

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

WOMEN'S NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

JANUARY 13, 1966

Friends and arm-chair Vice Presidents:

When your program chairman came to me and suggested that I speak on the subject, "Whatever Happened to Hubert Humphrey?", I was a little startled because this is a question that never worries me. I know. I have no complaints.

Actually since becoming Vice President, the question that has been going through my mind is: "Whatever happened to the Press?"

What have you been doing these days? Are you happy doing it? Are you really happy?

Back in the days of total exposure when I was in the U.S. Senate, I found you bright-eyed, on my trail, eager -- with pad and pencil in hand.

Yet, here I am working longer hours on space, on civil rights, with the nation's mayors, with the President's legislative program -- but where are you?

I'm really very, very worried about your IMAGE. In fact, I'm so worried I've had a poll taken. The results would discourage you.

Your problem is what to do about it. You must do something. If not, by 1972, at the rate you're going there won't be any radio, TV, or newspapers at all. Just word-of-mouth communication.

In fact, I've even received a memo leaked to me by some disaffected members of the press about the PRESS IMAGE. If I were you, I'd take stock.

But, more seriously, let me get down to the question of the evening: "Whatever Happened to Hubert Humphrey?"

What have I been up to?

I've been "moving, traveling, visiting, climbing, worshipping, hunting, fishing, sailing, boating, hobbying, reading, studying, thinking, sitting, gazing, looking, working, shirt-sleeving, gardening, flying and cooking."

But I've also been reciting some poetry to people I know. And one of my favorite verses is:

"Lives of statesmen all remind us

As their pages o'er we turn

That we shouldn't leave behind us

Memos someone ought to burn."

All this speculation about "Whatever happened to Hubert Humphrey?" has had one good result. It has re-directed attention to the office and responsibilities of the Vice Presidency.

People have discovered that the Vice President is a member of the Administration, and that his speeches and actions are directed toward implementing Administration policy. To borrow a saying of our British friends, he's a gamekeeper, not a poacher.

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You know, a short while ago I was asked to appear on What's My Line . . . but they were afraid no one would stand up when they asked for the real Hubert Humphrey. But they were wrong.

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I'm as handsome as Dick Nixon, younger than
Alben Barkley;

I can spit as far as John Nance Garner;

I am as quiet as Cal Coolidge;

I am only slightly shorter than Lyndon Johnson;

and I sing about as well as Tom Lehrer.

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I insisted on getting back here tonight even though
it meant flying all night. I was getting too identified
with foreign policy.

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But I had another reason for wanting to be here
tonight -- Bill Moyers said he had planted a couple of
questions.

I've got copies of Bill's questions here:

"Why did you take Valenti to Manila and not Bill Moyers?"

"How many phone calls did you get last week?"

"Why did you take Lloyd Hand to Manila and not Bill Moyers?"

Whatever became of that book, "MY TRIP TO SAIGON WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT" By Andy Glass?"

"Why did you take Muriel to Manila and not Bill Moyers?"

"What was your position on the great White House Wall?"

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But, finally, let me thank the number of my friends who have assured me lately that, despite what they write in the press, they really love me.

I don't know why, but an old piece of verse keeps coming to my mind. It runs:

"Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me downstairs?"

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Ladies of the press, Hubert Humphrey is right here in Washington. He's doing find. He likes his job. He likes you.

What is more, he has saved some news for you tonight.

It is with regret that I must announce tonight that, after long consideration -- despite pleas from friends -- I have decided not to seek the seat of Senator Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts.

Although I feel sincerely that I could "do more for Massachusetts" and despite my long association with that state -- I feel that the way should be left open there for the young people of the Democratic party who have worked their way up toward this opportunity.

Hubert Humphrey will have to be found at the Capitol, at the Executive Office Building, and on airplanes around the world.

Come and see me.

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