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Office of the Vice President
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PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
STEWART HALL, ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS
ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

(AT 4:05 P.M. CST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a pleasure to be here, and I thank you very much, and I appreciate deeply the opportunity of speaking at the Minnesota Independent Republican State Convention.

I have great respect for those men and women who give of their time and energy to support and keep alive and strong the two-party system, which to me is the essence of democracy and the future freedom.

If anybody has any questions, I would be delighted to attempt to answer them.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you talked about trying to reach the majority of the American people and not to become preoccupied with the minority of the minority. Were you referring to Ronald Reagan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. We have more minorities than that.

QUESTION: Which minority?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, if you have got 18 million people registered as Republicans, and then there are groups within that group, then they are a minority of a minority, seeing as there are some 200 million people.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the network made much yesterday of the possibility that you left open that you might run for President under some condition or other. What kind of contingency would allow you to make that decision to actually run for President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I didn't make anything of it yesterday. I just refused to talk about it. I am in the same mood today. I just haven't any concept, no thoughts or considerations of any contingencies.

QUESTION: Sir, you said that Gerald Ford is your candidate at this time.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is correct. I am supporting him. I think he is going to be nominated.

QUESTION: You also indicated, sir, in the past that you favor some Federal support for New York City. If a candidate were to come --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Wait. You have to define that word. That is a very sensitive area we are in now.

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I have opposed a bail-out. I have agreed with the President that you cannot bail out cities or local governments that spend more money than they have revenue, because it would set a precedent and every city would do the same thing.

However, what I said was if New York City takes the tough steps to balance its budget and restore fiscal integrity by 1978, there will then be the need to get some help in taking those \$3 billion 200 million of short-term notes and translating them into long-term notes.

I recommended the Congress study this because the President has no power anyhow. We should give some consideration to helping them over that short period to bridge that period.

QUESTION: If a candidate appeared who would more closely match that point of view than Gerald Ford, would you change your support?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. It has nothing to do with that. The President has had the courage to tell it like it was in terms of the problems of the city, and he called for a revision of the bankruptcy laws. That took a lot of courage.

The Mayor and Governor of New York came down to Washington a couple months ago with a bill to do that, but nobody wanted to talk about it openly because it gave the impression there was a loss of confidence or something.

The truth of the matter is, the present Federal laws only affect or really cover private enterprise and not government units. There is need for modification so that if something did happen, that they could reorganize their situation, restructure their situation, under that law without chaotic conditions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, for the first time you have switched from flies on a hot summer day to a cult of personalities.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Right.

QUESTION: You mean there are personality squabbles that are going to tear the party apart; and, if there are such personality conflicts, who are the personalities?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There are no personality conflicts that are going to tear the party apart, and particularly around me. I have been through this thing, as you all know.

I don't think the party should, can afford to, or will indulge in that; and in order to facilitate the avoidance of it, I just withdrew my name as being available, although I had never said I was available. But it was assumed. So I just took it out. Now there is no problem.

QUESTION: But these personalities apparently are still around. What is it going to do to them?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But they are not going to be

buzzing around me.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, in urging the party not to indulge in these cults of personalities, do you include yourself or do you include Ronald Reagan? Whom do you include?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wasn't trying to be specific. I was just trying to -- I don't like to say the same thing every day, and I got asked the same question so I try and think up different answers.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: At that level, though, there are only some personalities.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You would be surprised. There are lots of them. This doesn't mean they are all the personalities that are running; just personalities active in the party.

QUESTION: There is some discussion, some speculation, that Ronald Reagan may announce his candidacy next week.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I read that. I think the President is going to be nominated.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what is your view on the nomination of George Bush to head the CIA inasmuch as he is also mentioned as a Vice Presidential candidate? Do you believe that should bar him from a sensitive post?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't want to try and anticipate what the congressional action might be under those circumstances. That is their responsibility.

The President picked him because he is a man of outstanding ability and dedication to public service. I have to think that from his point of view it is a very difficult situation in terms of his own political future. But those are the hazards of public life.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, who do you think should be appointed to the Supreme Court and what type of person and legal philosophy do you think he should have?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, this happens to be the President's responsibility and not mine. Therefore, my thoughts might be interesting to me but not to anybody else. He has got that responsibility.

He will, I know, consider very carefully all of the possibilities, weigh them, including, of course, the first woman member of the Supreme Court as a possibility. He will pick people of integrity, of honesty, of great ability in the legal field who believe deeply in this country and its basic values.

The field is broad and there are a tremendous number of able people, men and women, throughout the Nation. So that he has a wide field to choose from.

QUESTION: You have not pointed out what you think his legal philosophy or law philosophy should be?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, that is not up to me, and I don't think that -- you see, you are getting into an area which we really were talking about before, which is this whole question of ideological positions. I am not a lawyer, but I have to think that lawyers spend their time analyzing the law and trying to be judicial about the law, and they don't say, "Don't confuse me with the facts; my mind is already made up," on the basis of some ideological belief.

We can't run the country that way. We have to stick to the fundamental concepts on which the Nation was built and then try and do the best job within the constitutional framework as established by the founding fathers and amended by Congress and the people.

QUESTION: In light of the fact there were several hundred anti-abortion people here today, do you consider that question to be closed in the United States?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not sure how you relate the demonstration to the question being closed. Never mind. I will comment on the question.

The Supreme Court has rendered a decision and that is the law of the land, unless there is a constitutional amendment. We have got the final word, and the only ones that could change the law now would be a constitutional amendment.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, in light of this weekend's action where the Minnesota Republican Party redesignated themselves to Independent Republicans, do you see any national reaction; and, if so, favorably or unfavorably?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: To their action?

QUESTION: The national reaction, the Republicans in particular.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I think it is a reflection of the fact that many citizens feel that to be an independent somehow is a badge of honor of showing that they are more empirical in their approach.

On the other hand, I believe that this country has benefited tremendously from the two-party system, and that having two groups who will take the responsibility for shaping the issues, picking the candidates, putting them forward, and so forth, this system has served us well.

I think that the fact that our parties in this country basically have shown a broad spectrum of thought has been useful. I would assume this relates to the fact a large percentage of people consider themselves as independent, and this is an identification with this large group trying to associate themselves or the people with the Republican Party.

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QUESTION: You don't see any ripples nationally as far as the Republicans or --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You never know. It sounds like the idea of independence is a very attractive and good idea. I believe in it. We are all independent, free citizens.

I believe that in each party, and certainly the Republican Party, that there are different people of different perspectives, different thoughts, and that you argue out and debate the issues and then, after that has been done, the majority rules. That is the whole essence of democracy.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you believe a ticket that included Ronald Reagan could be elected next year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not a speculator, and particularly because of the fact that I think the President is going to be the candidate. So that it is an idle speculation.

QUESTION: He could be Vice President, I suppose.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Pardon me?

QUESTION: There is another place on the ticket besides President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, and it is open.

QUESTION: If he was on it, could they win?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, you see, I happen to be one of those people who feels that if a responsibility is not mine, I don't like to mess in it. That is not my responsibility. That is President Ford's responsibility, when he is nominated, to pick his running mate. He should be free to do so without pressures to make the decision that he feels will best reflect the national interest.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a pleasure.

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(AT 4:17 P.M. CST)