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Conversation No. 33-62

Date: November 8, 1972

Time: Unknown between 1:16 am - 1:28 am

Location: White House Telephone

Participants: Richard M. Nixon, Hubert H. Humphrey

In a telephone conversation between President Nixon and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minnesota), Senator Humphrey calls to congratulate the president on his "historic victory." Nixon after making a comparison between the 1968 and 1972 campaigns, thanks Humphrey "for being such a statesman."

The conversation also touches on Humphrey's role in the McGovern campaign and Nixon's announcement that he had known "for a week" of progress in the Vietnam peace negotiations, but "we couldn't say it." Significantly, Humphrey acknowledged that he had been asked "whether or not we could have got a [Vietnam] settlement like this in '69," to which he had replied "no."

Operator: Mr. President?

Nixon: Yeah.

Operator: I have Senator Humphrey for you.

Nixon: Hello?

Operator: Go ahead please.

Nixon: Hello?

Humphrey: Mr. President?

Nixon: Hi Hubert, how are you?

Humphrey: Well, fine, and I wanted to call up just to congratulate you on this historic victory.

Nixon: Well, thank you very much, you've, uh—

Humphrey: You really racked 'em up.

Nixon: Well, you've been a very, uh, statesmanlike man. As I always, uh, always, when, I just, speaking as friends, people ask me very privately to compare this with '68, and I said "well, the difference is that when Senator Humphrey and I were campaigning and we had this terrible issue of Vietnam, we both put the country first." And I said, "this time," I said, "we had a problem where one fella' said any goddamn thing that came in his head."

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Humphrey: Yeah.

Nixon: For your private information, and uh, I think you should know, that for three days I had the whole thing in my pocket.

Humphrey: Yes.

Nixon: And you probably gue—, as you probably guessed.

Humphrey: Yes. I had a talk with Henry a couple of days ago.

Nixon: Right.

Humphrey: He had asked me whether or not we could have got a settlement like this in '69.

Nixon: I don't—

Humphrey: I said no.

Nixon: Yeah. Well, you made a great statement, and I asked Henry to call you, but I think you should know that—

Humphrey: Thank you.

Nixon: —that within 10 days, you will see, it's all fallen into place. And we knew it a week ago, but we couldn't say it, I mean—

Humphrey: Well, I understood that.

Nixon: But I, I felt you had to fight for your man, and I understood why, but I know that you didn't approve of some of the tactics.

Humphrey: Well, I'll have a talk with you sometime. I knew it, you know, I did what I had to do.

Nixon: Of course you did.

Humphrey: If not, Mr. President, this whole [McGovern] defeat would have been blamed on me—

Nixon: That's right.

Humphrey: —and some of my associates.

Nixon: That's right. That's right. *[laughs]*

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Humphrey: You know that.

Nixon: That's right. Well, we'll get together and, uh, we'll work for the good of the country, that's the important thing.

Humphrey: We surely will, and I, I didn't want to let this night go by without calling.

Nixon: Well, it's so good of you to call, and, how are you feeling?

Humphrey: I'm feeling fine. By the way, my son was elected to the State Senate out here.

Nixon: Isn't that great. Well, I hope we didn't run a man against him that gave him any trouble.

Humphrey: Sure, as a matter of fact, the man that ran against him's [*laughs*] a very fine man.

Nixon: Yeah.

Humphrey: I was worried—

Nixon: Yeah.

Humphrey: —the boy wasn't—

Nixon: Yeah.

Humphrey: —going to win.

Nixon: Right.

Humphrey: —but, uh—

Nixon: Isn't that great.

Humphrey: —he conducted a good campaign—

Nixon: Yeah.

Humphrey: —and you can imagine I feel pretty good tonight.

Nixon: We had some good things going on here, and, uh—Well, say, what's—are you in Minnesota now?

Humphrey: Yes I am.

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Nixon: Yeah. How's that coming out? I don't, I haven't seen, I hear it's very close.

Humphrey: Yes, of course what you've got here now, Mr. President, is the city votes are in.

Nixon: Uh, do you think, uh, how do you project it?

Humphrey: Uh, I'd think you'd win out here, but not by as large as you would in other states.

Nixon: Yeah.

Humphrey: Uh—

Nixon: Well, we never did. Minnesota's always closer.

Humphrey: *[laughs]* Well, we're fairly well organized out here, Mr. President.

Nixon: I know, I know. That's right, particularly with you coming out, you see. You hurt us, you see.

Humphrey: *[laughs]* Well, I did my duty!

Nixon: But, we didn't need you this time like '60, so I won't hold it against you.

Humphrey: I did my duty!

Nixon: *[laughs]* Ok. But do you think we'll win [Minnesota], you think we'll win it at the moment, seriously?

Humphrey: Oh yes. Yes I do.

Nixon: Yeah.

Humphrey: I think that, uh, that you'll most likely come out of here with, uh, oh, between 50 and a 100 thousand.¹

¹ In a conversation with Henry Kissinger at 1:10pm on November 8, 1972, Humphrey recalled his conversation with the President early that morning:

H: [...] it was a tremendous victory.

K: It was—

H: Oh, God.

K: It was unbelievable.

H: Unbelievable is right. I told him last night I thought he would carry Minnesota by about 50,000, that's about what it looks like now.

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Nixon: Ok!

Humphrey: Uh—

Nixon: I'll hold to you that. Anything less than 50, I'm going to make you pay!

Humphrey: You'll make me pay, are you? [*laughs*]

Nixon: All right

Humphrey: All right.

Nixon: Good.

Humphrey: Well, both you, you and Pat both looked good on that TV tonight. And, uh—

Nixon: Oh, well, those things are so hard to handle, those roaring crowds, but, uh—

Humphrey: Listen, I've never told you how much I appreciated that hand-written letter [following the assassination attempt], but I just want you to know—

Nixon: Well—

Humphrey: —that both my wife and I cherish it.

Nixon: Listen, I—

Humphrey: It meant a great deal to me.

Nixon: —I've been through this, so, and I meant it from the heart.

Humphrey: I know that.

Nixon: And, uh, anyway, we'll have a, we'll do some good things for this country in the next year—

K: Well, it shows that the American people just don't like to be put down by their candidate.

H: That's right. You know, our people got too far out, Henry, and it's too bad because it makes it look awfully bad for us. But we'll be back there ready to go to work.

K: Good. And I look forward very much to seeing you.

See: Henry A. Kissinger Telephone Conversation (Telcon) Transcripts, Nixon Presidential Materials Project (NPMP), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA II), Box 17.

Humphrey: Right-o, and—

Nixon: —four years, Hubert!

Humphrey: —in these areas, you, uh, I told Henry you can depend on us.

Nixon: I know it.

Humphrey: We're going to be there.

Nixon: And just remember, whenever you think you're gonna, I mean, you're checking yourself out, read about [*Winston*] Churchill. I was reading, uh, uh, uh, Peter [*Demessingo*]'s, uh, new, uh, well, it isn't new, it's a—it's a great biography out in California the other day. You know Hubert, when he was 68, he became Prime Minister, and [*Benjamin*] Disraeli was 68, so, what the hell, you still, you're still in your 60s.

Humphrey: Yeah, I know, but we Minnesotans got a bad reputation for running too often.

Nixon: [*laughs*] Ha! Ok!

Humphrey: [*laughs*] You know about that.

Nixon: Well, good luck, and thank you for being such a statesman.

Humphrey: All right, friend. Goodbye.