

The original documents are located in Box 40, “10/14/76 - Opening Statement at Presidential News Conference” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A BRIEF OPENING STATEMENT.

WHEN I WAS CHOSEN TO BE VICE PRESIDENT, I UNDERWENT
THE MOST INTENSIVE SCRUTINY OF ANY MAN WHO HAS EVER BEEN
SELECTED FOR PUBLIC OFFICE IN THE UNITED STATES. MY PAST
LIFE, MY QUALIFICATIONS, MY BELIEFS -- ALL WERE PUT UNDER
A MICROSCOPE AND IN FULL PUBLIC VIEW.

NONETHELESS, ALL OF YOU HERE TONIGHT AND MANY IN
OUR LISTENING AUDIENCE ARE AWARE OF ALLEGATIONS IN RECENT
WEEKS INVOLVING MY PAST CAMPAIGNS.

2.

AS I HAVE SAID ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, THOSE RUMORS
WERE FALSE. I AM VERY PLEASED THAT THIS MORNING THE
SPECIAL PROSECUTOR HAS FINALLY PUT THIS MATTER TO REST ONCE
AND FOR ALL.

I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT I AM DEEPLY PRIVILEGED TO
SERVE AS THE PRESIDENT OF THIS GREAT NATION. BUT ONE THING
THAT MEANS MORE TO ME THAN MY DESIRE FOR PUBLIC OFFICE IS
MY PERSONAL REPUTATION FOR INTEGRITY.

TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR
REAFFIRMS THE ORIGINAL FINDINGS OF MY VICE PRESIDENTIAL
CONFIRMATION HEARINGS.

3.

I HOPE THAT TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT WILL ALSO ACCOMPLISH
ONE OTHER MAJOR TASK: THAT IT WILL ELEVATE THE PRESIDENTIAL
CAMPAIGN TO A LEVEL BEFITTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE
AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION.

FOR TOO MANY DAYS, THIS CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN MIRED IN
QUESTIONS THAT HAVE LITTLE BEARING UPON THE FUTURE OF THE NATION.
THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY DESERVE BETTER THAN THAT. THEY
DESERVE A CAMPAIGN THAT FOCUSES ON THE MOST SERIOUS ISSUES
OF OUR TIME -- ON THE PURPOSES OF GOVERNMENT, ON THE HEAVY
BURDENS OF TAXATION, ON THE COST OF LIVING, ON THE QUALITY OF
OUR LIVES, AND ON WAYS TO KEEP AMERICA STRONG AND AT PEACE.

4.

GOVERNOR CARTER AND I HAVE PROFOUND DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

ON THESE MATTERS. I HOPE THAT IN THE 20 DAYS REMAINING

IN THIS CAMPAIGN, WE CAN TALK SERIOUSLY AND HONESTLY ABOUT

THESE DIFFERENCES SO THAT ON NOVEMBER 2ND, THE AMERICAN

PEOPLE CAN MAKE A CLEAR CHOICE AND GIVE ONE OF US A MANDATE

TO GOVERN WISELY AND WELL DURING THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WILL GLADLY ANSWER YOUR

QUESTIONS NOW.