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MEET THE PRESS

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Produced by LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

Guest: SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY (Minn.)
Democratic Vice Presidential Candidate

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MR. SCHERER: This is Ray Scherer, inviting you to MEET THE PRESS. Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democratic candidate for Vice President of the United States. Now, we will have the first question from Lawrence E. Spivak, Permanent Member of the MEET THE PRESS Panel.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator Humphrey, recently you warned the American people that the Republicans—and these were your words “may appeal to passion and prejudices and to fear and bitterness in the campaign,” and you pledged that the Democrats’ campaign would be conducted—and again these were your words “with honor and dignity.”

In view of that, why did the Democrats use the TV spot showing a little girl counting daisies and then being blown to bits by a nuclear blast, with the voice asking that you vote for President Johnson? Would you say that was an appeal to “passion” and “fear”?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: First, I said I felt that the Goldwater Republicans would make this appeal. I didn’t say all Republicans, because a substantial number of them are supporting President Johnson.

I did not approve of the TV spot that you refer to, and when my point of view was asked, I suggested that it be removed from the air, even though I do feel that the issue of nuclear power and the control of nuclear power is possibly the central issue in this campaign, because I believe that what you need is a President who is experienced, who is reliable, who temperamentally is steady and calm and not at all impetuous. Nuclear power is too important and too devastating to be left in uncertain hands.

MR. SPIVAK: You do think then that that TV spot was a mistake, and you say it has been repealed, or it is not going to be used again?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I said I did not personally think it was very good.

MR. SPIVAK: On the nuclear power issue, Senator Goldwater has said over and over again that he is not in favor of using nuclear bombs in Southeast Asia. Why, in view of that, do the Democrats keep insinuating that he is?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It is a little difficult for me to keep up with this shifting target of Mr. Goldwater. He did once say that he thought it would be well to use nuclear weapons to "defoliate," I believe it was, the jungles in Vietnam. There isn't any doubt but that he said that. I think that was a very reckless statement, and I have said so. I haven't particularly stressed the point, but I think Mr. Goldwater now has retracted that. He has either said he didn't say it, or he said that he shouldn't have said it, but whatever he said has confused the issue.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator, hasn't he said that that was one of the things that might be done but that he didn't recommend it?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Oh, I think that is about the way he explained it, but may I say to the world that is deeply concerned about any irresponsible action in the use of nuclear power, for a Presidential candidate to make the suggestion that this is one of the ways that you might conduct your activities or military operations in Vietnam is indeed very dangerous and, I think, does our country a disservice.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator, still on the question of nuclear power, whether or not to give NATO commanders the right of decision for the use of small nuclear weapons has become an issue in this campaign. There have been recent reports that General Lemnitzer, the head of NATO, has already been given a right to use small nuclear weapons in certain types of operation. Can you tell us whether or not that is true?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: It is my understanding that it is not true. And I think when we talk about small nuclear weapons, we should indicate to the American people what we are talking about. We are talking about little nuclear weapons that laid low Nagasaki and Hiroshima, 10 kiloton, 15 kiloton, 18, 20 kiloton weapons, larger than any weapon that was ever used in World War II with the exception of the atomic bombs on Japan. There aren't any small, little nuclear weapons. There are no little old conventional nuclear weapons. These are deadly, destructive, powerful weapons, Mr. Spivak.

MR. SPIVAK: Let me ask you one other question on that: Suppose war did break out and suppose the enemy did use a small

nuclear weapon. What would we do, would the commanders have to wait until they got in touch with the President of the United States before they could fire back? Would they have no right at all to use nuclear weapons in retaliation? Would they have to wait?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I am not privy to all of the most intimate details of the relationships between the generals in the field and the Commander in Chief, the President of the United States, but I do know that our military communications system is almost instantaneous. There wouldn't be any serious problem at all as to what we might do in terms of retaliation. If we are attacked by nuclear weapons, I am sure that the President of the United States, in combination and consultation with the top military officers of our government, would make a quick decision and one that would be in the interests of our national security.

MR. SPIVAK: May I ask your own judgment on this matter: Are we not to use nuclear weapons until the enemy has used them first? Is this the policy of the Administration?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: We do not believe in preventive war.

MR. SPIVAK: And we would not use them until they had used them on us and mightn't that not be too late, Senator?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think these are matters a little too sensitive for candidates for public office to be talking about. This is a matter of the highest security of our land, and the Senator from Minnesota, not as a Vice Presidential candidate but as a responsible public official, is not going to be drawn into any "iffy" discussions or any theoretical discussions. These are matters which ought to be kept in the closest classification in terms of the security of our nation. I don't think we ought to telescope or telephone our messages to the potential enemy.

MR. LISAGOR: Senator Humphrey, I'd like to clear up a point you made in your exchange with Mr. Spivak just a moment ago. You spoke of military communications being virtually instantaneous today. In the Gulf of Tonkin just very recently we seem to be having trouble establishing what really happened there, and it led Senator Goldwater the other night in Charleston, West Virginia, to say somewhat contemptuously that we were waiting for an air mail letter to tell us what went on.

Why is that a communication problem, and doesn't that bear upon the exchange you had with Mr. Spivak about the need of our commanders in the field to work and to react rather instantaneously?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The problem in the Gulf of Tonkin incident that you are mentioning was not one of communications. The message did get back as to what action was taken by our destroyers, the two destroyers in that area. The problem was not of getting the message back, but of finding out what happened in the Gulf of Tonkin, because the four vessels that appeared on the radar screen, after having been—after receiving a firing of notification, or of warning, kept coming on, and then there was open firing by our destroyers, and then the vessels seemed to disappear.

In so far as to what we were doing and what was happening there, we have a pretty good idea, but how you evaluate it, that is another thing.

MR. LISAGOR: But Senator, isn't it rather important to know what you are shooting at in this world of nuclear weapons?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, but we were not shooting nuclear weapons.

MR. LISAGOR: Yes, but do we yet know what we were shooting at?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, it is the view of our Navy and the commander that was in charge of that particular detail or detachment that these were unfriendly vessels. We had had two such incidents before, that these vessels came on despite the warning shot, and they were moving in upon American ships, and the orders are to those destroyers to protect those ships.

Mr. Goldwater said that we apparently were waiting for an air mail letter. I consider that comment very childish, and I would hope that this incident itself might once again demonstrate how important it is to have thoughtful, prudent judgment before you take any type of massive retaliation of rather intensive retaliation over an incident like this.

MR. LISAGOR: Senator, during his Southern trip, which I covered the past week, Senator Goldwater seemed to be running against two main targets. One was the Supreme Court, and one was a man he kept calling Hubert Horatio.

I would like for you to tell us how much of an issue, if any, do you regard yourself in the South?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, Mr. Lisagor, if I can serve as the lightning rod for President Lyndon Johnson in this campaign, I think I will have served a very great purpose. I think I ought to tell my good friend Senator Goldwater that I am not running for President. It is President Johnson that is his adversary in this campaign. But if he wishes to give me this friendly treatment out on the hustings, I am somewhat honored, and I am glad

that he repeats my middle name, too, because it has seldom been used, and frankly it was my father's addition to the name, and I sort of like the fact that someone has thought of dad in these moments.

MR. CRAIG: Senator Goldwater was the first to speak out at the Republican Convention about violence in the streets, the streets not being safe for people to walk upon. Now after the looting and the rioting, the President also called for law and order, but did not the Democrats condone the start of this sort of thing by allowing the demonstrations by the civil rights organizations?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: No, I do not believe that we have condoned it at all, and may I say that no one should condone lawlessness, violence, looting, vandalism, hoodlumism. We can not do that. I have been the Mayor of a rather large city. I have had to enforce the law. I operated and was in command of a police department, and I maintained law and order. That is the first duty of a public official that is entrusted with the responsibility of law and order, and of course law and order is essentially the responsibility of local government and of state government.

The President of the United States and the Senator from Minnesota both believe in law and order. We believe in strict law enforcement. We believe in law observance. The President has ordered the investigative services of this government, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to be helpful, to try to find out if there is a pattern to these incidents of violence and disorder. And may I make the record crystal clear, the full power of this government in so far as it has power—it doesn't have a federal police system, and I don't want one, but in so far as we can do anything, that will be done. Then I think there are a few other things that need to be done, too, such as trying to find out what is it that causes this social dynamite that brings about these explosions in some of our cities.

MRS. CRAIG: Yes, but Senator, you are speaking of now. I am speaking of the beginning, when the civil rights demonstrations broke laws, blocked streets, invaded business houses. I don't recollect that the Administration then said anything against stopping the demonstrations, even when they blocked off, for instance, the Triboro Bridge.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Oh, Mrs. Craig, may I say that the first person, I think, to speak up on that is the man you are interviewing today, and I was joined in it by Senator Thomas Kuchel of California. We both issued a statement, a joint statement in which we said that civil wrongs do not make for civil rights, and civil disobedience does not add to respect for law and order or equal protection of the laws.

Not for one single minute would I condone this kind of lawlessness, nor has the President, nor has any responsible public official. I might add that I would hope that Mr. Goldwater would help appeal to the basic sense of decency and fair play of the American people and urge law observance and quit making these comments to the effect that the Civil Rights Act breeds hatred and bitterness and violence. This is just an invitation to trouble.

MRS. CRAIG: But Senator, I was not aware that you rated the Civil Rights demonstrations as leading to what it has now come to in its exploitation by thugs and possibly for Communists.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: These demonstrations always lend themselves at times to people who are unsavory, people that have little or no regard for rights of other people, and there isn't any doubt at all but that in some of these demonstrations, gangsters, hoodlums, dope addicts, Communists, Klu Kluxers and their ilk, have been involved, and our task is to see to it that they don't take over.

May I add also that we ought to give a little word of praise to the hundreds of thousands of people who, though they may not have all of the privileges that some of us have, go quietly about their business, trying to be good American citizens. As far as Senator Humphrey is concerned, he is going to insist upon adequate protection for our people, that is, law enforcement. But I am also going to insist upon social justice.

MRS. CRAIG: Have you asked the demonstrators not to demonstrate any more? I don't hear of demonstrations, now.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I have constantly—or, let me put it this way: I have on many occasions said that demonstrators are not serving the cause of civil rights, they are not serving the cause of a better America, by demonstration with violence. The right to petition, peacefully, of course—that is free speech. But violence, looting, gangsterism, disorder in the streets, disregard for local ordinance or law, this we cannot condone, and this I deplore. And I have asked people wherever I have had a chance, "Please, please don't engage in it."

MR. OTTEN: Senator Thurmond of South Carolina this week switched from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. There are a number of other Democratic office-holders in the South who either have endorsed Mr. Goldwater or at least refused to support Mr. Johnson.

Do you think they should follow Senator Thurmond's example and switch to the Republican Party?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: We always believe in freedom of choice. Whatever people wish to do, that is their right and their

privilege. I suppose some of them will. But I think that before this campaign is through most of our friends in the South will recall that the Democratic Party and the Democratic Administrations have been good to the South. Likewise the South has been very good to the Democratic Party.

For example, Georgia and Arkansas have never voted any other way except Democratic. For this we are extremely grateful, and I might add from my point of view it shows very good judgment. I am of the opinion that when some of the Southern local office holders find out Mr. Goldwater is not merely trying to be President but he is trying to build, as Senator Thurmond said, a Goldwater Republican Party in the South, which if it takes hold and which if it starts to move, could throw out of office a substantial number of Democrats, that when that happens they may very well return to the home of their fathers, which is the Democratic Party. And may I say, they will be welcome.

MR. OTTEN: Assuming that the Democrats do keep control of Congress, would you favor some sort of disciplinary action such as taking away seniority or committee assignments against those Southern Democrats who continue to refuse to support your ticket this fall?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: If a Senator such as Senator Thurmond announces that he is leaving the Democratic Party, that he has become, as he put it, a Goldwater Republican, then I must say that he will have to move his real estate in the Senate, and that desk will have to go from the Democratic side over to the Republican side. He has made that choice. I don't want to be unkind with him, but that is his choice.

If a Senator or a Congressman should just decide that they are going to ride this one out, we may be a little unhappy about it, but he still may be a Democrat and therefore may want to stay with the Democratic Party. I would hope that he would support Lyndon Johnson. I think that they should. But I wouldn't say that they ought to lose their seniority in the Democratic Party or their position on committees, as long as they remain as a Democrat. There will be some Democrats that will not support the Johnson-Humphrey ticket and still say they are Democrats. But if a man says, "Look, I am leaving you; I am joining the Goldwater Republican Party," then I think that he ought to have all the privileges that come with it, namely of moving from the majority over to a diminishing minority.

MR. OTTEN: There seem to be a number of Southern Democrats, though, who take an in-between course of not actually switching over from their party, but criticizing the Administration and refusing to endorse the ticket. You would not take any sort of reprisal against those?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: No, I would not, but I would say this, I am of the opinion that before November 3 comes around, they will see the light, and they will be with us, most of them. I am quite confident that President Johnson will do exceedingly well in the Southern states.

MR. SCHERER: Senator, you have been out beating the bushes now for some three weeks. What feel do you get of this campaign? Is it focusing down to one central issue?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Yes, I think so, Mr. Scherer. We like to feel, those of us who do campaigning, that there are many issues, and I suppose that there are regional issues, there are issues for special groups like Social Security, for example—many people are concerned about Mr. Goldwater's views about making Social Security voluntary, however he interprets that. And those that are in the TVA area are very concerned about his switching—first, he wanted to sell TVA, and then he didn't, and now he does want to sell it. But I think the central issue, the one that seems to bother people and that brings people to President Johnson, even though they may be Republicans or independents, is the issue of—let me put it this way: which of these two men, Senator Goldwater or President Lyndon Johnson, is best equipped by experience, by knowledge of government and of foreign affairs and by temperament to give this nation leadership during the cold war. That decision, of course, must be made in light of the facts of nuclear energy and of nuclear power and of the kind of a world in which we live. So I think that is the issue. It is the issue of which of these two men can you trust with the responsibility of the guidance, of the leadership of this great nation of ours during this turbulent and troublesome period of world tension and cold war. And on that issue, I think many, many people that ordinarily were good, hard-working Republicans have come over to President Johnson and are—I won't say they are leaving their party—they don't leave their party—but they have left for the moment the standard-bearer of the Republican Party.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator, the Bobby Baker case in the opinion of many has become a disgrace on the Senate involving even the name of the President himself. Don't you think the American people are entitled to a real, fair, thorough investigation of the case by a Senate Committee?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Mr. Spivak, that case has been checked into by the Senate Committee on Rules. It has been reopened. I voted for that, to reopen that case, because of some allegations that were made recently. Furthermore it is being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau

of Investigation and the Department of Justice. You ask me, does it deserve investigation? Of course it does. And I also voted, may I say, as did the majority of the Senate and the majority of the Democrats, for that bipartisan committee to be established to keep a constant watchful eye upon the activities of the United States Senate and any of the employees of that body.

MR. SPIVAK: But isn't it in the Senate Rules Committee now which is controlled by the Democrats overwhelmingly, and wouldn't it be a good idea to appoint a select committee, an impartial committee?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I do not believe that one should judge or prejudge these men on the Rules Committee. I know them. My judgment would be after having served in the Senate with them for years, that they are honorable men, and there isn't a one of them that wants to cover up the thing. What they want to do is to do justice and to be fair, and sometimes it is rather difficult to please the desires of some people in a political year, if you try to be fair.

MR. LISAGOR: Senator Humphrey, I think all three other candidates have issued a financial statement, and you have said that you are going to issue one, and it has been suggested that you are a little ashamed of how little you are worth, or how much you are worth, I forget which, but when do you plan to do this, and could you give us an idea of how much you may be worth?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I think that ought to be released, according to my lawyer, this weekend. I would say between now and Tuesday at the latest, and it would have been released last weekend except the accounting firm had some other work to do. I am going to do all right. There will be enough there to take care of mother. We had a little mortgage on a house out in Minnesota. This one's paid for. We have a few government bonds. I made a couple of wise investments out home in Minnesota. I can say that I am not as well off as my brother, who is in private enterprise, but I am well enough off to get along, and I have no complaints.

MR. LISAGOR: Can you give us a rough figure on this, Senator?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Oh, I think you ought to wait for the bombshell. It will be very interesting.

MR. LISAGOR: But you are not in the red, is that it?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I surely am not. I am happy to say that I have proven myself to be a prudent man.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, you have said on this program, last

spring, that you are against taking children out of their neighborhood schools and taking them someplace else to achieve a racial balance.

The Washington Superintendent of Schools agrees with that and has so ruled, and I believe you said, did you not, that the Civil Rights Bill said that it should not be used to do this.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: That is correct, Mrs. Craig.

MRS. CRAIG: Now it is being done. It is being done in many places. You have even got a crisis in New York City about it. Can anything be done nationally and federally to prevent that?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The Civil Rights Act made a specific provision that none of the pertinent portions or the sections of that Act were to be used for the purpose of bussing children, as we put it. My position now is identical to what it was when we were on this program some months ago, I believe, in March. I do not believe that this is the way that you achieve the objectives of equal protection of the laws and full citizenship under the Constitution. I think the best thing to do is to build good neighborhoods. I don't want the federal government to be messing into this thing. I think this is a matter of local authority, and I think the problem ought to be handled locally.

MR. OTTEN: Do you think it right for a high official of the federal government to have so much of his wealth in an industry regulated by another federal agency as broadcasting, where President Johnson has the bulk of his family wealth?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I feel that the agency that regulates that is not one which is subject to executive persuasion. It is what we call a quasi judicial agency. It is an agency established by the Congress, by the way, and not by the President of the United States.

MR. SCHERER: Senator, our time is up. Thank you, Senator Humphrey, for being with us.

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