

SELECTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

NBC Forum
Statler-Hilton Hotel
Washington, D.C.

March 5, 1977

The Vice Presidency, long an ignored or belittled American political institution, has in recent years received increased attention in this country consistent with the increased responsibilities of the office.

This new interest also derives in great part from the fact that, of the last nine Vice Presidents, four succeeded to or were elected to the presidency itself. And three others were leading candidates for their parties' presidential nominations.

I was privileged to carry the Democratic party's standard in 1968, opposing a former Vice President who emerged victorious after a close and exciting contest.

Another reason the vice presidency is undergoing special examination is the widespread feeling in both major parties that the vice presidential selection process has been too hurried and has not received the attention from national convention delegates that the office deserves.

In the traditional vice presidential selection process, the presidential nominee announces a running mate almost at the last minute, sometimes to the dismay and surprise of the convention.

Critics of this process point especially to 1972, when the Democratic party's vice presidential nominee withdrew from the national ticket, and the Republican nominee, although elected, later resigned from the vice presidency itself.

Because the vice presidency is a springboard to the White House, increasing attention is being focused on two questions:

First, what should be the role of Vice Presidents in our political system?

Second, should there be changes in the process by which nominees for Vice President are selected?

As Vice President and as a candidate for President concerned with selecting a vice presidential running mate, I have reached some general conclusions about both these questions.

The Constitution gives the Vice President only the responsibility for presiding over the Senate and casting votes in that body in the case of a tie, or succeeding to the presidency in case of a vacancy or disability in that office.

Consequently, some critics argue that a vacancy or disability in the presidency is not the best time to introduce an unfamiliar face -- that of the Vice President -- to the country. The widest possible acceptance of such a transfer of power should be one of our political system's highest priorities.

This is a strong argument for a President to assign important duties to the Vice President -- duties that will equip him for the difficult decision-making responsibilities of the President, and functions that will give the Vice President periodic public exposure. I applaud the initiatives taken by President Carter in giving Vice President Mondale precisely these kinds of assignments.

But, second, the wise and careful selection of a vice presidential nominee helps to insure public acceptance of a later possible transfer of power precisely because that nominee was elected to office.

The elevation to the presidency of a Vice President elected on the same ticket and who is committed to the same platform and policies as the President, maximizes the opportunity for continuity in programs and policies endorsed by the nation in the preceding presidential election.

When no one was especially concerned with the vice presidency, scant attention was paid to nominees for the office. Our political history is full of vice presidential nominees chosen to placate factions of a party, regions of the country, or ruffled personalities otherwise unhappy with other convention decisions. Frequently, in our political history more attention has been given to the political needs of the party than to the selection of a candidate of presidential timber.

But in the last 30 years, because of deaths and illnesses of Presidents in periods of general international instability, we increasingly have come to recognize that we cannot afford the luxury of giving priority to in-house party politics in the selection of vice presidential candidates.

Selection of vice presidential nominees is not a matter that is controlled or guided by federal law. Therefore, it is essential that the major parties institute reforms in the selection of vice presidential nominees that will contribute to the serious consideration of the nomination that the office deserves.

I served as Chairman of the Democratic Party's Commission on Vice Presidential Selection which reported proposed changes in vice presidential selection to the Democratic National Committee, in December, 1973.

Our commission's work might be interpreted as having had limited impact. But it should be recognized that, after having considered other alternatives, our major recommendation was a reaffirmation of the party's national convention as the best forum for vice presidential candidate selection.

But from an historical perspective, the most important fact was that the establishment of the commission and the widespread attention given to our work clearly indicated that the vice presidential selection process had become a matter of national concern.

The commission recommended that the length of the Democratic national convention be extended by one day to permit an interval of 48 hours between the selection of the party's presidential and vice presidential candidates.

A second recommendation made by the commission would allow the presidential candidate to ask the convention for additional time if it agreed that one extra day did not allow enough deliberation on the choice for a running mate. He also could propose more than one person for that nomination.

If that additional time were granted, a special meeting of the Democratic National Committee would be held between 14 and 21 days after the convention to select the party's vice presidential candidate.

We also proposed that every Democrat, even without the the presidential nominee's recommendation, might seek the vice presidential nomination, providing petitions supporting his or her candidacy are signed by at least 10 percent of all delegates, and those delegates are from at least three states.

There have been many proposals to change the method of selecting vice presidential nominees. These include such radical departures from present practices as requiring presidential candidates to indicate their choices for running mates before state conventions and presidential preference primaries, or requiring that the vice presidential nomination be awarded to the runner-up in the presidential nomination balloting. Other proposals similarly seek to narrow the options open to the party and the presidential nominee.

It is my belief that the present method -- allowing the presidential nominee and the delegates to the national convention to agree on a choice that need not be made official until mid-convention -- best serves the needs of our political system.

After all, both the party and the presidential nominee want to win the election. They want to face the electorate with issues and candidates they can proudly support. Any arbitrary system that forces a vice presidential nominee on a reluctant presidential nominee would not serve the interest of the party or the nation.

Today, both parties should be focusing on the real problem in vice presidential selection -- how to give the presidential candidate and his advisers time to make a wise choice.

There is no way to take politics out of the business of choosing candidates for public office. No detailed party rules can prevent a presidential candidate and a party convention from choosing a vice presidential candidate for purely political reasons or prevent what may later prove to be a bad choice.

We must rely on the individuals involved in the process -- just as we rely on the good judgment of public officials to enact good laws and carry them out with good sense.

Our system of government provides the best check yet devised against poor government. That check is the ballot box or, in the case of political party conventions, the vote of the delegates.

1964 - LBJ -
1968. Munkie Selection

(Competence)

Careful Selection Procedures

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CANDIDATE

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Herb Schlosser
Alvin Perlmuter
David Brinkley

L THE VICE PRESIDENCY, ~~long~~ ^{a long} IGNORED OR BELITTLED AMERICAN
POLITICAL INSTITUTION, HAS IN RECENT YEARS RECEIVED INCREASED
ATTENTION, ~~IN THIS COUNTRY CONSISTENT WITH THE INCREASED~~
~~RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE.~~

L THIS NEW INTEREST ~~DERIVES~~ DERIVES IN GREAT PART FROM THE
FACT THAT, OF THE LAST ⁹ NINE VICE PRESIDENTS, ⁴ FOUR SUCCEEDED
TO OR WERE ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY ITSELF. ¹ AND THREE OTHERS
WERE LEADING CANDIDATES FOR THEIR PARTIES' PRESIDENTIAL NOMI-
NATIONS.

I WAS PRIVILEGED TO CARRY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S STANDARD
IN 1968, OPPOSING A FORMER VICE PRESIDENT WHO EMERGED VICTORIOUS
AFTER A CLOSE AND EXCITING CONTEST.

~~ANOTHER REASON THE VICE PRESIDENCY IS UNDERGOING SPECIAL
EXAMINATION IS THE WIDESPREAD FEELING IN BOTH MAJOR PARTIES
THAT THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS HAS BEEN TOO HURRIED
AND HAS NOT RECEIVED THE ATTENTION FROM NATIONAL CONVENTION
DELEGATES THAT THE OFFICE DESERVES.~~

L IN THE TRADITIONAL VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS, THE
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE ANNOUNCES A RUNNING MATE ALMOST AT THE LAST
MINUTE, SOMETIMES TO THE DISMAY AND SURPRISE OF THE CONVENTION.

L CRITICS OF THIS PROCESS POINT ESPECIALLY TO 1972, WHEN THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE WITHDREW FROM THE
NATIONAL TICKET, AND THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE, ALTHOUGH ELECTED,
LATER RESIGNED FROM THE VICE PRESIDENCY ITSELF.

L BECAUSE THE VICE PRESIDENCY ^{is} ~~is~~ A SPRINGBOARD TO THE WHITE

HOUSE, INCREASING ATTENTION IS BEING FOCUSED ON TWO QUESTIONS:

(1) L FIRST, WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENTS IN OUR
POLITICAL SYSTEM?

(2) L SECOND, SHOULD THERE BE CHANGES IN THE PROCESS BY WHICH
NOMINEES FOR VICE PRESIDENT ARE SELECTED?

L AS VICE PRESIDENT AND AS A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT CONCERNED
WITH SELECTING A VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE, I HAVE REACHED
SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT BOTH THESE QUESTIONS.

L THE CONSTITUTION GIVES THE VICE PRESIDENT ONLY THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESIDING OVER THE SENATE AND CASTING VOTES IN THAT
BODY IN THE CASE OF A TIE, OR SUCCEEDING TO THE PRESIDENCY
IN CASE OF A VACANCY OR DISABILITY IN THAT OFFICE.

L CONSEQUENTLY, SOME CRITICS ARGUE THAT A VACANCY OR DISABILITY
IN THE PRESIDENCY IS NOT THE BEST TIME TO INTRODUCE AN UNFAMILIAR
FACE -- THAT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT -- TO THE COUNTRY. L THE
WIDEST POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH A TRANSFER OF POWER SHOULD BE
ONE OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM'S HIGHEST PRIORITIES.

L THIS IS A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR A PRESIDENT TO ASSIGN
IMPORTANT DUTIES TO THE VICE PRESIDENT -- DUTIES THAT WILL
EQUIP HIM FOR THE DIFFICULT DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE PRESIDENT, AND FUNCTIONS THAT WILL GIVE THE VICE PRESIDENT
PERIODIC PUBLIC EXPOSURE L I APPLAUD THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY
PRESIDENT CARTER IN GIVING VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE PRECISELY
THESE KINDS OF ASSIGNMENTS.

(2) L

BUT, SECOND, THE WISE AND CAREFUL SELECTION OF A VICE

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE HELPS TO INSURE PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF A

LATER POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF POWER ~~PRECISELY BECAUSE THAT NOMINEE~~

WAS ELECTED TO OFFICE.

L THE ELEVATION TO THE PRESIDENCY OF A VICE PRESIDENT
ELECTED ON THE SAME TICKET AND WHO IS COMMITTED TO THE SAME
PLATFORM AND POLICIES AS THE PRESIDENT, MAXIMIZES THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR CONTINUITY IN PROGRAMS AND POLICIES ENDORSED BY THE NATION IN
THE PRECEDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

WHEN NO ONE WAS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED WITH THE VICE PRESIDENCY,
SCANT ATTENTION WAS PAID TO NOMINEES FOR THE OFFICE. OUR POLITICAL

HISTORY IS FULL OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES CHOSEN TO PLACATE

FACTIONS OF A PARTY, REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY, OR RUFFLED PERSON-

ALITIES OTHERWISE UNHAPPY WITH OTHER CONVENTION DECISIONS.

all too often
FREQUENTLY, ~~IN THE PAST~~ MORE ATTENTION HAS BEEN

GIVEN TO THE POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE PARTY THAN TO THE SELECTION

OF A CANDIDATE OF PRESIDENTIAL TIMBER.

L BUT IN THE LAST 30 YEARS, BECAUSE OF DEATHS AND ILLNESSES
OF PRESIDENTS IN PERIODS OF ~~GENERAL~~ *and national* INTERNATIONAL INSTABILITY,

WE INCREASINGLY HAVE COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD

THE LUXURY OF GIVING PRIORITY TO "IN-HOUSE PARTY POLITICS" IN THE

SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES IS NOT A
MATTER THAT IS CONTROLLED OR GUIDED BY FEDERAL LAW. THEREFORE,
IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE MAJOR PARTIES INSTITUTE REFORMS IN THE
SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO
THE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE NOMINATION THAT THE OFFICE
DESERVES.

I SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S COMMISSION
ON VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION WHICH REPORTED PROPOSED
CHANGES IN VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION TO THE DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL COMMITTEE, IN DECEMBER, 1973.

L OUR COMMISSION'S WORK MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS HAVING HAD
LIMITED IMPACT. L BUT IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT, AFTER HAVING
CONSIDERED OTHER ALTERNATIVES, OUR MAJOR RECOMMENDATION WAS A
REAFFIRMATION OF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL CONVENTION AS THE BEST
FORUM FOR VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SELECTION.

BUT FROM AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT
WAS THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION AND THE WIDESPREAD
ATTENTION GIVEN TO OUR WORK CLEARLY INDICATED THAT THE VICE ~~PRESIDENTIAL~~
PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS HAD BECOME A MATTER OF NATIONAL
CONCERN.

L THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED THAT THE LENGTH OF THE DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL CONVENTION BE EXTENDED BY ONE DAY TO PERMIT AN INTERVAL
OF 48 HOURS BETWEEN THE SELECTION OF THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL
AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

✓ A SECOND RECOMMENDATION MADE BY THE COMMISSION WOULD
ALLOW THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TO ASK THE CONVENTION FOR
ADDITIONAL TIME, IF IT AGREED THAT ONE EXTRA DAY DID NOT ALLOW
ENOUGH DELIBERATION ON THE CHOICE FOR A RUNNING MATE. ✓ HE ALSO
COULD PROPOSE MORE THAN ONE PERSON FOR THAT NOMINATION. Context.

✓ IF THAT ADDITIONAL TIME WERE GRANTED, A SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WOULD BE HELD BETWEEN
14 AND 21 DAYS AFTER THE ^{National} CONVENTION TO SELECT THE PARTY'S
VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

✓ WE ALSO PROPOSED THAT EVERY DEMOCRAT, EVEN WITHOUT THE
THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE'S RECOMMENDATION, MIGHT SEEK THE VICE
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, PROVIDING PETITIONS SUPPORTING HIS OR
HER CANDIDACY ARE SIGNED BY AT LEAST 10 PERCENT OF ALL DELEGATES,
ARE 3
AND THOSE DELEGATES, FROM AT LEAST THREE STATES.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE METHOD OF
 SELECTING VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES. THESE INCLUDE SUCH RADICAL
 DEPARTURES FROM PRESENT PRACTICES AS REQUIRING PRESIDENTIAL
 CANDIDATES TO INDICATE THEIR CHOICES FOR RUNNING
 MATES BEFORE STATE CONVENTIONS AND PRESIDENTIAL
 PRIMARIES, OR REQUIRING THAT THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION
 BE AWARDED TO THE RUNNER-UP IN THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION
 BALLOTING. OTHER PROPOSALS SIMILARLY SEEK TO NARROW THE OPTIONS
 OPEN TO THE PARTY AND THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE.

~~Keep~~ ~~Keep~~ IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE PRESENT METHOD -- ALLOWING THE
 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE AND THE DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONVEN-
 TION TO AGREE ON A CHOICE THAT NEED NOT BE MADE OFFICIAL UNTIL
 MID-CONVENTION -- BEST SERVES THE NEEDS OF OUR POLITICAL

↳ AFTER ALL, BOTH THE PARTY AND THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE
WANT TO WIN THE ELECTION. ↳ THEY WANT TO FACE THE ELECTORATE
WITH ISSUES AND CANDIDATES THEY CAN PROUDLY SUPPORT. ↳ ANY
ARBITRARY SYSTEM THAT FORCES A VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE ON A
RELUCTANT PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE WOULD NOT SERVE THE INTEREST OF
THE PARTY OR THE NATION.

↳ TODAY, BOTH PARTIES SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON THE REAL PROBLEM
IN VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION -- HOW TO GIVE THE PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE AND HIS ADVISERS TIME TO MAKE A WISE CHOICE --

*Rearranging convention schedule, Setup
advisory committee to assist in the Vice
Presidential selection process - advisory committee
to ask presidential contenders for lists of
prospective running mates - these lists
to be available to public no later than
the final round of Primaries*

L THERE IS NO WAY TO TAKE POLITICS OUT OF THE BUSINESS
OF CHOOSING CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE. L NO DETAILED PARTY RULES
CAN PREVENT A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND A PARTY CONVENTION FROM
CHOOSING A VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR PURELY POLITICAL
REASONS OR PREVENT WHAT MAY LATER PROVE TO BE A BAD CHOICE.

L WE MUST RELY ON THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS --
JUST AS WE RELY ON THE GOOD JUDGMENT OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO
ENACT GOOD LAWS AND CARRY THEM OUT WITH GOOD SENSE.

L OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT PROVIDES THE BEST CHECK YET
DEvised AGAINST POOR GOVERNMENT. L THAT CHECK IS THE BALLOT
BOX OR, IN THE CASE OF POLITICAL PARTY CONVENTIONS, THE VOTE
OF THE DELEGATES.



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