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I S S U E S   A N D   A N S W E R S

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1968

GUEST:

HON. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,

Vice President of the United States

INTERVIEWED BY:

Sam Donaldson, Washington Correspondent

Bob Clark, ABC Capitol Hill Correspondent

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MR. DONALDSON: Mr. Vice President, does the entry of Senator George McGovern into the presidential race have any great effect on your chances for the nomination? Will it help or hurt them?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I really don't think it will have any appreciable effect. We expect to be able to come to the convention with a sufficient number of delegates to gain the nomination.

MR. DONALDSON: Why do you think Senator McGovern jumped in just two weeks before the convention?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I think you'd have to ask the Senator that question. I really can't give you anything

1 but just an opinion. I believe that as the Senator has  
2 indicated himself, that he is primarily interested in certain  
3 issues that might be in the platform, that he possibly seeks  
4 to polarize certain forces in the country around his candidacy.  
5 I was very pleased to note that Senator McGovern will not  
6 be a participant in any fourth party movement, that he is a  
7 Democrat; that he remains within the Democratic party; that  
8 he will support the nominee of the party at the convention.

9 MR. DONALDSON: Well, as you know, Senator McGovern is  
10 head of a group that calls itself the Committee for a  
11 Democratic Convention, and their avowed purpose is to get a  
12 dovish Vietnam plank. Do you think his announcement of his  
13 candidacy makes it more likely that they can achieve that goal?

14 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I really don't think we are  
15 going to have too much difficulty in arriving at a responsible  
16 and reasonable plank, indeed, a total platform. Senator  
17 McGovern says he is for peace in Vietnam. So am I.

18 I don't know of any candidate that isn't for peace in  
19 Vietnam. He is for a political settlement of the struggle in  
20 Vietnam. So am I.

21 He is for a negotiated peace. So am I.

22 I have a feeling that we will be able to work out our  
23 difficulties if men want to be reasonable. I think Senator  
24 McGovern is a reasonable man. I consider him, frankly, almost  
25 a lifetime friend and I do not look upon his candidacy as far

as I am concerned, as anything that is abrasive or disruptive. He has made his own commitments. That is, he has his own views. He apparently wishes to crystallize those views into a candidacy and this is surely his right.

MR. CLARK: Well, Mr. Vice President, you say that you think you can work out a reasonable platform but you are going to have to deal with specifics. Both Senator McGovern and Senator McCarthy want a peace plank in that platform that will call for an immediate halt to the bombing and for free elections in Vietnam which would permit the participation of National Liberation Front candidates.

Can you compromise your position on Vietnam to agree with a plank of that sort?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, let me just say a word about Vietnam, and which I hope will be a responsible word. Our negotiators in Paris now are in very serious negotiations with North Vietnam; I think at a very important point in the negotiations. I don't believe that it is going to be very helpful for a lot of voices to be heard on the details of what a platform plank would be or what I personally might think about that plank. I have great faith in Mr. Harriman and Mr. Vance, who has just returned home. I have talked with Mr. Vance. It is my view also that many of the issues which Mr. McGovern and Mr. McCarthy have emphasized are not really issues of controversy. There is no problem about free elections as far as I am concerned.

1 MR. CLARK: You say it is not a good idea for a lot of  
2 voices to be heard, but these voices are going  
3 to be heard at the Democratic platform hearings  
4 which start next week, and the voices of Senator McGovern and  
5 Senator McCarthy are going to be heard and they are going to be  
6 pressing for a specific platform plank that would among  
7 other things call for an immediate halt to the bombing.

8 Can you agree with such a plank?

9 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I would refer my friends and  
10 colleagues that you speak of back to a statement that was made  
11 sometime about a year ago in which 17 or 18 of the United  
12 States Senators, all of whom had a position of opposition to  
13 the Administration on Vietnam, called upon Hanoi, called  
14 upon Hanoi to make some kind of response to the peace  
15 overtures which were being made. In other words,  
16 to have some effective reply and response.

17 Now that is what this government is calling for now.  
18 There isn't any problem as far as we are concerned about  
19 halting the bombing, if we have some kind of restraint or  
20 response from North Vietnam, and our negotiators have wide  
21 latitude, may I say, as to the definition of that restraint  
22 and response -- a reasonable response.

23 MR. DONALDSON: Mr. Vice President, may I just draw  
24 you out on that point because of course this business of  
25 reciprocity is a key. A week ago Tuesday, Secretary

2 of State Rusk in a news conference seemed to say what many  
3 interpreted as moving the United States back to a position  
4 of demanding a direct word from Hanoi, either a direct  
5 or indirect word, but something specific.

6 Now are you saying that actually we will take almost  
7 anything that looks like a deescalation of the fighting  
8 or a deescalation of the resupply and interpret that as  
9 a response?

10 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I am saying that this matter  
11 is in the hands of our negotiators and I do not believe that  
12 it contributes to what I want and what I know you want and  
13 what we all want, namely, a peace in Vietnam, for me to try  
14 to delineate here in almost a unilateral position what  
15 would be our definition of restraint and reasonable response.  
16 The word "reciprocity" has been interpreted as being a  
17 rather hard and harsh word and I have used very carefully  
18 here today such words as "some degree of restraint and  
19 reasonable response." This nation has sought not once but  
20 many, many times to find a road to the peace table. Other  
21 nations have also tried. The United Nations has tried.  
22 And I think we are closer to that objective of getting the  
23 process of peace under way than we have ever been before,  
24 and if I can lend one little note of optimism today, which I  
25 do very carefully and with prudence and caution, I would say  
26 that the negotiations, while they have been sticky and

1 they have been slow and they appear many times not  
2 to be productive, that those negotiations are at a serious  
3 stage, and because I believe them to be at a serious stage  
4 and because I believe the talks are serious and not just  
5 perfunctory, I believe that we ought to be placing every  
6 bit of confidence that we have in the men who are conducting  
7 those negotiations, and I don't believe that as Vice President  
8 and as a serious contender for the nomination of my party,  
9 and hopefully, a serious contender for the Presidency, and  
10 hopefully, a winner, that it would be wise for me to  
11 spell out in detail all of the facets of what I consider  
12 to be possible points of negotiation. I do approach  
13 the negotiations, however, on this basis, that we are now at  
14 a point where, if we do not weaken our position with Hanoi  
15 by loose talk, that we have a better chance of gaining  
16 some progress in the peace talks than at any time up to date.

17 (Announcement)

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1 MR. CLARK: To get back to politics, Mr. Vice President,  
2 do you have any serious concern that Senators McCarthy and  
3 McGovern will form a coalition in Chicago that could turn  
4 into a "Stop Humphrey" drive?

5 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I do not. Now, there may  
6 be those who will try to interpret the candidacy of Senator  
7 McGovern, of course, and the candidacy of Senator McCarthy,  
8 as a "Stop Humphrey" drive, but I know that many of the people  
9 in the camp of the late Senator Robert Kennedy are very active  
10 in my own campaign, and I also know that when they have joined  
11 with the forces of Senator McCarthy it has been primarily on  
12 what they thought was platform matters.

13 So I am not really concerned about it.

14 You know, this is a most interesting and ironic situation.  
15 I don't suppose that I have had two better friends in poli-  
16 tics, to be honest with you, than my very good friend Senator  
17 McCarthy, and my next door neighbor and very good friend,  
18 George McGovern. I just can't bring myself to saying very  
19 much unkind about either one of them. I think I will have to  
20 reserve and preserve whatever extra energy I have for  
21 partisan and political discussion for Mr. Nixon. I always  
22 seem to respond a little better in that area than I do --  
23 to Mr. Nixon, than I do to Senator McCarthy and Senator  
24 McGovern.

25 MR. DONALDSON: Then perhaps this is the proper point to

ask for your assessment of the ticket of Nixon and Agnew. How strong you think it will be, how tough you think it will be to defeat.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I have never underestimated Mr. Nixon as a campaigner. Some Democrats have, but I haven't. He came mighty close to winning in 1960 against an extraordinarily able and brilliant man, John Kennedy. I feel that the Republican ticket will be a tough ticket, so to speak. It will be a strong ticket, but I haven't any doubt as to what we can do with that ticket if I am given a chance, and I expect to have that chance to lead the Democratic party. I believe we can go on to win. I think Mr. Nixon has made a calculated decision to sort of play to the conservative -- what he thinks is the conservative temperament of the country. He has oriented his candidacy towards the more conservative elements in the South. I don't think he has sensed that there is a more progressive spirit amongst some of the more articulate and effective leaders of the South.

I was in Texas Friday and Saturday and Senator Tower had made it quite clear, at least to the Texas press, that Mr. Nixon had made this kind of a decision to orient his campaign to the Southern Conservative wing. Sort of to try to stop the inroads of Governor Wallace. And, of course, the leading Republican advisor in the South now to Mr. Nixon is Strom Thurmond.



1 MR. CLARK: I had a feeling you were going to get to  
2 Strom Thurmond.

3 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I will always remember that  
4 television scene of Strom Thurmond walking Mr. Nixon up to the  
5 podium. I thought that was a most interesting, revealing  
6 scene. And, of course, we now know that Mr. Nixon did make  
7 his accommodation with not just the South -- I am not talking  
8 about the South because there are many very fine Progressive  
9 leaders in the South. He made his accommodation with Strom  
10 Thurmond. He made his accommodation with what I consider to  
11 be the Conservative elements of the South.

12 MR. CLARK: You also said at one point that you felt  
13 he made a calculated decision to appeal to the more Conserva-  
14 tive wing of the party.

15 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes.

16 MR. CLARK: Do you not accept the view of some Republicans,  
17 some members of Mr. Nixon's own party, that he sort of painted  
18 himself into a corner as he was bargaining for votes that  
19 could have gone to Reagan and that he made this promise to  
20 come up with a vice president who would be acceptable to all  
21 wings of the party? Do you think it was more calculated --

22 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, maybe the word "cal-  
23 culated" was not the proper word. Let me put it this way:  
24 When Mr. Reagan became an open candidate and was making his  
25 strong appeal to Southern delegations, I believe that Mr.

1 Nixon's strategy at that point, which had been shaping  
2 even before but at that point became much more definite in  
3 appealing and trying to make some accommodations, some  
4 rapprochements, some sort of understanding, not with what I  
5 call the Progressive elements of the Republican party of the  
6 South, not with the Progressive elements of the South at all,  
7 but with the oldest elements of the Republican party in the  
8 South headed by that old Dixiecrat -- one-time Democrat --  
9 Strom Thurmond. I don't think that makes the "New Nixon."  
10 I think it sort of comes back to what I would call Mr. Nixon  
11 as we all knew him.

12 MR. CLARK: Do you share the view of some Republicans  
13 that in doing this Mr. Nixon threw away the ghetto vote and  
14 the vote in the key northern cities?

15 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, only time can tell that.  
16 I do think this, that Mr. Nixon has not demonstrated any keen  
17 understanding of the basic problems of our cities and his  
18 own party has failed to do so.

19 I just noticed the other day here when I was looking  
20 through the Republican platform that on the Model Cities issue  
21 -- first of all, the Republican platform said, "We must get  
22 at the blight of the urban centers" but here is the Republican  
23 party vote in the Congress. Over ninety per cent of the  
24 Republicans in the Congress of the United States, in the House  
25 of Representatives, voted against the Model Cities program.

Now, the Model Cities Program is one that has had basic endorsement of American business, American labor, the urban coalition people. They voted not only against its authorization, over 80 per cent of them voted against the funds; voted not to fund it at all. Then when you get to a program like Head Start, over 55 per cent of the Republicans in Congress voted to kill the extra funds for a program like Head Start.

MR. DONALDSON: Mr. Vice President, one thing intrigues me about one of the major issues: Law and order. You told us on this program a few weeks ago that you thought that would be a big one. Mr. Nixon says about law and order that the first civil right of every American is to be free from domestic violence, and I checked our transcript and that is almost word for word what you told us.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, sir.

MR. DONALDSON: Now, how are you going to delineate any ground in the way of separating yourself from Mr. Nixon's position?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I can do it, I think, both currently and historically. The Founding Fathers, the authors of the Declaration of Independence, talked about those inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I think the first duty of government, of organized

society and of government, representative government is,  
the protection of life. I think it is not only the protection  
of life -- that is its first responsibility -- that is pro-  
tection against violence and crime and lawlessness. No doubt  
about

that. That is where you start, but then you go on to make  
life meaningful, not merely to protect it. Survival is not  
enough, gentlemen, in a free society. Surely it is not a  
high enough standard for the American people and this is where  
I find myself in some difference with Mr. Nixon. He places the  
emphasis on law and order. Now, we are for law and order.

By the way, I was the Mayor of a great city and I did  
give that city law and order. I don't have to speak of it in  
theory. I have a record of performance on law and order. I  
believe in it, but I believe in something else. I believe that  
you also must get at the conditions that provoke frustration  
and disappointment and bitterness. This means that there must  
be a very effective coordinated attack on such matters of  
unemployment, underemployment, the housing, the unbelievably  
bad conditions of housing, the lack of educational opportunity,  
the health needs of people, an attack upon illiteracy, the pro-  
motion of jobs and job training --

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, I wonder if we could agree  
at this stage though that one of your problems in campaigning  
in the North is that you have failed to stir a great deal of  
enthusiasm in the big city ghettos, in these precise areas  
where these problems exist.

Now, there are many Democrats who feel that the strongest  
possible ticket would be a Humphrey-McCarthy ticket, somebody  
who could bring along some votes in the big cities or, beyond

1 this, someone representative of the Kennedy wing of the party.  
2 And Senator Kennedy, of course, had this great charisma in  
3 the Northern cities but first, do you agree that a Kennedy-  
4 McCarthy ticket would be the strongest possible ticket that  
5 the Democrats could nominate?

6 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Did you say Kennedy-McCarthy?

7 MR. CLARK: I meant a Humphrey-McCarthy ticket.

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I am not in the business  
9 of selecting vice presidential candidates.

10 MR. CLARK: I wonder if you would just analyze the  
11 strength of that ticket for us?

12 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Let me analyze what I think my  
13 strength is. I think my basic strength is in the big cities.  
14 I think my relationship to those cities is clear and unmis-  
15 takable. I have been the liaison with the Mayors of our  
16 cities for the past four years. I know the problems of the  
17 cities and when you say there is a lack of enthusiasm, I  
18 don't agree with that. Every public opinion survey that you  
19 find in the ghettos -- and that is the way we designate these  
20 areas of deprivation -- finds my candidacy getting from 80 to  
21 85 per cent support among the Negro residents of those ghetto  
22 areas and amongst the minority groups. I feel a great sense  
23 of confidence and I think that is where Mr. Nixon is going to  
24 fail. He is going to fail to have, not only appeal, but he  
25 has no program.

(Announcements)

1 MR. DONALDSON: Mr. Vice President, you said earlier you  
2 thought the ticket of Nixon and Agnew was moving toward  
3 the conservative side. The logic seems to be almost  
4 irresistible that you may decide to move your ticket, assuming  
5 you are nominated, toward the liberal side.

6 Does that mean that you will pick a man to be your running-  
7 mate who represents the liberal wing of the party.

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I consider myself  
9 a liberal, a moderate liberal, and I hope a reasonable and  
10 effective liberal. I believe the most important thing, Mr.  
11 Donaldson, about a runningmate is his competence, his  
12 ability, his capacity to carry on the duties of the  
13 Presidency in case that need should arise. Also his  
14 capacity to help the President in an effective manner.

15 For example, I have said that I wanted the Vice  
16 President, my Vice President, to be a sort of a super  
17 Cabinet officer, to call upon him to coordinate many of the  
18 domestic programs that today really need coordination. They  
19 are spread very widely throughout the government. In other  
20 words, to be a working assistant to the President of the  
21 United States.

22 MR. DONALDSON: Well, Mr. Vice President, you are talking  
23 about the competence, but let us look at the political  
24 aspects. Let's take a man like Governor John Connally.  
25 He is certainly in the conservative wing of the Democratic

2

Party. Then there is Senator McCarthy. We must say he must be counted to the left of you at the moment on Vietnam, of course. Which side do you think would strengthen your ticket.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I will say that we have so much good talent, Mr. Donaldson, in the Democratic Party that I don't think you ought to get pinned down with either the Governor of Texas or the Senator from Minnesota --

MR. DONALDSON: But you may get stuck or pinned down with one.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: May I say both of whom are competent men. I noticed there was some talk this morning about Governor Hughes of New Jersey. He is a fine man. Senator Muskie has been in the papers -- another good man. The Mayor of San Francisco, Mr. Alietto, has had a good deal of comment -- another good man. Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma. I have heard many names. I am only happy to tell you that I will be selecting, if I am privileged, my Vice President not on the basis of geography, not on the basis of ideology. I believe that my ideology, my stand on the issues, is good for this country. I believe that. I do not think I need a Vice Presidential candidate to fortify that stand. What I need from a Vice President is competence, ability, quality, character, experience.



1 MR. CLARK: Are you saying you are not going to make  
2 any deals with anybody, that you are going to pick the  
3 Vice President you want?

4 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I have no need to make any  
5 deals with anybody and I am not in the business of making any  
6 deals.

7 MR. CLARK: And you are not going to proceed in the  
8 direction Mr. Nixon did and look for someone who is  
9 acceptable to all wings of the party?

10 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think we have many people  
11 who are acceptable, but I don't think it requires a deal.

12 MR. DONALDSON: By the way, Mr. Vice President, Bob Clark  
13 mentioned the name of Kennedy. Of course we know Senator  
14 Kennedy has made a statement which everyone interprets as  
15 taking him out this year. Do you accept and believe that he is  
16 out of it, irrevocably?

17 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, I do. I believe that  
18 Senator Ted Kennedy spoke from his heart and not only from his  
19 mind and as a friend of his, I respect that judgment and I  
20 respect his decision.

21 MR. DONALDSON: We were talking about the platform a moment  
22 ago. Do you plan to testify before the Platform Committee?

23 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I do not. I will have people  
24 who will be presenting material but I do not intend to  
25 testify.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, the National Observer this week had a tally of your first ballot probable votes and they say you are close to 1600. They also say they checked this out with you and you said that is almost precisely your own tally. Do you think you have almost 1600 first ballot votes?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: That is what my people tell me and I have some very fine people working on the matter of delegates. I hope that they are right. There is room there for a slight amount of slippage, but I think they are close to being right.

MR. CLARK: Since that is some 300 more than are needed to nominate you, you think at this point you have that first ballot nomination sewed up, would that be correct?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Let me tell you I feel rather relaxed. I feel good. I think we ought to be looking forward to November.

MR. DONALDSON: Mr. Vice President, a quick question. Our time is limited. You have talked about people like Secretary Rusk and Draft Director Hershey as people who would not be in a Humphrey Cabinet. Others have talked about people who would not be in their Cabinet. What about J. Edgar Hoover? Would you keep him on as Director of the F.B.I.?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, let me just point out that when a President, a new man, comes in, he generally

selects a new cabinet. This is the general procedure. I notice that Mr. Nixon said that he would have a new Attorney General. I would imagine that he would. I can't imagine --

MR. DONALDSON: Of course, Mr. Hoover isn't in the Cabinet, but would you keep him on?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I am not going to be making any judgments about that. I have a very high regard for Mr. Hoover. Let me make it quite clear so no one misunderstands me. I think he has served this country faithfully and well. If I get to be president of the United States, I will have a chance to talk things over with Mr. Hoover. I am sure that you know that all cabinet officers automatically submit their resignations.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Vice President, I am sorry to cut you off here, but we are out of time. Thank you very much for being with us on ISSUES AND ANSWERS.



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