

HUMPHREY STATEMENT

8:20 PM

OCTOBER 31, 1968

NEWARK, AIRPORT

(After President's statement) Well gentlemen and ladies the President has just addressed the nation and it appears - - -
- - - Hanoi has agreed to proceed with prompt and productive discussions. I fully support the action undertaken by the President -- his order for the cessation of the bombing of the North, as I am sure the vast majority of the American people will support it. Now, let us hope and pray that the negotiations in Paris will be able to move forward now towards an honorable and lasting settlement. That is my statement to you.

Q Mr. Vice-President, there is going to be the obvious inference that the announcement at this time has political implications. What would be your reaction to it?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think the President answered that very fully. We have all been informed at the same time under the same circumstances in conference calls. I did not return to the National Security Council meeting even though I am entitled to be there. The President has made his message very clear. I suggest that you just look at the message and study it.

Q Sir, there are those who say that it might help your candidacy -- this bombing halt.

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think this does help the cause of peace. The President says he has taken this decision in the hope that it will reduce the killing and the danger and the injury on both sides and that it can lead to prompt and productive discussion. This is going to help people. I don't think it has much to do with candidates as such.

Q Are you going to continue your campaign schedule?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Oh, of course. I held it up tonight because of discussions that the President held with all of us.

Q Would you tell us why you did not go back to the Security Council meeting.

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: For the simple reason that I am a candidate. I didn't feel that it was appropriate for me when other candidates cannot be there. The President's decision -- I am pleased with it. And I hope and pray that we can be very successful now in this new addition.

Q During this period of the bombing cessation do you think your focus will now be on domestic issues as opposed to the war in Vietnam?

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: It has been focused on domestic issues for some time for the simple reason that I hoped that we might have discussions take place that would lead to a -- to the situation which now prevails. I have never felt that the Vietnam issue should be a partisan political issue.

It ought to be a matter of great concern to all of us.

A: Mr. VP in a philosophical vain, what do you think the cease-fire means to the country?

VP:

I think it means that we have reason to hope that the negotiations will proceed in the productive manner. I am sure the American people will approve this decision of the President. He has consulted the top officials of the government and the military leaders of our country and our allies. He has made a very prudent and I think a wise decision. And I hope that it will lend itself to the peace that we all long for.

Q: Sir, what about the Vietnam now for the rest of the campaign?

A: I haven't discussed it much except in the Salt Lake City speech where I stated my position. I have not felt that I could contribute to progress of negotiations which are close to my heart, by partisan debate about Vietnam. I have had to take my fair share of abuse on this matter but that is part of the job.

A: Sir, what would you think would be the chances of achieving a negotiated settlement by the time the next President takes office, by January 20?

A: I hope and pray that can be the case. I think that no man is more richly deserving of the honor of obtaining peace than President Johnson.

Q: You have said in the past sir that in the long-term that Americans will come to believe as the President believed that it was right for the U.S. to become deeply involved in Vietnam. Do you still think that way.

A: I have never doubted that we made the right decision. It has been a very difficult one.

Q: Mr. VP you said a cease-fire, is it in fact a cease-fire

VP: I didn't say that, I said a bombing halt.

Q: And can you tell us since we didn't hear the radio, what were the other conditions?

A: The, it will all be on your planes, I think one of the girls is supposed to be taking it down --
(we are trying to get a transcript now)
You can all file

Q: One final question, was it your decision alone not to go to the National Security Meeting?

A: Yes sir. Absolutely. I want no political implications whatsoever.

Was

Q: ~~XXXXX~~this what you were looking for when you made your speech October 1 in Salt Lake City?

A: I have been hoping for months that this would happen. For Months. I have said all I'm going to say.

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