

September 13, 1975

Office of the Vice President  
(Oklahoma City, Oklahoma)

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PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
THE VICE PRESIDENT  
TINKER AIR FORCE BASE  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

(AT 10:15 A.M. CDT)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Thank you very much, indeed, Senator, for your generous words. I would just like to say what a pleasure it is to be here at the Air Base in Oklahoma City with General Randolph, General Shannon, and it is a special pleasure to be here with Paula Unruh, who is Republican State Chairman, and to all of you here.

I might say it is a special pleasure for me to be here with Dewey because Dewey, who is your Senator, and Henry Bellmon, who is your Senator, were both governors. I served with both of them and Governor Ray Shafer, of Pennsylvania, is in here.

So we have got a lot of old colleagues who enjoyed association in trying to preserve the Federal systems with States' responsibilities and States' rights.

I would like to say a word first about being here at the Tinker Air Force Base. Yesterday in Little Rock, Lieutenant General James Allen, Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, was speaking.

He said the American military might is the major element most responsible for maintaining the freedom of personal choices for the American citizens. I thought that was a very interesting and a very effective way of describing and translating the role and the importance of the military in preserving the values of freedom which we enjoy and take too much for granted, and the like, that we have citizens that, as individuals who can decide what we want to do, where we want to go and how we want to conduct our lives which is a privilege we enjoy in this country, which too many countries in the world can't enjoy that we don't want to take for granted, and that we have an opportunity here to express our appreciation and our gratitude to the wonderful men and women who serve in the armed forces, particularly here in the Air Force, which is the first line of defense for our country that preserves these freedoms.

I would like to take this opportunity to express on behalf of the President, myself and, as a matter of fact, all of the American people, our gratitude for the patriotism, the loyalty and the devotion of the men and women in the armed forces of the United States, who have done such a fantastic job for 200 years, and preserved these privileges which we enjoy as free citizens.

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I will be delighted to answer any questions if you want to ask any.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, with the two recent events of people with the guns near the President of the United States, do you have any thoughts on any changes that should be made in security for the top officials of our government?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I have to tell you that I think the Secret Service that protect the President are very efficient and the FBI, the local Police Forces, the sheriffs in this country, do a fabulous job.

Those of us who are privileged to have the opportunity to serve in public office, or to run for public office, take no greater risks than those men and women who, in the armed forces, who are defending our country overseas.

This is part of the hazards of life. Everybody does their best to cut it down and to see that individuals who are unbalanced or who have a motive that is alien to our free society are prevented from perpetrating the kind of tragic drives which they were attempting.

I must say that it does indicate the importance of having intelligence, and I think it is an element that should be considered at this point when the Congress of the United States, the Senate and the House are reviewing CIA and the entire intelligence structure.

I was Chairman of the Committee on the CIA to investigate violations or alleged violations of domestic statutes. CIA is designed to handle foreign intelligence and the FBI domestic intelligence.

We are in a period when the American people have been told that their rights and their privacy and privileges have been violated in massive violations. There was no massive violation. I think we do see from what happened in the case of the President that it is essential that the FBI and the local law enforcement agencies preserve records of those who have been outspoken or been active in efforts to undermine the freedom of this country, to destroy our democratic society by force or to kill leaders in this society.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, has there been any change whatsoever in the system for new security system in your traveling?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, ma'am. We have a wonderful group. I am very grateful to them and their expertise is tremendous, and I am totally relaxed.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, in light of President Ford's statements of support for you yesterday in St. Louis, you see now a stronger commitment or a definite commitment that providing President Ford is renominated as presidential candidate for the Party that you will be renominated as the vice presidential candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am deeply grateful to him for his expression of confidence in the work that I have tried to do for him. I am Staff Assistant to the President in my capacity as Vice President, and my official function is to preside over Dewey Bartlett, Henry Bellmon, and their 98 associates.

But in that capacity which is a great honor and privilege, I cannot speak without unanimous consent.

So that, that is my only official function; otherwise, I am Staff Assistant to the President. I appreciate what he has said. However, I do not feel -- and I want to preserve the position -- that he should in any way be committed or bound emotionally, morally or any other way, to the decision which he has to make after he is nominated.

After he is nominated, the great American tradition is that he then will decide who, in his opinion, can best serve the American people as Vice President and the Party. At that time, he should make the decision. Until he has done that, I am not a candidate and I am totally relaxed in this issue, as well as the other one.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, in your discussion about intelligence, are you also saying that the House Committee, which released certain information, was incorrect in doing so and the President was justified in asking for the White House documents back?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wasn't referring to that, nor was I even thinking about it. Now that you mentioned it, I read the story in the paper and to the degree that I understood what was written, it seemed to me that they had every reason to take the action which they did.

Apparently there was agreement regarding the secrecy of the documents which they turned over. That secrecy was violated by the committee and therefore he asked the documents be returned because it breached American security and it was a very serious situation as far as revealing sources of information and individuals which can be identified by the opposition.

The trouble is that a lot of people are handling very sensitive material who are not trained in this, who have no experience in it, therefore don't understand the significance of a great deal of material which they have. This can be extremely dangerous in terms of our national security.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the national security is in danger because of all of these incidents that there perhaps should be a rethinking of the intelligence community, that we have gone overboard?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I think I have had that experience with intelligence now for 35 years and worked very closely with the intelligence establishments, both the FBI and the CIA, and General Donovan's organization during the War.

I would like to say that in my opinion there is no problem about protecting the rights and privileges of American

citizens against infringement by the CIA, and the recommendations which our committee made, should adequately do that.

I do think that an effective intelligence system is essential for this country's security, not only military security, but security in terms of subversive activities and the undermining from within which is, of course, part of the international struggling that goes on between two different ideologies in the world today.

I think it is essential and I think the danger is that these investigations will mislead the American people regarding the importance of this and regarding the structure that is necessary to accomplish it.

But this is a democracy. Therefore, we have to, and there is no other country in the world that could do it, go through this. Once it is done, then let's get back to the business on a basis of protecting the American citizens' privacy but also will protect the American citizens' security.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what is your comment on the feeling in Oklahoma that you will be a liability in the presidential election in 1976?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This is a free country and anybody is entitled to have any feelings they want. That is what makes up the strength and vitality of democracy. They have got to make their own judgments. The President has to make his judgment, and then the people will determine whether that was an actual fact, if he makes the judgment one way and if he makes it the other way, then I will know.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, It seems to be that the leadership in the Republican Party here in the State of Oklahoma has been rather cool to yourself seemingly because you are considered liberal.

Do you, yourself, think that in the past few years you have changed in any way?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't really changed. I am a pragmatist, if you really want to know the truth. I try to do the best job in solving problems that relate to the people's best interests and their well-being.

Well-being is involved in the free enterprise system, the tremendous vitality and productivity of that system, the freedom of opportunity and choice and the freedom of individual citizens.

It is involved in also our ability to do for the people who cannot do for themselves. We want to do as much as possible to help other people, but we cannot go beyond our capacity to produce goods and services and Federal, State and local revenues which permit us to carry out our programs.

That is where this whole situation now has to be reviewed because we are spending more money than we have income. We see

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various areas in the country, New York City, to the Federal Government which are in financial difficulties.

The Federal Government has got a deficit of between \$60 billion and \$70 billion. This is one of the factors that breeds inflation. This is why the President is taking his stance. I agree with him. I believe in fiscal integrity as well as deep human concern, but you have got to balance them.

We are in a new situation, a different situation than we were before. Therefore, I reflect, I think, an intelligent, accurate analysis of the problems we face and try to be realistic in dealing with them.

I don't think really you solve problems with ideology. I think you solve them by careful analysis of the facts. I am not one of those people who say don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is already made up. You don't deal with problems effectively that way.

You have got to study them and analyze them, know what the best answer is and then if you want to put some politics into it, do it after you analyze it but don't let your mind be clouded by a pre-deceived ideological position, the left or right, which destroys your capacity to be an effective leader.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, your thinking on the Energy Resource Finance Corporation, does that have any kind of specific plans for Oklahoma?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, you are in a big energy business here, very successfully. We are very grateful to you and there are States that don't. This program that is being discussed is designed to support the free enterprise system in achieving the stated objective goal by the President of the United States in the State of the Union Message that this Nation must become self-sufficient in energy by 1985, so we are not vulnerable to blackmail, and that our economy cannot be undermined and really destroyed by political action outside of our borders.

This is just as serious a threat to our security as the military threat.

This corporation, when realized, is designed to take those areas of high risk that can produce new sources of energy where private capital cannot take the risk alone and support it and see that the research and the development and the full scale models are done and the production of energy where energy is needed and is not going to be produced because of one reason or another, lack of financing or lack of incentive.

QUESTION: Does this mainly apply to nuclear energy?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, it is right across the board. We have in this country more oil in shale. We have twice as much oil in shale as the entire known proven oil reserves in the Middle East.

If that can be tapped at reasonable prices and without destroying our ecology or our environment, we have got one of the

most fantastic resources in the world. There are those who feel that this can be done through what is known the fusion process, drill down, put off an explosion, set it on fire and then you get the same effect underground that you do if you take, bring up the shale and cook it to get the oil out of it.

You do it underground; take the gas up, condense it, you got oil. If that could be done at a reasonable price, this is a fantastic step forward. No private company can afford to do it.

Sir?

QUESTION: What would you say to Senator Bartlett's Okies who are concerned about too much Social Security payments and a large percentage of their paycheck going to Federal income taxes in comparison to the percentage that the richer folks pay and who are also worried about inflation? Do you have any words?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think they are right. I share that feeling. To the degree that we have these complex, overlapping, duplicating systems of trying to help people which are so complicated and so filled with red tape that people are losing their sense of dignity, and those who are the recipients of the system that is so widespread and so complicated that they are subject to tremendous abuse and a great many people who don't deserve or need assistance are getting it, that I think it is time the whole system be overhauled.

The President has asked the Domestic Council, and asked me. to hold hearings around the country to deal with this subject, along with other economic and social problems.

So I would agree with them. They are pretty smart people.

QUESTION: Do you foresee a possibility that there will be some improvements in the next five years?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There had better be, or we will be in more trouble than we are in now. The question is how you get this accomplished and it is going to take legislation. It is going to be very complicated and all of these 863 Categorical Grants and all the others have a special interest group supporting it and lobbying for it.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, who is your pick in the football game today?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will tell you. As a Vice President of the United States, you have got to be a little careful, but I must say that there is one team that seems to be closely identified with this State that has got an outstanding representation. There would seem to be considerable feeling that they have a very important hedge, and that they are making a tremendous record again of undefeated streak of winning. I think it is fantastic. I am very excited to be there to see them.

END (AT 10:40 A.M. CDT)