

Vice President's Remarks

National Committee for the Nomination of Hubert Humphrey

New York City -- May 6, 1968

With the people of this
"To form a more perfect
union,
Establish Justice,
Insure Domestic Tran-
quility, Provide for the Comm-
Defense
Promote the General Welfare,
Secure the blessing of
Liberty to ourselves and
our Posterity
Do ordain & Declare

John F. Kennedy
Jack Connor } committee
with the people of
"In order to form a more perfect
union, insure Domestic
Tranquility, Provide for the
Common Defense
The People
Reason
Responsibility and
Responsibility
The Revolution of '68
Amer. Dream
Participation - from
Voting Rts - Negro
Business & Govt
NAB
Rehabilitation Cities &
People.

KNAPP & BERSON

660 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021

RE: Announcement of the Formation of the
National Committee for the Nomination
of Hubert Humphrey, 12 o'clock noon
on May 6, 1968, Hunt Room, "21" Club,
New York City.



Transcribed by

DICT-A-MATIC Corporation

565-0350

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

5/6/68

RECORDED AT "21"

(John Loeb)

VOICE:.....John Connor and I are co-chairmen of the committee. He is an independent Democrat. I am an independent Republican. The committee which is still in formation represents men of varied interests and different political affiliations. We have joined together to work for the nomination of Hubert Humphrey for the Presidency, because we believe he is the best qualified candidate.

In Hubert Humphrey, we see a man of wisdom, maturity, intellectual capacity and proven ability to act across the board for young and old. He is, in fact, a man of all ages. He is a tested leader who can unite our people and get along with the unfinished business of our country.

Mr. Vice-President, we are honored and pleased to have you with us today.

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you.

APPLAUSE

Thank you very much Sir..friend John Loeb and Jack Connor, members of the committee, members of the press, radio and television and friends that are gathered here. You know, you'd just as well to get accustomed to the ordeal of politics which is that you eat when you can and you speak when you can and you meet when you can. And in this instance, you're going to have to take the bitter before the sweet. You will have to listen to me before you have your meal. But I have

sufficient sensitivity to know that there is a limit to anyone's patience, particularly, when you are in the "21" Club. And you ought to have the very best of food..and you will have..and the finest of service.

So I shall try to direct my remarks very briefly to you. Everyone in this room with few exceptions knows me. And I think with few exceptions I know you. We're not here engaged in the business of forming new images. Nor are we here in the business of trying to design a new personality. We are what we are! And we do with what we have! And we try to think of the future rather than to have nostalgic memory of the past.

I am very honored to have the support of these two distinguished gentlemen, who have today announced the formation of the National Committee for the Nomination of Hubert Humphrey. I am singularly honored to have their support and their leadership, and the other members of the committee. They were just kind enough to give me a copy of their release related to this committee..and I know that the committee is in formation, that ^{but} it will grow and expand with some of the finest citizens of this country are already signed up as participants and active supporters. Participants in the committee and active supporters of the candidacy of Vice-President Hubert Humphrey.

I am very grateful..and I'm humbly grateful and I want each and every one of them to know my very sincere appreciation.

I've traveled a good deal about this nation for better than twenty years, as a public servant. I believe that I am acquainted with the American family. I've had the privilege of dining in such magnificent surroundings as the Hunt Room of the "21" Club and I have also dined in the slums in the hollows and the hills..slums of our great cities..and the hollows and the hills of Appalachia. I think I have met the rich and the poor, the white and the black, the privileged and the underprivileged. This is all a ~~part~~ of the American family.

So as one looks ahead to a role..an increased role of leadership in this nation, you have to ask yourself, do you know your country. Do you know the hopes and the aspirations of the people. Do you know their sorrows. Do you know their pain. And I would hope that in these twenty-three years now of public service, first as a mayor, secondly as a Senator, thirdly, as a Vice-President..and above all, as a citizen, that I have had the opportunity to know the hopes and the aspirations, the pleasures and the pain, the sorrows and the joys of our people.

I've been in all fifty states of this union since I've been Vice-President. I've been in over 600 of the cities of this great United States of America. I've been with the rural people and the urban people. I've been privileged to be the

liaison of the President of the United States with the mayors of our great cities. I have met with them, practically all of them. And I've worked very closely with the local government officials and governors.

I've also had the privilege of working with our friends in business..or they wouldn't be here. Yes, I have talked to the smallest businessman in America, running a little drugstore, namely, maybe, myself. And I have addressed the New York Stock Exchange, in the confines of their own conference room. I've had the privilege of traveling overseas into Asia and Africa, into Latin America, into Europe. Not just as a junketeer, but as a representative of this nation, to meet with the leaders of the great powers, to meet with the leaders of the developing countries.

I consider all of this as an education, or should I put it, as a period of preparation for service...for service. Because after all, that's what public life is all about..service! Not privilege, not luxury, no special benefits, but service! And when you dedicate yourself to public life, you dedicate yourself to service--unless you have only selfish ambition. And I don't think that men that design, desire to be President of the United States, or announce their candidacy for that are selfish men. As a matter of fact, you'd better be very selfless, because that's what the nation needs.

This country of ours is going through the most difficult period in its history, since the war between the states. And it's going the period..of hist..going through this experience very much for the same reason. Because, the war between the states was the violent culmination of a great social change. We are now going through another period, filled with turbulence and ferment and tension and sometimes violence, which is indicative of a basic change in the political, economic and social structure of our society.

What is its..what are the many reasons? We have not the time today. Science and technology has surely played its part. The radio, television, the press, the automobile have surely played their part. The mobility of our people.. the energies released at the end of World War II, the abolition of colonialism in its traditional forms, the rise of people asking for their day in the sun. In other words, to be heard, to participate. These are the changes that are taking place. There's really a change taking place in terms of human emancipation, and you know how strongly I believe this.

I believe, in fact, if it didn't sound too dogmatic, I would say, I know! But let me settle for saying, I believe that the forces of freedom, of emancipation, are on the ascendency, and as these forces break through the old crust and the old brick and mortar of a bygone age, there's trouble. And we sense it and see it. And we see it more than we've ever seen

before because of what I see over there.

A picture is worth 10,000 words. And as I used to say jokingly and somewhat truthfully to my friends of the White House Photographers Association..if you fellows had taken more pictures, my speeches would have been shorter.

(laughter)

But...the camera, the lens is the X-ray of the social structure. And people today communicate more readily than they ever did before and ideas leap over the walls of the past. And we're going through a period of tremendous change. The only question is...there's no doubt about the change..the question is, what will it lead to? And what it will lead to is dependent in a large measure on how these forces are conditioned and directed. Will they run helter-skelter? Will there be no sense of leadership? Will they just find their way through destruction? Or will they be directed and will they be counseled and will they be conditioned for constructive purpose.

I think the answer is that they can be conditioned. They can be directed. They can be managed for constructive purpose. Which leads me to this: In order to build a better America, you do not destroy that which you have. You do not destroy the institutions that have benefited so many for so long. What you seek to do is to improve those institutions, to modify them, to adjust them to the greater needs. You know my philosophy. You know that I feel that democracy is an

unending business. You know that I feel that the American Revolution is the unfinished business of this century. You know that I feel that you and I shall not live long enough to see its fulfillment. But I do think that every generation has an obligation to add on to its heritage.

I can think of nothing worse than those who inherit great blessings and corrupt those blessings or just abuse and use them to their selfish purpose. So what I seek to do, as a candidate and as a citizen and as Vice-President, because I am Vice-President and will be Vice-President until January the 20th, 1969, God willing...what I seek to do is to help mold the institutions of American life and the forces of American life, the strength of American life, in such a fashion that more and more of our people will have every benefit of this society. I believe in full opportunity! I believe in expanding participation in the economic, social and political life of this nation! And I believe it's happening.

I do not believe that America is sick. I think that America is showing life! I think it is showing all the signs of maturity. It is leaving the age of innocence and adolescence and coming into its maturity. And anyone that knows anything at all about life, or human behavior, knows that these are always very turbulent experiences. And what is an experience of an individual is an experience of a nation, because a nation

is made up of individuals, particularly, our nation.

So let me just put it this way. I've jotted down a few notes here and I'm not going to keep you long. The basics...the basics..that's what we need to think about and build on. Now I used to be a teacher of American government. I've sometimes said that I felt I owed all my students a refund, after having been in government for these years. But I am a teacher of American government and I think I'm a better teacher now than I ever was before because I have lived the experience of government and have tried to learn.

Every American ought to remember that the basic document of this government, the Constitution~~of~~ the United States is not a piece of history. It may be presently preserved under the most careful conditions in the archives. But what it is is a living instrument. It's written in the present, not in the past. It doesn't say, "We, the people"..did. It says, "We, the people"...do. That's we, the people, now! This ...these people, in this room..and our children and those who come after them. And that basic document represents two things above all..the aspiration of mankind for law and order and for social progress. How can we have progress with order and how can we have order with progress. And those who (SOMETHING WENT WRONG WITH TAPE...NOT RECORDING)..of these United States, and then it goes on to state the purposes.

What are the purposes? What are our purposes?

What do they continue to be?...to form a more perfect union. It didn't say it was perfect. It said, we will form a more perfect union. We'll do it every day.

Secondly, to establish justice. It didn't say we had it. And we don't have it now. But it says that we will seek to establish justice...in our time..in each generation.

To insure domestic tranquility...Surely, there was no domestic tranquility when the Constitution was written. There was more violence then than there is today, if you're any students of history. There were open rebellions in the nation. And I'd even name them, except the Irish might get angry with me..(LAUGHTER)..if I were to name them. But there were open rebellions. But the purpose was to challenge each generation to insure domestic tranquility, to provide for the common defense, of course! To promote the general welfare..of course! And we've been busily engaged in that. And we redefine what we mean every generation..and by the general welfare.

For example, it is our view in this time that the general welfare really means opportunity rather than the traditional phrase "welfare". If there's any one thing that needs to be changed in this country, it is the definition of "welfare". Because welfare is not the rich just expressing charity for the poor. It is not the poor being the supplicants of the rich.

Welfare means each individual standing in his own dignity and full opportunity, earning, learning, participating. That's the only kind of welfare that this nation ought to endorse. Now when it comes to the crippled and the handicapped, when it comes to those who have no hope of making their own, then indeed a rich and a strong nation ought to be extremely compassionate..wholly compassionate.

But the final words of this basic document are to "secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity. That's quite an order..quite an order! And that's what we're trying to do now. There is no freedom for a man that is ignorant, illiterate and unskilled. There is no equal job opportunity for a man that has no skill, even though the jobs are open. I read in your press here, this city, this morning.. where there were 35,000 jobs open, begging in New York City.. and 165,000 unemployed. We're trying to match jobs with people. Well this is something that you're involved in and now..this.

I think there's a revitalization of democracy in our country. These notes I just hastily jotted down in the last five minutes. There is a revitalization. And let us not be cynical about it. I might just preach a moment. If there's any one thing that's needed in America today, it's the abolition of cynicism. We've been too cynical because we've been too affluent. An abolition of skepticism. You do not prove yourself to be an intelligent man because you're a cynic or a skeptic.

You may prove yourself to be only exposing your own inadequacies. There's a reason for confidence in this nation. There's a reason for optimism. And I have no illusions about our problems. I live with them, daily..and have. And what is more, I've had to come to grips with them. I've had to be in charge of a police department. I've had to manage legislation through the Congress. I've had to face angry audiences. I've been a teacher. I've had to work with students. This is not theory with Hubert Humphrey. This is my life!

I've sat in the counsels of this government when great decisions were made. So I know that it's not easy. But I know this..that there's more participation today in America, in the decision-making processes of this country by more people than ever before. Poor people, rich people, students, Negroes, ethnic groups...there's more participation than ever before. There's not just government for the people, there's more government of the people and by the people than ever before.

There's less poverty in this country than ever before. And it isn't because just of government. It's because of our system, our enterprise system..John..and Jack..An enterprise system which some people have enjoyed pooh-poohing..laughing at, ridiculing..an enterprise system that has given more benefits, more profits, more rewards, has more incentives, and yet has more compassion than any enterprise system in the world.

And may I say I think that statement can be defended without fear of contradiction. The voting rights of people is another sign of our participation. The business and government in partnership. And I'll leave you with this: that many an American businessman has prided himself on calling himself a conservative. He deceives himself by that title and he deceives his associates. An economy that provides the benefits that this nation has provided is not, in the traditional sense, a conservative. He is a progressive.

There are more benefits by accident out of our enterprise system, than there is by premeditation out of some of the state controlled systems. You see, we're not engaged in building a welfare state in this country. We're engaged in building a state of opportunity..expanded opportunity. And I want to compliment the men in this room from business who are presently today working in our national alliance of businessmen for jobs. I want to compliment the members of the Urban Coalition.

What does this all add up to, in simple terms? It adds up to a partnership between their government and their enterprise..the two governments..the governments of the public sector, in a sense, and the government of the private sector. The great federalism of the private economy and the public economy. And it's working! It's working! We're trying it.

We're experimenting. We're not dogmatists. We have no doctrinaire philosophy here. We're in a sense, pragmatists with great ideals and we have a lot of it.

Now it's for these reasons that I believe that this country can be united. And I know this. That unless we can unite this country, at least have a unity of spirit, we cannot accomplish anything that we need to at home or abroad. We have to rebuild our cities and I shall speak to you about these things in specifics. We will lay for it a program in the weeks and months ahead in specific detail about the urgent needs of better education and how we improve it's quality. How you rebuild a city so that it is a living institution rather than a dying institution...how you brighten the countryside to give people an honest choice in this country, as to where they want to live. We shall be talking about these things and not only talking--proposing.

And we can develop a better understanding among nations. How we can involve in a greater measure the role of private capital in development because remember this, that development is the new name for peace..said Pope Paul..and he's right. Development! The new name for peace. Development at home, in the ghettos, development abroad in the developing countries. There isn't any peace just because you write about it or I talk about it. There's only peace when you build the foundation stones that make possible the citadel of peace.

I've been engaged in the peace business a long time. I'm going to be engaged in it more. And what I think we want to do above all is not only to emphasize the weaknesses of America, which is no real discovery. We have many people that have prided themselves in portraying the weaknesses of this nation as if this demonstrated that they were brilliant scholars of the social scene. What kind of a doctor would you think it was..or what kind of a doctor would yours be, if all he told you was of your limitations. What kind of hope would you have if every time you walked into that office, he spent all of his time just telling you of the unbelievable problems that you have.

The greatest healer of them all said, heal thyself. And I think that we need to do a little healing. And I think we need to understand not only our weaknesses which we surely should and must, but we also ought to inventory our strengths. I started taking inventory in a little business when I was eleven years old. And I've been taking inventory every since. And I've taken inventory of this nation and I can say to this audience, that this nation today has more assets, more knowhow, more resources, more capacity to do good, to remedy it's own problems, to solve its own ills, than any nation in the history of the world.

And I say to you that if we can't solve our problems with what we have here, what makes you think you can solve problems any place else. And for those that preach peace for the world, let me suggest that you've got to show that you

can produce peace at home.

Precept an example. This is why I'm in this campaign. I'm not in it because it's easy. I'm not in it because I just want to win. There are many ways to win. Some of those ways I have already repudiated. We will not win this campaign by demagoguery and we will not win this campaign by promising things that we can't deliver. And I'm not going to win this campaign by arousing people's passions of hate, and of devisiveness. We're going to win this campaign -- win this nomination -- and I am! -- and we're going to win this election by mobilizing the spiritual, the political, the economic and the social strength of this nation, getting people to see themselves as they are. And to see this country as it is. And then getting down to the business of tackling our problems..all of which can be tackled..all of which we can solve...Not instantly!...But we can start to solve them. And that's what's important. The beginnings.

Thank you very much.

APPLAUSE

(John Loch)
VOICE: Thank you very much Mr. Vice-President. Now we're going to have lunch. I'm sure you'll be pleased...

APPLAUSE AND SHOUTING FOR MR. HUMPHREY

VOICE: Mr. Humphrey..are you encouraged by the showing of the latest Harris Poll which now gives you 38%?...11%..

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Very much so. It's very encouraging. Thank you...very encouraging...

MORE APPLAUSE...

-16-

Thank you all very much..thank you..good to see you
again..thank you.

(GENERAL NOISE OF CROWDS)

END OF TAPE



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