

Humphrey sets sights for Florida primary

WASHINGTON—As Hubert Humphrey recalls it, he stopped playing coy about another campaign for the presidency just a few weeks ago—at a garden party in Miami Beach.

Up to that point most of his Florida supporters had counseled a waiting game and assumed that Humphrey was taking their advice. And, for a while, he was.

But then, he says, "It came to me just as clear as could be that if I were to get the nomination, I would have to go after it, not wait for it to drop in my lap. It wasn't going to do that. Nor should it. I think it's fair for people to ask the question: 'Can Humphrey win?'"

"So I said, 'All right, I accept that challenge.'"

The informal announcement was made December 4 at the elegant home of Miami Beach banker-lawyer Arthur Courshon, a longtime Humphrey loyalist. About 20 couples had gathered there to dine in a star-lit garden with the Senator and Ms. Humphrey for 1,000 dollars apiece. Not all were delighted at the news that he had decided on an all-out campaign starting with the Florida primary.

"I'm with him all the way," says one of the HHH boosters who was at the get-together. "But I think he'll do terribly in Florida. Yes, behind Muskie. Maybe behind Jackson, too. But he had that look in his eyes. It's a disease. He's got run-itis. Nobody was going to tell him he couldn't make it."

Courshon is a bit more optimistic, even though he, too, was one of those who had been advising Humphrey to stay away from Florida's March 14 primary.

"I'm still not convinced it's the right thing to do," Courshon acknowledges. "But what do you do? Run away from it? I honestly believe that he's the best qualified candidate in the race. If we can start the 'he can be a winner' psychology along with that, he might make it. If he does well here, it'll surprise the hell out of everybody."

After losing out to John Kennedy in 1960 and Richard Nixon in 1968, Humphrey has no illusions of easy victory. What was illusory, he became convinced, was the notion that he could sit back until the other Democratic candidates stumbled and the Humphrey appeal became apparent. At age 60 in Presidential politics, demure hesitation is not the most seductive pose.

Humphrey trailing Muskie

Polling conducted in Florida in late November helped him make up his mind. The results reportedly showed Humphrey running neck-and-neck with Sen. Edmund Muskie. Never mind that they also put Alabama Gov. George Wallace ahead of both of them. To Humphrey, Florida suddenly offered a chance to come in ahead of Muskie, his running mate in 1968 and now the presumed front-runner for the Democratic nomination.

"Wallace doesn't count nationwide," says Courshon. "We were surprised at our strength in the poll vis-a-vis Muskie and Sen. Henry Jackson. That's pretty well when Humphrey decided he was going to jump in."

Buoyed by the decision, Humphrey has been proclaiming happily that he feels like a new man, no longer dogged by the shadows of Lyndon Johnson and the nightmarish 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

"I feel more relaxed, more released, more of an emancipated man," the Minnesota senator said in a recent interview. "I'm not saying this critically, but when I was vice president, I constantly had to be careful as to whether or not I was causing the president any embarrassment." Even wife Muriel, says Humphrey, has noticed the difference. Surprisingly, he says, she encouraged him to try again. "She said that she felt I was a much different man, that I didn't feel or act the same way I did three or four years ago."

Campaign different

Convincing the voters of that will be the chief task of the Humphrey campaign. Ramrod for the effort will be campaign manager Jack Chestnut, 39, the single-minded Minneapolis lawyer who directed Humphrey's successful 1970 race to win back a senate seat.

Other top aides include Minneapolis millionaire John Morrison, deputy campaign manager, and James (Mike) Maloney Jr., a political organizer in charge of corraling Democratic convention delegates. Like Chestnut, both men are in their 30's.

They promise to give Humphrey the best organized campaign he has ever had and, except for the incurably voluble candidate himself, the most tight-lipped. A busy man who eats lunch at his desk, Chestnut has been described as "the S.O.B. inside that Humphrey never had before." The candidate's 1968 campaign was considered a babel of voices, full of chattering advisers. By contrast, the Washington headquarters of "Humphrey for President" in 1972—opened without fanfare on December 6—resembles an FBI office, full of subordinates who have been told not to talk to newsmen. The atmosphere is always business like, occasionally brusque. There is no hoopla. Until recently at least, there wasn't a bumper sticker in the house. Chestnut considers them a waste of money.

Humphrey has been checking into the odds on a comeback for months, holding onto political friends and moneybags as tightly as he could while he took his soundings. Despite the dead-weight of his image as a yes-man for President Johnson and the war in Vietnam, which he tried to shuck off in 1968, he says he has found a reservoir of good will towards him throughout the country. It is often difficult to distinguish between simple nostalgia for "good old Hubert" and affection that can be translated into votes, but Humphrey thinks there is more than nostalgia to it.

"I know lots of times you hear what you want to hear, but I've tried to be pretty objective about this," he says. "I'm reasonably sure that I have a good chance. I think it's all nip and tuck. In some areas, it's an uphill battle. But it's not so far out of reach."

Home state divided

Still as bouncy and irrepressible as ever, Humphrey, it seems clear, has been itching for a re-run ever since his loss to Mr. Nixon by a scant 510,000 votes, a margin of less than one per cent.

Humphrey began his political comeback in 1970, combining an old-fashioned, handshaking campaign for the senate with prodigious efforts to overcome the division in Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor party. The organization had been shattered first by a bitter gubernatorial primary in 1966, and then by the competition between Humphrey and that other Minnesotan, Eugene McCarthy, in 1968. Humphrey managed to put it back together again, winning the senate election by the biggest margin he'd ever commanded.

Even so, it would have been unseemly for the junior senator from Minnesota re-assert himself for higher office sooner than he did. It was Sen.-elect Humphrey, after all, who told newsmen just 13 months ago that he would use his influence as titular leader of the Democratic party to consolidate support behind the frontrunner for the 1972 nomination and thus avoid a series of "incredibly expensive, bloodletting" presidential primaries.

There was, however, a caveat to the proposal. If there was no clear front-runner by the end of 1971, Humphrey said, he might get into the race himself. This, Humphrey submits, is precisely what happened. If there is a front-runner, the Gallup and Harris polls indicate, it is Sen. Edward Kennedy (Massachusetts), who had repeatedly said he has no intention of entering the primaries.

"Ed Muskie is a leader," Humphrey acknowledges, "but he's not ahead of Kennedy. And if you take Kennedy out, I get a bigger share of the Kennedy vote than anyone else. It becomes a kind of dead heat between Muskie and me."

With his well-worn skimmer now in the ring, Humphrey is again trying to preach the gospel of party unity, suggesting that all good Democratic contenders should focus on Mr. Nixon and refrain from cutting each other up. Such sermons may sound rather hollow to Muskie, who might have had a tighter grip on the nomination if Humphrey had not kept such jealous reins on his old supporters and worked so hard during 1971 to cultivate new ones. But Humphrey insists that he is no "spoiler."

On the contrary," he said, "I think that I delayed beyond what was smart for my purposes."

The late start is only one of Humphrey's problems. Not a few AFL-CIO leaders were chagrined at his vote against the SST last year after allegedly indicating his support for the supersonic project. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley announced long ago that he had little use for Humphrey and his post-election complaints about the mayor's tepid support in 1968.

VALLETTA, Malta — Demonstrators burst through police lines and attacked British symbols in Valletta on Wednesday night in a violent show of support for Prime Minister Dom Mintoff's decision to order British forces off this Mediterranean island by Midnight Friday. A group of 300 from a marching crowd of 2,000 stoned the building of the Times of Malta, a pro-British newspaper leading the opposition to Mintoff. The crowd also smashed a memorial to a former prime minister sympathetic to Britain, and spat on a statue of Queen Victoria. A government spokesman declared after the demonstrations that if the British remain past the deadline they will be regarded as an illegal presence. Malta "certainly will sound out the U.N. Security Council and the Council of Europe in such a case, Information Director Paul Naudi said.

BATON ROUGE, La. — Four members of an alleged Black Muslim splinter group, who officials say provoked a bloody shootout with police that left four men dead, are still at large, it was revealed Wednesday. Dist. Atty. Sargent Pitcher said police were searching for two men and two women members of an alleged group of 16 touring Muslims who officials contend came to this Louisiana capital city to precipitate a violent confrontation with authorities. With the exception of the four, the remaining members of the group are accounted for, Pitcher said. Two deputy sheriffs and two members of the alleged band died in the sudden volley of gunshots on a city street Monday.

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Ecology Director John Biggs asserted Wednesday that economics, and not environmental factors, prompted Weyerhaeuser Co. to announce closure of its Everett pulp mill. "It's an old, old mill," Biggs told newsmen. "It's rapidly becoming uneconomic. The company just decided the factor of obsolescence was so overwhelming in light of the environmental considerations that a shutdown was necessary." But company officials blamed the shutdown on the high cost of pollution abatement and the uncertainty of federal pollution controls. The firm announced Tuesday its plans to shut down the 36-year-old mill by May 1973 rather than install \$52 million worth of pollution control equipment for treatment of waste.

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — Hundreds of police and troops used small arms, bazookas and mortars in a day-long battle Wednesday with suspected Communist guerrillas that cost an estimated 14 lives. The shootout at a cave outside the city touched off riots in this Caribbean island capital. A police captain, nine policemen and four outlaws were reported killed, but the gang leader apparently escaped. The battle began at a house 14 miles east of the capital in which the gunmen were hiding out. The assault with bazookas and mortars was launched on a 1,600-foot-deep cave in which the surviving members of the gang holed up later in the day.

DALLAS Tex. — A hijacker demanding up to \$1 million, jungle survival kits and parachutes seized an airplane with 94 passengers and seven crew members Wednesday and ordered that it be flown to South America. But he allowed the passengers to de-plane in Dallas. Although he gave orders to take off at 5:40 p.m. for South America, ground crewmen said there was a fuel leak in engine No. 1 and it would take hours to repair. The hijacker said he planned to parachute over South American jungles and make his way to Bogota, Colombia, where he had friends. Two hours after the 5:40 p.m. deadline, the plane remained virtually isolated on a remote ramp at Love Field, the main Dallas airport.

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Sam Yorty, who is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, was asked to leave the party in a sharply worded resolution approved by the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee and made public Wednesday. Yorty was en route to San Francisco for a speech and unavailable for comment. The resolution, passed by a voice vote late Tuesday, was not unanimous, said a spokesman for committee Chairman Walter River. It was addressed to voters in New Hampshire, where Yorty is a presidential primary candidate. It said a "major portion of his campaign and his personal funds come from the same reactionary Republican sources that have served also to finance such Republican figures as Calif. Gov. Ronald Reagan and Max Rafferty," who lost a 1970 election race for reelection as state school superintendent.