

FOR THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

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VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY INTERVIEWED

HUGH DOWNS: It's now a three man race for the Democratic Presidential nomination. The newest entry is Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who is in our Washington studios this morning to discuss his candidacy with NBC Correspondent, Richard Valeriani.

Gentlemen.

VALERIANI: Thank you, Hugh. And good morning, Mr. Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Morning, Dick.

VALERIANI: Sir, what was the moment of decision for you to enter the race?

HUMPHREY: Well, Dick I don't know if there was any one particular moment. It was a very soul searching experience that I went through, talking with Mrs. Humphrey and talking with my friends; visiting across the country with mayors and local officials and state officials.

I think about -- oh, about ten days before the announcement I was pretty well sure in my own mind that this was what I ought to do, and what I wanted to do.

I say ought to do, because I am in public life; I am privileged to be the Vice President. If I were going to run for the office of President, this seemed the most logical time to do so, once President Johnson had withdrawn from the race.

And I think that, plus my interest in the great issues of our time and my feeling of public service -- I believe that's what brought the decision about.

VALERIANI: Mr. Vice President, your entry was timed to come after it was too late to enter any primaries. Why did you decide not to do that?

HUMPHREY: Well, first of all, there were very few primaries that one could have entered even after the President announced that he was no longer a candidate, or would not be a candidate, or would not accept nomination. Secondly, I had to take some time to make up my mind whether I wanted to make this important decision. This changes your whole life, you know. In a very real sense you dedicate your life to this office if you get it. And you surely dedicate a good deal of your energy and resources to the quest for the office. So I took some time for that.

And then there was quite a period of time, may I say, in which many things were happening. Where the President's statement of four weeks ago, the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., -- there just seemed like there was one thing after another. Therefore, I couldn't really enter the primaries without having firmly made up my mind that I wanted to do so. And the only primary left open, as I recall, was the one in South Dakota. And I looked at the polls out there, and if I really wanted to pick one, I suppose I could have said, well, I'm going to charge into this primary. I was running about two to one in the polls over the nearest contender. But that's my old native state, I was born there. I didn't think that that was really cricket -- it wasn't really fair play -- if you're going to go into the primaries, you ought to go into them.

So, I had no other primary that I could get into under the law. And I thought I'd better stay with the non-primary route.

VALERIANI: You don't feel, sir, that you're going to be hurt in any way by lack of a confrontation with the other candidates?

HUMPHREY: No. I think the primaries primarily serve to identify you with the public, above all other things, and identify you with issues. If a man that's been in public life for better than 20 years isn't identified with the public by now it's a little late.

And as far as the issues are concerned, I think I'm pretty well identified with them. And we have -- we have four months between now and the Demo-

cratic convention to get identification and to become known as to how you stand on issues. And then there's better than two months afterwards.

You know, Dick, one of the things that really kind of makes you wonder is what's the hurry all about? I'm not sure that the American people can take six or seven months of highly active political pursuit and political life by the candidates. I think you can burn yourself out. I think you can literally become unwelcome. And I don't want that to happen.

As I've indicated before, I hope to address myself to some of the basic issues of our time, and to do it in good time; to do it thoughtfully; to do it after a great deal of consideration; and to do it looking to the future.

VALERIANI: It's generally believed, sir, that you have the lead in delegate strength, but not enough to put you over. Now, how are you going to get more delegates between now and convention time?

HUMPHREY: Well, that of course is the big question. There are two campaigns, so to speak; one to get the nomination, which is the delegates that you need to get; the second is the general election.

I gather that, from what I've read, that we're supposed to have some lead in delegates, and I think that's maybe true. How do we get more of them? Traveling around this country. Speaking out, becoming identified as a man that can be elected -- a winner. Talking to the delegates. Knowing the people in the party organization. Creating an appropriate and constructive public image.

You know, to win a delegation at a state convention or in the caucus route -- that is where you start at the local caucuses and come up through the county conventions, through the state conventions, is very much like a general election, anyway. And we're going to be able to do that; and we will be doing so. In fact, we'll be doing so this week. And I think doing it rather effectively.

Senator Mondale and Senator Harris, two of the more brilliant members of the Senate -- I think two of the most gifted members of this Congress, are my co-chairmen. Both of them active, intelligent, forward-looking young men; attractive, knowledgeable in the arts of politics. They'll be out working. They'll be carrying the main brunt of the search for delegates. I'll be doing a good deal of it myself. So I think we'll do all right.

VALERIANI: Sir, there's also a campaign going on in Indiana this week; and Governor Branigin was running as a stand-in for President Johnson until the President took himself out of the race.

Yesterday you seemed to disown the Governor....

HUMPHREY: Oh, no.

VALERIANI: ...to disclaim any identification with him in this race.

HUMPHREY: Not at all. Governor Branigin is one of the fine public servants of this country; and he's an extraordinarily gifted and capable governor, in his own state of Indiana.

Governor Branigin is running as a favorite son.

As Senator Mondale, my co-chairman said, we do not want to insinuate ourselves into any of these primaries. By that I mean he's not a stand-in for Hubert Humphrey. He is a stand-in for himself. He's running -- Governor Branigin is running as the favorite son.

He would like to have the Indiana delegation go to the Democratic convention in a posture or position of being able to pick and choose at that particular time what they want to do and whom they want to support.

I think a great deal of Governor Branigin. I hope that whatever I may say may be helpful to him. I believe that he deserves the support of the people of his state. I think he has earned it.

And as I said yesterday, his support is very broad. It's not only in the Democratic ranks. Which is -- this is a closed primary, by the way, only those that are registered Democrats can vote in that primary.

He's a popular Governor all across the board with independents and Republicans, as well as Democrats.

There'd be no doubt in my mind how this race would come out for the primary for the favorite son if you had a cross the board Indiana race.

I think Branigin is a popular Governor. A strong Governor.

And if anything I could say that would be helpful to him, I'd like to have that so understood.

But by the same token, I don't want it to be understood that the Governor is my stand-in. He understands that, I understand that.

And I want to compliment him for his forthrightness in not trying to rest on anybody's shoulders. I'm not sure that my shoulders would be that strong for him, anyway. As a matter of fact, I'd like to rest on his.

VALERIANI: How important do you think this primary is, sir? Wouldn't a victory by either one of the other candidates have a pretty good psychological impact?

HUMPHREY: It would have a psychological effect. But you can win all of the primaries, Dick, and still be a long, long way away from winning the nomination. It takes 1312 votes, if I -- I believe I'm correct, yes. Thirteen hundred and twelve votes to get the nomination.

Now the primary states, where there is a control by the action of the primary, represents less than a third -- I think about a third of that total vote.

What's important about a primary is that it does give you momentum. It gives you publicity. It gives you copy, as we say. It gets you on NBC. And it gets you into the front pages of the press.

But in the meantime, the Humphrey candidacy does not intend to be lethargic, apathetic, or fade into the shadows. We will be around. Also, I'll be doing my job as Vice President of the United States, and that's going to take a good deal of my time and energy.

VALERIANI: Turning to the issues, sir, do you think the war in Vietnam will be the chief issue?

HUMPHREY: I think the peace -- the search for peace in Vietnam will be a very, very, very important matter. I hope it's not an issue of conflict. I hope that we can have a recognition on the part of all of us who seek the nomination, that we must cooperate with the President to permit him to use whatever

diplomacy we have to obtain negotiations.

Mister Goldberg will be succeeded in the United Nations by Mr. George Ball. Now, everybody knows that Arthur Goldberg and George Ball are men of peace.

I think everyone knows that Averell Harriman, our negotiator, and Cyrus Vance -- the men -- the two men that the President has appointed to try to establish contact and negotiations with North Vietnam, are really soldiers of peace.

I don't know of two finer diplomats. Think of what Mr. Vance has done only recently in Cyprus and in the instance of the Korean problem.

And Averell Harriman is known as a peace-man; all of his life. He's a gifted diplomat.

What we're going to be doing is searching relentlessly and honorably, hopefully effectively, for the path to peace. That's what we ought to be thinking about.

The war -- who likes a war? Wars ought to be unpopular. Wars are not what the American people want.

There are times that a nation is compelled by events and circumstances even beyond its control to take its stand. And I think this is one of those times.

As I've said before, this struggle in Vietnam was not initiated by President Johnson or Hubert Humphrey. It is our view that the stand that was taken was necessary.

But I think it also ought to be crystal clear that the ultimate goal of our policy is a peaceful settlement -- a negotiated settlement -- a political settlement of the war in Vietnam.

We have sought to destroy no one. We seek to conquer no one. We have no desire of imperial domain. What we seek to do is to help to build a shield of protection for a period of time, behind which the South Vietnamese themselves can build their own economy. That's what we're trying to do.

And then as the ARVN -- the Army of the South Vietnam, and as the Government of South Vietnam improves -- and it is improving -- both of them -- as these institutions improve, they're able to take over the responsibility of defending their country and of governing themselves. This is what we mean

by self-determination. I repeat: to build that shield of protection behind which the people of South Vietnam can build a free society. And whatever the South Vietnamese do with that society will be their decision.

VALERIANI: You suggested last week, sir, that a site for preliminary peace talks would be agreed on in a very short time. Did you have some new evidence to suggest that?

HUMPHREY: I said "hopefully." There's been a great deal of argument about a site. I think it's fair to say that some of this argument has not been very helpful. We may have over-spoken ourself when we said we'd go any place, any time, anywhere. I think what everybody understood was that we would go a place that would be conducive to an honorable discussion; a reasonable place; in a reasonable -- a place that was supposedly neutral. Now, there are many places in the world where we can -- but whatever the -- whatever the over-statement might have been -- and sometimes I think it's just as well to recognize you might have over-stated.

We must find a suitable place to have -- to begin the talks. And private negotiations are now underway.

And as you know, Dick, most successful diplomacy is private. The public diplomacy doesn't generally yield too much.

VALERIANI: Do you feel, sir, that a coalition government must be an essential ingredient of negotiations?

HUMPHREY: My view about a coalition government in South Vietnam is pretty well known. I do not think that we ought to impose on South Vietnam a coalition government by our will and by our power. I think that would be wrong. I think that would be the denial of self-determination. That would be our determination on somebody else. In a very real sense it would almost be like conquest -- forcing the South Vietnamese to our will.

It is my view that if the South Vietnamese decide in their own way that in order to bring peace to their country they have to have some kind of a coalition, that's their judgement; that is self-determination.

I have never believed that we as allies ought to try to tell other people that you do it this way or that way in terms of their governmental or social structure. To do so is exactly what the North Vietnamese are trying to do.

So what comes in the future only time can tell.

I happen to believe in the policy of reconciliation. And I think that free elections will provide that.

VALERIANI: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President.



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