

Larry Edwards

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

BY

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

FOR

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Interviewed by: Linton Wells
Storer Broadcasting Company
1725 K Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20006
338-8884

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

MR. WELLS: Our REPORT TO THE PEOPLE today is by the Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey.

Mr. Vice President, what prospects do you see for peace in Southeast Asia before the elections in November?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Those prospects depend almost entirely upon the reaction of Hanoi, the men in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and his associates. Any time they are ready for peace, needless to say we are ready for an honorable peace.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Vice President, has the United States the resources to carry out the Riot Commission's recommendations and wage a war at the same time?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We have the resources to undertake these responsibilities if we are willing to dedicate ourselves to the use of those resources, keeping in mind, of course, that in every struggle, whether it is international or domestic, that there is a need for time. We cannot find instant solutions to any of these problems. But I believe we have the resources.

MR. WELLS: When you disputed the conclusion of the President's Commission on Disorders, that the United States is moving towards two societies, one black and one white, now why?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well that headline story seemed to indicate that I disputed it, but in checking through what I said in a transcript, I pointed out that the Riot Commission or the Commission on Civil Disorders,

expressed a fear that there would be or could be two societies in America, the white society and the black society, separate but unequal. And then I said that assertion may be true, although I think it is open to some challenge. Now those are the exact words of my statement. What I was pointing out was that the Commission presented a body of evidence that indicated a growing pattern of separatism in America of two societies, but it had not as yet been fully stabilized or fully set. The Commission report was not an obituary. It was a health report on the state of the nation. And I happen to believe that we do not need to look forward to two societies. We can look forward to one America indivisible as we say, with liberty and justice for all, providing that we get at the task of preventing the solidification of these patterns of prejudice and of inequality.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Vice President, isn't it really up to the private sector, that is, the free enterprise sector to provide jobs and housing, clean up the cities and do what else is necessary to preserve our free society?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: In the main you are right, sir. The government has a role to play and an important role, but not the total role by a long ways. And President Johnson knows that and in his Messages to the Congress here recently on Urban Affairs and on Employment and all the problems that relate to our inner city, our ghettos, the President has looked more and more to private enterprise for leadership, for example, the National Alliance of Businessmen, to provide job opportunities for a half a million of the hard core unemployed. I believe that the great strength of America is in its private

enterprise, in its business economy. It is in this free system of enterprise that we have. And we need to work with that system asking it to take the lead, to use its imagination, to use its own creativity, as we call it, its own ways of doing things, to find answers to many of our problems today, jobs and housing and transportation, the rebuilding of our cities. The government can be helpful, but the government should not be dominant.

MR. WELLS: The Negro masses seem to believe that someone can wave a magic wand and correct all social evils overnight. Are there really any shortcuts to this end, Mr. Vice President?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My answer is there are no shortcuts that I know of. I said a moment ago that there are no instant solutions to problems that are generations, indeed centuries old. What is important, however, is to get going, is to make the starts, to make the commitment, and to know that you can achieve your ultimate goal. It will take time. The problems of our cities do not lend themselves to instant solutions, and no magic wand. I might add that many people feel that they want a magic wand to solve their problems, but the simple truth is, as we all well know, is that there are no easy answers, and the answers are going to be tough and costly.

MR. WELLS: The militants are demanding action and not promises. How are you going to give them action?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We are giving action. One of the most important developments of recent years is the fact that we've made great breakthroughs in the field of civil rights, in the field of urban renewal, in the field of

housing, and of health and of job opportunities. More has been done in these past few years in providing job opportunities and training, expanding education, doing things to help people help themselves, than in any comparable period of our lifetime. To be sure, you never satisfy a real militant. No one ever has, but the important thing to keep in mind is are you making progress. And my answer is we are making substantial progress. But what we need now is a commitment of reassurance to those that feel helpless or frustrated, a commitment that we will continue our efforts, and that we will not only continue them, but we will intensify them within the limits of our resources.

MR. WELLS: And you cannot promise anyone instant action?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: You can promise people instant action, but you cannot promise people instant cures. You can call on the doctor, and he will come and he will administer medication to you, but he doesn't promise you that you are going to get over that case of flu tonight.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Humphrey, is ours a sick society, as Senator Fulbright maintains? And are we more concerned with the arrogance of international power than with human values here at home?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Ours is not a sick society. As a matter of fact, sir, I believe that it is fair to say that the signs of health in this society are being exemplified by the signs of social concern, by our business leaders, by our community leaders, and by our government. Never has there been a time in the history of the United States when more people have been more interested in improving the lot of their fellow man by community effort, by personal effort, by

private effort, as well as government effort, than today. I think that is a sign of moral quality, and a sign of strength and a sign of health. Now you asked as to whether we're more concerned with the arrogance of international power than human values, not one bit. Any power that we have exercised internationally has not been for the sake of power, but also for human values, self determination, individual freedom, national independence. Now these are noble ideals for which this country has been dedicated for years, and we ought to be thankful that we have the strength today to be able to make some contribution to the protection of those ideals.

MR. WELLS: Then you don't agree that the United States has pledged its soul to advance imperialistic aims, exercising imperial rather than moral leadership in this world?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I surely do not, and I would consider such a charge to be false, ridiculous and irresponsible. It is my view that the United States has demonstrated a deep concern for self determination, for independence, for resistance against the forces of aggression, the law of the jungle. And when a country is willing to do what this country has been willing to do in these post war years since 1945, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to clothe the naked, and to provide shelter for the homeless, to train and to educate, to give foreign aid, to send its young men abroad in the Peace Corps, and to stand guard at the ramparts of freedom, I think that country ought not to be accused of imperialism, but rather ought to be cited for its idealism. We have made a tremendous commitment and I am proud of it.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Humphrey, let's change the subject just a moment. Every time the President needs a leader, he picks you. He has just named you Chairman of the National Council on Indian Opportunity. Now where do you find the time and vitality for everything that you have to do?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I can find the time, and I hope that I can find the vitality. The time means that you just stretch your work day, and so far I have been blessed with good health and lots of vitality. Let's just say this, that I enjoy the challenge of my work, and when the President gives me an order, I try to be a loyal soldier and carry it out to the best of my ability. I'm afraid sometimes the only question in doubt, the only question in debate is do I do a good job at it. I try to.

MR. WELLS: There is no question about you doing a good job, Mr. Vice President, but the puzzle to me is how do you manage, or where do you find all this energy?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, sometimes, my dear friend, I run a little short, but so far I've held up, but I must confess to you that I find myself moving a little more rapidly at times and more quickly than I wish I had to.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Vice President, how much cooperation do you expect the Administration will receive in this second session of the 90th Congress?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think the cooperation will be basically good. It will not come easily. I don't think we should expect Congress to promptly, quickly say yes to everything that we ask for. I served in Congress sixteen years.

The duty of Congress is to examine, to debate, to discuss, to amend, and hopefully to legislate. By and large we have had reasonably good cooperation from the Congress, and I expect that we will continue to get it, not on every item, but hopefully on most.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Vice President, do you believe that you and President Johnson will be reelected next November, and what are your reasons?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well I'm a man of considerable optimism and I hope genuine confidence. Yes I do. And I'll tell you why, because when the American people are going to choose, are required to make their choice of their national leader, they are going to want a man who has been able to stand the test, who has been able to go through the dark days, the difficult days and still come out tall and strong and forthright. I believe President Johnson has exemplified those qualities of leadership, strength, firmness, the unwillingness to yield even when under attack, and yet at the same time to probe and to look for ways to improve the lot of the American people, and hopefully to find a way to peace in this world.

MR. WELLS: And if he could find peace the whole situation would change almost overnight, wouldn't it?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My dear friend, if we could find peace in Vietnam in the next few months, I think that you wouldn't have to be talking about elections at all.

MR. WELLS: How concerned are you about George Wallace's third party movement?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well one always has some concern over all of these matters, but I really leave that pretty much up to Mr. Wallace and his supporters.

MR. WELLS: Do you think that this movement is going to throw the election into the House of Representatives?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I've read about that. I doubt it.

MR. WELLS: What are the Republicans chances of gaining control of the House of Representatives next November, Mr. Vice President?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't think they have much chance, sir.

MR. WELLS: Mr. Vice President, what GOP gains do you expect in the Senate with 34 Senators up for reelection?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think it is generally conceded that the GOP would have less chance to gain in the Senate than they would in the House. Most of the Senate seats look rather secure, and I doubt that there will be much change either way in the Senate. So I'd have to answer your question by saying that any change would be very modest one way or another, and I don't see any particular big change.

MR. WELLS: But we are going to see some new faces in the Senate? Through retirement and otherwise.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, we have what is it three Senators, I believe, that have announced their retirements, three very distinguished Senators.

MR. WELLS: And finally, Mr. Vice President, you were a Presidential candidate in 1960. Can we expect you to run again for the Presidency in 1972, and if so, why?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I'm a much better historian than I am a prophet, particularly when it comes to my own well being. I don't make any prognostications or plans for my political life beyond the election of 1968. I hope that I can be helpful in that election, and trust that I may have the opportunity to carry the message of this Administration to the people. 1972 is four years away, and my goodness what can happen in this changing world in four years is more than I can find words to describe.

MR. WELLS: Would you like to be President?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think I'll let you ask that question to me some years later.

MR. WELLS: Thank you very much, Vice President Humphrey. You have just listened to a REPORT TO THE PEOPLE by the Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey. This is Linton Wells in Washington.



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