

The Proceedings of

M E E T T H E P R E S S

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Panel: STEWART ALSOP, *Saturday Evening Post*
PHILIP L. GEYELIN, *Washington Post*
JOHN L. STEELE, *Time Magazine*
RAY SCHERER, *NBC News*

Moderator: LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

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MEET THE PRESS

MR. SPIVAK: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is the Vice President, Hubert H. Humphrey. We will have the first questions now from Ray Scherer, NBC News.

MR. SCHERER: Mr. Vice President, what is your old Minnesota ally, Senator McCarthy, up to in planning to run against the President in various primaries?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My friend, Senator McCarthy, has not really talked to me about this, and I am not at all sure yet just what he is going to do. There has been some indication that he will make an announcement this coming week. He has some differences of opinion and view on the matters of foreign policy and, I suppose, on some domestic matters. Other than that, I know not much about it. I can only say this, that back in Minnesota where I was this week, the state Central Committee of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party representing about 450 people, a cross-section of our state, strongly supported the President and his policies on this international front in Southeast Asia and Vietnam. The AFL-CIO Executive Committee, which has preserved a rather nonpartisan view in most of the legislative races, supported the President very vigorously with a very—I think there were only one or two votes in opposition, so that is about the way it is, sir.

MR. SCHERER: You say he hasn't talked to you. If he came to you for friendly advice, would you tell him not to do it?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't generally answer "iffy" questions, Mr. Scherer. I can only say my support for the President is well known. My support for the President's policies

is equally well known. I would hope that the people in my state and throughout the nation would see matters as I do, and I shall campaign vigorously for President Johnson and his policies, domestic and foreign.

MR. SCHERER: Do you think Mr. McCarthy is interested only in moderating Administration Vietnam policy or is it more than that, taking the nomination away from the President?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think you ought to ask Mr. McCarthy that question.

MR. STEELE: Mr. Vice President, there seems to be in the country today a sort of intolerant dissent. One example is the number of college students who block other college students, block them physically, from attending interviews of government agencies, such as the military and the CIA, and indeed prevent them from going to job interviews with representatives of private companies.

You are an old dissenter yourself, and I would just like to know what you think about this business?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I suppose there has been no subject that has had more discussion than the role of dissent in a free society, in a democracy. And of course dissent, freedom of speech, freedom of press, the right to seek redress of grievances is a very precious right and one that we must jealously guard, even to a point, may I say, of where it may appear at times that the guardianship is even of abusive dissent.

My own feeling is that those who are deeply devoted to dissent and the right of dissent, the right to be heard, should keep in mind that the quality of tolerance of the other man's point of view or the willingness to listen to the other man's point of view is absolutely essential. What may be a majority, today, or a minority today, may be a majority tomorrow, and vice versa. What disturbs me about some of the dissent of the present time is that it has gone into the streets, so to speak. It is a dissent that is characterized in some quarters, and I want to be very careful about this, in some quarters with obscenity, obscene statements on walls, violence, people unwilling to listen to the other man talk, threatening abuse of public officials.

I don't really consider that dissent. I think the President described it very well when he spoke of it as, sort of, storm trooper tactics. I listened earlier today to Senator Kennedy speak about the role of dissent, and I thought he did very well in his expression of it. A dialogue, discussion, debate, is the very heart and core of dissent, which ultimately, of course, must be resolved by decision. But violence, disorder, abusive language, booing, shouting, threatening people's physical security and their life itself, is an abuse of that right. With every right comes a responsibility. With every freedom comes a duty, and those who love—I

mean, cherish the right of dissent, those of us who believe in free speech, must speak responsibly and constructively.

MR. STEELE: In a related field, in the field of civil rights where you have been a leader for years, some of the leaders have taken a most militant line urging other people to burn and shoot and take what generally in normal society is regarded as criminal action. I want to know what your advice to these people—to the extreme militants of that movement—is?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think they do a disservice to the cause of social progress.

There is no room in this country for violence, lawlessness, disorder, riot, arson, hooliganism. That has no place in a mature, developed, democratic society. We have ways and means of redressing grievances, as I said.

Actually those who preach violence and hate do the cause of social progress a great disservice. They ought to be rebuked, and surely those of us who believe in social progress ought to take our stand and make it quite clear that we cannot in any way condone or tolerate that kind of action.

MR. ALSOP: Mr. Vice President, yesterday I perhaps rather unfairly looked up an interview I had with you in early 1965, and in it you had this to say about President Johnson:

"There has never been a President happier in the presidency. The reason is that the President knows just what to do and how to do it."

I think we'd all agree here that those words sound a little dated today. I wondered if you had any explanation of what has happened to the famous Johnson consensus and why there has been this very visible decline in the Johnson-Humphrey Administration's popularity? Obviously Vietnam is part of it, but is it all of it?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Whenever a man is called upon to make a decision, Mr. Alsop, he loses some friends.

I often used to say, when I was a member of the Senate, that if I could just vote "maybe" on most of the issues, how happy I would be and how much more happy my constituents would have been, but I was required by the roll call to vote yes or no, and even when I was absent, to declare my position. And that is when you start to lose some friends and start to make some enemies.

In 1965, when the President first came into his elected presidency, I think it is fair to say that he was very relaxed and happy in his work and that the American public found him to be a forthright, strong leader. He still is that forthright, strong leader, but he has had to make some of the toughest decisions of any President.

Much of his difficulty today rests in the fact that as President

he has had to take the lead in the field of civil rights, making it a firm policy of this government to see to it that every citizen, regardless of race, color or creed, had a right to participate in all parts of this nation, full participation. This has caused him great trouble in certain parts of America from some people. Then he had to take a stand on an international matter in Vietnam. This has caused a great deal of difficulty for the President. He has had to face up to a host of other special interest groups in this country.

When you come out for truth in packaging and truth in lending, and when you start to advocate legislation that sometimes antagonizes some of the pressure groups and interest groups, when you get involved in liberalized trade legislation tax policy, monetary policy, you may have a little erosion of what we call the popular consensus.

What is important is not that the President is popular; what is really important is that he makes the decisions on the basis of the best advice that he can obtain and that he makes the decisions in the belief that he is right.

MR. ALSOP: I would like to ask you a personal question, Mr. Vice President. The President himself described his years in the vice presidency as miserable years, and most Vice Presidents back to the first John Adams have had rather the same reaction to the vice presidency.

How about your own experience in this miserable office, to quote the President? What has been your own experience of it?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't consider it a miserable office. I consider it an office that imposes a great deal of self-discipline upon one, much more than being a member of the Congress, or of any other political office other than the presidency itself. But I consider it an office that offers great opportunity for public service. I have had an opportunity to be at the center of decision-making, to help shape in some way national policy, to represent our great country overseas, which I believe is a rare privilege, to have a hand in the formulation of domestic policy and, quite frankly, to work closely with the Congress and the American people.

I have never agreed with John Adams or even John Nance Garner or others that think that this is a miserable office. To the contrary, it is one that tests you, one that gives you an opportunity to learn, and if you don't mind my saying so—you know, I was just born a poor boy above a drug store out in South Dakota, and to come from that humble beginning at Wallace, South Dakota, the son of a small town, independent entrepreneur druggist, to become Vice President of the United States and to have the friendship and the confidence of the President of the United States, I think is a wonderful thing. I am quite happy at it.

MR. GEYELIN: Mr. Vice President, do you have any real

hopes now that the North Vietnamese will be in a mood to negotiate with us until after our election? Do you think there is any chance of real peace talks between now and then?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have become quite wary of prophecy, Mr. Geyelin. I am not at all sure about what the North Vietnamese will or will not do. What I am more concerned about is that we pursue the course that we are on, and I think we shall, and I believe, if we do, one of two things will happen: Either the North Vietnamese in due time will come to the conference table and seek an honorable peace or seek a peace which we will insist upon being an honorable one, or they will just de-escalate and retire from the field.

It has been my view that the latter would most likely be the case. I don't see Ho Chi Minh coming to the negotiation table. He has resisted it up until now, every plea from every quarter. I think, however, if we pursue the course that we are on militarily, politically, diplomatically, that the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong will be ineffective, will ultimately have to retire from the field and either come to the conference table for a peace or just, as we say, fade back into the jungle.

MR. GEYELIN: Now, we have been told by the Administration that the Chinese are the real ultimate threat in Asia and that they have a major stake in the outcome of this war. Could they allow the North Vietnamese simply to wither away or wouldn't they have to move in and do something to rescue them? I mean, after all, we did when our side of the war was losing. What is the logic that says that they won't?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think that is a question that the Chinese or whomever else wants to support the North Vietnamese have to answer themselves, and they have to consider the consequences of whatever decision that they make. I think it is a fact that when we have stood firm in other times that these nightmares, possibilities and prophecies just didn't come into being. We took our stand in Cuba; we took our stand in Korea; we have taken our stand in Berlin; we have stood many, many times, and because of that we have averted the great holocaust that constantly threatens humanity. I believe that we are pursuing the right course; we are pursuing it with restraint—the use of power with restraint. We are seeking in the best way that we know to bring this struggle to a political solution as soon as possible.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Vice President, may I ask you a question: In answering a question of Mr. Alsop's, you explained why the administration was unpopular at the present time and yet in a recent speech referring to the 1968 elections, you said this: "I have seen the polls. I have read a thousand pessimistic reports, and I am confident."

Can you tell us just what makes you so confident?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: First, I want to thank you for repeating what I said, because I didn't think that particular part of my speech got good press, but this has a wonderful listenership and viewing. I believe every word of what I said in that speech in Florida.

The reason I say this is because when the American people have to make a decision as to the future of their country and the kind of leadership that they want for this country, I believe that they will start sorting out the minutiae and come down to basics and fundamentals and when that comes they will remember the record of President Johnson on the domestic front with a vast array of social progress, programs that people have waited for for years. They will be mindful of the economic growth and the stability of our economy, and I think they will also be mindful of the fact that the stand that we have taken internationally has been designed to prevent the great nuclear holocaust which constantly threatens humanity.

In other words, that we are taking stands now for limited objectives in the war, in battlefields far away, so that we may not have to take a stand later on in a greater conflagration.

In other words, I don't think the people want Armageddon on the installment plan.

MR. SPIVAK: I take it from what you have just said that there isn't any question in your mind but that the President is going to run again?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: In my mind that is quite firm, but he hasn't really confided in me on this nor have I asked him. I think at the proper time he will let all of us know what he is going to do, and in the meantime the President and the Vice President are going to pursue the course and the policy which has been established by the Administration.

MR. SCHERER: Mr. Vice President, you mentioned watching Senator Kennedy on CBS today. He said that the South Vietnamese Army, as you heard him, has really pulled out of this war, and he asked the question: Why is the South Vietnamese Army not at Dakto and not at the DMZ? What could be your answer to that?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My answer, of course, would be that the South Vietnamese Army has been at Dakto and has been at the DMZ, and in fact some of the most courageous fighting of this war has been by some of the units of the South Vietnamese Army, the ARVN, in the Demilitarized Zone. Generals that have returned—

I was there by the way. I met some of the units. In fact I decorated the Commander of one of the airborne units of the South Vietnamese Army in the DMZ area, and they have performed valiantly, courageously, that particular part of the service in the I Corps area.

The press only recently revealed there were some units of the South Vietnamese Army at Dakto. But this struggle is going on in many places. While I was in Saigon for the inaugural, there were three major engagements within 25 to 40 kilometers of Saigon, and in all three of those engagements it was the ARVN and the regional forces of the South Vietnamese Army that engaged the North Vietnamese regular forces and defeated them, giving them a smashing defeat. In fact there were five such engagements.

I want my statement clearly understood. The South Vietnamese Army has two functions to perform today. One is in combat with the main units of the NVA—North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, and the other is pacification, and pacification is no little specific job. Pacification is security. It is the nitty-gritty, the hard part of this war, as much as any other part, and the ARVN is doing a good job trying to give security and protection against Viet Cong guerrilla tactics, terrorism, at the Village and hamlet level.

MR. STEELE: Mr. Vice President, after your recent trip to Southeast Asia you came home and reported in these words—The question, you said, that you were most frequently asked in the field was: Why are we winning the war in Vietnam and seem to be losing it at home?

What is your answer to that question?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't think we are losing the war at home. I think there is a vocal minority that has taken up the cause of what is called dissent, trying to make the American people feel that this is an unworthy cause and that we ought not to be there or of some of them disagreeing merely on tactics.

May I make this point first, that I think most of our people who disagree on Administration matters relating to Vietnam, do not disagree on the fundamental commitment. They are not asking that we withdraw. They are not even suggesting it. They are suggesting that there is a different way to do it. We have a substantial number of civilian experts in military matters that seem to know better how to fight the military war than some of our generals. That is what they seem to feel.

It is my view that they are in error, even though I recognize their right to disagree. No, my view is that the American people have the courage to stick it out, will stick it out, will persevere. And that was the message that I brought to Southeast Asia. This was the basic concern that the leaders of Southeast Asia had: Will the Americans persevere? Will we stay with them? Will we help them in national security and national development? Will we have the patience? And my answer was, yes.

MR. STEELE: On another phase of the war, Mr. Vice President, many of your colleagues in the Senate are supporting a resolution to try to bring once again the United Nations into

efforts to settle the war there. What do you think of this approach?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We will continue our efforts to involve the Security Council of the United Nations in the area of Southeast Asia and the struggle in Vietnam. Ambassador Goldberg has made this very clear, speaking for our government. He right now is in consultation with members of the Security Council to see how best to bring this about. So the Administration—what you are talking about is nothing new for the Administration. In fact, last February, Ambassador Goldberg presented the Vietnam issue to the United Nations and renewed it again this September with the reconvening of the United Nations and the General Assembly. So we will continue to pursue this course—any honorable course, sir, to find a solution, a peaceful solution to this struggle.

MR. ALSOP: Mr. Vice President, I'd like to ask a question, which seems to me to have a certain political meaning, about Vietnam: General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker have both reported that the enemy is very sharply weaker.

Under these circumstances is it not possible that within the next year or let's say within the next ten months, to make it more politically significant, (a) American casualty rates might go well down, and (b) there would be some chance of reducing the American troop commitment now planned at 525,000 to something lower, and if these two things happened, won't the political situation have a different aspect?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: First of all, I let General Westmoreland speak for himself. I believe, that as a military commander, he possibly has more knowledge of these matters than I may have as one on the outside in a civilian capacity.

Secondly, I hope that all that you have said is going to come about. I cannot at all be sure. I do not possess those mystical powers of prophecy. If I did, I might even be a journalist, you can't tell. But I just don't think this kind of prophecy as to specific dates or a time frame or numbers is helpful. I do think it is fair to say that there has been steady progress on every front in Vietnam; militarily, substantial progress; politically, very significant progress, with the Constitution and the freely-elected government. In pacification or what we call revolutionary development, steady progress, with increased momentum, and I want to emphasize this.

Diplomatically, in terms of a peace negotiation, that is the place where there has been the stalemate. There is no military stalemate. There is no political stalemate. There is no pacification stalemate, and what the American people need to know and what they have learned from a man of great integrity, Ambassador Bunker, and a General of considerable competence and ability, General Westmoreland and another Ambassador of great experi-

ence, Robert Komer—what they have learned is that we are making progress, and if we stick with it there is no doubt in my mind that this will result in a durable peace in Vietnam, the protection of the independence of Vietnam and the improvement of the international security in Southeast Asia which will result in our own national security.

MR. SPIVAK: Gentlemen, we have less than two minutes.

MR. GEYELIN: Mr. Vice President, you have always been identified as an advocate of the barrier across the top of South Vietnam. Where does that stand? Is it going to work or is it being replaced?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Mr. Geyelin, I feel this way—that there are many ways that you ought to try to intercept the enemy, block the enemy and the enemy's activities and progress. The barrier is but one of them. It isn't an alternative. The bombing, the barrier, the bombing of trails, what took place recently at Dakto at the intersection, at the end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and on the near boundary of Cambodia—all of these things are part of our effort to suppress the aggression, to resist the aggression and to bring the enemy—to prevent the success of the enemy.

I think we ought to do all of them, and I don't think we ought to put them in terms of alternatives.

MR. SCHERER: Mr. Vice President, the news today is dominated by Cyprus, and that suggests this question: Could NATO survive if two NATO powers went to war and with weapons supplied by other NATO powers?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We are working, as you know, along with the United Nations, to prevent that possibility, and let us hope and pray that it will be successful; namely, that there can be peace maintained in Cyprus.

MR. SPIVAK: I am afraid that on that note we must end, Mr. Vice President.

I am sorry to interrupt, but our time is really up. Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.

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Produced by Lawrence E. Spivak

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1967

GUEST:

HON. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, Vice President of
the United States

MODERATOR:

Lawrence E. Spivak

PANEL:

Stewart Alsop - Saturday Evening Post

Philip L. Geyelin - Washington Post

John L. STEELE - Time Magazine

RAY SCHERER - NBC News

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14 (Announcement)
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18 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't consider it a miserable
19 office. I consider it an office that imposes a great deal of
20 self-discipline upon one, much more than being a member of the
21 Congress, or of any other political office other than the
22 presidency itself. But I consider it an office that offers
23 great opportunity for public service. I have had an opportunity
24 to be at the center of decision-making, to help shape in some
25 way national policy, to represent our great country overseas,

ON
VICE
PRESIDENCY
LBJ

HHH
Responsibility

1 which I believe is a rare privilege, to have a hand in the
2 formulation of domestic policy and, quite frankly, to work close-
3 ly with the Congress and the American people.)

4 I have never agreed with John Adams or even John Nance
5 Garner, or others that think that this is a miserable office.
6 To the contrary, it is one that tests you, one that gives you
7 an opportunity to learn and if you don't mind my saying so,
8 you know I was just born a poor boy above a drug store out in
9 South Dakota and to come from that humble beginning at
10 Wallace, South Dakota, the son of a small town, independent
11 entrepreneur druggist, to become Vice President of the United
12 States and to have the friendship and the confidence of the
13 President of the United States, I think is a wonderful thing.
14 I am quite happy at it.

15 MR. GEYELIN: Mr. Vice President, do you have any real
16 hopes now that the North Vietnamese will be in a mood to
17 negotiate with us until after our election? Do you think there
18 is any chance of real peace talks between now and then?

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have become quite wary of
20 prophecy, Mr. Geyelin. I am not at all sure about what the
21 North Vietnamese will or will not do. What I am more concerned
22 about is that we pursue the course that we are on and I think
23 we shall, and I believe, if we do, one of two things will
24 happen: Either the North Vietnamese in due time will come to
25 the conference table and seek an honorable peace or seek a peace

STYLE

1 which we will insist upon being an honorable one, or they will
2 just de-escalate and retire from the field.

3 It has been my view that the latter would most likely
4 be the case. I don't see Ho Chi Minh coming to the negotia-
5 tion table. He has resisted it up until now, every plea from
6 every quarter. [I think, however, if we pursue the course that
7 we are on militarily, politically, diplomatically, that the
8 North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong will be ineffective, will
9 ultimately have to retire from the field and either come to the
10 conference table for a peace or just, as we say, fade back into
11 the jungle.]

12 MR. GEVELIN: Now, we have been told by the Administra-
13 tion that the Chinese are the real ultimate threat in Asia
14 and that they have a major stake in the outcome of this war.
15 Could they allow the North Vietnamese simply to wither away
16 or wouldn't they have to move in and do something to rescue
17 them? I mean, after all, we did when our side of the war was
18 losing. What is the logic that says that they won't?

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think that is a question
20 that the Chinese or whomever else wants to support the North
21 Vietnamese have to answer themselves and they have to consider
22 the consequences of whatever decision that they make. I think
23 it is a fact that when we have stood firm in other times that
24 these nightmares, possibilities and prophecies just didn't
25 come into being. We took our stand in Cuba; we took our stand

*Vietnam
Resolution*

1 in Korea; we have taken our stand in Berlin; we have stood
2 many, many times, and because of that we have averted the
3 great holocaust that constantly threatens humanity. I believe
4 that we are pursuing the right course; we are pursuing it with
5 restraint. The use of power with restraint. We are seeking
6 in the best way that we know to bring this struggle to a
7 political solution as soon as possible.

8 MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Vice President, may I ask you a question?
9 In answering a question of Mr. Alsop's, you explained why the
10 Administration was unpopular at the present time and yet in a
11 recent speech referring to the 1968 elections, you said this:
12 "I have seen the polls; I have read a thousand pessimistic
13 reports, and I am confident."

14 Can you tell us just what it is makes you so confident?

15 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: First, I want to thank you for
16 repeating what I said, because I didn't think that particular
17 part of my speech got good press, but this has a wonderful
18 listenership and viewing and I believe every word of what I
19 said in that speech in Florida.

20 The reason I say this is because when the American people
21 have to make a decision as to the future of their country and
22 the kind of leadership that they want for this country, I
23 believe that they will start sorting out the minutiae and come
24 down to basics and fundamentals and when that comes they will
25 remember the record of President Johnson on the domestic front

1 with a vast array of social progress, programs that people have
2 waited for for years; they will be mindful of the economic
3 growth and the stability of our economy, and I think they will
4 also be mindful of the fact that the stand that we have taken
5 internationally has been designed to prevent the great nuclear
6 holocaust which constantly threatens humanity.

7 : In other words, that we are taking stands now for limited
8 objectives in the war, in battlefields far away, so that we
9 may not have to take a stand later on in a greater conflagra-
10 tion.

11 In other words, I don't think the people want Armageddon
12 on the installment plan.
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LIMITED
WAR

1 MR. SPIVAK: I take it from what you have just said that
2 there isn't any question in your mind but that the President
3 is going to run again?

4 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, in my mind that
5 is quite firm, but he hasn't really confided in me on this
6 nor have I asked him. I think at the proper time he will
7 let all of us know what he is going to do and in the meantime
8 the President and the Vice President are going to pursue the
9 course and the policy which has been established by the
10 Administration.

11 MR. SCHERER: Mr. Vice President, you mentioned
12 watching Senator Kennedy on CBS today. He said that the South-
13 vietnamese Army, as you heard him, has really pulled out of
14 this war, and he asked the question: Why is the Southvietnamese
15 Army not at Dakto and not at the DMZ? What would be your
16 answer to that?

17 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My answer, of course, would be
18 that the South Vietnamese Army has been at Dakto and has been
19 at the DMZ and in fact some of the most courageous fighting
20 of this war has been by some of the units of the South
21 Vietnamese Army, the ARVN, in the Demilitarized
22 Zone. Generals that have returned --

23 I was there by the way. I met some of the units.
24 In fact I decorated the Commander of one of the airborne .
25 units of the South Vietnamese Army in the DMZ area and they

2 have performed valiantly, courageously, that particular
3 part of the service in the I Corps area.

4 The press only recently revealed there were some units
5 of the South Vietnamese Army at Dakto. But this struggle is
6 going on in many places. While I was in Saigon for the
7 inaugural there were three major engagements within 25 to
8 40 kilometers of Saigon and in all three of those engagements
9 it was the ARVN and the regional forces of the South
10 Vietnamese Army that engaged the North Vietnamese regular
11 forces and defeated them, giving them a smashing
12 defeat. In fact there were five such engagements.

13 Now I want my statement clearly understood. The South
14 Vietnamese Army has two functions to perform today. One is
15 in combat with the main units of the NVA -- North Vietnamese
16 and the Viet Cong, and the other is pacification. And
17 pacification is no little specific job. Pacification
18 is security. It is the nitty-gritty, the hard part of this war
19 as much as any other part and the ARVN is doing a good job
20 trying to give security and protection against Viet Cong
21 guerilla tactics, terrorism, at the village and hamlet
22 level.

23 MR. STEELE: Mr. Vice President, after your recent
24 trip to Southeast Asia you came home and reported in
25 these words -- The question, you said, that you were most
frequently asked in the field was: Why are we winning the war in

1 Vietnam and seem to be losing it at home?

2 Now what is your answer to that question?

3 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't think we are

4 losing the war at home. I think there is a vocal minority
5 that has taken up the cause of what is called dissent,
6 trying to make the American people feel that this is an un-
7 worthy cause and that we ought not to be there, or some of
8 them disagreeing merely on tactics.

DISSENT

9 May I make this point first, that I think most of our
10 people who disagree on Administration matters relating to
11 Vietnam, do not disagree on the fundamental commitment.
12 They are not asking that we withdraw. They are not even
13 suggesting it. They are suggesting that there is a
14 different way to do it. We have a substantial number of
15 civilian experts in military matters that seem to know better
16 how to fight the military war than some of our generals.
17 That is what they seem to feel.

18 Now it is my view that they are in error, even though
19 I recognize their right to disagree. No, my view is that
20 the American people have the courage to stick it out, will stick
21 it out, will persevere. And that was the message that I
22 brought to Southeast Asia. This was the basic concern
23 that the leaders of Southeast Asia had: Will the
24 Americans persevere? Will we stay with them? Will we help
25 them in national security and national development? Will we

1 have the patience and my answer was Yes.

2 MR. STEELE: On another phase of the war, Mr. Vice
3 President, many of your colleagues in the Senate are supporting
4 a resolution to try to bring once again the United Nations
5 into efforts to settle the war there. What do you think of
6 this approach?

7 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, we will continue our
8 efforts to involve the Security Council of the United Nations
9 in the area of Southeast Asia and the struggle in Vietnam.
10 Ambassador Goldberg has made this very clear, speaking
11 for our government. He right now is in consultation with
12 members of the Security Council to see how best to bring this
13 about. So the Administration -- what you are talking about
14 is nothing new for the Administration. In fact last
15 February Ambassador Goldberg presented the Vietnam
16 issue to the United Nations and renewed it again this
17 September with the reconvening of the United Nations
18 and the General Assembly. So we will continue to pursue this
19 course. Any honorable course, sir, to find a solution,
20 a peaceful solution to this struggle.
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1 MR. ALSOP: Mr. Vice President, I'd like to ask a ques-
2 tion, which seems to me to have a certain political meaning,
3 about Vietnam: General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker
4 have both reported that the enemy is very sharply weaker.

5 Under these circumstances is it not possible that within
6 the next year or let's say within the next ten months, to
7 make it more politically significant, (a) American casualty
8 rates might go well down and (b) there would be some chance of
9 reducing the American troop commitment now planned at 525,000
10 to something lower, and if these two things happened, won't
11 the political situation have a different aspect?

12 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, first of all, I let
13 General Westmoreland speak for himself. I believe, as a
14 military commander, he possibly has more knowledge of these
15 matters than I may have as one on the outside in a civilian
16 capacity.

17 Secondly, I hope that all that you have said is going
18 to come about. I cannot at all be sure. I do not possess
19 those mystical powers of prophecy. If I did, I might even be
20 a journalist; you can't tell. But I just don't think this
21 kind of prophecy as to specific dates or a time frame or
22 numbers is helpful. I do think it is fair to say that there
23 has been steady progress on every front in Vietnam; militarily,
24 substantial progress; politically, very significant progress,
25 with the Constitution and the freely-elected government.

Vietnam

1 In pacification or what we call revolutionary development,
2 steady progress, with increased momentum, and I want to
3 emphasize this.

4 Diplomatically, in terms of a peace negotiation, that is
5 the place where there has been the stalemate. There is no
6 military stalemate. There is no political stalemate. There
7 is no pacification stalemate, and what the American people need
8 to know and what they have learned from a man of great integrity
9 -- Ambassador Bunker -- and a General of considerable compe-
10 tence and ability -- General Westmoreland -- and another
11 Ambassador of great experience, Robert Comer -- what they
12 have learned is that we are making progress and if we stick
13 with it there is no doubt in my mind that this will result in
14 a durable peace in Vietnam, the protection of the independence
15 of Vietnam and the improvement of the international security
16 in Southeast Asia which will result in our own national security.

17 MR. SPIVAK: Gentlemen, we have less than two minutes.

18 MR. GEYELIN: Mr. Vice President, you have always been
19 identified as an advocate of the barrier across the top of
20 South Vietnam. Where does that stand? Is it going to work or
21 is it being enplaced?

22 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Mr. Geyelin, I feel this way:
23 That there are many ways that you ought to try to intercept
24 the enemy, block the enemy and the enemy's activities and
25 progress. The barrier is but one of them. It isn't an

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V.N.

1 alternative. The bombing, the barrier, the bombing of
2 trails, what took place recently at Dok To, so that at the
3 intersection, at the end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and
4 on the near boundary of Cambodia -- all of these things are
5 part of our effort to suppress the aggression, to
6 resist the aggression and to bring the enemy -- to prevent
7 the success of the enemy.

8 I think we ought to do all of them and I don't think
9 we ought to put them in terms of alternatives.

10 MR. SCHERER: Mr. Vice President, the news today is
11 dominated by Cyprus and that suggests this question: Could
12 NATO survive if two NATO powers went to war and with weapons
13 supplied by other NATO powers?

14 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We are working, as you know,
15 along with the United Nations, to prevent that possibility
16 and let us hope and pray that it will be successful; namely,
17 that there can be peace maintained in Cyprus.

18 MR. SPIVAK: I am afraid that on that note we must end,
19 Mr. Vice President.

20 I am sorry to interrupt, but our time is really up.
21 Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for being with us today on
22 MEET THE PRESS.

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