



David S. Broder

# Humphrey entry into Democratic presidential race legitimate and desirable if Carter falters

PHILADELPHIA — Even before the Pennsylvania primary returns were in, Jimmy Carter and Hubert Humphrey were beginning to debate their claim to the Democratic presidential nomination. The focus was not on their qualifications to lead their party or the country but the tactics they have employed in respect to the nomination.

Carter suggested repeatedly during the past week that if Humphrey were nominated "without going through the primary process, at a brokered convention, it would saddle the Democratic Party with a severe political handicap."

Humphrey replied that "if Carter or anyone else gets nominated, there will have to be some brokering. I've never been at a convention where somebody didn't ask somebody for a vote. Delegates are sent to the convention to make a choice. That's what it's all about."

The debate about the "brokered convention" is an important political question, and before it gets obscured in the emotions of a Carter-Humphrey contest, it might be well to examine it on its merits.

The basic work of a political convention is to assemble from the diverse elements of our loose party structure a majority coalition capable of winning the election and governing the country. In that very broad sense of the term, Humphrey is right when he says that "brokering" is the very essence of the nomination process. Historically, the votes that decided the nomination were cajoled from delegates in the weeks, the hours or the frantic last minutes before the roll-call ended in convention hall.

That is how Humphrey won in 1968 without entering the primaries. But it is also how John Kennedy won in 1960 and George McGovern in 1972 — after beating their major rivals in the primaries.

There is nothing inherently improper about this process — particularly when the selection system for naming delegates has been made as open and accessible to rank-and-file Democrats as it has this year.

As Humphrey has recognized, the bargaining or brokering process will almost inevitably yield Carter the nomination — as it did Kennedy and McGovern — if he emerges from the final primaries on June 8 with a commanding lead. That tipping point is generally placed in the 1,000 to 1,200 vote level. Humphrey concedes it would be "very foolhardy" to try to block a candidate that close to the 1,505 votes needed for nomination and says he will not be party to such a stop-Carter effort.

Hamilton Jordan, Carter's able manager, thinks his candidate is well within striking range of that goal. But if Carter should fail to secure more than 1,000 of the 3,008 delegates by the end of the primaries, is it legitimate for someone like Humphrey, who has shunned the primaries, to enter the race?

That, in turn, involves four other judgments:

Did Humphrey have valid, unselfish reasons for avoiding the primaries? The answer is yes. He had sought the presidency three times previously — in 1960, 1968, and 1972 — failing twice to be nominated and once to be elected. He recognized that the party might well be better served by a new face, and

knew he could be legitimately criticized for imposing himself onto what was initially a large field of fresh candidates.

Was there also an element of self-interest in that decision? Of course there was. Scarred by previous battles, Humphrey frankly wanted no more of the ordeal of the primaries — the endless hours of campaigning, the scrounging for money. He also calculated that a stalemate was likely and his chances of winning second-round convention support would be improved if he incurred no personal enmities from the active contestants.

But all nomination strategies are calculated. Carter did not make 35 trips to Florida or visit 110 Iowa towns by chance. That, too, was a calculated decision — no better or no worse than Humphrey's stratagem.

Is there an element of risk for the Democrats in rejecting someone who has taken his case to the people, as Carter has? There is, indeed — and a very serious one. Carter clearly intrigues people. His appeal is unique. And his themes have struck a deep chord with some voters. His rejection by the convention would risk alienating not only the South, which has understandable pride in his candidacy, but thousands of talented people his campaign has attracted to the Democratic Party in other sections of the country.

But that is not the only risk. There is also a risk in nominating a man whose support is as thin, whose views are as unexamined, whose

links with major Democratic constituencies are as weak, and whose record is as equivocal as Carter's. Humphrey's strengths and weaknesses are well known; Carter's are not, and there is risk either way for the Democrats.

Finally, can Humphrey serve a useful purpose by contesting Carter, even if the likelihood is great that Carter will be the nominee?

In my judgment, this is the most important question and the answer is yes. A Humphrey-Carter debate on the role and policies of the national government would force the Georgian to define, far more precisely

than he has done so far, his purposes as President.

And if Carter were forced into a "brokering" process, he would have to negotiate relationships with his political peers — with governors, members of Congress, party officials, interest group leaders — that he has shunned so far. Having those relationships would make him a better candidate and a safer potential custodian of presidential power than he is today.

For those reasons, it seems to me not only legitimate but desirable for Humphrey to seek the nomination if circumstances permit.

## Readers' forum

### Czech situation clarified

Editor: I want to express my appreciation for the way in which your reporter quoted me (quite accurately) in the first Battalion write-up concerning the Czech program here at Texas A&M University. While the second story, written by members of the Czech Club, is also essentially correct, I would like to clarify a couple of points. I did not say that we would continue Czech if enough people signed up for it. What I did say was that if I received a petition with a good many names attached, I would forward it to Dr. W. David Maxwell, Dean, College of Liberal Arts. This offer was first made well over a year ago. In the Fall of 1975, I met with the Czech Club and expressed surprise at not having heard from their members long ago; I also noted that our budget and faculty recruiting were usually settled during the fall semester. Several weeks later I received a petition (undated).

At the convention of the Modern Language Association meeting in December 1975, I attempted to locate someone for the possible opening. Only one person applied (who would not have been desirable for our program for a variety of reasons). Other advertisements and correspondence yielded no positive results.

I should like to call attention to the following figures: in the Spring Semester of 1971, 10 students were registered for Czech 128, 13 for Czech 388; in the Fall of 1971, 20 were registered for Czech 127, 12 for Czech 387; in the Spring of 1972, 13 in 127, 12 in 388; in the Fall of 1972, 15 in 127, 10 in 227 and 2 in 387; in the Spring of 1973, 7 in 128, 8 in 388; in the Fall of 1973, 15 in 127, 7 in 387; in the Spring of 1974, 11 in 128, 6 in 388; in the Fall of 1974, 14 in 127, 9 in 227, and 4 in 387; in the Spring of 1975, 11 in 128, and 6 in 388.

You will notice that Czech 227-228 has hardly ever had the required ten students for the course to be taught even though it was offered, thus explaining the number of those taking Czech 387-388 which are variable credit reading courses. Obviously, even though Czech courses were offered for many years, the enrollment was minimal. The above figures are totals for all Czech courses during the period indicated.

The decision to phase out Czech was not made without a great deal of soul searching. A committee of the senior professors in the Modern Languages Department and I decided on the weight of the evidence

that continuing the program for such a small number of students could no longer be justified.

Dr. Anne Marie Elmquist  
Modern Languages Dept. Head

### Listen Up

#### Affable Aggies

Editor: There has been a lot of criticism lately about how Texas A&M is changing. As a senior last year, I was among the first to complain that few people greeted each other anymore. However, it was only after I returned to A&M after a few months' absence that I could properly compare it to the "real world." Even if it isn't as friendly as it used to be, it is still the friendliest place around. I was reminded of this when, soon after I arrived in College Station, my car got stuck in the mud. Immediately four Aggies stopped individually to help me, and I was out in no time. This is hardly typical of most places. So, Aggies, appreciate each other's company. The rest of the world isn't quite so special.

Melissa Martin

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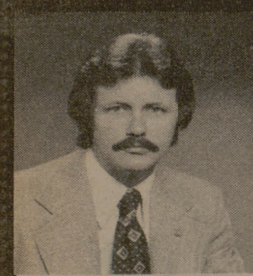
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