Economy Top

Hearst Task Force Report

Campaign Issue, Says Shriver

By William Theis
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WASHINGTON — Democratic vice presidential nominee R. Sargent Shriver thinks "everything humanly possible" will be done by President Nixon to obtain a Vietnam peace before the November election—and might be successful. But he terms "ridiculous" the Agnew view expressed last week in an interview that Hanoi will make no deal until it is sure the McGovern-Shriver ticket can't win.

The nominee insists his campaign charge that Nixon is the nation's "number-one warmaker" is valid and criticizes the President for not getting the country out of Vietnam since he has been in office.

Shriver also believes leaders of organized labor are now swinging to the Democratic team and predicts "98 percent" of Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley's organization will be with them on election day.

The Kennedy clan brother-in-law who was finally chosen by Sen. George McGovern to be his '72 running-mate sees the economy as the number one issue of the campaign.

Second, he says, is "loss of confidence in government," fed by Republican involvement in the Watergate bugging case, administration handling of grain sales to Russia and its secrecy in campaign financing. But he fears voters are "benumbed" by political scandal and violence.

Shriver, still bouncing with energy in the late evening of a long campaign day, was interviewed in his New York hotel suite by an editorial panel led by National Editor Robert E. Thompson. Also participating in the hour-long Hearst interview were Washington Bureau Chief William Theis and columnist Marianne Means.

The former peace corps and poverty war director, who served as ambassador to France under both Presidents Johnson and Nixon, talked at machine-gun tempo while munching on pretzels and peanuts. 27 SEP

(The interview was held last Thursday before any indication of yesterday's meeting in Paris of White House National Security Adviser Henry A. Kissinger with Le Duc Tho and Xuan Thuy, Hanoi's representatives at the Vietnam peace talks.)

Highlights of the Shriver interview:

Q—Can you begin by analyzing the campaign at this point?

A—Well, I would say the five or six weeks since I have been nominated, so far as I am concerned, have been given over to getting the structure of the campaign ready so that during the month of October it will be possible to spend the entire month and the first week of November speaking only about the transcendent issues or the over-arching issues or the big topics. I have been working with the various component parts of the Democratic party traditionally, and meeting with the people I felt I could naturally turn to as friends of mine.

Trying to Develop the Issues

At the same time I have been trying to develop the issues I am interested in, and the set speeches . . .

I have drawn an analogy, talking to a lot of people: It's like one of those 747's getting ready to go with a full load across the ocean . . . before the plane takes off everybody has to be in their assigned seat, and that is a little bit of a sweat, and in politics it means you think you have the right seat in the right part of the plane, and you haven't been demoted or haven't been put in the right side when you ought to be on the left side, and everybody is together on the plane.

I think 80 percent of that has been done now, and I think on October 1, just to use a date, all that structural work will have been finished, and then you will be able to take the plane off and see what happens.

Q—What is the issue that will provide this jet stream to take this plane off though?

A—I think we have to pick out those issues which . . . McGovern or I or both of us together feel are the issues that the American people are concerned about.

Number one in my travels, it's the economy. Number two is the loss of confidence in government, so the people—even with something like the Watergate affair or the alleged scandal in selling grain or the alleged scandal about the milk producers or the $600,000 in a black bag coming up on an oil company airplane from Texas to Washington—people have lost so much confidence in government that they just . . . shrug their shoulders and say, "so what's new?"

Q—What are you going to do about the defecting Democrats, the Democrats for Nixon? Is there any way you can stop that loss of Democratic blood?

A—I think that has been stopped. I think President Johnson endorsing the ticket as he did was a very helpful ingredient in stopping it, and if you look at the people who have joined it, they are not what you would call for the most part extremely influential Democrats.

There are some people there with a lot of money, but they are not people I think whose strength can be measured in thousands and thousands of votes. In politics votes — money counts, it's true — but votes are more important . . .

Q—How deep is the Daley organization support running?

A—When you say how deep is it going to go, political leaders are like some other leaders. They follow their followers sometimes, you know.

Can't Guarantee Victory

I will put it this way: I don't think you can win. a Democratic candidate can't win in Illinois without the Daley organization, but because you have it doesn't mean you will win. As the cliche goes, I think about labor leaders, sometimes they can prevent you from winning, but they can't guarantee you victory; so my statement is that I think we will have 98 percent of the organization . . . I think they will do a good job. They are not going to be as enthusiastic as they were for Jack Kennedy.

It's also true that times have changed a little bit in that the organization isn't as capable of producing total victory by itself as before, whether it is in Chicago or wherever else you are talking about.

I say that about labor organizations too. I think that it's useful to Nixon, for example, that Frank Fitzsimmons (Teamsters' president) is for him, but on the other hand you see (vice president) Harold Gibbons declaring his independence.

And it's useful, I suppose, to Nixon that Meany is neutral, but I just came from Ohio where there are 1,400,000 labor union members. There are 200,000 in the UAW, 200,000 in the communication workers.

Of the million who are left, 800,000 are in unions which have already declared for McGovern. Two hundred thousand are not, and the guys are now going after the 200,000.

Now, they managed to do that in Ohio independently of the edict that the AFL-CIO structure could not be used.

I don't mean that because all those labor union leaders are with us that all those labor union members will vote with us. I don't think that's true. But I think that the first essential to being able to go to the labor union members with a chance of succeeding was to get the labor union leaders organized. They are organized now.

Q—You said Johnson's support was important. If it is important, how come you said the other day that Richard Nixon had replaced Lyndon Johnson as the world's number one warmaker?

A—Well, number one, it's important because I brought it out in connection with John Connally. I think it does deter some Democrats, even in Texas, from bolting the traces. It gives a cachet of legitimacy to the McGovern candidacy which, without that, it would not have had.

Q—But aren't you being counter - productive then when you say things like you did in Boston the other day?

A—No, I don't think so at all. Because what I was trying to explain was why I said that Nixon was the number one warmaker.

Q—But you included Lyndon Johnson.

A—And the person said, "Well, then, if you included that about Nixon, you must think Johnson was the number one warmaker when he was in office." And I said that's correct, because that's the only honest position that you can take.

At that time, when Johnson was there, the United States was making the most war of any nation in the world. Johnson left, I am happy to say, having reduced our role significantly and substantially, and Nixon came in with the greatest chance to eliminate it, and blew it, as I said, and has replaced him as the number one person making war in the world today, and has again put our nation in the position of being a militaristic power interested exclusively in that, in the eyes of millions and millions of people all over the world, and I resent that.

I didn't like it when President Johnson was doing it. He knows that . . .

I think that if we had actually put the money into the war against poverty at home, not technically just what I was doing, and given the amount of money that we were using to the war in Vietnam, our nation would be infinitely better off right now internally and externally.

Q—McGovern has used the term "warmonger."

A—Yes, but I have not.

Q—Is that a fair term?

A—I don't know the context in which he said it or the intention he meant to convey. Therefore, I'd like not to make a comment . . .

Q—What about Agnew's charges in which he in effect accused the McGovern-Shriver ticket of being soft on Communism, and that you would be dangerous for the national security. Doesn't this put you on the defensive on that kind of an issue?

A—My feeling is that he has a significantly different idea of national security than I do. I think we are endangering our national security by that activity.

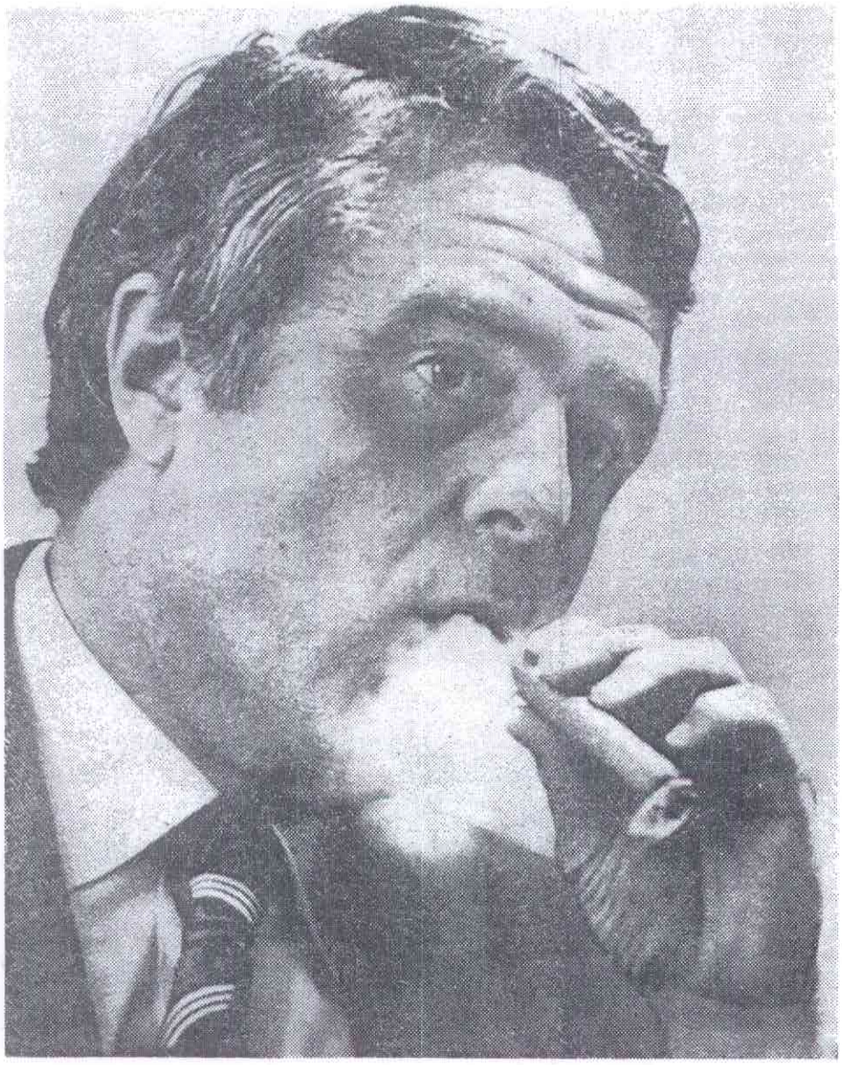
Q—What about missile gaps and things like that?

A—I will give you an example of what I mean . . . I believe that those people who negotiated the SALT agreement . . . have negotiated a balance where we are at least in a position of nuclear equality . . . I think that is a very important part of national security, but I think it's only one part.

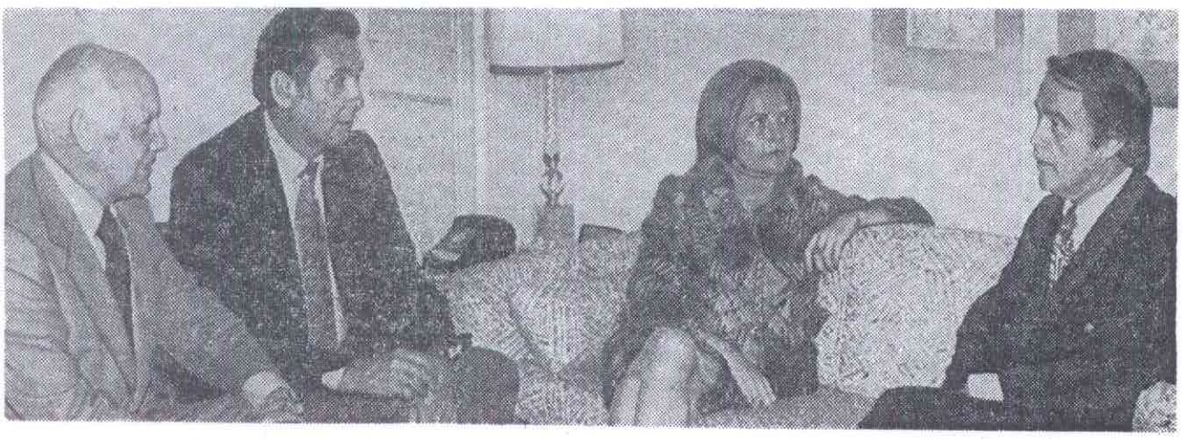
I think another aspect of national security. is the fact that in the Army and Navy and Air Force, but particularly in the Army, the morale has never been worse . . .

Q—What is your solution?

A—My solution is that I think we are doing many, many things in those forces which are contributing to a weakness in the forces rather than strength, because



"People have lost so much confidence in government they shrug their shoulders and say, 'So what's new?' "



Sargent Shriver, Democratic vice presidential candidate, right, being interviewed by Hearst Task Force. From left are: William Theis, chief of the Hearst Washington Bureau; Robert Thompson, national editor of the Hearst Newspapers and Marianne Means, King Features columnist.

what we have done is to quantify the national security in terms of silos, submarines, megatons, and so on; but the spiritual, the will to fight, the esprit de corps, as they used to say, has been practically lost.

Q—But I don't understand how you expect to improve the morale of the fighting forces if they know that they have, say, less carriers or less fighting planes or missiles than the Soviet Union, which would be the effect, by the Nixon charges, of the McGovern slashes in the budget. How are you going to improve the morale if you know they have got less hardware?

A— . . . the morale of troops is not dependent on hardware. George Washington at Valley Forge was not counting how many bullets he had against the other guy as an indication of his morale.

The Jews in Israel have no chance to survive, but they will survive because they have a national security that we don't.

The Vietnamese, with no B52s, are still fighting. It's incredible, isn't it?

Q—Could we talk about the Vietnam situation? Vice-President Agnew said he would not expect North Vietnam to make any peace move until they know that Senator McGovern and you had no likelihood of being elected, and that this might not be known until mid-October. Do you have any comment?

A—I think it's ridiculous, yes . . . George McGovern has been nominated since when, July? . . .

There were three years up till July when the North Vietnamese and we had been making peace moves. So to say the likelihood for peace is dependent upon the fact of whether George McGovern is going to have a particular rating in the polls in October seems ridiculous . . .

Q — The point was that George McGovern is the one that has said he would pull everything out 90 days after his inauguration.

A — I understand that, but that should be the thinking that controls peace . . . we should be seeking peace and not worrying about whether George McGovern has got 48 or 22 points in the Gallup Poll. We should have been doing it before George McGovern was nominated. For three years we should have been doing it.

Q — You are saying that everything Kissinger and Nixon have been doing is not in pursuit of peace?

A — I said publicly, and you don't need to get it from me, you can get it from the fellows who work in the national security office under Kissinger, as to what the approach was when the effort to achieve peace at the negotiating table in Paris was stopped.

Q — But it's still not to say that they are not trying to get a peace settlement before election or any time as soon as possible with everything that is at stake?

A — Well, my own belief is that everything humanly possible will be done. I think everything humanly possible will be done.

Q — Do you think it is being done?

A — I think Kissinger is frantically going around trying to get a peace before election, of course.

Q — Do you think anything is going to happen between now and election?

A — I would . . . let me put it this way: I would not be at all surprised if Kissinger pulled a rabbit out of a hat between now and the middle of — let's say the 20th of October.

I think it's been possible to get it for a long time, you understand, so I wouldn't be surprised if it were obtained now.

Q — If they did what you regard as the right thing between now and then?

A — Well, the big issue has been, I think, for the better part of three or four years, what kind of a government you are going to agree to in South Vietnam.

Q — What kind of government would you agree to?

A — With a kind of a coalition government, they would have peace.

Q — What kind of government are we talking about? What would you like to see in South Vietnam?

A — . . . I don't think that we should say what kind of government should be in Vietnam. Vietnam happens to be a country where we Americans are, shall we say, visitors at least, and I don't think by any stretch of the imagination we say that it's our country. And I think therefore the kind of government they have in that country really depends on them, and not on us.

All I think we can do, as George Aiken said about six years ago, was to say that we have done what we went out there for. I was in favor of what he said when he said it . . . as a matter of fact we had done much, much more for that particular nation than any nation could be asked to do, and we have done it in every possible and conceivable way.

I believe, having done that, the greatest service we can do is to withdraw and permit that government or nation to achieve its own maturity.

Q — What about Thailand? Thailand is a member of the SEATO treaty. And Thailand has great trouble up in the northwest with Communists . . . out of Vietnam. Then what do we do if they are in trouble?

A—Let's say this Vietnamese was is over and we are out of there, and so far as we are concerned the fighting is finished, and the Thai government came to us and said they definitely wanted us to stay and there was a good case made for it.

I would certainly be willing to consider it, and I think George McGovern would too. That is, George McGovern has said that when the prisoners come out of North Vietnam, that he would be ready to remove our forces from Thailand. I would also be ready to remove them, but I would not say I would automatically remove them in opposition to the wishes, if they were so expressed, of the Thai government.

Q—Mr. Ambassador, in a very simple way, the question that I really suppose I am asking is, do you believe that we should adhere to (our) commitments?

A—With respect to commitments to NATO, I think those commitments should be maintained within the ambience — as the French would say, of the current situation, which is that with the leadership in part of the French, and with other European nations, we are going to have a European security conference, which I have been for for five years. We are going to have a mutual reduction of forces conference.

Those conferences may modify the commitments which were made by John Foster Dulles, let's say, using him as a name.

Therefore, I don't think that we ought to say that today we will maintain the commitments John Foster Dulles made in 1950 . . . when we have already agreed to have a European security conference and a European mutual reduction of forces conference.

Deserves Credit

Q—Mr. Ambassador, you have been a businessman. There is a great deal of concern in the business community about Senator McGovern's tax proposals. Do you have any feeling that they, particularly the capital gains approach and relative matters, may have gone too far? Are these amenable to adjustment . . . ?

A—I think George McGovern deserves a fantastic amount of credit as the only political candidate I can remember who had the nerve to put a tax reform program on the table for everybody to look at.

And it's typical that the Nixon administration, with all the resources of the treasury department and council of economic advisers has not yet been able to come up with a tax reform program, and in fact Ziegler and Ehrlichman, you might say, say there is not going to be one. Schulz says there is going to be one . . . the fact is, you know and I know that you cannot finance even the existing ingredients in the military budget, let alone the domestic budget, without either extreme inflation or taxes in the next four years. That is absolutely impossible . . .

Secondly, I think that like any tax reform program, it will probably take a year.

I talked to Wilbur Mills about that at great length. and he agrees it would take a year to rewrite the tax statute.

Q—Can I ask you, speaking of money, why has not the Kennedy family in some capacity donated to your campaign?

A—I think there are a lot of reasons. I think they will; I think, secondly, they have plenty of things to do, and I don't think the first thing you rush out to do is to make a contribution. I haven't asked for a contribution.

Q—Are you going to?

A—No.

Q—Mr. Agnew's views on the vice presidency are of total loyalty to the president. Do you have any views about the vice presidency, if you are elected?

A—It isn't so much what my views are that are important. It's what McGovern's views are, I think, because we run in tandem, and I was picked by him, and therefore I am very much, just in terms of straight loyalty, interested in what he thinks rather than in what I think.

First of all, he told me he didn't expect me to agree with him on everything. He said to try to create the illusion that two grownup people would have total agreement on political and other issues would be a fraud, and I think that is sort of typical of him, that he would take that approach.

Q—Is there any way that you and Senator McGovern can take any more advantage of this Watergate situation than you have already attempted to do in the sense of arousing public feeling about it? Apparently there is a great degree of public indifference. . . .

A—I don't know personally of any way in which the conscience of America can be made more sensitive than it currently is.

I must say I think one of the real tragedies is that our conscience as a people has become benumbed, and we are getting to the point where we will accept nearly anything.

Q—If you should not succeed in this campaign, would you want to continue to devote your attention to public service? Do you have other political ambitions?

A—I don't know about politics. I have always had that interest. Like in the 1970 campaign I wasn't in politics in the sense of running for office, but I did go over the United States trying to say things that I thought ought to be said or listened to.

But in terms of running for elective office, if that is what you mean, I don't have any particular aspirations or intentions along those lines, no. I don't mean to preclude it. I have said this many times, but this is the first time I have ever done it.