

February 20, 1976

PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
HENRY CABOT LODGE

DOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

1:25 P.M. EST

MR. NESSEN: Some of you asked John Carlson if we would bring Ambassador Lodge over to talk to you after the lunch and the Ambassador agreed to do that and here he is.

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, I am very glad to be here in New Hampshire, a place in which I have so many fond memories going back to the year 1964 when I did so well while I was not here. I always felt that if I was here, maybe I would not have done so well.

One journalist went on an investigative trip after that particular primary and asked a citizen of New Hampshire why I had received so many votes. "Oh," he said, "I guess it is because he didn't bother us none." I didn't bother you none because I was in Saigon.

So I am very glad to be here, but it is more than that. This is a very important event and New Hampshire has a very special importance. I remember campaigning in 1952 when Eisenhower was running and, of course, Ike was in Europe and could not come and I went all over New Hampshire then. It is a very, very important State. Much is going to be done here on election day. You have, of course, national repercussions.

Also, I have great regard for President Ford. I think he has done a lot of very good things. He has restored the prestige of the Presidency. He is so obviously a good man, an honorable man, and that can't help but have an effect.

I have gotten to be so old that I have memories of everything. I remember Senator Vandenburg saying to me in 1948, "We have got a tremendous young Congressman coming to Washington from Grand Rapids," and it was Gerald Ford.

We had a meeting of the Congressmen and the Senators who were openly supporting Eisenhower in 1952. There were 11 Congressmen and two Senators and we all met in a Congressman's office, and one of the 11 was Jerry Ford. The two Senators were Senator Duff from Pennsylvania and George Keenan.

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Here was a man who was wildly popular, Eisenhower was, and yet that is how it showed up. I say that often there is a distortion of public opinion.

Then I think when a man is holding an office, you have a right to criticize him when things go wrong; he has a right to expect to get a pat on the back when something good happens. I think there has been a favorable turn as regards unemployment. I think there has been a favorable turn as regards inflation. I don't say the President deserves all the credit for it, but I say he deserves some, and he must be doing something right, and to me it is very clear that he is.

So I appreciate your giving me the chance to say all this and I hereby announce my strong support of President Ford and I hope that he gets elected.

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Q Do you think he will?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Yes, I think he will. I think the understanding of him and of what he has done has grown a great deal, and I think he will.

Q Why do you think he is in trouble now? He has been President for 18 months. Why should there be any real question in the mind of the public?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Well, one of the fascinations of politics, I think one of the reasons people go into politics, is because it is a mystery. You can get everything lined up and you can take all these polls, which, by the way, are only public opinion in a region, and then some surprise will come up and hit you in the face. So you naturally assume the worst.

I feel confident that he is going to make it but I quite understand the people who are apprehensive, and so they want to work and go all out and campaign right down to the finish line.

Q Why is he in trouble?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I didn't say he was in trouble.

Q You say he is not?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I think he is going to make it. I don't think he is in trouble. I think he is going to make it.

Q Senator, your former runningmate in 1960, Mr. Nixon, is on his way to China very soon for a mission of his own. As a former diplomat, would you assess the worthwhileness of that trip and what effect do you think it will have on the voters?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Well, the date, of course, is the anniversary of his visit there four years ago and it was worked out by negotiation between the Government of Peking and Mr. Nixon who, after all, is a private citizen, and I think it is understandable.

Q What do you think the voters think of that? Will it remind voters of Mr. Ford pardoning Mr. Nixon?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Well, I run into a lot of people that don't like it.

Q Don't like what?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: His going to Peking just at this time. But I say from my own personal point of view, I think it is understandable.

Q Do you think it will have any diplomatic value for the country?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I won't be surprised if it has much value but I don't think it is going to do much harm, either.

Q Can a parallel be drawn between this year and 1964? Is Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater and is Gerald Ford, Henry Cabot Lodge in New Hampshire -- is there a direct parallel at this point?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I don't think so, no. After all, Henry Cabot Lodge was not President.

No, I think it is quite different. Goldwater was running, Nixon was running, Rockefeller was running, and I was not running but I was getting elected without running. It was quite a different situation.

Q You are talking about being within the political spectrum of the Republican Party. Is Ronald Reagan another Barry Goldwater?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: No, I don't think so. I think everybody is different and the times are different and the men are not identical.

Q Mr. Lodge, President Ford has made quite a point of saying in recent weeks that he didn't think anyone to the right of him could be elected. Do you think that Ronald Reagan could be elected President if he got the nomination?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Oh, well, if you have one of the two major party nominations, there is always a chance that you could be elected, yes.

Q Mr. Lodge, how do you account for the fact that if the President goes around the country and takes questions from voters, nobody ever asks him about Vietnam after 11 years of war, 55,000 dead, \$150 billion spent and the efforts of yourself and a lot of other American diplomats who served over there? Why does Vietnam go Communist and nobody seems to care in this election year?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I don't know. That is somewhat of a mystery, I agree with you. In fact, I have often thought about it because, naturally, I think about Vietnam and I probably will the rest of my life. I think it is a very curious thing.

Q What do you think went wrong? What do you think of the peace that Dr. Kissinger made?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I think it was the best that he could get; in fact, it was surprisingly good when you consider how weak ~~opposition~~ was.

*opposition*

MR. NESSEN: The President is waiting for the Ambassador so perhaps one more question.

Q Mr. Lodge, you were very successful with the write-in. How do you think the Connally write-in is going to go?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: What write-in?

Q John Connally. There has been some effort here to write in his name.

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Well, anybody who tries to do that has got his hands full. I don't know. I think it takes a tremendous amount of work. I remember the trouble we had in 1952 getting a sample ballot printed because the Eisenhower delegates were scattered all through and we had to get a separate sample ballot for all the precincts. Incredible labor but we never could have won without it.

Q What will happen in Massachusetts the following week? Will President Ford win there and, if so, how big?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: I expect him to carry Massachusetts.

Q By how large a margin?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: The people in Massachusetts don't come out today in these primaries. I don't know but I certainly expect President Ford to win the Massachusetts primary.

Q Mr. Lodge, did you have any specific advice for the President over lunch today on how to handle his campaign?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: Well, I think the thought that I expressed was that to be factual, to give as accurate a picture of the things he has done, the things he has worked at, be candid and not try to be a phrase maker and not try to put on a good show, but talk as the man who has been holding the job and doing the work and give a list, if you will, of what has been accomplished, the successes and the disappointments.

Q Has he been unsuccessful so far in doing that?

AMBASSADOR LODGE: The things that I heard him saying today, this morning, I thought were very good; right on the nose.

THE PRESS: Thank you.