

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 29, 1975

Office of the Vice President
(Tampa, Florida)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PUBLIC FORUMS ON DOMESTIC POLICY
TAMPA CONVENTION CENTER
TAMPA, FLORIDA

(AT 9:23 A.M. EST)

Thank you very much, Jim Cannon, for all that you have done in connection with the organization of these, and Jack Veneman. I would also like to thank very much Jack Raven who is the Federal Regional Council Director for the South-eastern Region. He has been tremendously helpful in handling the organization of this meeting.

Also, I would like to say I was in this area for a meeting on the Water Quality Commission where we had a similar meeting of this kind, and he was extremely helpful in connection with that.

I think that I would like to identify myself to the Councilman, not only to thank him for the keys of the city but to say that this kind of town meeting, or public hearing, I as Governor of one of the 50 States for 15 years found them, just as he did, tremendously useful.

As you start to shape your legislative programs and recommendations for the coming year, in the period of change in which we live, it is essential to get reactions to the programs as they exist and how they can change and be more effective from the point of view of the services of people and the role of government and its relation to the people.

So at all levels, whether it is the municipal level, whether it is the county level or State level or national level, I think the most important thing in a democracy is the people get a chance to exchange views with their elected representatives and officials that are appointed.

So that all of us here, and particularly the President, are deeply grateful to you for your presence and for those participating in the program.

I want to thank particularly Governor Williams for his welcome. I thank him for his presence here. Also, Lieutenant Governor Beazley who is here from Alabama, I want to thank him for his presence. To Mayor Poe of Tampa, I appreciate very much the welcome. I have already mentioned the Councilman.

Now I would like to introduce the members of the Federal Government who are here. We have a very brilliant and distinguished Secretary of Housing and Urban Development who is sitting on my right, Carla Hills, who will be speaking first. I will introduce her first.

On my left, another brilliant, not quite as good looking, but handsome Secretary of the Treasury, Bill Simon. It is a pleasure to have Bill here.

Then Secretary of the Commerce, Rogers Morton, who is one of the knowledgeable people in terms of problems that this country faces. He was Secretary of Interior just prior to moving over to become Secretary of the Commerce. I am very grateful for his presence here.

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Then the youngest member of the Cabinet, the newest member, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, David Mathews, who is sitting on my left, who is former President of the University of Alabama.

One of the important functions and roles in Federal Government is that held by the former Governor, Russell Peterson, and now Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality.

Environment is one of the major developments that this country has undertaken in recent years, the last 10, 15 years, where I think we particularly owe a debt of gratitude to the young people for having acquainted us to the fact we are in the process of despoiling our environment.

Tremendous progress has been made, and Russell Peterson, while he was Governor of Delaware and while he has been in this post, has been a major factor in finding the course of the path we can follow to make up for the lost time and prevent further despoiling of the environment and our ecology.

If I may make a few remarks before we get started, I would like to say how delighted I am that so many of you citizens have turned out today to come to this gathering. I am also equally grateful to the public officials who are here and are participating in this.

I want to thank all of you on the President's behalf and on behalf of all of us who come down from Washington to discuss domestic policies and domestic programs. They are inseparable.

We have participants here today not only from Florida but from Alabama, Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina. I don't have to elaborate on the importance of this region to the Nation as a whole.

The rapid expansion of your industrial economy has joined the long-standing agricultural significance of the southeast to make your importance to the Nation's future abundantly clear.

We therefore thank you for taking the time to share with us your concerns, your opinions, on where we should be headed as a Nation as we begin our third century.

Last month President Ford directed, as Jim Cannon has already said, the Domestic Council to conduct a broad examination of our Federal Government's domestic programs and policies.

He called for this review because of the state of our economy; because of the unemployment that exists in this country; because of the high cost of living which was brought on by inflation and its cruel impact on American families, especially on the senior citizens; because of the rapid growth in Federal expenditures and the size of the Federal deficit. These are the basic concerns.

The President is concerned whether our social programs are truly meeting human needs and the social objectives for which they were designed.

He is concerned about the proliferation of Federal regulations in all areas of activity and whether they are encouraging a healthy, self-reliant citizenry, or increasingly dominating the daily lives of individuals as citizens, or shackling the dynamism of the free enterprise system.

President Ford is concerned that we are more dependent today on foreign supplies of energy than at any time since the Arab embargo. In other words, we have lost ground instead of gained ground. And we must proceed to achieve greater energy production here at home if we are to meet our energy needs and protect our national security.

He is concerned about our environment and how we can enhance the quality of life for all Americans today, and assure a healthful tomorrow for our children and the generations to come.

Because of these concerns, which are shared by most Americans, the President asked me as Vice Chairman of the Domestic Council to conduct these public forums throughout the country as part of the policy review process.

The President recognizes that decisions that affect the destiny of every American cannot be confined to the limited perspective of Washington, for Washington has no monopoly on ideas or wisdom.

The President wants to tap the common sense, the wisdom, and the practical experience and the imagination of the people of every part of the country.

This forum today is the second of six which are being held throughout the country over an eight-week period.

The major areas we will be discussing during today's meeting are economic development and job opportunities; community development; resource development and the environment; social policy and the quality of life. Before calling upon our first witness, I would like to comment briefly on the need to review policy in these particular areas.

A healthy, growing economy is required if our Nation is to prosper and if all Americans are to have the opportunity to achieve an improved standard of living on a basis of equality.

We have been going through a difficult period of readjustment, a period of strain and difficulty for all.

I would like to just say a few words about the background factors which are involved in this. First, we have the problem that we are going through a period of accelerating change at home and abroad, the likes of which we have never seen before.

We all understand the impact of change on our lives as individuals, in our homes, in our business, in government, in the relations between State and Federal and local governments, so that we understand the difficulties caused by change, the fear that is caused, and the resentments and sometimes bitterness.

We have another factor that is fundamental. That is the growing interdependence within the world, among nations, and the growing interdependence within the United States between regions; between Federal, State, and local government; between government and private. These are two basic factors.

Then one more we have to face realistically is a fundamental ideological division in the world between those who believe that people are spiritual human beings, that we are all part of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God; and those who believe that individuals are simply cogs in a machine to be disciplined and dominated by the State, to the point where they have lost all capacity for independent thought.

These are conflicting basic, ideological differences that exist in the world. Illustrations briefly which will be brought out in these discussions of this interdependence are what happened in the field of energy where the United States in the sixties no longer became an exporting country but became a net importing country.

Those other nations which were exporters saw what was happening, started to raise prices a little bit, then came on the Middle East War, the involvement of the United States with the Soviet Union in this delicate situation, and then the boycott of oil, and then the increase of 500 percent on energy prices by the producing countries, and the resulting impact on the world.

It is totally a new situation; it never happened anything like this in history before. That is one.

Or you have the situation in the area of food where populations in the world today are growing much more rapidly than the production of food; and particularly in the areas where the populations are growing rapidly, they are not able to keep up, or they have not kept up with their production.

Therefore, the demand for food. And when you combine that with what happened when the crop failures took place in the Soviet Union, you had a situation where they moved into the American markets because the American farmers are the most efficient producers in the world. We are the major exporter of food.

They moved in; food prices, grain prices doubled; and feed prices doubled. We found ourselves with both energy and food in an inflation spiral which hit every family; then recession; dislocation, and then unemployment. That is the backdrop of what we face.

We are in a period now where we have got to deal with these problems, and this has been the President's basic objective. His first objective is to control inflation. The second is to revitalize the economy and get jobs.

Those jobs people want in private enterprise where they have got security and growth. And only through growth can we have growth in the protection of the environment, can we have the production to produce the needs in terms of goods and services of our people and to provide additional jobs for a growing population.

When we get to Bill, we will be talking about the economy and what is going on and the recovery that is starting, so I won't get into that.

But I would just like to say that with all of these problems, I have to be, and I think this reflects this whole group here, we are basically optimistic about the future. This is the greatest free country in the world; that people who with creativity and imagination built this Nation have got the capacity now to meet the problems we face today.

We have got to understand them to meet them. We have to have the courage and self-discipline as free people in order to be able to take the tough measures that are necessary to do the things that are going to assure that future.

I have faith that we can do it and that there are no problems in this country that we Americans, when we understand them, can't face and deal with

So we move into this situation, this discussion today with a sense of optimism, with a sense of desire to face

up to the tough realities which exist, but with the confidence that we can do it and that we are going to do it and that we are going to see this country move ahead.

Now, I want to, without going any further, call on, first, or introduce first, Mrs. Carla Hills who will speak on the subject of community building. We will then call on two other participants, and then we will have a general discussion. Then we will go on to the next subject. That will be the pattern.

There are microphones on the side there, and after the speakers have spoken, those who want to ask questions, make comments or suggestions, we look forward to it.

So it is my great pleasure to introduce Carla Hills.

(Applause.)

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(AT 9:37 A.M. EST)