

1 GARDNER COWLES DINNER
2 WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL
3 APRIL 2, 1968

4 MR. MIKE COWLES: I'm delighted that so
5 many of you could be here tonight to help us honor the
6 Vice President. There's so many distinguished people
7 in the room that I'm not going to attempt any intro-
8 ductions. I do want to mention, however, that we're
9 especially pleased that the Directors of the National
10 Association of Food Chains are here tonight as our
11 special guests. (APPLAUSE)

12 Hubert Humphrey has been a very good
13 friend of ours for many years. He's had a long and
14 distinguished career of public service and, in my book,
15 he's handled every task that he has tackled with superior
16 skill and tact and success, and I think if fate should
17 decree that he would be living in the White House next
18 year, America would be in good hands. (APPLAUSE)

19 I like to have people around me who are
20 both lucky and whose timing is right. (LAUGHTER) Two
21 months ago, I called up Hubert and I said we wanted to
22 have this Dinner for him and he said, "Alright, I'll do
23 it, if you make it on April 2nd." And I said, "No, I'd
24 rather have it later, I'd rather have it in May or June,
25 I think there'd be more interest." And Hubert said, "No,
it has to be April 2nd." (APPLAUSE) Now, all of these

1 | unpredictable political events that have occurred in the
2 | last six months; they may have startled you but Hubert
3 | knew all about them, everyone of them in both parties,
4 | and he decided that this Tuesday night, April 2nd,
5 | would be the maximum amount of interest and so I think
6 | he's got a good, lucky star going for him. I hope
7 | Hubert is going to tell us a little bit how he views
8 | the political scene, I hope he will discuss some of the
9 | awesome problems facing the United States. But he told
10 | me that he's just returned from Mexico and he decided
11 | he was going to give us a little travelogue so that
12 | we'd be better informed of the Mexican economy. (LAUGHTER)

13 | Hubert, you're among friends and the even-
14 | is yours. He will talk, say whatever he wants and then
15 | he has kindly consented to answer questions. Gentlemen,
16 | the Vice President. (APPLAUSE)

17 | VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY: Well,
18 | thank you very much, Mike. My good friend John Cowles,
19 | Mike Cowles, gentlemen, I want you to know that I listened
20 | to that applause that you gave a moment ago and I've had
21 | all of my staff men taking your names down, through the
22 | audience, (LAUGHTER) a little later we'll work amongst
23 | you. (LAUGHTER) We'll not pick up pledge cards but we
24 | have taken your picture, I thought you ought to know.
25 | (LAUGHTER) I did say to Mike that I thought it would be

1 Well if he would mention that I had just returned from a
2 visit to Mexico City, 'cause I know how terribly interested
3 all of you in hearing my report on that country. (LAUGHTER)
4 As a matter of fact, when I arrived in Washington last
5 night, quite different from most of my arrivals, there
6 were all sorts of press men, photographers, TV cameras set
7 up at Andrews Air Force Base, and I just knew that I'd had
8 a diplomatic triumph. (LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE)

9 There are just a few things that I wanted
10 to set in proper perspective. I jotted down a few notes
11 here tonight, and the gentlemen at the table have been all
12 somewhat interested in how I've been doing this. And I
13 said, "Well, it's just the way that you put automobiles
14 together, make a telephone system work or get the National
15 Association of Food Chains operating or, even, get General
16 Mills to operate. It's all well planned, all of this. The
17 only think I hope is that my meeting is as successful as
18 their respective companies tonight. If it is, this will
19 be a smash evening for me.

20 I'm here because, in a very real sense, the
21 administration is demanding equal time, (LAUGHTER) I don't
22 know what administration I'm really talking about, right now,
23 but - (LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE) I just want Mike Cowles to know,
24 I read that article in the most recent issue of Look. It was
25 a very fine article about a very fine young man, and I thought

1 | it was just wonderful that Mike Cowles assigned one of his
 2 | senior editors to write the last three minutes of President
 3 | Johnson's Speech, the other night, sort of made everything
 4 | equal. First we have a very fine laudatory article about
 5 | a gentlemen that seeks to be President, and then we have
 6 | a fine three minutes on one who is President and says he
 7 | doesn't want to be President. I thought I'd come up and
 8 | talk to you, tonight, on my own, if you didn't mind.

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9 | (LAUGHTER) APPLAUSE)

10 | You know, I had a little trouble with my
 11 | friend, Henry Ford, at a meeting not long ago, he was
 12 | having a little difficulty positioning himself behind a
 13 | podium and I was trying to get him over there behind the
 14 | Vice Presidential Seal, you know, and he wouldn't come
 15 | over there, and I said, "The trouble with you, Henry, is,
 16 | you just never been Vice President of anything." You
 17 | know, once you've been Vice President, you'll know what
 18 | it means to position yourself around.

19 | Well, I think you've heard this phrase
 20 | before, but I've been reassessing my position. (LAUGHTER)

21 | And I come up here tonight to meet with all of my fellow
 22 | democrats to get some advice. (LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE) Now,
 23 | I know for some of you to be a democrat a full year is just
 24 | more than you can take. But have you ever thought about
 25 | trying it until August? (LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE)

1 I've been trying to get some guidance from
2 this table, as to what I might say this evening that wasn't
3 going to get me in more trouble than I'm in already, and my
4 good friend, John Cowles, said, "Well, Hubert, why don't you
5 tell them some of the things that you said at the Gridiron
6 Dinner?" And I figured I shouldn't do that, there's a few
7 friends here that might take exception to some of my more
8 partisan remarks, during the gridiron festivities, in the
9 gridiron, of course, everybody - very few people even
10 remember what you say, so you can afford to be partisan on
11 that occasion. But, since I've seen you from last year,
12 I remember my friend Tom McCabe was filling in for me,
13 last year, I really appreciate that very much, in fact,
14 Tom came by and wanted to fill in for me tonight, he said,
15 "Once a friend, always a friend."

16 But, I thought I'd report on you - to you -
17 since I've last been with you I've been to the Far East,
18 Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia; I've been to Africa, to nine
19 countries in Africa, I've been down to Mexico and this
20 morning I got a call, I was invited up to Hyannisport. I
21 may even go up there - (LAUGHTER)

22 I know you didn't come here for a political
23 meeting, though why do you think I came? (LAUGHTER)

24 I want to talk to you, a little bit, primarily
25 on your terms. This is your evening, as well as mine. I come

1 here for, at least, two reasons. One is, I come because
2 of our host, a gentlemen that I hold in great admiration
3 and sincere, very personal friendship, and one who has
4 always made my life just a little more happy, by the
5 privilege of his friendship, and I come here secondly
6 because a number of you have questions that you would
7 like to ask. Questions of a government official. And
8 I came to the conclusion that one of the reasons is that
9 the founding Fathers authorized the office of the Vice
10 President is that they in their prophetic wisdom knew
11 that there had to be somebody in the government that
12 could be responsible for asking questions and still not
13 be responsible for the answers. (LAUGHTER) And, I came
14 here under those circumstances. This is an off-the-record
15 session, I think you know that. Now having said that, I
16 also know what'll happen, but I do think it would be better
17 if we just feel very free to speak to each other and you
18 can ask any question that you would like, and I shall do
19 my level best to try to answer it as responsibly as I can.

20 I did put down just a few notes and, I think
21 I can say in all sincerity, I did it very quickly, and I
22 want to refer to them.

23 I'm not a pessimist about our country, never
24 have been, I guess one of my characteristics has been one
25 of optimism, sometimes people feel I am too optimistic but

1 after you've been in government as long as I have you feel
2 the necessity to have a degree of optimism, just to keep
3 your spirits up. And in Washington, we specialize in
4 pessimism. And since the field is rather crowded, I
5 moved over to where the opportunities were a little better,
6 in the field of optimism. But I believe in all sincerity,
7 that we have good reason to be optimistic about our
8 country. There was an old British cynic, I don't know
9 just what his background was, but I remember his phrase
10 so well, his name was Aldus Hucksley, and he once said,
11 "I've looked into the future, it won't work." I'm talking
12 to people that have looked into the future, and you knew
13 it would work. The reason that you knew it would work,
14 you made it work. I doubt that there are very many, what
15 you would call, professional students of history, in this
16 audience, but everyone of you have been the makers of
17 history in your way, in your company, in your community,
18 in your life. I look about this room and see men who have
19 carved out for themselves a very unique place in the
20 economic and social life of this nation. And I'm not
21 flattering you when I tell you what I have said to many
22 an audience, but the businessman of America represents in
23 our culture success, and he does. Henry, you've heard me
24 say this as we've talked to people about our Jobs Program,
25 the program that you have been so kind and willing to head

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1 and when you get to be what you call a success, then the
2 fun is all over, from there on out it's responsibility,
3 it's duty, it's burden, because leadership really gives
4 no one any privilege. What it really does is impose
5 upon you an extra measure of responsibility. And in the
6 American culture, the economic life of our nation, and
7 those who are in it, and those who make singular achieve-
8 ment, represent what we call success. Now, with that you
9 take on many obligations, you take on the obligation for
10 community service, you take on the obligation for a sense
11 of social conscience, you take on the obligation of public
12 responsibility, you can't divorce your business and your
13 economic life from politics, you may think you'd like to,
14 but you can't, you have an involvement, and you either
15 will involve yourself, somewhat on your own terms or other
16 people will involve you on their terms. There is no way
17 to escape it, there is a new dimension of our democracy
18 and it's called participation. Now, we've asked the poor
19 to participate, but I think we also have to ask those who
20 are responsible in this nation for the economic system of
21 our country to participate, and not to participate strictly
22 on the basis of their own self-interest but, also, to par-
23 ticipate on the basis of the national interest. Which in
24 turn can mean the best self-interest. I remember one phrase,
25 John, that I used at the Gridiron Club, there was one who

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1 | said that the business of America is business, but that's
2 | really not the truth. The business of America is America,
3 | and the business of business is, ultimately, America. It's
4 | fiscal policies, it's political policies, it's economic
5 | policies, it's social policies, it's cities, it's foreign
6 | policy; everything about it, it's your business, and it's
7 | your duty to be an enlightened participant. Not just your
8 | privilege, your duty. Because remember that another word
9 | for politics is power. And if you're unwilling to engage
10 | yourself in the political processes of this country, dirty
11 | as you think it is, sometimes, and sometimes as ugly as it
12 | seems to you. Just remember that there are those who will
13 | engage themselves in those processes. There has never been
14 | a power vacuum and there never will be, either here, at
15 | home, or in the world, somebody moves into it and that's
16 | why your nation has to watch the scene of the world and
17 | that's why you, as individuals, have to take a good look
18 | at your country. What kind of a country do you want? Do
19 | you want a country in which literally armed minorities,
20 | the extremists, whoever they may be, can bludgeon their
21 | way into power, bludgeon their way into decisions, or do
22 | you want a country in which there is both law enforcement
23 | and reasons for law observance in which the processes of
24 | democracy can work peacefully? You have to make your stand
25 | and you cannot rely strictly on repressive measures, you

1 have to also rely on what you always relied on in your
2 business; motivation, incentive, something that makes
3 people want to do a better job with their lives. But I
4 repeat, our central issue at home and abroad is whether or
5 not we're going to permit decisions to be made out of
6 sheer brute force and violence, in our streets or in
7 our foreign relations. (APPLAUSE) Now, we have to make
8 up our mind about that.

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9 We have to find a way, in this country,
10 to preserve order amidst change and, at the same time,
11 to encourage change within order. It's a tough assign-
12 ment. It's the same kind of an assignment that many of
13 you, ⁱⁿ industry, have to work out all the time with your
14 collective bargaining agreements. It's the same kind of
15 an assignment that you have to work out, all the time, in
16 your competitive relationships. And in those competitive
17 relationships, sometimes government exercises a role, a
18 regulatory role, a policeman's role. You have to make
19 up your mind, also, as to how big a role that should be.
20 And I hear of cries today coming about that their ought to
21 be more federal intervention, watch out! I've been in
22 government a long time. Somebody said to me, "I think
23 you've changed." I hope so, I think a man ought to learn
24 by experience. The fact that a man changes does not
25 necessarily mean that he's wrong, it just means that he's

1 growing up, and this is very, very important, in business,
2 in government or whatever it may be. (APPLAUSE) I'm
3 talking to people that know the importance of judicial
4 processes, of the processes of law, of people who under-
5 stand what it means to have administrative interference
6 that's unchecked. And you must understand that if you
7 want the kind of government that you think is the better
8 or you, you have to take an interest in it. Now, you've
9 taken it, partially, but not as much as you should. And
10 that means you also must take an interest not only in
11 your own well-being, but in the well-being of others.

12 Now, I just jotted down four or five
13 realities and I'm going to sit down and we'll open this
14 up for a good bite at a live public official, at least
15 momentarily alive, anyway. (LAUGHTER) I guess I should
16 put in my plug, here, that I have several other professional
17 talents besides public service, in light of how precarious
18 everything seems these days. I don't know whether there
19 are any school administrators here, but I once was a
20 professor. Case I need a job, I'd like to see you later
21 on. I never have written a column, however, and I guess
22 I'm at the wrong table and I never sold cars. I do use
23 the telephone and I'm a damn good customer for General
24 Mills, I might add. (LAUGHTER)

25 But I think there are certain realities,

1 and the realities bring within themselves the questions
2 that you might want to ask. The first reality was pretty
3 well stated by our late President, John Kennedy, and I read
4 what he said, and you can draw your own conclusions. Peace
5 and freedom do not come cheap and we are destined, all of
6 us, to live out most if not all of our lives in uncertainty,
7 challenge and peril. Now, there it is gentlemen, that's
8 the last third of the twentieth century right before you.
9 If I could draw you a picture of it, it couldn't be any
10 more vivid than those words. Uncertainty, challenge and
11 peril. Now, if it were any less interesting/that there
12 wouldn't be much use to be involved. I don't think that
13 that's a particularly unique statement except it cogently
14 says what is the situation. Now, you can go around and
15 pretend it isn't there but this is a fact. A precarious
16 balance of power exists in this world which permits us,
17 in this country today, to live as we live. And social
18 systems are changing and will continue to change and we
19 have to be able to adapt ourselves to those changes
20 without sacrificing the institutions and the ideals and
21 the standards that we adhere to. That's quite a task.
22 That's the task of statesmanship. That's why you're
23 here, that's why you've made your mark in life and I hope
24 that that's why I'm here.

25 Now, the second reality is that there are

1 no simple answers, and beware of those who try to give
2 you those simple answers. Oh, I know, all of us are
3 guilty of simple answers, at time, we do it in our
4 advertising, once in awhile, we surely do it from the
5 stump. We often do it in politics and I think I should
6 remind you of that common weakness of mankind and that
7 is to exaggerate, a bit. The President told a story
8 about a chap that came up to get a job on the Redskins
9 in Washington, recently. He was a graduate of one of
10 the Universities, he wanted to play professional football
11 and he say Otto Graham, the Coach of the Redskins, and
12 Otto said to him, "Well, what are your credentials?"
13 And the fellow said, "Listen, I'm terrific, he said, I
14 can run fully uniformed, in a full football outfit, I
15 can run the length of the field in ten and a half seconds."
16 Otto said, "Oh, that's impossible." He said, "not at all."
17 He said, "I've been doing it for the last two years of my
18 college career." He said, "Im fast." And Otto said, "Well
19 what else do you have to recommend you?" And he said,
20 "Listen, my average punt for the last three years of college
21 football was 72 yards." Graham said, "That's absolutely
22 fantastic." He said, "What else do you have to recommend
23 you?" He said, "I'm the best passer, best college passer,
24 at least in our league, he said, my average pass has been
25 52 yards and I'm target 90% of the time." And Graham said,

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1 "I've never heard anything like this." He said, "You, without
2 a doubt, are the most fantastic football player I ever heard
3 of." He said, "Now, do you have any limitations?" The fellow
4 said, "Well, just one, I do exaggerate." (LAUGHTER) I guess
5 we all have some limitations. But what I'm trying to tell
6 you is, that there are no simple answers to this age of
7 challenge and peril and uncertainty. This is a complex
8 environment in which we live and there isn't anybody that
9 can come up with an instant solution. Now, I know we have
10 some instant coffee and instant tea, I guess we've got a
11 few others around, I've got to be careful, I'm in the food
12 business here tonight. But there are no instant economic
13 or political solutions, none whatsoever. We're lucky if we
14 can find them in our lifetime.

15 Now, what's the third reality? The third
16 reality is that America is a grown up country. We're a
17 grown up nation, not an old nation, but a grown up nation
18 and we need to act our age. And those of us that represent
19 this country need to act our age, whether in politics or in
20 business or whatever we may be in. I asked one of my staff
21 men to go up to my briefcase and pick up a little quotation
22 that I found, it just pinpoints what I'm talking about. This
23 is sort of what you call a smorgasbord speech, I'm just
24 putting it together here. I'm talking to a group of men that
25 represent what we call the establishment, I imagine there might

1 be somebody come in this room and say, well, you sure
2 are not out with the young crowd tonight, Humphrey.

3 (LAUGHTER) I don't want you to draw any conclusions from
4 that. Not a one of you have jumped up or done a darn thing
5 that would really excite me, yet. But, let me tell you
6 what I think I'm doing here tonight, let me tell you who
7 I think you are.

8 I think I am talking to a very young
9 audience. A philosopher, sort of a country philosopher,
10 in many ways, Samuel Oldman once said, "that youth is not
11 a time of life, it is a state of mind. You grow old only
12 by deserting our ideals, you are as young as your faith,
13 as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence,
14 as old as your fear, as young as your hope, and old as
15 your despair." Now, gentlemen, that's a good description
16 of what we call the youthful spirit. And while this
17 nation of ours is a grown up nation, I think it's a young
18 nation, it has self-confidence, it has ideals, it has hope,
19 it has aspirations, it's unafraid. And, therefore, when I
20 say that we should act as a grown up people, I don't mean
21 that we abandon what we stand for, to the contrary, we
22 fight for it, and we seek to constantly build on yesterday's
23 standards, making more or less our ambition, what we call,
24 the realization of the impossible dream, but making it a
25 possible dream.

1 And the fourth reality that I would put down
2 is, that we have the best political system of all systems.
3 Now, I know that Winston Churchill had a way of describing
4 it, and I happen to be one of the fans of the late, beloved
5 Winston Churchill, I've been reading his works. Winston
6 Churchill said that democracy is the worst possible form
7 of government, except all others that have ever been tried.
8 (LAUGHTER) And, we've had an experience now of almost 200
9 years, with this political system, and I don't think we
10 ought to sell it short. I don't think it has deceived or
11 failed the American people, I don't think it has crippled
12 the individual, I don't think it has deprived enterprise
13 of its chance. In fact, I think it's operated pretty well
14 and what's more important about it, it tends to grow with
15 the nation, and it tends to adjust itself to the needs of
16 the nation.

17 And, finally, we have as the fifth reality
18 of our time, gentlemen, we should have in our minds the
19 knowledge that we have the resources to do whatever needs
20 to be done, if we're willing to apply them. Now, those
21 resources may not yet be fully developed, but they're here.
22 And there isn't a man in this room tonight that isn't a
23 living example of what I'm saying. Everyone of you sometime,
24 somehow came up the hard way. Everyone of you had that
25 innate quality of ability that had to be developed. And I

1 think that the best testimony of America is not the size
2 of it's skyscrapers, or even the amount of money in it's
3 bank, or its gross national product. But I think the best
4 test of America is the quality of its people. And, really,
5 that's what we're talking about here this evening. That's
6 what's made this country great. The leadership, the
7 people. And you, gentlemen, in this room in your own
8 way, in your own line of life, in your own endeavor, what-
9 ever it may be, you have given proof to this generality
10 that I've just uttered here tonight. That the true test
11 of a civilization is not its goods or even its services,
12 but the character and the quality of its people. And we
13 have reared out of this great America of ours from very
14 plain and ordinary people a quality of people, an aristocracy,
15 an elite based on merit, the likes of which this world has
16 never known. And we continue to do it, now we're reaching
17 deeper into the fabric of our society. We're reaching
18 deeper into areas that you men never thought was possible
19 to touch or to reach, but you found the way to do it.
20 And we come from government to business, particularly in
21 these recent years, and have said to you quite candidly,
22 we don't have all the answers, in fact, we don't have many
23 of the answers. And we come to you in the spirit, as I've
24 said to you, on three other occasions of partnership. We've
25 come to you and said, look, this is your country, there isn't

1 a problem here in this country that government alone can
 2 handle, and yet there isn't a problem that if we leave it
 3 unsolved won't destroy both government and the system, the
 4 system of free enterprise. So we come to you in a partner-
 5 ship, not as a dominant partner, but as a working partner,
 6 and say, let's join together, let's pool our resources,
 7 let's find a way to employ, for example, the hard core
 8 unemployed, to rebuild our cities, to strengthen our system
 9 of education, to expand our enterprise, to improve our
 10 foreign trade, to find a way, if you please, to save this
 11 nation in its fiscal and monetary matters, before the value
 12 of the dollar is destroyed, before we're faced with an
 13 international monetary crisis of monumental proportions.
 14 And, we're even coming now to the people and saying, quite
 15 frankly, help us to find the answers to the grave problems
 16 of foreign policy and national security. I don't think
 17 this is weakness on the part of government, frankly, I
 18 think this is strength on the part of government, because
 19 the only government that dares to come to a people is a
 20 government that can trust the people. The dictatorship
 21 never dares to go to the people. A monarchy, a royalist
 22 system never dares go to the people. The only government
 23 that ever dares to go to the people for help and for
 24 answers is a government that draws its strength from the
 25 people, is of the people and by the people and, hopefully,

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1 for the people.

2 I'll take your questions. Thank you very
3 much.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 MR. COWLES: Hubert, you're very inspiring.

6 I'll dare to ask the first question, would you mind telling,
7 the group here in this room, when you first learned of the
8 President's decision not to stand for reelection and how?

9 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Oh boy! Well, I'll
10 fuzz it a bit because (LAUGHTER) there are certain things
11 that are a privilege but much of it has been in our Free
12 Press and I'd be glad to write a good article for Look.
13 From time to time, in the past year, I've, of course, had
14 - though I think you know it goes without saying - I talk
15 very frequently with the President, and like all human
16 beings and we in politics are very human, that's both good
17 and bad, but we're very, very human, there are times you
18 get discouraged, there are times that you fell excited,
19 inspired and there have been some times, of course, when
20 you look ahead and you wonder whether you're doing what you
21 ought todo, whether what you're doing is what will best serve
22 the nation. I think you have to keep in mind one thing about
23 that Presidency. Once you've been there, even if you've just
24 been looking around corners, like I have, believe me that's
25 the end of the line as far as what can happen to you and your

1 country, that is it, that's the apex. And I've heard
 2 the President say, from time to time, to me that he was
 3 doubtful as to whether or not he would seek another term.
 4 But I have always, more or less, felt that that was, well,
 5 just the way any of us get, you know, you get a little
 6 discouraged. I never say this too often at home, or
 7 complain too much, because Mrs. Humphrey always says,
 8 well, you know, nobody really demands that you be in
 9 public office (LAUGHTER) I have a very good leveling
 10 influence in my household, as the Cowles Brothers know
 11 here. But on Sunday, this past Sunday, the President
 12 called and said he wanted to drop over and have some coffee,
 13 and he does come by, once in awhile, at our apartment, we
 14 do visit. This time I knew that he must have something
 15 extra in mind, because we had been talking a great deal
 16 about what his message would be to the nation, you know
 17 that I have said, I hope you've read that I did say that
 18 we were making a very careful examination of our policy
 19 in Southeast Asia, we were reviewing it. And as Dean Rusk
 20 said, from A to Z, and I tried to find another letter in
 21 the alphabet, just to get a little ahead of Dean Rusk on
 22 it, but I said, we were reviewing it completely. And the
 23 President came by and we went off to our study and he
 24 wanted to show me what he was planning on saying, and we
 25 discussed it. And he has a sort of a filing system that

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1 he carries in his right-hand pocket, right up here, and
2 he pulls out - and I'm beginning to do it too - it just
3 proves what can happen to you in this business, and he
4 pulled out a couple of papers and he showed me one paper
5 and he said, "This is, what do you think about this for
6 an ending?" I looked at it and I thought it was pretty
7 good. Then he looked at me and he said, "Now this is
8 one that I've been thinking about for a long time, I
9 want you to take a look at this one." In fact, as you
10 read, I think, in the press he indicated, he said, "You,
11 know, I had planned on using this one at the State of the
12 Union Address, but I'd given it to Lady Bird to look over
13 and she went to the hairdresser and took it with her.
14 And when we looked it over, I read it, and it read very
15 beautifully, very movingly, until about the last four
16 sentences, that's the sentences I was talking about, I
17 know Mike Cowles had one of his writers fix that up, I
18 believe that in all sin- not really, Mike - I read it,
19 and I said, "Mr. President, I hope that you wouldn't do
20 that." And then we sat and talked, ^{for} quite awhile, about
21 why he felt as he did. Now, he's explained this to you,
22 in considerable detail and it doesn't require any more
23 explanation on my part. He said in his address why he felt
24 that he ought to renounce any ambitions for a second term
25 and make it quite positive, not only quite, unequivocally

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1 positive that he would not accept the nomination for a
2 second term. When I read that, to be quite honest with
3 you, I was very upset, saddened, I hoped that he wouldn't
4 feel that way, and yet after we discussed it for about a
5 half an hour I could fully understand why he did feel
6 that way. And when he left, he walked over and was going
7 out the door and he put his arms around my wife, that goes
8 alright in the Presidential Family, I want you men to know,
9 Mrs. Humphrey is very fond of the President and he is of
10 her, and he gave her a big kiss and when he went out the
11 door he looked at me and he said, knowing that I - you
12 know there are times that a fellow does get a little too
13 talkative - not me, of course - but, he did this. I tried
14 to explain to Mrs. Humphrey on the way to the Airport, we
15 we're going to leave from Andrews Airport Base, that noon,
16 to go to Mexico, for the signing of the Nuclear Prohibition
17 Treaty, in Mexico, which bans the use of nuclear weapons of
18 the station and nuclear weapons in the Latin American
19 Countries, I tried to explain to her that the President
20 was quite discouraged, that he was concerned about the
21 nation, about his division, about the partisanship in our
22 own party, primarily, that he was concerned that his work
23 to try to bring a peaceful solution to the War in Vietnam
24 was being jeopardized by this fratricidal struggle and that
25 he thought he had to do something that would unite the nation,

1 remove himself as the source of any possible dissention
2 and trouble and, at the same time, be able to dedicate his
3 life to the remaining months of his career, as President,
4 to the consummation of a just and enduring peace. Well,
5 I couldn't tell her, you know, you just don't go around
6 telling everybody around what happened. But, I said, "Mom,
7 Muriel, you know, he's discouraged and I don't know what
8 he's going to do, and just sort of bracing her for it.
9 Well, when we got to Mexico. And I was going to say the
10 funniest thing happened to me on the way to Mexico City,
11 and it literally did, but we were at the Embassy, U.S.
12 Embassy, Ambassador Freeman, one of our real top Ambassadors,
13 I might add, in Mexico City. President Dios Hodas, the
14 President of Mexico and Mrs. Dios Hodas came over to the
15 Embassy for a dinner that I was privileged to host and I
16 asked for the privilege of sitting off in the Library and
17 listening to this speech. We got it in on Voice of America
18 and we listened to the speech. And at about ten minutes
19 after the speech opened, I received a call from the White
20 House, from Mr. Watson, who is the President's Secretary,
21 and I knew there were two endings to the speech, and I
22 received a call and Mr. Watson said, "Mr. Vice President,
23 I think you ought to know, as you are aware of on your
24 mornings visit with the President that it's number 2."
25 And I said, "Well, thank you." But I was very unhappy, to

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1 be quite frank about it. But I must say that I think
2 history will record that this was a very, very important
3 speech. In its text, substance, in its purpose. I think,
4 also, what the President did was to extricate the Presi-
5 dency, the Office, from the incredible struggle that
6 seems to surround it today. A struggle which is not
7 strictly partisan and you men ought to know about it. A
8 struggle that is involved in a whole kind of new social
9 ferment that rises up into literally bellowing flames of
10 extremism and militancy that the likes of which this
11 country hasn't seen for many a year. I've witnessed it
12 out on the public stump, believe me. I've had to walk
13 through the lines, I've had to hear the people call me
14 an assassin, and hear the wild shrieks of people who think
15 that we haven't done enough, when many of you think that
16 we've already done too much. And what the President did
17 and what he decided to do, and I think very properly, was
18 to preserve the honor and the integrity and the dignity
19 of the Office of the Presidency so that whomever may
20 occupy it from here on out would have the same obligation
21 and not to prostitute that Office, in a bitter conflict
22 that is ugly and almost violent, in order to become the
23 nominee of a party on the one hand and to be the victor
24 in an election on the other hand. I think he did a great
25 job and I, of course, feel as you do, very honored by it.

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(APPLAUSE)

Any other questions around here? That was a kind of a sentimental one for me.

Yes sir?

FROM THE FLOOR: Sir, are you planning to run for the Presidency?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Oh, my goodness! Are you with the Associated Press? (LAUGHTER) I'll answer your question, as I have to others. I have no plans right now, I really don't, except to do my job. This is a very serious - very serious decision for any man. I suppose under these circumstances, eight years ago, without knowing what I know now, I might have said, well, it looks very inviting, you know? But I have seen a President, I think I have some idea of what it means to see a man wrestle with these incredibly difficult problems. And literally looking for handles and not being able to find them. To wrestle with the problems of international monetary policy that are not really under your control alone, to try to find some way in this world of change and violence and ferment, to bring about at least a modicum of peace or to preserve ourself from the possibility of nuclear destruction. And after you've been around that White House, a little bit, and sat in the National Security Counsel about three and a half years, and been at Cabinet Meetings, and been at a situation room,

1 day after day and night after night in the Middle East Crisis,
2 crisis in Cyprus and the Dominican Republic, and to have the
3 reports come back from General Westmoreland and General
4 Abrams and sit down and talk across the table with Kosegan,
5 you really think a good deal before you say quickly that
6 you're going to be a candidate for anything. I'm a public
7 man, I'm a political man, I don't know what I will do. All
8 I know is that I'm going to seek a lot of advice. In the
9 meantime, I'm going to try to do my job. I happen to
10 believe that the best politics is no politics. I think
11 the best politics, and I keep driving this home to my office,
12 the best politics is to make as few mistakes as you can and
13 do the most that you can, without regard to party, and to
14 try to, at least, merit the respect, if not the affection
15 the respect of the American public because you try to do
16 your job. Now, my job is not the most important one. But
17 it is my job. And if I do that well, somebody might think
18 that I could do another job, at least partially as well.
19 And that's the way I look at it. (APPLAUSE)

20 FROM THE FLOOR: Mr. Vice President, I'm
21 sure most of us, last night listening between ten and eleven
22 to a broadcast, and one of the gentlemen, let us say we shall
23 unname, said that as a result of President Johnson's statement,
24 he said that he no longer is a political influence nor does he
25 have any affect on who might be the democratic nominee. This

1 was, of course, - Do you feel that as a result of what
 2 he has done that the President doesn't have any political
 3 influence on who shall be the democratic nominee?

4 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I do not
 5 feel so. I think it depends entirely on what the Presi-
 6 dent wishes to do. I think that it should be quite clear
 7 that the President has lifted himself above the contest in
 8 the Democratic Party. He has said, almost as Dick Daly said,
 9 the Mayor of Chicago, that we need a sort of a moratorium
 10 on some of the conflict within the ranks. But the power
 11 of the Presidency, my friend, is a tremendous power. It's
 12 a magnificent power, too, if it's properly used. Any man
 13 that's President, at any time, has a great influence on
 14 everything, what you do, what I do, what happens to me,
 15 what happens to you, what happens to anybody else. And I
 16 think that a statement such as that, does not represent
 17 what I would call a deep mature thinking. Now the Presi-
 18 dent may not take any hand in matters, that's entirely
 19 probable. I don't know. I, frankly, have not discussed
 20 the situation with him. I was at a meeting this morning
 21 of the leaders of the Democratic Leaders of the House and
 22 the Senate, which is our regular Tuesday morning meeting.
 23 We did not discuss politics, we didn't discuss the future
 24 of Hubert Humphrey, or the future of the President of the
 25 United States, or the future of anybody. We just did not.

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1 Now, we maybe will, I would hope that we would. But we
2 didn't. But I am convinced of one thing that anyone that
3 says that the President has no influence, even if they call
4 him what they say, lame duck, after you make the announce-
5 ment, is not reading American history. After all, you have
6 only one President between now and the twentieth day of
7 January to high noon and every man in this room knows it.
8 Now, there may be some fellow that is trying to interpret
9 that doesn't know it but, I'll guarantee, the men of
10 business know it, the men of finance know it, and those of
11 us that live in this political , most of us, most
12 of us know it. Of course, the wish can be the father of
13 the thought. I don't know who said that but there are an
14 awful lot of wishers, and not enough thinkers. (APPLAUSE)

15 FROM THE FLOOR: Indistinguishable.

16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I didn't
17 come up here to either launch his campaign or to sink it.
18 In fact, nor mine, cause I haven't even as much as spelled
19 out the word. But I did say to a group of Reporters out
20 here, and I've never seen quite so many Reporters, lately,
21 I guess they're all interested in my trip to Mexico, wherever
22 I go, but I said you can't tell who will be in the World Series,
23 on the basis of what happens in the grapefruit league. This is
24 the month (LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE) - this is April, and the Con-
25 vention is August. Now, the Washington Senators are really at

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1 the top of the list, you know, I hope you'll forgive me
 2 for these parochial prejudices, but as a Twin supporter
 3 we're second only to Boston. Boston who was the league
 4 leader in the American League, Bless their souls, is at
 5 the bottom, next are the Twins. We did all right, last
 6 year, both of us. Right now, Washington Senators, Bless
 7 their hearts, are right up there, they've won every game
 8 against the National League, they've even been doing good
 9 in the American League, they look g - r - e - a - t in
 10 April. Have you ever seen them in September? So, I
 11 guess that's my answer, I don't know what's going to
 12 happen. (APPLAUSE)

13 FROM THE FLOOR: You said that in the last
 14 half hour of your discussion with the President that he
 15 made it clear to you, why. Could you comment on some of
 16 the reasons?

17 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I think I
 18 should leave that pretty much to the President. I think
 19 that the articles that have been written since are rather
 20 interpretive. The President was extremely candid in his
 21 final five minutes of that splendid address. I think he
 22 meant every word of what he said, I hope you'll read it
 23 very, very carefully.

24 FROM THE FLOOR: Isn't that what he said
 25 to you that made you ?

1 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes sir. I -
2 Yes sir. Thank you.

3 FROM THE FLOOR: Mr. Vice President, would
4 you care to comment on what your opinion is as to the
5 possible response to the Hanoi to Mr. Johnson's latest
6 attempts at de-escalation of the War.

7 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, of course,
8 the honest answer is, I just don't know. I really don't.
9 My surmise is that they will not respond very favorably.
10 That's my surmise. My hope is that they will respond
11 favorably. I think I should tell you that our appeal was
12 not only to Hanoi. That this message was not something
13 that was prepared hastily. That before this message was
14 ever delivered, that contacts had been made, as you could
15 imagine, in the Soviet Union, in Great Britain, in France,
16 in Italy, in the countries of Asia. We have to try to
17 find out, at least to inform other nations as to the
18 general tenure of what we had in mind. Because in that
19 message the President called upon the two co-chairmen of
20 the Geneva Conference, the Soviet Union and the United
21 Kingdom, to reconvene the conference and try to find a way
22 of solving this problem. He appointed two of the most
23 mature and, I think, the most brilliant negotiators we
24 have and, I think, looking at the personality and the record
25 of those negotiators will tell you a great deal of what he

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1 had in mind, Averill Harriman, on the one hand who knows
 2 a great deal about the Soviet Union, who negotiated agree-
 3 ments in Southeast Asia before in the instance of Laos.
 4 And the other one Lleweln Thompson who is highly regarded
 5 in the Soviet Union and is considered an expert on Soviet
 6 American relationships. Insofar as the military aspect
 7 of his message is concerned, it was not a belligerent
 8 message, the numbers of troops that were committed were
 9 minimal, they were support troops. And I might add that
 10 they didn't come anywhere's near, did they, to the head-
 11 lines that you read here, when you were told that some
 12 four hundred thousand would be - were requested, and some
 13 two hundred and six thousand would be sent. You have to
 14 be so very, very careful, gentlemen, because there are
 15 always people that are asking for something that doesn't
 16 happen. As a matter of fact, you folks ought to be awfully
 17 glad that it doesn't happen. Did you ever look at some of
 18 those bills I introduced in Congress? (LAUGHTER) I asked
 19 for a lot of things and I knew that I wasn't going to get
 20 it, too. But it's a bargaining position, and you try to
 21 stake out a position and there isn't any doubt but what
 22 most likely some Colonel, some staff officers, somewhere
 23 down the line, in the military, flushed up some big figure.
 24 And, I'll tell you something, if you don't have a good title
 25 in this government, you can always get a g - o - o - d

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1 feeling if you just leak something that looks very big,
2 it makes you feel very good for about an hour or so -
3 or a day or so. Now, we had no intention of any such
4 numbers of troops. There were thirteen thousand troops
5 committed in this message and the Pentagon indicates
6 today that there'll be maybe a modest call-up of some
7 reserves. But only for the purpose of our strategic
8 reserve. So the message was a conciliatory message,
9 that's what I'm trying to tell you. It was not a
10 belligerent message, it was not bellicose, it's not a
11 message of escalation, it is a message of an appeal
12 through the proper channels for an honorable peace, not
13 a fake peace, not a phony peace, and it was a responsible
14 message in terms of our troops in South Vietnam, namely
15 that we would still have to make sure that the arteries
16 of infiltration were subject to some bombardment so that
17 the flow of goods which comes from the north to the south
18 could be somewhat impeded. Now, I must tell you, in all
19 candor, that the north is building up their forces in the
20 south, and they have been and we can surely expect a very,
21 very, difficult Summer, unless we can get some peace
22 negotiations going. Now, we've been working, gentlemen,
23 behind the scenes for months. It's no secret, I think
24 that we really ought to even tell you more than we do. I
25 think you ought to know that we've had contacts, very good

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1 | working contacts with people in Eastern European Countries
2 | that have been to Hanoi. With Asian Countries that have
3 | been to Hanoi. With the Soviet Union, through Mr. Kosegan.
4 | With the United Kingdom, through Mr. Wilson, and others.
5 | To the Holy Sea, through the Pope. Through Yugoslavia.

6 | Yes, we've had all kinds of contacts. The truth is, how-
7 | ever, that none of them have been productive. None of
8 | them. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the President of
9 | The United States to try to find a way to bring this
10 | bloodshed to an end. And to do it without destroying
11 | everything that we stand for, and without seeking a
12 | dishonorable peace. This is the most difficult assign-
13 | ment of all. I've been involved all of these three and a
14 | half years, gentlemen, in all of these decisions, and I
15 | don't think that any of you would be unmindful of the
16 | fact that men that have strong points of views, occasionally
17 | express those points of view. Your government is not a
18 | monolith, your President doesn't ask his Cabinet to stand
19 | up and say yes, yes, yes, I've heard all that nonsense.
20 | But there are men on the National Security Council and
21 | advisors brought from outside to that Council that have
22 | stated their point of view as candidly as any of you in
23 | this room would state your point of view to me. But when
24 | it's all said and done, after the debate, the discussion
25 | and the dissent, all of which is so pleasurable, I've

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1 indulged in all of it, an undue amount of discussion
 2 and an adequate amount of debate and a suitable amount
 3 of dissent, that's been my life. But I'll guarantee that
 4 when you have to get down to that other one called decision,
 5 that's when you really separate the men from the boys, and
 6 that's when it gets difficult. And the only man that has
 7 to make the decision is the President. Secretary of State
 8 or the Secretary of Defense, they can say, if things go
 9 wrong, well, gee, I didn't realize it was going to be that
 10 way, Mr. President. But he hasn't anybody to talk to,
 11 save God Almighty. And sometimes people don't even believe
 12 you're talking to him. So that's about all I can tell you
 13 about what's going to happen.

14 FROM THE FLOOR: Mr. Vice President, just
 15 to change the subject a little bit, as a possible candidate
 16 to the office of Presidency with all the pressure we have
 17 over the world on the American Dollar, what do you think
 18 is the future of the American Dollar?

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: The economy. This
 20 economy. This is the secret to the American Dollar, without
 21 a doubt. Now, I'm not unmindful of the International arrange-
 22 ments which one must have in terms of convertability, I'm not
 23 advocating that we abandon pell-mell what we call the gold as
 24 a means of some form of International monetary stability. But
 25 the most important thing about the dollar is this economy.

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1 | Whether or not it is an economy that is chewed up by
2 | inflation, whether it's an economy that is feather bedded,
3 | whether it's an economy that is productive, whether it's
4 | an economy that can produce goods and services that are
5 | competitive at home and abroad. That's what counts on
6 | the dollar. And I'm not wise enough, I'm not a monetary
7 | medical man, nor a medicine man, I don't know all about
8 | the gold business, even though I read a great deal about
9 | it. I think the recent meeting in Stockholm can be con-
10 | sidered to be, at least, a temporary victory for Inter-
11 | national Fiscal and Monetary responsibility, provided
12 | that we act responsibly. Now, the simple truth is,
13 | gentlemen, and this will shock some of you, we have simply
14 | got to put the American Fiscal and Monetary House in order.
15 | And we got to do it, and it's going to be painful. And
16 | some of us that have been liberals all of our life are
17 | going to catch hell. But we're going to have to reduce
18 | some expenditures, we're going to try to have to bring
19 | some better balance in our Balance-of-Payments and we're
20 | going to have to get a tax Bill. Now, there isn't any
21 | other way out of it. Until we act that way there's no
22 | hope. (APPLAUSE) You have to live a long time in this
23 | government, I've sometimes come to that conclusion, but
24 | it comes.

25 | Yes sir.

1 FROM THE FLOOR: Mr. Vice President, how did
2 you appraise the ability of the South Vietnamese Government

3 -
4 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, if they
5 could ever be relieved of the constant attack, I think
6 they could do fairly well. There are great differences
7 of opinion about this. I'd like to review it, as I see
8 it. Let me just start out by telling you that Ho Chi Ming
9 is no Asian Santa Claus, that's number one. Some people
10 think so, but he is not. I won't burden you with the
11 details of his life, but he started out as a confirmed
12 hard core communist at age 18, and he hasn't changed. A
13 pretty old man, he's in his 60's or 70's. He started out
14 as a philosophical communist and became an active one,
15 educated and trained in France. Secondly, he's no
16 particular social worker. Thirdly, he's never been elected
17 to anything in his life. Now, many of the critics of South
18 Vietnam point out the corruption in South Vietnam. I guess
19 there's plenty of it. But the greatest corruption of all
20 is dictatorship. That's the worst kind of corruption. And
21 is that/the corruption of communism, that the corruption of
22 dictatorship. Now, what about South Vietnam? They've had
23 elections. They haven't been all that you and I'd want,
24 but some of ours at home are not as good as we'd like either.
25 But by and large they were pretty good. At least, for people

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1 that had never known a free system of government, or at
2 least a modicum of freedom, they were pretty good. There
3 have been district elections, village elections over 1600
4 Villages had their elections. There have been elections
5 in the Provinces, there were elections for the Congress
6 of the Upper House and the Lower House. And by the way,
7 not once has this Upper House and Lower House been denied
8 its power. When President Cheu who was elected wanted to
9 have marshall law and wanted to have emergency powers, he
10 had to go to the Congress and the Congress denied it. And
11 the Congress was not locked up, it wasn't disbanded like
12 the Third Reich disbanded the Reichstag, it still functions.
13 And some of the most erudite, well educated, knowledgeable
14 people in Vietnam serve in the Senate in the Vietnam
15 Congress and in the House of Representatives. Now, Presi-
16 dent Cheu is trying to be President of a country that's
17 never known an effective central government. The powers
18 of the government in Saigon to reach out to all the
19 Provinces and Villages, I think, is rather limited. But
20 I believe that it should be noted that the prime purpose
21 of the Thet offensive was to destroy that government.
22 And many people don't understand what happened in that Thet
23 offensive, and I guess time doesn't permit it here tonight.
24 But the prime objective of Hochi Min since 1954 when the
25 Geneva accords were signed, the prime objective is the

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1 political control of the south. Now, if he can get that
2 through a free election, that's something you'll have to
3 live with. Cause we believe in free elections. If it's
4 Internationally supervised, if it comes under the aegis
5 of the United Nations or an appropriate national body,
6 where there is fair play, but Ho Chi Min's record from 1954
7 to 1961 was that he didn't succeed in doing that. Now
8 many people say well, they should have had the election
9 in '56, why didn't they have the election in '56, which
10 was signed by the Geneva accord of '54, because Ho Chi Min
11 would not permit International inspection in North Vietnam,
12 but would want an International inspection of a free
13 election in South Vietnam. This would be exactly like a
14 Republican candidate, or let me say a Democratic candidate
15 insisting that there be no election, no poll watchers in
16 Chicago, but three in every Precinct down State. (LAUGHTER)
17 Now, what do you think about that? I could use a little of
18 that, as a matter of fact. But, I would say, that I think
19 that this government, thus far, has shown capacity to, not
20 only survive, but capacity, at least, to govern. As you
21 know, now, they're raising another 135,000 troops, the
22 draft age is age 19. May 1st their draft age is age 18.
23 They have fired twelve provincial governors, they've pro-
24 secuted 240 officers of the Armed Forces, for malfeasance
25 and corruption. They have a program of rehabilitation of

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1 the areas that have been destroyed, but with all of it,
 2 it's still a fragile system. I think that it could survive,
 3 I think it would survive if the violence would stop. And
 4 that's what we're trying to do. You see, we have to
 5 understand our objective. Our objective is to have the
 6 violence stopped and to permit the peoples of South Viet-
 7 nam to work their own will and self-determination. What
 8 they'll ultimately work out, I don't know. I think I know.
 9 I think that they are not going to throw away their freedom.

10 Mr. Cowles says that the last page of this
 11 magazine has now been put to print, but to bed, we're
 12 ready to close it up and put it on the stand.

13 Thank you very, very much.

14 (APPLAUSE)

15 MR. COWLES: Hubert, you've given us a
 16 great evening. I invite you all to retire to the other
 17 room and have a nightcap and if the Vice President's time
 18 permits, he'll have a nightcap with us in the other room.

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Gardner Cowles Dinner

Jade Room - Waldorf-Astoria

Realty - JFK

#1 Peace & freedom don't
come cheap & we are
disturbed - all of us -
to tear out most of
not all of our lives
in uncertainty & challenge
of Peace -
there it is

#2 - Madangel Amicus
Human evolution is
complex

#3 Amicus is a juvenile
operation - act our
age -

1/2 boy under 25 - good
for Fresca.

#4 - we have Best of
System - Democ
Chambers -

But it works

#5 - we have most chance to success & prosperity

① middle Caucus - Last 3 minutes
of LIBS speech
Equal time - the
RTH articles -

② "Re assessing my Position"

③ LIBS - called on me
Sunday -

④ Buente for East & Africa
& impire -

also to the Ranch, and
may get to Huamoa Port!

"Looked into the future -
It won't work" (Husley)

⑤ Issues as I see them -

S. F. Asia

articles -

Israel & Morocco

Cowles Dinner

* Funny thing happened
to me on my way
to meets.

⑥ my report on medical
Amer. Relations



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