

INTERVIEW OF VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY -- By
Ted Bryant, News Editor, King Television
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QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, John Kennedy once said that a prime responsibility of the President is to lay before the people the unfinished business of the country. What is the unfinished business of the country at this time?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, there are two areas in which I would cite unfinished business. One, of course, is the war in Viet Nam, which relates to more than just Viet Nam, but the whole matter of international peace, the reduction of tensions, starting, of course, with hopefully finding a way to bring this war to an end.

The second, I would say, is the unfinished business of opening the doors of opportunity to millions of Americans that yet live in conditions of poverty and deprivation, that suffer from illiteracy and a sense of helplessness, that are victims of unemployment and poor education. We are working on both and on the latter, particularly on the areas of deprivation. I think we have made some significant breakthroughs.

And insofar as the war is concerned, thank goodness the negotiations are underway in Paris. I happen to believe this is a reassuring development.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you have indicated that the Democratic Platform suggests that it would be well to take what is called a calculated risk in order to try to bring the war to a conclusion in Viet Nam. Do you consider calling a halt to the bombing in North Viet Nam such a calculated risk? Do you expect if that is the case, to persuade the President to do that soon?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: This has been the subject, of course, of considerable discussion in the Administration as you can well imagine. People hold points of view on a certain subject as significant, such as the cessation of the bombing. That is a military matter, but it also relates to negotiations. The Platform says that peace, the search for peace involves risk, and that some calculated risks you must be willing to take. The purpose of that section of the platform is to remind us that peace keeping, the search for peace is an uncertain one and you can't quite be sure how successful you will be. But you ought to be willing to take whatever steps seem prudent and wise at the moment.

We in the Platform, and I by the way supported the Democratic Platform, I took the pledge when I became the nominee of my party. That Platform contains what I consider the formula for a systematic approach to the successful conclusion of this war or to a political settlement, a negotiated settlement of this war. It says we should cease the bombing. That is where you start. But cease the bombing at a time when it does not impair or in any way bring serious injury to our troops and to take into consideration a response from Hanoi.

Now, that leaves Mr. President a great deal of flexibility. No

president would cease the bombing if he thought that in so doing, he would leave his own troops, the troops of this nation, at the mercy of the enemy. That means, of course, that a cessation of bombing must have, the president if he were to do that must have some feeling that there would not be massive forces move across or large numbers of forces move on our troops in the South.

QUESTION: You are talking about a definite response in advance of any such action from Hanoi, is that right?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I am first talking about the subjective judgment of the president in light of the information that he might receive from his commanders and from the intelligence sources. Would a cessation of the bombing first of all seriously impair the safety of the troops? That has to be a subjective judgment.

Secondly, would it contribute to the negotiations that lead to a political settlement? Again that has to be a subjective judgment made by the president.

Thirdly, you would make that decision of cessation if you had some feeling, some way, some indication, direct or indirect, that there would be a response from Hanoi that they would continue the negotiations and that they would seek to find some way to move those negotiations along. That is what it is all about. There is no argument about the desirability of ceasing the bombing. It is desirable to have the cessation of the bombing if such cessation will move the negotiations along to some kind of conclusion such as a cease fire or an armistice so that you can talk and make a final political settlement.

QUESTION: At this point it is your subjective judgment that these conditions do not exist, is that correct?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: That is the judgment of the president and that is the judgment he gets from his advisers. And as I have said, as I said to the City Club here in Portland, if I become president, and I like to put it "when I become president," I would, of course, take a complete reassessment of the situation in Viet Nam, military, diplomatic. I would have to find out what I am dealing with, then I would have to make my own subjective judgment or objective judgment on the basis of that information. Nobody can predict what that information is going to be in January.

QUESTION: In the meantime, you are not trying to convince the President with the information that he has to take such an action now?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have always felt that my conversations I have with the President in the Security Council are matters of privacy. I think the matter of cessation of bombing has to be judged by the Commander in Chief.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, Mr. Nixon said in St. Louis yesterday that if Congress would suspend Section 315, he would debate you, despite some advice he might have got from his aides, remembering 1960. He also said that this is a two-party country, that the third party doesn't count and that he would exclude

Mr. Wallace from such a confrontation. Would you exclude Mr. Wallace?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have wanted very much to have open discussion of the issues in this campaign with Mr. Nixon and I am also prepared, of course, to discuss this with Mr. Wallace. He is an active candidate, Mr. Wallace, whether we like it or not. I don't like his candidacy in the sense that I believe it is unhealthy for this country. But he is a candidate and he gets a rather substantial percentage in the national polls that are taken. I don't think we can ignore him.

I would like to see Section 315 amended so that we could have the debates on the basis of the leading candidates of the two major parties. But in the meantime, if that doesn't happen, I see nothing wrong in having three men, just as I look upon you here, the three in front of me, standing on the same platform, presenting their points of view on a particular series of subjects. It wouldn't be as desirable to me as a two-man discussion or debate, but I see nothing particularly wrong in having all three.

For example, let us say that we had the topic before us of economic policy for the next four years. Let each of the three of us present our point of view with equal time to each of us and then let us cross-examine each other and let us have questions from the audience. I believe that the issues before us are so complex, really they are so crucial -- issues of race relations, of economic policy, of foreign policy, of arms control, of what are we going to do about the poor in this country, problems of our educational system -- there are some of them that the American people are entitled to know the thinking of those who seek this high office.

Now, there are three viable candidates, three national candidates today for this office. And I see nothing wrong, in fact, I see much that is right in having each of us, all three of us, discussing these matters. I would prefer that it were the two, but if that can't work out, then why not have a municipality, for example, set up a bipartisan sponsoring group and invite the three of us to come and have it televised. National television today can perform a great educational service to this country.

QUESTION: Do you think that there is a possibility that Mr. Wallace has enough influence that it might possibly put the election into the House?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I have read that. I think it is too early to really predict. That is within the realm of possibility. But I expect to get enough electoral votes so that we won't have to bother the House of Representatives.

QUESTION: Mr. Humphrey, I'm not intruding on any private conversations you have had in the Security Council with the President or with anybody else, but yesterday in San Francisco, I believe, you talked about the need for collective action.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes.

QUESTION: Instead of unilateral action in future world

difficulties such as Viet Nam. Would you say, then, that we perhaps made a mistake in unilaterally going into Viet Nam by slow progressions since -- 1954 and since?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I doubt that I can give an honest judgment of that. This decision was vitiated in a sense by Dwight Eisenhower in 1954 when we started offering military assistance and what we called advisers to the Government of South Viet Nam. It was then implemented further by John Kennedy by the special forces that went into Viet Nam and got up to the number of 25,000, 30,000. And then when the country of South Viet Nam looked like it would collapse, it was implemented by U. S. air power in February 1965 and it just sort of grew. I think only history can give you an honest judgment on that.

I really believe that if I were put to the test now and were to have to answer that just from my limited perspective of history, I would say that to have failed to resist aggression in Southeast Asia might have seriously distorted the power balance of the world and caused great repercussions for the bad.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. Southeast Asia today is a more stable area than it was five years ago. I think that is primarily true because of our presence there and if we will take a look at Viet Nam in the broader perspective rather than looking upon it just as a segment or as the central focal point, I think we get a better understanding of what we have been doing. Indonesia today is a free country. A few years ago, three years ago, 2-1/2 years ago, it was in the clutches literally of the Communist Party from Peking-oriented Chinese Communist influence. Sukarno was in charge, but the country was going fast over to the Communist side. And the whole country was being dominated by the Communists.

Today that is not the case and the leaders in Indonesia are the first to acknowledge that our presence in Viet Nam has been of substantial help in stabilizing that area and permitting them to take their own action to purge the country of Communism.

The same thing is true of Malaysia and of Thailand and Singapore. Those areas are much more stable today because we were there. There is a great feeling of confidence and there is great progress being made in some of these areas, regional cooperation on education and on health matters, on economic policy, yes even in political policy. Meetings have been held in Bangkok and in Seoul, Korea, and in Manila. Things are happening which are good. The Mekong River for the first time is being developed. Laos today has at least the hope of its own freedom and so does Cambodia.

The Prime Minister of Laos once told me, Souvanna Phouma, who was once almost chastised by the West for being almost a Communist sympathizer, he became in 1942 the Prime Minister. He told me if the U.S. were to withdraw from South Viet Nam, there would be no Laos. He is close to it. His country's life is at stake. By and large, I would say our decision to come, to be of help, was a sound decision.

As I say, that is my limited judgment, but only history can decide it. No one dreamed we would ever be this involved. No one could

have foreseen it. Now the problem, as I see it, is to de-Americanize this struggle, hopefully, to de-escalate it. We have made a very substantial move toward that by a unilateral reduction of bombing. I think the population ought to know that 98 percent of the area of North Viet Nam is absolutely bomb free. 78 percent of the area is bomb free. All of South Viet Nam is under attack by North Viet Nam and the Vietcong. We have made a very substantial contribution to the process of peace and we have the negotiations going on in Paris. That is much different than it was a year ago.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, we have reached the halfway point in this campaign. During the past week, some of your representatives have been trying in Washington State to bring the McCarthy forces actively into your campaign -- the people that have rung the door bells, done the mailings and been out working in the field for Mr. McCarthy. The leaders, however, for McCarthy in Washington State say while the voters will probably vote for you, they will not try to see to it that they do, that they do not plan to engage in your campaign unless there is a change in your stand on Viet Nam, specifically that the bombing in North Viet Nam should end.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I am sorry about that, because I know Senator McCarthy and I know him well and the objectives Mr. McCarthy seeks will not be fulfilled by either the election of Mr. Nixon or Mr. Wallace. I do believe that people who want to see a more peaceful world and who would like to see social progress in this country have to settle down now and make some hard choices.

I suppose none of us is all that everybody would like, but you are not choosing between perfection and imperfection. You are making a choice between alternatives. I have spent a lifetime in the cause of peace. If peace is the issue, then I think I am the candidate that would justify their support.

The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which was surely a step toward peace, I fought for that when very few others were willing to take a stand. The Peace Corps -- this was my idea, my legislation. I authored it under President Kennedy's Administration. The U. S. Disarmament Agency and the Senate Disarmament Subcommittee -- these are my proposals. The Food for Peace Program, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is presently before the Senate, I went to Europe to help negotiate that treaty, to perfect it, a little over a year ago. I think this is one of the major building blocks in the hope for peace in this world.

Mr. Nixon, by the way, says he is for that treaty, but he doesn't think we ought to ratify it now. I think that is most unfortunate. We may miss the opportunity on this treaty. And if we do, nuclear weapons are going to spread throughout this world into a half dozen or a dozen or more countries and the level of danger is going to be raised, the possibility of some erratic act by some leader in some country could precipitate a nuclear conflict.

I am a peace man. I always have been. I believed in a political settlement in the war in Viet Nam, but a peace man does not ignore violence, any more than a man who believes in law and order in your city can permit violence to take place in your street and have wanton destruction. That doesn't mean you are for peace.

It means you are ignoring realities.

What's going to happen? I believe most of the McCarthy people are going to support us. Most of the Bobby Kennedy people, as you know, are active in our support and giving tremendous help to me.

All my appeal to the young people is take a look at a man's record. Not only take a look at a man's record, but take a look at the alternatives. I don't think a single objective of Eugene McCarthy, domestic or foreign, will be realized by the election of Richard Nixon. I think that all of them can be realized by my election.

QUESTION: You need, however, the practical support of these McCarthy people here in substantial numbers in this part of the country.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes.

QUESTION: Do you need them in order to win in Washington and in Oregon?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I surely want them. I want them. Whether one needs them to win, maybe you are a better judge of that than I am because you are closer to it here. I surely want them. I think I need them, I would like to need them and I would like to have them, because I believe we have the same purposes at heart.

QUESTION: There is a report that Senator McCarthy may offer his public endorsement of your candidacy in the coming week. Is there any truth to that, or do you know?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have no specific information. I hope so. We have been life long friends, we have worked together in the vineyards of democracy for 20 years. We built together the D-F-L. Our voting record in Congress is so much alike they could call us the Siamese twins. I can't believe that Senator McCarthy would want Mr. Nixon to be elected or Mr. Wallace. I don't think Senator McCarthy is going to ride it out, so to speak, because sometimes the acts of omission are more significant than the acts of commission and I have a feeling that this man of principle and of conviction is going to speak up for the kind of world that he wants, and I believe and hope that he would find the possibilities of that world better served in my candidacy, in my election.

QUESTION: Would you consider appointing Senator McCarthy to your Cabinet if you are elected?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have the highest regard for Senator McCarthy. I have not gone around making Cabinet suggestions. But surely he would not be ruled out.

QUESTION: Secretary of State, for instance?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have not ruled him out of anything.

QUESTION: You spoke a moment ago about destruction of our cities,

the crisis of our cities.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the insurgence and the obvious irritation at the Administration now in office for young people?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Some young people. You know, I have been to over a hundred college campuses since I have been Vice President and I have been to many since I have been a candidate for the office of President. I get a fine and wonderful reception, sometimes thunderous ovations from the young people at those campuses. To be sure, that seldom gets you the publicity. It is that 25 that walk out, the hundred that walk out of a meeting of 5,000. And of course, another hundred immediately comes in to take their seats.

But it is the unusual. You men are in news, just like I am in politics and it is the unusual things in politics that attract my attention and it is the unusual things in human behavior that attracts what we call the news attention. I am not being critical. It is just one of the simple facts of life.

I happen to believe that most young people today are sensible, they are highly idealistic, thank goodness. They are concerned about the country and the world in which they live, and they well should be. I think they can find hope in my candidacy. I have worked with young people all my life. I brought them into politics. Most of the men today from my part of America, from out in the Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, South Dakota part of the nation, and North Dakota, are people that I have worked with. I helped bring George McGovern, for example, into politics, supported him as a young man, Orville Freeman, Don Fraser. These are young men and my Congressman, Joe Karth, these are young people. Eugene McCarthy, I was with him. We grew up together as young men in politics.

QUESTION: What firm position would you take, though, on handling that small percentage that is riotous and --

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I appreciate your defining the question a little bit more for me. That group are not Democrats with a small "d." There is a handful of hard-core militant provocators and agitators in this country that for all practical purposes are anti-everything. I don't know what they believe in. They are anarchists and nihilists. They have little or no, and they say so, confidence in any of our institutions and some of them have said they would like to see them destroyed and build something anew. I don't know what they have in mind. That group doesn't represent the young people of America. Many of them aren't very young, as a matter of fact. Some of them are not surely what you would call college students. For the few that are, they shame the college that they come from and they surely shame themselves.

I want them to know, this handful, that their practices are beyond what we call the standards of freedom. I noticed that the Civil Liberties Union has condemned these practices now. The Civil Liberties group is very democratic, very. You know of their boldness in defending all types of freedom, personal

freedom. But people that heckle, harass, use vulgarity to stop a man from speaking, they do not believe in free speech.

I believe in free speech. I believe that a man has a right to be heard even if he isn't taken seriously. I believe that George Wallace, Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, are entitled to be heard. In fact, they ought to be heard together as I said awhile ago, one at a time or in pairs, however you wish to put it. I believe any government or any group that abridges the right of free speech is dangerous. I believe any government or any group that abridges or violates the right of freedom of peaceful assembly is dangerous and bad for this country. When this group says they are going to sit down in the voting booths and prevent people from voting and they are going to force the police to drag them out, these are little Hitler Youth. They are storm troops. They are Fascists. They are not Americans in the sense of democrats with a small "d." They have given up any faith at all in the democratic process and they ought to be condemned as such and I so do.

QUESTION: We have four minutes left, Mr. Vice President. I wonder if the Democratic Party is not so disunited in these divisive times as to be incapable of governing the country if it does elect a president?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Not at all. I don't believe that for a single minute. I think what happened at the Democratic Convention despite the arguments and the open controversy was a healthy thing for our Party and our country. You saw in that Convention -- I am speaking of in the convention hall -- what happened outside we can all deplore. It was a tragedy. But what happened inside that Convention and in committees I think was all to the good. Arguments were propounded, debates were held, time was divided, the rules of the convention were changed and the rules for our Party, to democratize it, were improved. I think this convention will go down for purposes of American government and American political parties instruction and study as one of the historic conventions, equal to the one of 1948 when we had the civil rights plank.

Now, we Democrats have a tendency to kind of feud and sometimes it gets a little worse than others. It was that way in 1948. It was that way in 1960, and it has been that way even in the Adlai Stevenson-Kefauver days. There were bitter arguments in the Party, as you know. Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose. Most of the times we have won.

I notice a coming back now, a regrouping of Democrats. As I said, what happened was healthy, because this new spirit, this new feeling, these new voices of these new young people are exactly what this Party needs. It reawakens it, gives it a sense of idealism. It gives it a freshness of an approach. Surely, it will be a little abrasive for awhile. I have had some people come to me and say, Mr. Humphrey, I am with you. I will work my heart out for you and I will see a Kennedy button or a McCarthy button on them. And I am very pleased to have them.

I have noticed as I have gone around this country lately how much the desire is now for our people to really buckle down to the task. They do not want Mr. Nixon as President, they surely do not

want Mr. Wallace. I am going to do my level best to win their confidence.

QUESTION: Would you favor a national primary for the election of the nominee?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have been for that. There are some complexities. But on balance, yes. I would like to come to some kind of an agreement on how we are going to finance these campaigns. Quite frankly, the cost of campaigning is getting out of hand. It really and truly is. I have had serious financial problems in this campaign, I want you to know that. I am going to be frank with the public. We haven't had a television spot from August 20 until two nights ago. We just didn't have it, because we didn't have the money. When you have to spend \$15 million, \$10 million, whatever you have to spend, just on media alone, that is too much. That is why I have suggested and the TV stations are perfectly willing, I have suggested that we have these debates where the public service time of the television networks is made available. To the everlasting credit of the television stations, they want to do this. The only problem is in the candidates. I am ready. I think Mr. Nixon ought not to call this kid stuff, as he said about my proposal. This is mature stuff. An American electorate is making a critical decision in 1968 -- on domestic policy, foreign policy, equal opportunity, race relations and the American people ought to share in this. It ought not to be a circus, it ought to be a seminar.

QUESTION: I am sorry, Mr. Vice President. Our time is up.

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