going ahead. Don't make any fast moves, don't try to go pell-mell. Make every step a measured step. But move forward.

And then I think the electorate was telling us that the President and that this country must continue to accept the burdens of world leadership for freedom and for peace.

It was a reaffirmation of our bipartisan foreign policy. Many of us are discouraged at times with the developments in the world. But I think the American people said that despite these discouragements, despite our setbacks, we are on the right course, let's pursue that course. But let's pursue it again with reasoned measures, with careful determined steps. But let's go ahead, let's move, let's not lose faith in the United Nations, let's try to strengthen it. Let's not lose faith in our alliances. Let's try to strengthen those. And above all, let's not have any recklessness, any irresponsibility in the use of our power.

The American people are conscious of the power of this country. And they want to be sure that that power is used with restraint and that it is used responsibly.

So I believe what the American people did was to repudiate recklessness and irresponsibility, and to sort of embrace responsibility and performance.

Mr. Scherer. Senator, one final point.

You came out of this campaign tired; we all did. What can be done to make the American election campaigns shorter, less arduous, less boring, if you will?

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Well, I do believe that we

are going to have to catch up politically with the developments in science actually, with the jet airplane, and with the radio and television and the news media that we have today we can get to the people with our message in a much shorter period of time.

What we really find ourselves doing with these long, extended campaigns of two or three months is replaying the whole material. And it loses a quality of its spontaneity and its freshness, and therefore I think that you tend to become tired, the public becomes a little tired.

It is my view that the people were ready to vote in this election at least two weeks before it was over, and that they actually had made up their minds about two weeks before the election date. So maybe we can have a little bipartisan soul-searching and bipartisan reasoning and negotiation and come to an understanding that it might be well if we had our political conventions, let's say, in the month of September.

Mr. Scherer. The month of September.

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Rather than having them in July and August. And then get down for at least two weeks of preparation, and maybe a six weeks campaign instead of a ten weeks campaign.

We could cover America. There isn't any doubt about that. Why, with one telecast, you can get to more people by accident than you can by premeditation going around the country all year long.

Mr. Scherer. I think you started something.

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Well, let's hope that it might be of some help in the days ahead. At least we ought to give it some thoughtful consideration.

Mr. Scherer. Thank you very much. Thanks for this provocative look into 1965. I think maybe we better turn you loose so you can get a top hat for January 20.

Vice-President Elect Humphrey. Thank you, sir. I am looking forward to that.

Mr. Scherer. We all are.

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