

TRANSCRIPT

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FACE THE NATION

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GUEST: THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
Vice President of the United States

NEWS CORRESPONDENTS:

Martin Agronsky
CBS News

Joseph Kraft
Syndicated Columnist

John Hart
CBS News

DIRECTOR: Robert Vitarelli

PRODUCERS: Prentiss Childs and Sylvia Westerman

NOTE TO EDITORS: Please credit any quotes or excerpts from this CBS Radio and Television program to "Face the Nation."

PRESS CONTACT: Ethel Aaronson - (202) 296-1234

1 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, South Vietnam's President
2 Thieu said he wants the United States to keep bombing North
3 Vietnam until there is a reciprocal gesture from Hanoi, that
4 there has been no breakthrough in the Paris peace talks, that
5 the current lull in the war has no significance as a peace
6 gesture. Does Thieu reflect your attitude and that of
7 President Johnson when he says these things?

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, President Thieu speaks for him-
9 self, but when it comes to the matter of bombing or not bombing,
10 since this is particularly an American mission in this war, I
11 think that it is fair to say that Thieu should exercise no
12 veto, and that this will have to be a decision that is made by
13 the United States, in light of what we believe are the
14 necessities in Vietnam.

15 ANNOUNCER: From CBS Washington, in color, FACE THE NATION, a
16 spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview with Vice President
17 Hubert Humphrey, Democratic Candidate for President. Mr.
18 Humphrey will be questioned by CBS News Correspondent John Hart,
19 Joseph Kraft, Syndicated Columnist, and CBS News Correspondent
20 Martin Agronsky.

21 - - -

22 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, when you say that the
23 United States will make up its mind about whether or not there
24 will be a bombing pause, have we made up their mind? Will there
25 be a bombing pause?

1 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, the White House issued a state-
2 ment, I believe, last Wednesday, and that, I think, represents
3 the position thus far. I am hopeful, but the White House spoke
4 for itself. It said there had been no breakthrough as yet on
5 the negotiations.

6 MR. KRAFT: Mr. Vice President, is General Thieu, by making all
7 these statements, is he playing a spoiler's role, is he trying
8 to dash whatever hopes there are for peace?

9 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I can't say what his role is or what
10 he is doing. He speaks, I suppose, for himself. He is the
11 elected president of the country. But in this matter, particu-
12 larly on bombing, obviously, we will take into consideration
13 many things, but this is an American mission. I believe there
14 is very little bombing, if any, done by the South Vietnamese.
15 And this matter must be something over which the government of
16 Vietnam, South Vietnam, cannot exercise a veto.

17 MR. KRAFT: Can you say, briefly, whether you approve or
18 deplore the statements he has made?

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I hope that he will be cooperative.
20 I believe that the American people expect the government of
21 South Vietnam to be cooperative. We have borne a heavy burden
22 in this war. We have bought time for the people of South
23 Vietnam. We have helped create conditions that have made
24 possible some of the progress that has been made there. And I
25 would hope that people, leaders of all groups, not just

1 President Thieu, I would hope they would understand that the
2 American people have been faithful to a point of pain in
3 fulfilling any commitments that we have had and, therefore,
4 the people and the leaders of South Vietnam should exercise
5 great cooperation with the President of the United States and
6 our authorities.

7 MR. HART: Mr. Vice President, there have been rumors of coups
8 in Saigon recently. Would a change in administration in Saigon
9 be helpful to the United States and to you as a candidate?

10 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: By a coup? I want to say that I
11 don't think the American people would tolerate that. I surely
12 would not. We have been fighting for representative govern-
13 ment. We have been fighting for at least constitutional govern-
14 ment. I think we ought to make it very clear to all leaders --
15 and I want to repeat, all leaders of all segments, all factions
16 -- that coups are out of style as far as American policy is
17 concerned.

18 MR. HART: Well, Mr. Vice President, there has been a lull in
19 the action in the DMZ recently. Would you consider this a
20 response to your statement in Salt Lake City?

21 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I would surely say that it has some
22 significance, and it surely ought to be taken into account
23 relating to any decision that is made by our government or by
24 other governments with respect to the negotiations and the
25 possibility of a bombing pause.

1 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, could we pin this down. I
2 think all of us would agree that the American people care more
3 about the prospects for peace in Vietnam than almost anything
4 else that is before their decision now. Do you feel that
5 there is any hope for peace before the election?

6 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, Mr. Agronsky, I guess you have
7 always known me as a man of, sometimes you thought, undue
8 optimism, but I have learned to be, because of the pain and the
9 uncertainty of this war, to be a very cautious person about it.
10 I am hopeful. There are very sensitive negotiations under way
11 now, as you know, and I am being very restrained in anything I
12 say, and I constrain myself in my response to you. And I
13 believe that that restraint indicates that I do have some hope
14 and I hope and pray that those negotiations can be successful,
15 and I hope that all parties will keep in mind that there is a
16 great yearning for success in these negotiations in Paris.

17 MR. KRAFT: Mr. Vice President, have you or any of your people
18 been using the prospect of a step forward toward peace in
19 Vietnam to win an endorsement from Senator McCarthy?

20 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I have not talked to the Senator
21 about that. I think you and I both know the Senator very well.
22 I believe that he will make up his own mind without me trying
23 to cajole him. To be frank about it, I talk to him from time
24 to time, but I learned a long time ago that Senator McCarthy is
25 not one that likes pressure, and I haven't tried to bring any

1 pressure to bear on him. To be very honest with you, what I
2 have tried to do more than anything else is to maintain a
3 wonderful friendship that we have had for many years, and I
4 believe that that friendship will be intact when this campaign
5 is over, and I expect that he will do the right thing.

6 MR. KRAFT: None of your people have been approaching him and
7 suggesting that something big is in the offing --

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No.

9 MR. KRAFT: -- and that it would be useful for him to --

10 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No. No, sir, not by the instructions
11 of mine. To the contrary, I think he would resent it and, not
12 only that, I think that would not be proper.

13 MR. HART: Mr. Vice President, you say the lull in the fighting
14 around the DMZ is significant and should be taken into account.

15 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I said I thought it was significant.

16 MR. HART: You thought it was significant. Well, now, is it
17 significant enough for you, then, in terms of the kind of
18 evidence you are looking for, to now call for a halt in the
19 bombing?

20 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Now, the President of the United
21 States is going to make these decisions.

22 MR. HART: But you, as a candidate --

23 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: But I can make no decision between now
24 and January 20th, and I have stated my case very clearly, as
25 best I could, in Salt Lake, and I do not believe that it will

1 be helpful to you or to me or to the American people or to the
2 cause of peace for me to try to elaborate upon it. I said that
3 I would consider this of significance. But there are other
4 factors, and the President must take into consideration all of
5 the factors. Now, he is the man who is going to make the de-
6 cision, and I am not going to substitute my advice publicly,
7 may I say, on this matter, on this program, because I don't
8 think it is going to be very helpful.

9 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, I agree with you that perhaps
10 we shouldn't torture this particular subject, and I don't want
11 to, but let me ask you this: The candidate is one thing, the
12 President-elect is something else. If you were to win the
13 election, do you have in the back of your mind any possible new
14 approach to bring out peace in Vietnam, if we have not had peace
15 by the election, and if it were to go further than that of where
16 President Johnson would be willing to go, would you then propose
17 or would you try to persuade the President to move in that
18 direction?

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I am sure that you know that, as
20 the Vice President, I do not hesitate, when at least asked, and
21 sometimes not asked, to express my point of view, and I do that
22 in the privacy of our meetings. That is the way the relation-
23 ship between the President and the Vice President should exist,
24 and that is the way I shall keep it. I expressed what I would
25 do on January 20, 1969, if there were no peace in Vietnam by

1 that time, and I thought I made a rather concise and explicit
2 statement. I can't find out what Mr. Nixon plans on doing. He
3 has not indicated what he would do, except he said there would
4 be a change of leadership. Well, that will be the case if I am
5 elected President, as well. So far as Mr. Wallace is concerned,
6 he says he doesn't believe that the negotiators from North
7 Vietnam are negotiating in good faith and, he said, if they are
8 not negotiating in good faith, then, there must be a military
9 solution. So at least we know where Mr. Wallace stands. I think
10 you know where I stand. I have said that I would have a bombing
11 pause -- I mean I would stop the bombing, as an acceptable risk
12 for peace in order to promote success in the negotiations and to
13 shorten the war. And --

14 MR. AGRONSKY: You have not said you are asking for a reciprocal
15 gesture. Did you leave that out deliberately?

16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I said that, in making that decision,
17 and before making it, I would want to take into consideration
18 evidence, either by word or deed, direct or indirect, of the
19 willingness of North Vietnam to restore the DMZ. The emphasis,
20 however, was upon stopping the bombing. And then I went on to
21 say, sir, that if there was negotiation in bad faith by North
22 Vietnam, I would reserve the right to resume the bombing; and I
23 further said that I thought we ought to de-Americanize this war
24 as much as possible, that we ought to encourage a policy of de-
25 escalation, and that we ought to have free elections that were

1 appropriately supervised. Now, I can't say what all the condi-
2 tions will be on January 20, but I do believe that I can say to
3 the American people that I have been more explicit and more de-
4 tailed in my response on this vital issue than any other candi-
5 date. And one of the reasons I wanted to debate Mr. Nixon and
6 Mr. Wallace is that we would have a chance to express to the
7 American people just what we are talking about, and to do it
8 almost as we are doing here. This kind of a dialogue amongst
9 ourselves, even though you are asking the questions and I am
10 supposed to be giving the answers, this is more informative,
11 may I say, to the American people than it is for a man to get
12 up and give a speech and sort of kind of fuzz it over and gloss
13 it over, because we are talking about the life of people. We
14 are talking about a great decision in our country.

15 MR. HART: Mr. Vice President --

16 MR. KRAFT: Mr. Vice President, when you appeal for a debate,
17 isn't that really the tactic of a man who is running behind,
18 and isn't that somewhat cynical view borne out by the fact that
19 you voted, in effect, when you were in the Senate, in 1964,
20 against a Johnson-Goldwater debate?

21 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, Mr. Kraft, on the latter you
22 are right. I did vote to table a motion to suspend the section,
23 what is it, 315 of the Federal Communications law.

24 MR. KRAFT: That's right.

25 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Now why? President Johnson did not

1 want to debate Mr. Goldwater at that time. I was the majority
2 whip. I was carrying out, frankly, the desire of the President.
3 Now, what is my personal position? As Senator, I always
4 debated; as a candidate in the primaries against John Kennedy,
5 we debated. I have debated any candidate that I could ever
6 find, and that is my position. What President Johnson's posi-
7 tion was is another matter, but my position is debate. I think
8 it is good for the country and good for the whole tone of
9 politics.

10 MR. AGRONSKY: Excuse me, gentlemen, we must interrupt here.
11 We will continue the interview with you, Mr. Vice President, in
12 a moment.

13 - - -

14 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, many political experts,
15 looking at the polls and the advantage that Mr. Nixon seems to
16 show consistently in the polls, seem to feel that your main
17 hope now is for the election to be thrown into the House of
18 Representatives, and that you would like to see that happen.
19 How would you respond to that?

20 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I wouldn't like to see it
21 happen. I have every intention of winning this election, first
22 of all by having a plurality of the popular vote. I think a
23 plurality is as much as you could expect in a three-way race.
24 Secondly, of having the necessary 270 electoral votes; we are
25 working hard to achieve that. I believe we are well on the way

1 of doing so.

2 MR. HART: Mr. Nixon says that he would, if he is in the House
3 of Representatives with you and the other candidate in this
4 election, tell his groups, that is, the Representatives who
5 would vote for him, to vote for whichever candidate wins the
6 plurality, whether or not he has the plurality. Would you make
7 that same commitment, thereby limiting George Wallace to defeat?

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I am going to stand by the constitu-
9 tional processes, and I think the American people would be in-
10 terested in knowing, once again, what those processes are, in
11 case this goes to the House of Representatives. Each state
12 delegation in the House of Representatives caucuses, and a
13 majority of that delegation will decide whether or not that
14 state casts one vote for whomever the candidate of the top
15 three, one of the top three candidates for President. If the
16 vote is 8-to-7 for Republican, then Mr. Nixon gets the one
17 vote; if it is 8-to-7 for me, I get the vote. If it is tied,
18 there is no vote cast. It takes 26, in other words 26 states,
19 in the House of Representatives, after the procedure that takes
20 in each representative group, to decide whom the President will
21 be. I do not want to make any kind of deals. I want the
22 members of the House of Representatives, if it goes there, to
23 live up to their constitutional responsibilities, and those
24 constitutional responsibilities are, first, that they shall
25 caucus and decide by majority vote as to whom they are going to

1 support amongst the top three, one of the top three; second,
2 that they must decide which of these top three candidates would
3 be the best man to be President of the United States. In
4 other words, they must cease being Representatives of a dis-
5 trict and become, in a sense, the electors for the entire
6 Nation, picking the President that they believe would be best
7 for the country.

8 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, there is another prospect
9 for a deal, and perhaps a more significant one, in the Electoral
10 College itself.

11 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes.

12 MR. AGRONSKY: Now, Mr. Wallace has indicated that if no one
13 gets an electoral majority, that at that point he might be pre-
14 pared to deal, and obviously if either of the two candidates,
15 you or Mr. Nixon, were to accept such a deal, it could insure
16 your election for President. How would you respond to the
17 prospect of that kind of a deal?

18 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I would not have any part of it. I
19 would say that any kind of deal on this presidential election,
20 in the Electoral College itself or in the House of Representa-
21 tives, would first of all be wrong; secondly, I think it would
22 put in great danger our whole constitutional system; thirdly, I
23 think it would defile the presidency. And I am not going to be
24 a part of any deal. Win or lose, I intend to do it honorably,
25 and I don't believe that the American people want any kind of

1 hanky-panky about whom the President shall be. It is the duty
2 of the House of Representatives, if it goes to the House, to
3 make the selection. And as far as electors are concerned, it
4 is their duty to pick the man that they believe is the best
5 man. Now, under tradition, the electors cast their vote for
6 the person that receives the plurality.

7 MR. AGRONSKY: But they need not.

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: But they need not. And then it be-
9 comes a matter of honor. And it may very well be that we will
10 be testing the honor of electors as never before in this
11 country. And I want every elector to know, that is pledged to
12 me, that you would be doing me the greatest disservice in the
13 world to make any kind of an arrangement at all. I want to
14 have this election won fair and square. We have got enough
15 troubles in this country, Mr. Agronsky, without contaminating
16 the constitutional process or without defiling the presidency,
17 the high office of the presidency by any kind of dealing. It
18 is really so obnoxious to me that I, maybe, have reacted a little
19 too sternly.

20 MR. KRAFT: Mr. Vice President, on this same point, and I think
21 with somewhat the same spirit in mind, Mr. Nixon has said that
22 if either the Electoral College or the Congress produced a
23 candidate who was not the candidate who had the plurality, he
24 would have an exceedingly difficult time governing the Nation.
25 Do you agree with that?

1 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think it depends a great deal upon
2 the man. I really don't think you can predict these things.
3 This all sort of "iffy" things. I have no doubt that I could
4 govern this country. I expect to get a plurality. I hope that
5 I will have the 270 votes that are necessary in the Electoral
6 College. But if it went to the House of Representatives, and
7 if I did not have a plurality, I still believe that I would
8 have the capacity to govern. And why? Because I believe that
9 a man that can have the cooperation of a Henry Ford and a Sidney
10 Weinberg on the one hand, and George Meany and Walter Reuther
11 on the other, such as I have, can work with labor and manage-
12 ment. I believe that I have a rapport with the black community
13 in this country that is vital for the kind of peaceful harmoni-
14 ous relationships that America is going to need. I believe
15 that I have a rapport with the Congress of the United States,
16 as the Vice President and the former majority whip, which would
17 be very, very helpful in helping to govern this country. And
18 I think with the young people, this new student coalition group
19 that is supporting us, representing a vast cross-section of
20 young people across America, tells me that I could govern.
21 Otherwise, may I say that, I wouldn't be in this race with the
22 determination I am in it now.

23 MR. KRAFT: So you wouldn't accept the principle that it would
24 be almost absolutely wrong for a man who did not have a
25 plurality to become President?

1 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I would not. But I must say this,
2 that I do think that a man who has the plurality will most
3 likely become President. I think the odds are 10-to-1 that
4 that is what will happen.

5 MR. HART: Mr. Vice President, going back to the subject of
6 debates again, which is one of your favorite subjects, Mr.
7 Nixon has accused you, in requesting debates, of collusion
8 with George Wallace in an attempt to build him up in the South,
9 in the border states, to deny those states to Mr. Nixon. Would
10 you respond to that?

11 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, I surely would. Now, let's just
12 first of all talk a little bit about the debates. Mr. Nixon
13 was the man who, in 1964, as I recollect, stated that he thought
14 it was the duty of candidates to debate, not only that it was
15 necessary but that it was a duty, that the American people had
16 a right to know what the candidates were saying on the issues.
17 And I think that is the truth. Now, Mr. Wallace, whether we
18 like it or not, is a serious contender in this election. I
19 wish he were not. I think it is a bad sign. I regret to have
20 to say it. But I want Mr. Wallace to spell out to the American
21 people what, if any, economic policy he has, what he means by
22 law and order, what he knows about foreign policy, what his
23 views are on national security, what his attitude and views are
24 on fiscal and monetary policy. These are the great issues.
25 What his views are on human relations and civil rights. And I

1 want Mr. Nixon to spell it out, likewise. And I want to spell
2 it out. Now, if there were just two of us, whomever those two
3 may be, we would ignore one of the more decisive and important
4 participants or factors. I think we need three. There are
5 three candidates. If it goes to the House of Representatives,
6 the House will choose from the top three, that is constitu-
7 tionally. There are three candidates that are serious candi-
8 dates in this national election. All three of them should
9 appear before the American people, on the great national media
10 of the networks, at the same time, under the same circumstances,
11 facing up to the same questions so that the American jury, the
12 200 million American people can make their decision. Frankly,
13 I think that Mr. Nixon is playing games, and I think he ought
14 to come out of this game-playing business and come out from
15 under the confetti and the balloons, and come on out here-and
16 stand up and accept the invitation which I made for this night,
17 and I bought time that we are having to use for another program.
18 And I asked Mr. Wallace, Mr. Nixon and myself. Mr. Wallace
19 agreed to it. I want to say for Mr. Wallace that he said he
20 would come. But Mr. Nixon won't. I happen to think that the
21 three of us ought to be there.

22 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Nixon accuses you now of lowering the tone of
23 the campaign by name calling, and your campaign manager, Larry
24 O'Brien, has charged that there is a Nixon-Wallace collusion,
25 as an indication of what Mr. Nixon objects to. Can you

1 document that charge by Mr. O'Brien?

2 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I think you would have to talk to
3 Mr. O'Brien about that. I did read some very interesting
4 copy in The Washington Post today about some of the discussions
5 that took place with presidential electors. I have Wallace
6 electors and what their attitude was about Mr. Nixon. I notice
7 that Strom Thurmond has been doing a little work in the South,
8 saying that he has never said anything unkind about Mr. Wallace,
9 that he thinks Mr. Wallace is a fine man and he hopes that the
10 Wallace people will come on over and vote for Mr. Nixon. But
11 Mr. Nixon is an accomplished, experienced politician. He has
12 been in public life a long time. I believe that the American
13 people ought to judge us on our records, not on the basis of
14 whether we have a smooth running campaign alone, not on the
15 basis of how we look momentarily under the most controlled
16 conditions, under television, but what's our record and how do
17 we react under fire. For example, Mr. Agronsky, Mr. Nixon
18 hasn't been on your program for two years. He hasn't been on
19 "Issues and Answers." Will you pardon me mentioning other
20 shows?

21 MR. AGRONSKY: No. That is all right.

22 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: He hasn't been on any of the national
23 news shows. He doesn't come under this camera. I don't know
24 what you men are going to ask me, and I have to sit here and
25 hopefully come up with answers. Now, my answers come from my

1 knowledge, my mind, and from my heart. I think the American
2 people ought to see what a man is like under fire, under cross-
3 examination, because the next President of the United States is
4 maybe going to have to meet with the Soviet leaders. He may
5 have to meet with other leaders. I would, if I were President.
6 I intend to do that sort of thing. And if Mr. Nixon can't meet
7 me, a man that has respect for him as a fellow American, how
8 does he expect to debate and meet with the leaders of the
9 Kremlin. The last time he met with them was in a kitchen, and
10 they discussed the merits of color television. The last time
11 I met with a Soviet leader was Mr. Kosygin, and I discussed
12 with him Southeast Asia. Prior to that it was Mr. Khrushchev,
13 and I discussed with him the prospects of peace for mankind.
14 MR. HART: Mr. Vice President, do you think that Hanoi would
15 prefer to meet with you than with any of the other candidates?
16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't know, but let me make it
17 very clear, if I am President of the United States, I will not
18 hesitate to meet with anybody who would be helpful, if it
19 would be helpful in bringing about peace or better understanding
20 in this world. I am not afraid of the prospects of what we
21 call the diplomacy of the summits. In fact, I have proposed --
22 MR. HART: Including Hanoi?
23 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: -- I have proposed with the Soviet
24 Union, for example, that we have a series of meetings that
25 would go into the tough questions that face our respective

1 countries.

2 MR. AGRONSKY: Mr. Vice President, I regret our time is up.
3 Thank you very much for being here to FACE THE NATION. Today's
4 interview with Vice President Humphrey concludes our series
5 with the presidential candidates. George Wallace was inter-
6 viewed on a previous program. We invited Richard Nixon to
7 appear at this same time next week. Mr. Nixon declined the
8 invitation. Instead of that interview, next Sunday, the CBS
9 News Correspondents who have been covering the campaign will
10 join Walter Cronkite in a special program, "Campaign '68:
11 Candidates in Closeup," the correspondents report. FACE THE
12 NATION will be seen at its regular time next, Sunday, and we
13 will have a word about our guest in a moment.

14 - - -

15 ANNOUNCER: Today, on FACE THE NATION, Vice President Hubert
16 Humphrey, Democratic Candidate for President, was interviewed
17 by CBS News Correspondent John Hart, Joseph Kraft, Syndicated
18 Columnist, CBS News Correspondent Martin Agronsky led the
19 questioning. Next week, at our regular time, Retired General
20 Curtis LeMay, Vice Presidential Candidate of the American
21 Independent Party, will FACE THE NATION. FACE THE NATION
22 originated, in color, from CBS Washington.

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