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Office of the Vice President
(Lincolnshire, Illinois)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
OTTAWA-CHIPPEWA ROOM
LINCOLNSHIRE MARRIOTT INN
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(AT 5:26 P.M. CST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I might say if it weren't for Bob McClory, Congressman McClory, I might not be here. He is on the House Judiciary Committee and they, while he was there and with his strong leadership and support, adopted the 25th Amendment. And then there was a resignation. First there were hearings by the Judiciary Committee in relation to the Watergate situation, the tragedy of that, and then a President resigned; and the Vice President whom they had already confirmed appointed another Vice President, which happened to be myself, and I went before the same committee again.

So that in a short space of time, Congressman McClory has seen the legislation pass, the first Vice President confirmed, and then the President resign and the second Vice President confirmed, all handled by his committee.

The irony of the situation is after having gone through months of these hearings, President Ford then appointed me Chairman of the Committee on Privacy. So I leave it at that, and I am delighted to be here on his 25th year in service to the people of this great State and this great country. I am delighted for the opportunity of supporting him and answering any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, does the recent turmoil in the Cabinet in Washington suggest to you reasonably that there is a lack of leadership or a lack of a firm hand on the till?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I don't have that impression at all. One could make a point the exact opposite of your conclusion, that the firm hand just took the till and pulled it over a little.

QUESTION: Do you make that point?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I think one could say that very fairly, that I would be glad to say it.

QUESTION: What will you do as a lame duck Vice President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The same thing I did as a non-lame duck, although, you see, the trouble is none of you believed me. I just have said right along that I was not a candidate and that the President should have total freedom at the time he was nominated to pick his Vice President after he was nominated and to do it on the basis of who he then felt would best serve the interest of the country, and that I was not a candidate.

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Nobody believed that, or at least enough didn't. Then we got in all kinds of squabbles in the minority of a minority. I thought it was distracting to the President and that he ought to be able to concentrate on the important things, the problems facing this country, so I just confirmed my position by withdrawing my name as one that could be considered for the Vice Presidency.

QUESTION: But you have so far refused to say that you will not run for the Presidency. Is that still your position today?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That seems reasonable.

QUESTION: Is there any circumstance where you would be a candidate for President in 1976?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I haven't given it any consideration, but I am one of those people who does not like to make flat statements about the future. I did it once, and that was I said years ago as Governor that there would be no tax increase.

Unfortunately, the fiscal situation in the State at the time was such that I suggested to the Legislature an increase in automobile fees. There were those who interpreted that as a tax increase. Then it was almost a total disaster as far as I was concerned. So that after that I have refused to make any flat statements about anything.

QUESTION: There is some indication that the President is changing his thinking vis-a-vis the problems of New York City. I wonder if you could tell us what the position is at the moment, as you understand it, and what the impact will be for the country as a whole in other municipalities.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is an interesting situation and a complex situation and one with which I am well familiar.

New York City overestimated its income and underestimated its expenditures for a good many years, with the result at the end of the year -- because every city has to come up with a balanced budget. And then to cover the deficit that resulted, they floated short-term notes and they kept rolling these over and this accumulated. Then this year they got into trouble.

The President took the position that the Federal Government could not bail out New York City, and I agree with him; because if we did it with New York City, although he doesn't have power to do anything unless Congress acts anyhow, if he did this with New York City, other cities would say, "Why should we preserve a balanced budget if the Federal Government is going to bail us out? Why not spend what we want?"

So the President took that position. My feeling was that the State was helping the city through this board that was set up and that ultimately they would take the very

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tough political steps necessary to bring their budget back into balance and to restore fiscal integrity; and that it would take them three years, which would mean 1978.

But after they had taken the action, the Mayor and the City Council, then they would need help to bridge this three-year period and that the Federal Government should, through a guarantee of bonds or something, help New York during that, after they had taken the steps.

The President didn't think they were going to, and that the only way in which they would take the tough steps would be if they went into default or bankruptcy. He called for a change in the laws, and he is right. We need two laws: One relating to authority for the President, if a city has been in trouble and restores their fiscal integrity and they need help, for an interim period, a bridge; and, secondly, a law that would allow a city to reorganize if they default.

Both of those are needed, and really, the Mayor and the Governor of the State have asked for both of them. Now the President I think is beginning to feel that there may be a chance New York City will actually take the tough steps that are necessary. And it is not easy, because it is a very serious problem. And that in the event that he might, if they did, then reconsider his position.

The only difference between us has been I think they would do it voluntarily and he thought they would only do it after they defaulted.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you believe there is any chance that Ronald Reagan could defeat President Ford in enough primaries to force him out of the contest; and my second part of this question, if that happened, would you enter it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I don't foresee the first and, therefore, don't foresee the second, either. I think the President is going to be nominated. The history in this country has been that a party has always nominated the incumbent. I think that is what is going to happen.

Let's face it. Some of us -- well, I might as well be more personal -- I have been in the New Hampshire primary and ran against a very distinguished Senator there, a good friend of mine, Barry Goldwater; and what happened? Cabot Lodge, who was Ambassador in Vietnam, was nominated, and he never appeared.

So I have got to tell you I think that is a very interesting primary, and it is a very important affair in the economic life of the State of New Hampshire. But as far as being significant in what happens in the election, Cabot Lodge never went very far, and neither did any of the rest of us.

QUESTION: Assuming, Mr. Vice President, that Mr. Reagan might beat President Ford in New Hampshire, Florida, and Illinois --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is an iffy question that I cannot answer because I don't think it is going to happen.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you feel that you are a political liability to the President; and, if so, what happens to your middle-of-the-road philosophy for the Republican Party if someone with liberal tendencies like you would then withdraw from the whole campaign?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't feel I am a political liability to him, but there were those who seemed to feel that, and I did not want him to be distracted during this very important period when he is dealing with major problems affecting the well-being of the American people and the future of our country and the future peace of the world.

So in order to eliminate what I call squabbling by a minority of a minority, I just wrote him a letter and withdrew.

QUESTION: But you are also a party member.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. That is right. I am a strong -- I am not withdrawing from the party. I am not withdrawing as Vice President. I will be Vice President for the next 14 months, acting for him in carrying out whatever responsibilities he gives.

I am in the middle right now of going around the country holding hearings for the Domestic Council on a review of the domestic policies and domestic programs to give him the impressions of the American people on these subjects.

I can tell you one of the impressions that we get comes through loud and clear wherever we go and that is the American people are fed up with bureaucracy and red tape in Washington. That is for State Governors and it is for Mayors; it is for local government and it is for business and it is for individuals.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, President Ford has developed a reputation as a nice guy. Do you feel he is now making moves to prove he is firm domestically and also will be making moves to prove he is strong in the diplomatic field?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't read as much into this as you do, frankly. The people that he changed in the Cabinet were both hold-overs from the Nixon Administration.

He said when he came in that he was going to put in his own Cabinet. Now, in both those areas he didn't make changes. You can say all right, maybe he should have done it sooner. If he had done it sooner, nobody would have said boo.

But we had tough problems in the military field; we had tough problems in the whole intelligence community. So he delayed action, that is all.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, would you care to

comment on what women in this country might be eligible for an appointment to the Supreme Court?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There is a great many of them. There is about, I was going to say more than half of the population are women, but I guess they are not all lawyers and you have to be a lawyer to be on the Supreme Court.

But I know of outstanding women who come from different parts of the country who are brilliant, dedicated lawyers who would make excellent members of the Supreme Court.

Now, I have no corner on knowledge of who has got the ability in the legal profession among the women. They are in all parts of the country.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you wouldn't care to name any names?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I have learned that is a very unfortunate thing. First, it is not my responsibility; and, secondly, if you name a name and don't name another one and the more names you name, the more people are hurt because you didn't include them. So I wouldn't want to get myself caught in that.

QUESTION: You are a member of the various Executive Agency Intelligence Oversight Committees, and what is your reaction to the various investigations going on by Congress into the intelligence agencies of the United States and do you think they are doing a disservice by holding those hearings, number one, and allowing that information to be leaked, number two?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am no longer on the oversight committee. I was prior to my becoming Vice President. I have been off and on over a period of years, so I am very familiar.

Then I was Chairman of the President's Committee on the CIA looking into the allegations that there were massive violations of domestic statutes. We made our report, found there were violations but they were not massive, and we made recommendations as to what should be done to avoid the possibility in the future.

Certainly the Congress of the United States has the right and the responsibility to investigate anything. They are a coequal branch of government, and this is very important.

I do think that we have gotten to a point where information, and I cite this just as an illustration, where information that was in our report and made public is now being brought out as revelations and used as headlines in the papers.

I think we have reached the point where the headlines and all of the implications, it is awfully easy to create an atmosphere that has been unfortunate in terms of the effective functioning of this major and vital element

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of our national defense, which is intelligence.

So that I, frankly, am concerned about this, and I think the Congress has got all the information they are going to get and that they ought to wrap it up and make their recommendations and let's get on with our business; because we have got to defend this country and intelligence is a major factor today.

The Soviets have the most fantastic intelligence system in the world, and we are hurting our own intelligence. I think it is to our own disservice.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, earlier today you said Republicans should stick together when you were asked --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We are a minority.

QUESTION: -- when you were asked if you would support Governor Reagan in the event that he became the Republican nominee. Will you actively campaign for him in the event that he is the Republican nominee?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But I don't think he is going to be the nominee, and I don't want to speculate on it because if I answer your question affirmatively, then I am giving the impression that President Ford is weak, that he is not going to make it.

I don't think that is true, and I think he is going to make it. Therefore, I am sticking right where I am, and that is that President Ford is my candidate. He is going to be nominated.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what are you going to do in 14 months?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I have never worried about what I was going to do. I resigned as Governor after 15 years and set up a commission to study the critical choices facing the American people, and the next thing I know I was asked to be Vice President. So I am here. Fourteen months from now, who knows.

But I am interested in serving this country, and there is a tremendous number of different ways you can serve your country. So I have no concern about that at all.

QUESTION: Will you do any campaigning for Republican candidates around this country this coming year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As you know, the election laws are very strict. I don't know whether you have studied them, but I am sure you have. They are very detailed.

No one person can contribute more than a thousand dollars to a person in the primary. Okay? Therefore, at the present time, I could not spend more than a thousand dollars, or any people who were working with me, for the President. You can't take many trips and go very far with

a thousand dollars around this country. So that I am traveling for two purposes: one, to hold these hearings which are nonpolitical; and, two, to attend functions such as the one tonight supporting a very distinguished and old friend of mine, Congressman Bob McClory, in a fund-raising dinner for the Republican Party. This the National Committee can pay for, the expense of the trip.

But to campaign for the President, there is only one body that can finance that and that is the Elect Ford Committee. Therefore, they would have to finance any trips for anybody who was going out campaigning for him.

QUESTION: What about other candidates, gubernatorial and Senatorial candidates, and so on?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If the Finance Committee pays the expense, and an individual can contribute a total of \$25,000.

QUESTION: Sir, are there any ramifications of the appointment of George Bush, a former party chairman, in the new and sensitive job he has?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to say to you in the light of hindsight, if you want to put it that way, in the light of development of events, I think it is a very tough situation for George Bush. He is a good friend of mine. He is an outstanding young man who has had very important posts in the government, both elected and appointed. He was Ambassador to the United Nations. He has always carried out his assignments with great skill and ability.

I think that this is an extremely difficult situation for him in terms of his political future as a potentially elected official. Therefore, I feel for him.

QUESTION: Sir, why is that? Why do you feel for Mr. Bush?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: For his political future. I think this makes it a very difficult situation for him in the future as an elected political official.

QUESTION: You mean beyond the CIA?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, he has got, first, to get confirmed. If they ask him to make one of those Sherman-like statements on the ground they don't want somebody in this sensitive agency, then what does he do? If he makes it, then he is automatically eliminating himself. If he doesn't, he won't be confirmed. If he is not confirmed, that hurts him. If he goes in there without the questions being raised, that raises a difficult test for him. As a personal friend of mine, I feel for him.

QUESTION: In the press conference where you announced you would not run again for your office, you said you accepted the office in the first place to serve your country in an unpopular duty..

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. That is right.

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QUESTION: In the same press conference, you said the only responsibility of your office is to preside over the Senate. Do you find this frustrating as a man of action and a man who has been your own boss?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I have talked about this before. I said that the responsibility was to preside over the Senate under the Constitution, and I added I act as a staff assistant to the President.

Therefore, in that capacity as a staff assistant, it would depend on whether he gives you assignments. He has given me a great many assignments and he has given me total latitude in carrying out those assignments.

I have enjoyed it. They are all areas -- what, five or six commissions -- and they are all areas I am tremendously interested in. I have organized four of the six commissions, gotten the people together, leading the work, and so forth.

I have enjoyed it tremendously. He is a man who, when he picks somebody and asks him to do something, he gives total latitude. So the first trip I went on to make a speech for him in Chicago, talking with the press on the trip, they asked, "Did he tell you what to say, or did he give you a speech?" I said no.

It got down to, "Didn't anybody even give you any advice? Didn't they ask you what you are going to say?" I said no.

That has always been. He tells you what to do and leaves it up to you.

QUESTION: You have always been your own boss. Haven't you felt harnessed?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't. I have felt totally free. I have had a lot of people working for me. I know what I expect from them. I want to give him what I expect from other people working for me. That is the loyalty and support, and this is a free country, so that when the situation got sort of sticky for him about the Vice Presidency, that I just wrote him a letter.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you mentioned the Sherman statement, which you have not made, but there are many people in the country who are really wondering what you are going to do.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am one of them.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Are there any circumstances, foreseen or unforeseen, which would allow you to run for President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I suppose so.

QUESTION: Would you expand on that? What are they?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't given them consideration.

QUESTION: Could you expand a little bit on what you just said?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I am not worrying about that. My candidate is President Ford. I think he is going to be nominated and he is going to be the candidate and I am supporting him. Why should I be wasting my time thinking about things that I don't think are going to happen?

QUESTION: What if you are drafted?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: By whom?

END (AT 5:47 P.M. CST)