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HUBERT HUMPHREY, 1911-78

Among the casualties of the Vietnam War were the convictions and programs of old-fashioned liberalism, and also the reputation of their most tireless champion, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey. When he came into office with President Lyndon Johnson, Humphrey had been a fighting liberal senator whose name was on some of the most significant progressive legislation of the century; bills on civil rights, health care for the aged, a nuclear-test-ban treaty and a flood of others.

Through the years of Humphrey's Senate career, a close friend and mentor was Lyndon Johnson, and it was only natural that he would become Johnson's running mate in the 1964 elections. When in early 1965 Johnson first began escalating US intervention in Vietnam, Humphrey expressed misgivings; Johnson forthwith banished him from deliberations for over a year. Finally, loyal to his old colleague, Humphrey came around, turning his ebullient style to promoting Johnson's war.

When Johnson declined to run in 1968, Humphrey survived the challenge of Eugene McCarthy to be named the Democratic nominee in the stormy Chicago convention. Despite making efforts in September to distance himself from Johnson and his war policy, he lost to Richard Nixon by less than one percent of the vote.