

Candidates Do Surmount Pettiness

By Jack Anderson

It happens every four years. A national election turns into a national free-for-all.

According to the old math of American politics, everything during an election is reduced to its lowest common denominator. Candidates become cartoon-like caricatures; issues become simple-minded rallying cries; the presidency is streaked with mud.

But we might remind our readers on this July Fourth holiday that the candidates are also capable of rising above campaign pettiness. We have learned that America's two veteran antagonists—Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon—on occasion have put integrity first and their political ambitions second.

As Vice President during the 1968 campaign, Humphrey read the secret diplomatic cables from Saigon. He learned from these cables that high-ranking Republican fundraisers were pressuring President Thieu in South Vietnam to boycott the proposed peace talks until after the election. This prevented the Democrats from softening the war issue, which Mr. Nixon was using against them.

Humphrey acknowledged to us that he had seen the cables, but said he had refused to use them against Mr. Nixon.

"A scandal like this would

have clouded the Vietnam issue and divided the country unnecessarily," he said. "I was convinced that Richard Nixon knew nothing about what was going on in Saigon."

Nixon's Secret

Earlier, following the 1960 election, Richard Nixon was furnished evidence that Democrats had stuffed the ballot boxes in three crucial states—Illinois, Missouri and Texas. This gave John Kennedy 61 electoral votes, the margin he needed to win the presidency.

Republicans uncovered numerous irregularities. In Chicago, thousands of Democrats supposedly turned out in districts wiped out by new super-highways. In St. Louis, seven Republican wards somehow turned Democratic overnight and voted heavily against Mr. Nixon. In numerous small towns in Texas, Democratic ballots outnumbered citizens two to one.

Republican leaders were pressing for a court fight that would have dragged on for months and left the country's leadership in doubt for the duration.

Ten days after the election, John Kennedy, the apparent winner, visited Mr. Nixon in Key Biscayne, Fla.

"Well, I guess we really don't know how this thing is going to be resolved," said Mr. Kennedy.

"Yes, we do," said Mr. Nixon. "You won."

Story Killed

Meanwhile, Earl Mazo, the chief political reporter for the New York Herald Tribune, began a 12-part series exposing Democratic election shenanigans. After the fourth story, Mr. Nixon called Mazo into his office.

As Mazo remembers the incident, "I told him that the election had been stolen out of his eyeballs. He laughed. Then he got serious. He said it was important that I stop my articles."

Then Mr. Nixon confided why he had refused to contest the election. "Our country at this time can't afford the agony of a constitutional crisis," he said, "and I damn well will not be a party to creating one just to become President."

Such incidents emphasize that politics is not always an end in itself. Even the most ambitious men have served their country worthily.

Footnote: Senator George McGovern gave up a night's rest and went 200 miles out of his way recently so that three teenage constituents could visit their parents in the hospital. McGovern found the youngsters late one Friday night stranded in the Minneapolis Airport after they had been bumped off the last connecting flight to their home-

town of Wagner, S.D. The youngsters told the senator that their parents had been in an automobile accident. McGovern quickly offered to fly the threesome to Wagner in his chartered plane, even though McGovern's destination was Aberdeen, 235 miles to the north.

Peace Breakthrough

President Nixon continues to twist and pull at the knobs of the great American war machine in Indochina, trying to find the right combination to bring this endless war to a halt.

The President, meanwhile, has pulled all the combat units out of Vietnam. At the same time, of course, he has quietly increased our air power in Indochina to an all-time high.

Secret intelligence reports reveal that 7,000 new North Vietnamese recruits will move south next month for combat in Vietnam and Cambodia. It was only two years ago that Mr. Nixon launched a major invasion into Cambodia to drive the enemy out of their sanctuaries. Today, the enemy is back in Cambodia in full force, controlling more territory than ever before.

Intelligence sources also confirm that 100,000 new enemy soldiers have entered the war since January to replace the dead and wounded.