

REMARKS OF
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS COLLEGE ROTC

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Clayton, Missouri
Wednesday, October 16, 1968

Brother Baldwin and Cadet Cantwell and officers and men of this brigade, and the students of the Christian Brothers College, this is a wonderful, wonderful privilege for me this morning. It sort of brightens my day. Every day is a hard working day and each morning I always look forward to something that sort of brightens that day and makes it, gets it off to a good start, and you have helped me with that this morning.

I said to Brother Baldwin when I was privileged to meet him that I was wondering whether or not he was the same Brother Baldwin that I had once met and known in St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota. I thought possibly, you know, that he had moved out because I hadn't been to St. Mary's for some time. But he reassured me that he was your Brother Baldwin, and not ours in Minnesota. And I am very happy to have the privilege of meeting him and of saying hello to those who are responsible here for the faculty and administration of this excellent institution of education.

One other word. Three of my sons attended a school similar to the known as Shattuck Academy, Faribault, Minnesota, and many is the time that I watched my boys in uniform just as I see you here today. My oldest son, who is in the position, Mr. Cantwell, that you now occupy, my youngest son was a member of their track squad which was really top grade. I don't want to compare but he said it was the best. We will take his word for it, I am sure. And my second son was one of the officers, so I have a feeling of some comradeship here with what you are doing and what your school stands for.

I met a gentleman here as I came in, several of them in fact, one gentleman that had been here many years, a member of this faculty, and I met a very delightful man that has the most appealing nickname, first of all, he has a very appropriate surname, he has the name Christian. Then he has that delightful name The Bear. I don't know how you boys tag him but there must be some reason for it.

I want to conclude my note this morning by asking you to keep one thing in mind. As we stand here together, as we have paid our respects to our country, to our flag, I think it would be good to recall the many blessings that are ours. I have never seen a man yet that cursed our country, that complained about it, that ever named to me another country that he wanted to go to. Whenever you say which trip would you like to make and where would you like to go, he seems to run short of travel programs.

We have a great country and we have got to take care of it. We are in the process of nurturing and taking care of that country in an election year.

Now, out of all the fuss and fury of an election year there come a few kernels of truth and it is for you and your parents and your associates to try to find those kernels of truth, but may I say in the words of Winston Churchill, democracy is the worst possible form of government, except all others that have ever been tried. Or to put it in the affirmative, there are none that are better and there has never been any that has been as great a challenge to civilized man and we in this time and place are facing the challenge to see whether or not we can develop a society in which we can trust each other, a society in which we can have respect for one another, a society in which we will judge men on the basis of merit, not on the basis of their name or their background or their race or their ethnic origin. We are really doing something that no other country has ever been able to do, and it is still

undecided as to whether we can do it.

I think we can. And I hope that this school will help set the example of proving that we can live together as a family of Americans in community rather than in enmity, and live together as neighbors and not as enemies, live together in confidence and not in suspicion, live together in hope and not in despair. And I must say that there is no generation that has a better chance of proving this than the one that I am looking at right now and if you can't prove it, then we have lost, not only for ourselves but for all mankind.

I want to wish you well. I am glad you are standing at parade rest. It is not nearly as difficult as standing at attention, and now as far as I am concerned, you have made my day.

I thank you very, very much.

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REMARKS OF
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
Q&A SESSION, CHRISTIAN BROTHERS
COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

- - -

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Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Brother Baldwin, first I want to thank you very sincerely and with deep gratitude for your willingness to permit us to have the use of this fine auditorium, this gymnasium

(Laughter)

Well, it has the odor of victory. That is why I like it.

(Applause) (Whistles)

I want to thank you so much not only for the courtesy that you have extended us here in this facility but also for having the young men of the brigade, the Cadet Corps, on parade for us. It was my privilege to meet with the officers and men and with certain members of your faculty. As I indicated outside,, I am somewhat accustomed to this sort of school. Three of my sons went through the same experience and I guess I was a member of the PTA. So, we have had all the experiences that come with the great institution of education such as Christian Brothers College.

I was awfully pleased, may I say, to not only shake the hand but I held the hand of Coach Robert Christian, knowing that he is an American government teacher, knowing that he has had an amazing record of success here at the school, and even if they do call him Bear, I want to say that I think he is bullish. I believe that the market trend is up, Coach, both for you and for me. You had one little touch up here the other day. That just sort of makes you appreciate the flavor of victory when it returns to you.

Governor Hughes, how good it is to have you with us, and I hope everybody here knows that we have a very distinguished public official from the State of New Jersey, the Governor, who is a personal friend of mine, and then we have another very fine friend of mine, and I am going to let you in on what I whispered to her. No. Maybe I shouldn't. It was rather intimate.

MISS STEVENS: Oh, go ahead.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I thought you might want to know. When I came in and saw Inger, I said, M-m-m, you look delicious.

(Applause and whistles)

I notice there is a great deal of support along the wall for that observation.

(Applause)

I have held you up and I am going to get right on with what I have to say. I have a very brief statement and it is going to be abbreviated.

What we are really doing in 1968 is more than just counting votes or making speeches or carrying on an ordinary election. What we are doing is choosing not only a President of our country and Senators and Congressmen and Governors and legislators and other elected officials. We are choosing the future, the future of the future of our country. By that I mean we are selecting and designing what kind of a future there will be, not only for the people who are now living with us, who are now members of this American family, but children yet unborn, because the man who becomes President in 1968, like any other President not only makes policies that affect those of his time, but makes policies that affect children yet unborn.

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was not only a document for 1863, issued in the midst of a terrible war, but it was a promise for humanity that waited a 100 years or more even for the beginning of its fulfillment. So that statements that are made and positions that

that are taken by Presidents in particular affect your life, the lives of your children, your grandchildren, but of children, believe me, that have yet to see the light of day, children yet unborn.

I believe that we are at the end of an era, both in terms of foreign policy and domestic policy, and that we have entered a new day, a new period. We are at the end of an era in foreign policy where American omnipotence is no longer a sole fact standing alone. Even though we are powerful, we do not run the world, control the world, nor do we want to.

There was a time at the end of World War II where there was no power that could possibly stand up against us. We were the mighty America, all powerful, omnipotent, but today there are five nuclear powers, not one. Today there are at least two super powers, not one. The conditions of today are much different than they were even in the 1950's and the early 1960's.

In 1963, in 1962-63, Mr. Kennedy could say to the Soviets, get your missiles out of Cuba because of the predominance of our Polaris submarine fleet, hidden beneath the seas.

Mr. Khrushchev not only had to think but he had to think twice and he had to move.

In 1968, the Soviet Union is building its own Polaris fleet and while we have today superiority in nuclear weaponry, it is still a fact, my dear friends and fellow Americans, that no one can say who would be the victor in a nuclear war.

I suppose you could in a sense satisfy your patriotic ego, as I could mine, by saying, well, we would take them, we would win, but when you think that the first nuclear exchange would kill 240 million people here and in the Soviet Union alone, you have to ask yourself, is there any victory?

So, the world has changed. Europe today is a much different Europe than it was five, ten, 15 years ago. Asia is much different. That is why a new President is going to have to reassess all of our policies, all of our priorities, not because he just does it because he is a new President but because the power relationships in the world are different, because he has to be a realist.

I happen to be one that believes that America's moral leadership in the world is of vital importance. We are the richest nation on the face of the earth without question. We are the most powerful nation on the face of the earth without question. But money and power alone are not enough. The question is, do we have a moral position in this world and are we able to lead from that position?

On the domestic scene we have changed so much, from a rural to an urban society, to the age of computerization and industrialization. It is a very different world that your young men and women are coming into. These young men that are here with us today do not live in the world of their fathers. They live in their world, in the space age, and there will be more dramatic change in science and technology in the next 30 years than in the last three thousand without question.

What they see in Apollo 7 now as an experiment will become a part of the reality of the next generation.

What they read now as heart transplants which gain the headlines will become part of modern surgery as a matter of practice in the next generation.

A very different world.

The crisis of our cities has come into full bloom. There had been a festering crisis there for a long time but now it is here and it cannot be ignored. We are going to have to decide whether our cities are to be livable or whether we shall have to abandon them and we can't afford to abandon them because where shall we live? We have to ask ourselves where are the next 100 million Americans going to live and how are they -- how will they live? There will be an additional 100 million Americans, you know, in the next 25 years. Where are they going to live and under what conditions?

We have to ask ourselves some other questions. The day of segregation is over. And are we going to be able to live in a society

of mutual trust or will it be one of mutual suspicion? And I have to ask every mother and father here today and every young man and woman, do you really think that you can live -- do you really think that you can live in suspicion and fear and hatred and really realize the best in this country? Or do you think it is going to require trust and confidence and hope and faith in one another?

Those are questions that you are going to have to answer and the man you elect as President is going to help you answer those questions.

We have to ask ourselves will our children grow up, in other words, when one race is pitted against another, where violence, tension and fear are part of the life of our every day life, will our children grow up in a world where we are bent on burying ourselves in a pile of nuclear weapons and where we raise the level of danger to a point that drives people to madness? Or are we going to grow up in a society that has pledged itself to the peaceful resolution of its problems?

I think these are the choices that we have to make.

Now, I am a very concerned person about these things, just as you are. You are concerned about the safety of your children. You are concerned about your own safety. You wonder whether you can walk the streets. You wonder whether you can go through the parks. You wonder whether you can go from your home to the supermarket. You wonder whether or not your children are going to be able to get off the school bus and come back to your -- to their home and their place of living. This is what we call law and order.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first duty of any organized government is to provide safety for its people. You know, our Declaration of Independence says that there are certain God given rights. They call them -- it was called inalienable, those inalienable rights of life, of liberty and of the pursuit of happiness.

Now, the right to live is the most precious right of all, and any violence, any disorder which threatens that life violates one of God's greatest gifts, the greatest gift, the right of life itself, and we established government amongst ourselves to secure these rights for ourselves and our posterity, so sayeth the Founding Fathers of this Republic.

And when we talk, therefore, of improving police departments, of providing more modern equipment, of increasing the policemen's pay, of seeing to it that they have better training and higher standards of performance, we are talking about life, and a candidate that comes to you and says all you need to do is put a bumper sticker on and say Support your Police, that man is not talking about your life. He is talking about his election.

We are going to have to understand what John Kennedy said was true. You remember those words. He said peace and freedom are not cheap.

Then he went on to say that we, all of us here, are destined to live out the rest of our lives in times of change and of peril and danger.

Now, that ought not to frighten us. It is just a fact. Well if peace and freedom are not cheap, and they are surely not -- men die for peace and freedom, nations spend millions on peace and freedom, we generally think of peace and freedom as something abroad, something out in the other part of the world. Those who threaten our peace and freedom, but there is also a peace and freedom here in America, the freedom to speak, the freedom to assembly, the freedom to be able to walk to our neighborhoods safely, the freedom to be able to spend an afternoon pleasantly in the park and walk across the park at night, the freedom to be able to move without being molested, and that is not cheap. We are going to have to pay for it, and that is why I have outlined a program for you, for you, my dear ladies, and for you and your children, to see to it that there is protection and not just for the white man but for the black man.

Let me tell you of surveys that have been made. In the City of Baltimore, a survey was made in the darkest ghettos of Baltimore and what do you think the people wanted there more than anything else? More police protection. The poor are set upon more than anybody else.

There is more crime committed by the poor than any other group and more crime committed by the poor against the poor in the areas of the poor. And they need equal protection of the laws and equal enforcement of the law, just exactly as a suburban housewife wants it that is white.

We need to be thinking in terms of each other, not in color, but in terms of citizenship. When you are an American citizen, whether you are an Italo-American or a Scandinavian-American, a Swedish-American, Inger, or whether you are Irish-American or whatever you may be, you are entitled to all the protections of what the Constitution says. Did you process of law.

(Applause)

And you are concerned about something else. You are concerned about the quality of education. Now, what is it that you would rather have your young people have than education? Very little, if anything. And today higher education should not be the prerogative of just the few. We must have a guarantee in this country that every child who, by the way, is God's testimonial to his faith in the future, that every child will have all the education that that child can absorb.

I met a mother out here today, yes, I met a mother here today that had a little retarded child. One out of every 400 babies born in this country is retarded.

Now, are you going to tell me that those retarded children are not entitled to all the education that they can absorb? They are entitled to it even more than some others.

What about a mentally disturbed child? What about a spastic child? What about all these handicapped people? Are we to push them aside as we have done for so long or is that sense of charity and compassion going to rise up within us like a mighty river and demand that we do something?

Every child, well or not well, normal or not normal, special or just ordinary, is entitled to all the training and all the education that that child can possibly absorb for its own good. And that may be from pre-school, and I think that is where it ought to start because the learning process is the greatest from age four through seven. They learn more at that time than any other time in their lives. And that is when we shortchange them. Every child, poor or rich, black or white, from age four on up through college or through special education, as they wish it, every person a guarantee of a good education in this richest country on the face of the earth. We can afford to do that.

(Applause)

You know, we learned a great deal out of Project Head Start. We learned more about the problems of our country out of that than any other place because it is written in Scriptures, "A little Child shall Lead them" and you know what we found out? We found out that a child leads you right back to the source of the trouble. That little child in Project Head Start, if you follow that child home, you will find out what is really going on. And the breakdown in family life is a fact in our country. And every government program must be judged by what it does to strengthen those family ties. It isn't good enough just to build cities of brick and concrete.

How do you build them? What is their function? What is their purpose? We need to build not great cities but we need to build communities. We need to build neighborhoods. And we need to build neighborhoods where people live as neighbors, not as enemies. And we need to build communities in which people can live a full and a rewarding life, not just bedrooms. And then, another area of the city just factories. We are going to have to learn how to life in this the last third of the 20th Century.

These are some of the things that are on my mind.

I think we are going to have to do a little something about this vicious narcotics traffic, too. And I am looking at mothers that have every right to be concerned

this vicious narcotics traffic, too. And I am looking at mothers that have every right to be concerned because it is prevalent in our schools and there has not been an outraged American public about it.

I call upon every educator, I call upon every public official to start to let the young people of America know what they are dealing in, and for those who are the peddlers, and to those who are the purveyors of this dastardly business, there is no penalty of law that is too severe. And when I become your President, I shall strengthen the narcotics enforcement of this country, Federal, state and local, and we will wage a struggle against this unbelievable odious proposition called the narcotics traffic that this country has never seen before, because I have seen the results of it, and we are not going to tolerate it. There shall be no permissiveness in that area, I will guarantee you.

(Applause)

And again, may I say if you want to do something about it, you can.

But in many of our cities there is no special detail on narcotics traffic. We can do something about it.

And what about our elderly, the health and the welfare of those who have lived three score and five or ten? You know many people think about Medicare -- I have talked to young audiences and they say, well, Humphrey, will you get off that Medicare kick? You may be interested in it, but we are not.

And yet, that young couple doesn't understand that when their mothers, their mother and father are cared for under a social insurance program of prepaid insurance that is dignified and respectful, that means that that young couple does not have to worry about whether their mother and father are going to have to go down to the relief office or to mortgage their little home or to sell their last piece of property.

Have you seen old people that have been the victims of long-term illness, that had to give up everything that they had worked for all of their lives? That used to be the case.

That used to be the case. Last year seven million elderly citizens in this country were given the best medical care, the best hospital care, the best nursing home care, that modern American society can provide and the Social Security fund is intact. The people have been helped. The medical profession is the better off for it. We have learned a great deal and the people are better and the young couples are better.

Social Security and Medicare is more for the young than it is for the old, or equally so.

(Applause)

Well, those are some of the things that I can talk to you about. Now, listen, I have talked to you 20 minutes on what I had on my mind. Lots of other things on my mind -- consumer protection, the air that you breathe.

I noticed the other day that my Republican competitor said that he had a program for air pollution. Well, I am glad he has finally got one. Some of us have been working on one for years and we have one underway.

This Administration in the last -- in its eight years, spent a billion five hundred million dollars on pollution control. The previous Administration spent about \$250 million. We have been trying to do something about clean water. The Great Lakes are polluted. Most every river and stream is polluted. We have left a heritage, a mess of pottage, for all too many people.

This is the first Administration and it is the Democratic Party that is the first party that has ever had any interest in the consumer. Truth in Labeling, Truth in Packaging, Truth in Lending. All kinds of protective laws see to it that you did not have to live in a market place that said the buyer beware but rather

in a market place in which you could have some assurance that what you bought and what you thought you bought were the same thing, in which there were labels, that were honest, packaging that was honest, in which you could be protected from drugs that would affect your life.

Have you forgotten thalidomide? Let me just remind you, dear friends. I was the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee that investigated the tragedy of the drug called thalidomide that was a tranquilizer for pregnant mothers. And it was supposed to be of great help, and what did it bring forth? Hundreds of babies that were deformed. And it was Dr. Kelsey of the Food and Drug Administration, of this Government of the United States, that single-handedly ferreted out, found out looking through the literature of our Government and looking through the medical literature, that there was something wrong.

You know what the result of it was? I led an investigation so that today every drug is catalogued, so that today there is communication and information worldwide, so that we have an information center on every drug and its side effects.

I am a pharmacist by profession. And all the new miracle drugs that come on the market are marvelous, but many of them need better testing and we set up the procedures for testing. We have seen to it at long last that when these new drugs come on the market that they are not fed to you as guinea pigs, that they are tested long before they are marketed, and there are people who are profit hungry, who can hardly wait to get a new drug on the market to test them on you, and then something happens to you, and then somebody said, I am sorry. In the meantime, somebody has made a lot of money. In the meantime, hearts have been broken, lives have been destroyed.

I led the investigation for years as Chairman of a special subcommittee of the Senate on drug control that is presently under Gaylord Nelson today, Senator from Wisconsin. And I made it my business to try to protect the lives of children yet unborn, because many of the drugs that are fed sometimes have injurious side effects.

I am a chemist. I have had some professional experience. I don't claim to be up to date but I am sufficiently inquisitive to say to those who bring these miracle drugs to us -- and they are marvelous, don't misunderstand me, some of them are a Godsend -- but I want to be sure that before they go to you, I want to be sure that your Government has protected you, and that is what a regulatory agency is for, ladies. That is why some people scolded the Food and Drug Administration. They say they ought to let us do these things sooner. And I say to them, don't be so piggish. Don't be so hungry for a fast sale. Let's be sure before that product gets on the market that its effect is going to be what you say it is going to be, and let's be sure that it is not going to leave any side effects.

Let's be sure it doesn't mean deformed babies. Let's be sure it doesn't mean bleeding and clotting. Let's be sure it doesn't mean blindness.

There are lots of things that your Government does for you and those of us that take the stand for these protections are frequently called the obstructors.

The President of the United States is your lobbyist. He has an obligation to one else besides his God, his conscience, and his people. He ought to be interested in special interests.

And when you put your savings into a mutual fund, you had better have a President that is interested in you and not in the broker. You had better be sure --

(Applause)

So now, I had a staff man send me the inevitable note. I want to tell you it is good to have people that -- you know, one of

the reasons I am a happy man is I let other people worry for me, and he says unless we leave pretty quick, we are going to be missing a downtown rally. Well, we are not going to miss that downtown rally. I have got my watch here. It works good.

Now, I would like to hear from you. Any questions?

(Applause)

MISS STEVENS: For those of you ladies who have questions, would you please state your name and your question and we will start. Who is the first lady? Would you raise your hand?

There are six microphones. Would you state your name, please, and your question?

VOICE: My name is Mary Bentley. I am a senior at -- college.

Mr. Vice President, you said repeatedly that you want to run on your own line and that your policies are different from those of the President. If so, could you explain Eugene McCarthy's reluctance to endorse your candidacy?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think you ought to ask Mr. McCarthy that question. I have never been able to read into the minds of others.

(Applause)

MISS STEVENS: Would you state your name, please?

VOICE: Yes. I am Mrs. Dorothy Strand, President of the Sheet Metal workers Auxiliary here in St. Louis and, Mr. Vice President, how do you feel about consumer boycotts, especially those against the grape growers in California?

Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My hope is that the growers and the workers would be able to negotiate their differences and I have offered my good offices as did the Mayor of San Francisco, Mayor Alioto. I have said that the workers in those vineyards and those great farms where the grapes are grown ought to have the right of organizing and of collective bargaining under the protections of the National Labor Relations Act. They do not have that right today. And when I am President, I will present a legislative proposal to the Congress to give them that right, because these workers, these workers are not working on family farms. We are not talking about mother and father and son and daughter that have 12 acres that they can take care of. We are talking about factory farms. And while I generally do not like to see a boycott, I said in California that it is either bargain or boycott, and I would hope that the --

(Applause)

-- I would hope that they would bargain.

You remember the time we used to have child labor? And there were all kinds of justifications for it, and there were women throughout America that organized the boycott on goods produced by child labor. You know what the result was? We finally got an amendment to the Constitution and we got statutory law that abolished child labor. And sometimes you have to take stern measures.

When people are willing to exploit human flesh for profit purposes, and not give them the protections of the law, you have to expect people to take extreme measures.

Now, my own hope and prayer is that every one of the growers will understand that it is to their advantage to bargain. And let me tell you that the price of grapes won't be fundamentally changed. I come from the midwest. You could put the price of wheat at \$3 a bushel. It is about a \$1.16 or a \$1.12 on the open market now. You could put the price of wheat at \$3 a bushel, ladies, and the price of Wheaties wouldn't go up half a cent. Most of the Wheaties that you are eating is in the carton. It is the advertising and the wrapping and the merchandising.

You could increase the price of wheat 300 per cent and it wouldn't increase the price of the breakfast food a penny. You

could increase the price of cotton 200 per cent and it couldn't increase the cost of a shirt six cents. So, it isn't that raw product.

And I am not complaining about the many processes it goes through. I just think we have to understand what we are talking about and a man that works, a person of profession or skill or semi-skill or unskilled labor in this country is entitled to a living wage and the protections that come under the law.

(Applause)

MISS STEVENS: The lady in the rear in the black dress.

VOICE: I was wondering during the riots, the National Guardsmen have stood around and watched the looters damage private property and steal.

What, as President, if elected, would you do to protect the small businessmen of the city and urban areas?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, first of all, I have outlined in my speech last Saturday some of my proposals. I also have had a paper that we produced and it was the result of some of the best brains in this country in the field of law enforcement, law and order. I suggested that the National Guard, for example, should have a highly trained mobile unit and units that are ready to go into action.

Now, the Governor of New Jersey is here and I want to commend the Governor in his presence for the program that has been inaugurated there in New Jersey which I commented on very briefly last Saturday. It is called Operation Combine and the Governor could tell you what they did in New Jersey was to take the local police officers, the county officers, the state patrol and the National Guard and they have put them into intensive training on coordinated law enforcement activities. Everything from how to stop a riot as to how to talk to a person.

You see, the police officer needs to know his rights and he needs to know your rights. He needs to know how to deal with an emergency situation and how to deal with a human relations problem. Most of the National Guards were never trained to be police officers. They were trained for combat in military. And they have a hesitancy to be used as combat forces against their own fellow Americans.

But we are now training that National Guard for riot duty. There is no excuse for anybody standing by and permitting other people to steal and to loot, and one of the things that a Governor can do and a President can be helpful is to set down the ground rules and the standards that police and National Guard are to adhere to.

What actually happened in many instances was we were caught off guard. No one really knew what to do. The military was called in, the regular Army in one instance in Detroit, the National Guard was there, untrained for that kind of duty. The police were late. And the thing gets out of hand.

The first thing we have learned about a riot is to promptly move with large numbers of people quickly, effectively, seal off the area, establish a curfew, use massive manpower, and hopefully non-lethal weapons, and be able to subdue the riot promptly, and we think that we know how to do it, and as President of the United States, having given a great deal of thought and attention to this, I am convinced that I can help give this nation the leadership that will see to it that people are protected and that this sort of thing does not happen or get out of control.

(Applause)

MISS STEVENS: We have time for two more brief questions. The lady in the rear on the right hand side, please.

VOICE: Mr. Vice President, and I want to introduce Mrs. Ujell(?) She has a question to ask you.

VOICE: Mr. Vice President, in line with what you have said, that you follow your own opinions, not necessarily those of our

current President, would you please explain to us the contradictory viewpoints that have come down today concerning Vietnam?

The report we got at 7:00 o'clock that said we were willing to halt the bombing, the report at 9:00 o'clock in which the White House repudiated this. Could you explain this and would you please be specific and tell us what you would do to stop the war in Vietnam were you elected?

(Applause)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I guess this is as good a point to satisfy my friends of the press as any other time.

There are many contradictory statements and those contradictory statements sometimes are the result of opinions of people rather than facts.

One can't conceal what transpires. I was held from the stage for some time. The White House this morning has issued a statement setting forth what are the facts and the proper authorities in the White House wanted us to know -- when I say us, we candidates -- to know what the statement was. And I was waiting for a conference call that permitted the three candidates for President to hear the same thing, the same time over the same telephone so that we would not be saying different things.

I will only say that Mr. George Christian, the White House press secretary, speaking in behalf of the President, has stated what the situation is and that anything that I say, anything today, if I should stutter for a moment, there are theologians on Vietnam that will write a whole new story about it.

It happens to be a very sensitive matter and I think the greatest service that I can perform for you today is to ask you to read my speech that I gave in Salt Lake City which was the definitive statement on my part, on my attitudes on the struggle in Vietnam and what I would do about it if I were President and when I am President. And also my attitude about arms control, nuclear -- the treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

For me at this stage to say anything further would add only to the confusion which you already have.

We have got more self-appointed Presidents and Secretaries of State and Ambassadors than any ten countries in the world. I would suggest that we -- if you want to know what is the government's position, that you listen to what the President has to say as the position. If you want to know what my position is, rather than to get up here and ad lib it, because I have done it before and somebody comes rushing up and says, but the last time you said "and", and I said, Oh, did I, because I am a very different sort of a fellow, you know. I don't memorize my speeches. And sometimes I say "and" when I should have said "or" or I say "should" when I should have said "would" or "could", and then somebody says, Aha, big change in policy.

It is sort of -- let me give you an example. It is sort of like somebody comes up here and says, How are you and Mrs. Humphrey getting along and I say, Oh, I love her, wonderful, I love her.

The same man comes up to me three or four days later and says, How are you and Mrs. Humphrey? I say she is wonderful. He says, Aha, aha, aha. Well, he writes a little something or says a little something that says things are not just quite like they were.

(Laughter)

Two weeks later somebody comes by and says, well, how are you and Mrs. Humphrey? I say, She's great. The story reads, two weeks ago Humphrey said he loves her. Three days later he said she was wonderful and all he says now is she is great. There is something wrong in the Humphrey family.

(Applause)

Well, let me make -- let me make it clear, there is nothing wrong in the Humphrey family. I love her, she is wonderful and she is great and I wish she were here. (Applause)

Yes? One more.

MISS STEVENS: Unfortunately this will be our last question. The lady in the pink suit.

VOICE: Mr. Vice President, would you change the draft laws?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, I would. I happen to think the present one has built-in inequities that are unfortunate. I believe and I think my young friends out here, -- by the way, when I walked down the line today, I said, my goodness, the Selective Service Director will be happy to see you.

I said to these -- I want to say to them that I believe in what we call the lottery system, the random selection system. If your number is called at age 19 you have got to go and if it isn't you don't have to go. It is just that simple.

(Applause)

MISS STEVENS: We would like to thank the Vice President very much for taking time out to speak today.

(Applause)

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