

The record: Hubert a longtime hawk

By Don Oberdorfer

WASHINGTON — Since Hubert Humphrey has made it clear that he does not intend to change his basic stand on Vietnam, here is an examination of his record going back to his earliest known utterances, in 1950.

The record shows him to be a consistent advocate of strong anti-Communist action there.

In 1962, Humphrey suggested that South Vietnam might wish to take the battle into North Vietnam, and thus give the enemy "a taste of their own guerrilla medicine."

Since becoming vice president in 1955, Humphrey has been a leading spokesman for the necessity, morality and—at times—the apparent successes of the war.

He ridiculed a 1966 proposal that the bombing of North Vietnam be stopped to induce peace talks.

According to an account he gave columnist Carl Rowan, he argued for more emphasis on "the other war" to win the hearts and minds of Vietnamese and against a major commitment of up to 207,000 more U. S. troops in the wake of February's Tet offensive.

HUMPHREY also told Rowan that he had helped convince President Johnson that U. S. forces should stand firm at the beleaguered Khe Sanh outpost early this year when the Chief Executive developed doubts. After a lengthy siege, the North Vietnamese backed away.

The Humphrey record, particularly the lesser-known part of it during earlier years, displays a deep anti-Communist commitment common among liberals of the 1950s and early 1960s but which has come under question today.

HERE, in highlight form, is the record:

June 27, 1950—Humphrey supported President Truman in acknowledging a request for help from the French-supported Emperor Bao Dai of Indochina: "Communism seems to be contagious. So far as Southeast Asia is concerned,

the Communist sore and infestation is there."

April 23, 1951—Humphrey praised the French war in Indochina as "a war against communism, against imperialistic, aggressive communism . . . The loss of Indochina could be as serious as the loss of Korea."

March 31, 1954—Concerned about a "serious situation" developing around Dien Bien Phu, Humphrey declared that "I agree thoroughly that the loss of Indochina would be a tragedy for the free world. . . . The sooner the American people wake up to the serious problem in Indochina the better off we will be."

April 19, 1954—Humphrey said the United States must publicly state a clear objective of "freedom and independence" for the Indochinese people before sending any U.S. manpower. He added that "to lose Indochina to the Communists may be to lose all of Southeast Asia. It is unthinkable."

May 11, 1955—Humphrey rebuked Sec. of State John Foster Dulles for reportedly saying that Vietnam is "not sufficiently important to become a source of serious friction between France and the United States."

"We are in the matter up to our necks," Humphrey told the Senate. "And when one is deep in a problem—as deep as we are now—it is not time to pull out."

He called on President Eisenhower to "unequivocally and unqualifiedly" announce his support for President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam.

August 23, 1960—"There is no doubt in my mind that in Vietnam we have had one of the staunch allies in the cause of freedom."

March 12, 1962—Humphrey said he would "ask some very serious questions and be very deeply disturbed" if large U.S. troop movements to Vietnam were to be contemplated. However, he said "the greatest risk is Communist aggression, Communist conquest and Communist advance. That we can-

not permit, if it is humanly possible to stop it."

Aug. 17, 1964 — Humphrey, then Senate Democratic whip, espoused the Johnson administration's policy on Vietnam point by point. "We must stay in Vietnam — until the security of the South Vietnamese people has been established."

Humphrey added that "we should not attempt to 'take over' the war from the Vietnamese" and urged a strong emphasis on the political and social aspects of the struggle.

The speech came less than two weeks after the Gulf of Tonkin incidents and 10 days after the Southeast Asia resolution in the Senate (which Humphrey supported) approving "all necessary steps" in Vietnam.

Humphrey warned that while South Vietnam remains the principal battlefield "this does not mean — as our action in the Gulf of Tonkin indicated — that North Vietnam will remain a privileged sanctuary regardless of provocation. Further attacks will be met with equal firmness. We dare not ignore such aggression."

Feb. 21, 1966 — Vice President Humphrey said of Sen. Robert Kennedy's suggestion that the National Liberation

Front be given a share of power and responsibility in South Vietnam: This would be like "putting a fox in a chicken coop; there aren't any chickens left."

Feb. 24, 1966—After returning from an inspection trip: "The tide of battle has turned."

March 9, 1967 — Humphrey delivered so strong a defense of administration policy to the Democratic National Committee that it was used by the committee in an effort to neutralize opposition to the war among liberal Democratic contributors.

March 19, 1967 — "We are going to pursue the course on which we are presently chartered or which we presently follow, regardless of political consequences."

Oct. 15, 1967 — In Vietnam "our own American security is at stake. Today the threat to world peace is militant, aggressive Asian communism with headquarters in Peking, China. The aggression of North Vietnam is but the most current and immediate action of

militant Asian communism." He added that "it is the Communist that is losing the war. . . ."

Nov. 13, 1967—"I come home with a reinforced belief that the safety, security and independence of the nations of Southeast Asia are critical to the safety, security and independence of the United States —and that this will be even more true in the years ahead.

"By all measures — roads opened, villages cleared, enemy casualties and desertions —we are winning militarily."

April 28, 1968 — "I wouldn't want to exaggerate the importance of my contribution (but) I have been in on most of the discussions where . . . high decisions were being given consideration. I feel I have played the role that a vice president ought to play, one of an adviser, when asked, and also one of a loyal supporter when the decision is made."

In response to a question, Humphrey said he supported the decision to begin bombing North Vietnam.