

*The National Broadcasting Company Presents*



# MEET THE PRESS

*America's Press Conference of the Air*

*Produced by* LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

*Guest:* SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
(D., Minn.)

VOLUME 17

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 1973

NUMBER 25

---

*Merkle Press Inc.*

*Printers and Periodical Publishers*

*Division of Publishers Co. Inc.*

*Box 2111, Washington, D. C. 20013*

10 cents per copy

*Panel:* PETER LISAGOR, *Chicago Daily News*  
JACK W. GERMOND, *Gannett News Service*  
JAMES J. KILPATRICK, *Washington Star Syndicate*  
PAUL DUKE, *NBC News*

*Moderator:* EDWIN NEWMAN, *NBC News*

*Permission is hereby granted to news media and  
magazines to reproduce in whole or in part. Credit  
to NBC's MEET THE PRESS will be appreciated.*

## MEET THE PRESS

---

**MR. NEWMAN:** Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is the former Vice President of the United States, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota. Senator Humphrey was the 1968 Democratic presidential candidate. In 1970 he was re-elected to the Senate where he had served earlier for 16 years.

We will have the first questions now from Paul Duke of NBC News.

**MR. DUKE:** Senator Humphrey, Congress has now accepted a compromise White House plan to end all American military operations in Indochina by August 15, but doesn't this mean that you are endorsing six more weeks of bombing in Cambodia, bombing which you yourself have characterized as illegal?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** We didn't have that choice. We have a very stubborn President who is commander-in-chief, and he made it very clear that he was going to continue bombing and continue to veto legislation that we passed that would have prohibited the bombing. We did not have the votes to override that veto. In politics you have to face reality, and the reality was that we did not have the votes to impose our will.

Also, the reality was that Mr. Nixon was unalterably, as he put it, opposed to any dateline for the complete cessation of all hostilities in Indochina. We were able to gain that dateline of August 15, ending all military involvement, ending this cruel war, finishing it for once and for all. While it wasn't the best of the worlds that I would have liked to have had, at least it ends what I consider a war that long ago should have been ended.

**MR. DUKE:** Senate Democratic Leader Mansfield, Senator Kennedy and some of your other colleagues do not see it that way. They see it as one more example of Congress caving in to the White House.

To use Senator Eagleton's term, don't you think the Congress has "cut and run" on this issue?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Not a bit. When men like Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey, Frank Church of Idaho, George McGovern of South Dakota, Bill Fulbright of Arkansas, who

have been in the forefront of the peace movement for years in the Congress, looked upon this so-called compromise as desirable and beneficial and justifiable, I think that the weight of evidence is on that side.

The important thing is the results. It is easy to have an argument with the President. I enjoy it as a matter of fact at times, but we weren't looking for confrontation. Government needs to have cooperation, and in this instance cooperation between the executive and the legislative, both of us giving to be sure, both of us with the checks and balance system at work, making some compromises, and adjustments. We came to an agreement, and I think it is a good one.

**MR. DUKE:** Senator, if you believe there has been a genuine compromise here—President Nixon was unalterably opposed in the past to accepting any cutoff date—do you believe that he decided to accept it in this instance because he has been weakened by Watergate?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I think it is a combination of things. First of all, I imagine that the President has some reason to believe that in these coming 45 days he might be able to arrive at some settlement in Cambodia. If he can't, he has run out his string. I don't think we should have been there. I have never taken back anything I said about this bombing being ineffective, unnecessary and illegal. I do believe the presidency also has been weakened—there is no doubt of that in my mind—by the Watergate, but more importantly, at long last we have been able to arrive at an understanding, which I think is in the public interest.

(Announcements)

**MR. KILPATRICK:** Senator, in the wake of John W. Dean's Watergate testimony we have been hearing a great deal of talk about the desirability, even the necessity, of hearing testimony from President Nixon. What would be your view on that, as a man who formerly was in the executive branch and now is in legislative branch?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Mr. Dean, I believe, testified for five days, some 25 hours, with critical cross-examination from both Republicans and Democrats. His testimony was filled with detail and some documentation. He made a strong case involving the President directly in the so-called Watergate coverup. There are yet other witnesses to be heard, of course. We don't have the total story as yet. It is my judgment, Mr. Kilpatrick, that when all these witnesses have been heard—and I understand Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Mitchell and possibly others, Mr. Colson, may be heard—after all of this evidence is in, that it will be necessary, for the good of this republic, for the integrity of the presidency and for the good name of the President of the

United States, for him to come clean with the American people in the appropriate forum, either before a Grand Jury or before the Senate Committee, testifying as any other officer of government or citizen.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** You have been in the executive branch. Would you see any damage to the theory of separation of powers if Mr. Nixon were to go up on the Hill before the Ervin Committee.

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** This does pose a very difficult problem, Mr. Kilpatrick. I don't play with this issue. I have not been out making wild accusations about the President. I am a troubled man, frankly. I am a sad man over this whole situation, but it seems to me that what we have here is the whole credibility of government at stake and particularly this highest office within the gift of the American people. I do believe that it is entirely possible, under precedent, for the President to make an appropriate appearance. Senator Baker, I believe, suggested that the President might put his testimony in a written form.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** Depositions or interrogatories?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** That has merit to it, but as the distinguished Senator Ervin has said, you cannot cross-examine a written document.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** You want to see the President cross-examined?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I don't want to see it, but I think for the President himself, if the evidence is still confusing and if there is no way that you can really draw firm conclusions, that it will be necessary for the President to tell the American people, with documentation—I am sure he has notes and minutes and maybe even tape recordings, to disprove any statement that have been made against him—or if he has made a mistake, and all of us have in private and public, I would hope he would come to the American people if he has made one and simply say, yes, that "I did."

You know the American people are very forgiving people, Mr. Kilpatrick, but they are not forgiving if they feel you are not playing fair with them, if there is a cover-up. I appeal to the President, not as an enemy—as a political opponent in the past, but more importantly, as a fellow officer of government—to help us clear this mess up, and I think the President would be treated with the greatest of respect and all possible safeguards procedure could offer.

**MR. LISAGOR:** Senator Humphrey, if the President were to go before the Grand Jury, as you suggest he might, wouldn't that impute certain involvement to him, the mere fact that he went before the Grand Jury, and how do you get around that?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Mr. Lisagor, I think there is some effort made to make that appear so, but a man can be called before the Grand Jury without ever having any evidence against him as being guilty. One of the problems we have today in this society is that if a man is interrogated by the FBI or the IRS or called before a Grand Jury, there is a presumption of guilt. Not at all. Let me once again say on this program that a man in this country, no matter who he is, is innocent until proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt, and I am not going to make an accusation that a man is guilty, no matter what the evidence is, until it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

The Grand Jury ought to be a very private hearing. There are safeguards for it even though some people violate them, and I don't have much time for those who violate that secrecy. If the President goes there it does not mean that he is guilty. It means that he may want very well to help expedite the processes of justice and clear up his name.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** Senator, you almost made it in 1968 as President. If you were confronted with the same kind of charges that Mr. Dean has leveled against President Nixon, what would you do about it? How would you handle it?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Those "iffy" questions are awfully hard to answer, Mr. Lisagor, but I want to say when the chips are down there is only one thing you can do. You either have to face up to the facts and protect yourself, yes, with all the safeguards of procedure that we have—and that is why I think the court process in many instances is the better—but you have got to come clean to the public.

We are in public business here. All of us have been in some troubles in our lives. I guess I would have to say that at least I would—if I were subpoenaed, if it was a matter of the safety of the country, of the integrity of the office, that I would appear.

**MR. GERMOND:** Senator Humphrey, you mentioned two forums the President might go before voluntarily, a Grand Jury and the Ervin Committee. If he refused to do that, would you recommend that he be impeached so he would have to go before the Senate?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** No. Impeachment does not start in the Senate. I would be a judge—

**MR. GERMOND:** The trial is in the Senate.

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** The trial is in the Senate, but the so-called indictment or the impeachment proceedings must be initiated in the House, and one reason that I refuse to make any statement as to whether or not I believe the President is guilty or not is that I will, as a Senator, serve as a judge in the im-

peachment proceedings if they should take place, and I do not want Hubert Humphrey ever to have to face a judge who has already indicated that he thinks you are guilty before he has even heard the evidence. I think the Senators ought to be very, very careful about any statement that they make in case impeachment proceedings are initiated and in case it ever should come to the Senate. I think every one of us has a special obligation to God, country and ourselves in the Constitution to be fair, objective and not opinionated.

**MR. GERMOND:** It has been very apparent that a great many members of the Senate, particularly Democrats in positions of leadership like yourself, who have been a presidential nominee, Senator McGovern, have avoided making what you just called wild accusations, but don't you have some responsibility of leadership to the country to say what you think about this thing?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Yes, sir, and we have a special committee of the United States Senate that has been legislated, properly staffed, consisting of Republicans and Democrats of high quality, that is looking into this matter with meticulous care and detail. That is the procedure that we ought to embrace. I do not believe that it is for the good of this country for Democrats or Republicans to run around making wild speeches, taking partisan advantage. Quite frankly, this whole Watergate mess casts a shadow over all public people, over the entire political process of this nation, and we are going through what I consider a period of cleansing, and I only hope that the cleansing process will be a lasting one. I think lessons are being learned here in this Watergate situation that will live with this Republic for years to come, and some very good lessons. Every public official will be more cautious, more careful about his personal and public conduct. We have become too easy, easy living, too permissive in many ways in this country. It is about time that we began to live by the doctrines of truth and the Constitution and start to uphold the sense—and start to embrace integrity rather than gimmickry, get away from this image-making and get back to substance. We have had too much cosmetics in everything, cheap advertising, cheap politics, and now we are beginning to pay the price in corrupted government.

**MR. NEWMAN:** You said a few minutes ago it was necessary for the President to come clean with the American people. The President has made statements. Are you implying then that in those statements he did not come clean with the American people?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** What I am saying is, and I think my statement was rather well measured and guarded, that after all of the testimony is in, if there is still confusion as to the right or the wrong, as to the guilt or the non-guilt, the involvement or

non-involvement, I want the President of the United States, as the leader of this country, as the President, a man who is being questioned now as to his involvement, to talk to the American people in light of all this testimony. Surely he has made statements in the past. Frankly some of those statements that have come from the White House have hurt more than they have helped. They have been filled with confusion and contradiction. They have not strengthened the image of the President.

I want this President to be a successful President. He is my President too. I don't want him to be destroyed. I want him to find every way he can that is legitimate and decent, not only to save himself personally, but to save the presidency and the country, and I believe that the best answer to that is for the President himself, at the right time, to tell the American people through the appropriate forum what the facts are as he sees them.

**MR. DUKE:** I'd like to further clarify your position, Senator. Does this mean that you think the President should make a confession to the American people if he were involved and in the light of that he should be forgiven by the people?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I think that if the President is involved—I have no body of evidence yet that proves that beyond question of doubt—that it would be desirable for the President to explain his entire involvement and take whatever the consequences may be.

**MR. DUKE:** If he really were involved, if he made the confession which you suggest he should make—

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I am not saying confession. Reply.

**MR. DUKE:** Well, if he answered in a way which implicated him, which indicated he was involved, would then Congress have a responsibility, a duty, to institute impeachment proceedings?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** It possibly would.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** Senator, I would like to get away from Watergate, if we could, for a minute or so.

Mr. Nixon, not long ago, recommended in the course of talking about amending the Constitution, a six-year term for the presidency, a single six-year term. You have been in the executive branch. What is your view on that issue?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I have mixed views, but as of today I would be opposed to it.

I know that from the point of view of the so-called theoretician that a six-year term, where you don't have to vie for office again and therefore owe nothing as they say to anybody, no special favors, etc., sounds good, but a four-year term with a limitation

of two terms provides for competition, provides for accountability, provides for the checks and the balances. None of these mathematical arrangements give you the full answer to our problems, so I would have to say that I am for the four-year term subject to re-election.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** The companion proposal was for four-year terms for members of the House. What would be your view on that?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** No, I still believe we need accountability in this government, and one of the ways that we test public opinion and that we have a constant review of a powerful government that grows more powerful every year, that spends more money every year, that has a greater impact on the economy every year, is to have elections at least for the people's body, the House of Representatives, every two years.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** How about the direct national election of a President? Have you taken a position on that?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Yes, sir, I support it, Mr. Kilpatrick. I think the two highest offices in the land ought to be directly elected and not through this anachronism called the "Electoral College."

**MR. LISAGOR:** Senator Humphrey, we have heard a great deal now about the kind of dirty tricks that were used in 1972, including forged letters and so on in which you were involved in one instance. How much did that determine the 1972 Democratic presidential nominee, or to put the question another way, would Senator McGovern have been the—would he have been the nominee if there weren't these dirty tricks?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I think so. I really do. I deplore the dirty tricks, but it seems to me that the dirtiest trick that was played, the Democrats played it on themselves; their crazy system of quotas and sub-quotas and partial voting, all the kinds of gymnastics, political gymnastics that we went through to divide our party. No Republican could have conceived of a program that did as much to tear the Democratic Party apart as we ourselves. You know, I said quite frankly, Pete, I didn't need any help in losing.

**MR. LISAGOR:** That leads me almost inevitably to this question, Senator. You will be 65 in 1976. I think that you will be younger than Governor Rockefeller, who is already making noises and sounds like he would like to run for the Republican nomination. Are you, to use one of the old terms, are you salivating' again about the 1976 Presidential nomination?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** No, I am dry, no salivation, Mr. Lisagor. I have no plans whatsoever, and to the contrary, I do

not intend to be a candidate in 1976. I have had my run at it. I tried to do well. I hope that I have been a constructive force in American politics. I will settle for that.

**MR. LISAGOR:** Is that a Sherman-like statement you are making now?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Well, I am not a general, but it comes close.

**MR. GERMOND:** Senator, I would like to go back with a couple of questions about your recommendation earlier about the President appearing either before a Grand Jury or the committee. Do you think it is a requirement of the way he should, come clean, to use your term, that he be subjected to questioning by the committee?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** It would be the most desirable. I believe that is a fact. I think that is where you would have the opportunity to get the full and complete testimony. You may not be able to get that. I recognize the realities here, and as a matter of fact the President possibly, under the separation of powers, could refuse to do all of this. I am speaking as a friend and not as a foe.

**MR. GERMOND:** If the President decides not to do any of these things that you have recommended, to come clean, could he function in the last three and a half years, if things sit just as they are now?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** May I say with reference to the words "come clean," what I meant was to speak out and tell his side of the story as his information indicates the truth. Now your question again?

**MR. GERMOND:** Can he function if the situation remains as it is now with these accusations hanging in the air unresolved?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** He will be a wounded President. He will be a President that lacks the full support and confidence of the American people and their representatives, regrettably. That is one of the real serious effects of Watergate. Regardless of what has happened, it has paralyzed the government. It has left us without the kind of firm leadership that is necessary in a host of areas. I think this has impact upon our economy, the inflation, the lack of confidence in the dollar, what is happening on the stock market, what is happening on prices, the problems of food and energy. All of this is related to the fact that this government today is torn apart by the revelations of the Watergate scandal.

**MR. NEWMAN:** We have less than three minutes left.

**MR. DUKE:** Do you think, Senator Humphrey, that all the disclosures of bugging and burglary, the misuse of the CIA, the

FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, do you think all of these in themselves add up to a case of presidential malfeasance?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** They add up to a case of lack of presidential surveillance and leadership and management and administration of this government. There isn't any doubt about that at all. The word "malfeasance" has legal connotations that I want to be careful about as I respond to your question, but how all of this could have happened in a government where they talked about order, efficiency and management is beyond me. This is an incredible display, may I say, of a lack of attention to the details of government. May I say, what has happened here is that there were people in this government that thought it was the responsibility of government to protect itself from the people. The Constitution of the United States makes no provision for that. The Constitution makes provision for protecting the people from the abuses of government. What has happened here is a twist and a turn of the whole constitutional process and literally an arrogance of power, which is so evident, and violating, I think, all of the tradition of representative government.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** I have a little footnote to history, Senator. At the time Mr. Johnson selected you as his Vice Presidential nominee, were you checked out?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Absolutely.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** Who did it?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** Lyndon Baines Johnson checked [me] out. I think you knew—

**MR. KILPATRICK:** He asked you all the dirty questions?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** All the dirty ones and all the linen and laundry, the whole ball game.

**MR. KILPATRICK:** That was a question I have been meaning to ask you ever since—

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** I'm sorry you asked it on television, but you wanted an honest answer and you got it. I want to say that I am not an angel, nor will I qualify for sainthood—there was one Saint Hubert, but that was back in about 800.

**MR. LISAGOR:** Senator Humphrey, we have heard reports that there may be a food shortage. You come from an agricultural state, why should there be a food shortage in the United States?

**SENATOR HUMPHREY:** One of the reasons, the failure to have any planning whatsoever related to demand and to production.

Another reason is the unusual demands worldwide because of two years of incredibly bad weather in the food-producing areas of the world; and, thirdly, of course, a rise in income worldwide, which has placed a heavy emphasis upon the use of protein. But by and large, what is really boils down to is that we have a government not only now, but in the past, that has never planned. We haven't planned about a thing. We have a transportation crisis; we have a fuel crisis; we have a food crisis, and they are tied together. Now we have a time crisis.

**MR. NEWMAN:** We do indeed. Our time is up.

Thank you, Senator Humphrey, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.

*The Proceedings of*  
**M E E T   T H E   P R E S S**

as broadcast nationwide by the National Broadcasting Company, Inc., are printed and made available to the public to further interest in impartial discussions of questions affecting the public welfare. Transcripts may be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope and ten cents for each copy to:

*Merkle Press Inc. Box 2111, Washington, D. C. 20013*  
*(Division Publishers Co., Inc.)*

*MEET THE PRESS is telecast every Sunday over the NBC Television Network. This program originated from the NBC Studios in Washington, D.C.*

**Television Broadcast 1:00-1:30 P.M. EDT**  
**Radio Broadcast 6:30-7:00 P.M. EDT**



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)