

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 11, 1975

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
(Austin, Texas)

PRESS CONFERENCE

OF

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TIFFANY BALLROOM, AUSTIN HILTON INN

AUSTIN, TEXAS

(1:00 P.M. CST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure, nice to be here in Austin and have a chance to attend this session. I would like to thank all of those who are participants and be glad to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you doing any politicking while you are here?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir.

QUESTION: Do you plan to do any?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I asked you last night at the airport, what would you learn you didn't know before? What have you learned that you didn't know before now that it is over?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I thought it was a very exciting and effective and carefully prepared series of comments and statements on the whole broad range of subjects.

One thing you asked, what kind of thing. The fact that the bloc grants which give latitude to local communities but as was pointed out by the mayor, can be blocked, to use a paraphrase here, can be blocked by middle level bureaucracy in putting restrictions on which are not in the actual intent of the legislation.

So there is the kind of interesting insight you get. I thought it was an extremely good session.

QUESTION: How do you and the President plan to weigh this information?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is the problem and responsibility of the Domestic Council. What the Council will do is take all of this information, take it by subjects and then come up with alternative approaches and proposals to him in the various areas, both relating to policy and program.

QUESTION: From these meetings how do you read the mood of the American people and what are they most concerned with as far as domestic problems?

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: I suppose unemployment and inflation are the basic broad concerns. I think that the specific concern particularly of administrators and business groups are bureaucracy, Federal bureaucracy and red tape, the inability to get action, the inability to get decisions, the delays, the confusion.

QUESTION: Do you think there will be more of a grass roots domestic plank in the '76 domestic platform as a result of these meetings?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course the problem really is in both the legislation and the administration of the legislation, the complexity of it and it has grown out of a desire on the part of government to be helpful to people. But in the process they have passed so much legislation and so many programs that now they are sort of -- have gotten pretty complicated.

QUESTION: To rephrase it, will some of these suggestions be reflected in the Republican platform or do you think President Ford is interested in implementing them in the Republican platform for next year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Prior to the formulation of a platform he has a State of the Union message. That is the place that I would think that what is being worked on here in these hearings --

QUESTION: These will have no effect on the GOP platform?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't say that. But this isn't the purpose. The purpose is for the government itself to formulate its own programs. That is the Executive Branch under the President's leadership to help him in the formulation of his plans, policies and programs on the domestic front for the coming year.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the Indian Chief from Oklahoma who told you a few good lines said there are just too many people, he had to wait out in line.

Is it realistic to ask that you can reduce department sizes, say, reduce HEW by five percent, or is government going to expand like that or can you cut out people?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The point is good. If there are 1,007 programs, categorical grant programs, each has to have its own administrator, and so forth, and the whole staff.

If you consolidate those, say, from 1,000 and something down to 60, just to use a figure, pick a figure, you would eliminate all of the staffs and the bureaucracies that went with those other programs.

I don't think you can do it just by cutting people. I think you have actually got to change the structure and change the program. By eliminating the

programs or consolidating them, then you can eliminate the people that go with them.

QUESTION: Do you get the impression that with the structured situation where you had these expert witnesses and you actually only listened to 22 of them, that you may not really be getting a very broad cross-section of people?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You have got a perfectly good point. One could go at this -- and we have discussed it a great deal -- one could have an unstructured meeting and you would then have people speaking on any subject and you might say have -- well, I don't think they would speak any less in length of time.

I think unstructured programs, people often talk longer. So to probably get more than 22 or 26 people is difficult.

We did cover a great many areas and we did hear from some very widely differing points of view which I think were extremely helpful.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you just don't act like a man who is not running for office. Have you thought about following Mr. Connally's example of switching parties, becoming a Democrat and running in '76?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It sounds to me like you are speaking for yourself. I don't think that what happened this morning is a basis for the conclusions, if you will forgive me, that you have just drawn, and I appreciate your advice.

But I have been very careful in my own life to not try to advise other people as to what they should do and to do the best I could on figuring out what I should do, which I will continue to do.

QUESTION: Are you planning on retirement, sir?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That I haven't given a great deal of thought to.

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QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the refusal, your refusal to categorically state that you would not under any circumstances seek the nomination for the presidency has caused a lot of repercussions and a lot of speculation today. Under what circumstances would you seek the Republican presidential nomination?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You see, you were in on a little discussion we had on the plane coming down last night. I said that my candidate was President Ford, and that I had every expectation that he would be nominated by the Party, and that this is the tradition. The incumbents are nominated by the Party for four years.

The question was then asked whether under certain circumstances, if all of these things didn't happen, would I rule myself out. I said no. It just happens that I am the Vice President and that, as such, if one accepts the vice presidency, one has to be willing to assume, or should, God forbid, if anything happens to the President. So that was the sequence of events.

But I have no plan. I don't expect that to be the eventuality.

QUESTION: What would it require for you to seek the nomination?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I haven't crossed that bridge. I can't foresee any circumstances which would bring that about.

QUESTION: Do you expect that you would be able to get into the fight without a Party squabble; get into under any circumstances a contest for the presidential nomination without a Party squabble?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I just withdrew my name as being available for continuation as Vice President in order to avoid any confusion. I don't suppose that anybody gets any nomination without some conflict.

QUESTION: Realistically, sir --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Is this the same lady?

(Laughter.)

I can't see that light. I can't see who is asking the question.

QUESTION: It is Connie. Realistically, do you think that the GOP would nominate you for President after having rejected you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As I have said, I foresee no circumstances under which this situation we are now talking about would take place. I just have said that I was not eliminating myself.

I once made a prediction, a flat statement, and I haven't done it in having found that it was the wrong one. I never made one since, a prediction, and that was I said there would be no tax increase one year, and then the circumstances developed where we had to have additional revenue. After having gotten myself into that box, I am not ever taking any flat positions about future developments, including my own.

QUESTION: Don't you think, sir, though, that it might be that President Ford might consider it a threat unless you eliminated yourself?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, because I have already said he was my candidate.

QUESTION: Do you see yourself in the future perhaps, after next year, as ambassador or something like an elder statesman?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. You don't have to go any further. No, sir.

QUESTION: Why not?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not interested. I used to be Assistant Secretary of State. There were 20 ambassadors working for me, and terribly important, and they are very significant in the structure.

But I am interested in being where the policy is made rather than where it is carried out.

QUESTION: Governor, you said last week in your news conference that you felt the President's stand on New York City would hurt him politically in the State.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: Now you have come to Austin and the Mayor here supports your stand on New York City. Do you think that the President's stand on New York City is going to hurt him in cities across the nation?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to say to you in all frankness, I don't think this situation is finished yet. He took a stand. And I admire his courage. He has said very courageously that the Federal Government cannot bail out cities that spend more money than they have revenue and get themselves into a fiscal bind.

I think as a basic concept that is absolutely right because once you start that, then any city is going to say, well, if the Federal Government will bail us out, we are just going to go. We will just spend that money, see.

So that I think that statement was a very sound statement. Now, what I had said and where we seem to differ in this situation was that after New York City, working with the State Board that was created, has brought its budget into balance in the three-year period by 1978, and restored

fiscal integrity, they are still going to have difficulty in selling long-term bonds to pay off the short-term notes which they have sold , \$3.3 billion to cover their deficit; and that during that period they were going to need some help from the Federal Government. And I urged Congress to get onto the top of the situation because it was a very delicate one and a very serious one.

I thought it could be catastrophic, if the City went into bankruptcy.

The President has taken another very courageous move. He has been the one who came out and said the bankruptcy laws need to be changed because they don't apply to cities. They are basically written, the Federal laws, for corporations. Therefore, there is no provision for a city like New York or any other city to reorganize its debt structure and to cope with its responsibilities in dealing with the problems of its people during this interim period.

Two months ago, both the Mayor and the Governor of New York came to Washington, and they brought with them a bill which had been carefully drawn to amend the bankruptcy laws. But it was only the President who had the courage to come out and say these laws should be changed. If they are changed, then that becomes another avenue under which they can go through the steps necessary to restore fiscal integrity.

In the end again, the Federal Government, though, would have to be involved during that interim period.

QUESTION: Do you believe the mood of Congress is changing towards helping New York City?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the mood of the Congress is a little confused. I think there are different groups that have different points of view. It depends upon where they come from and how they visualize or anticipate the effect of a default or a bankruptcy by New York City would affect their own constituents.

That is a subject which is up for debate. There are very intelligent people in government, in business, in finance, in all walks of life, who have totally different points of view as to what the effect would be. Some say it wouldn't be serious. Some say it would be serious. I happen to think, under the present legal structure or the constitutional structure, that it would be very serious.

If they change it -- as they need to pass laws -- and the Congress has got some tough decisions to make, and they have got very little time to make them.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you see any sign that President Ford is changing his position so that he would agree with you on the point that you now differ about tiding them over for that three-year period?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: His concern has been that the City would not take the action. My hope and faith has been they would. That is a judgmental question. That is a value judgment. It is an honest difference of opinion.

If the City did take the steps and made the hard decisions with the help of the State Board, then that would create a new circumstance; then that would be something that he had not anticipated, and when a new situation develops under those circumstances, maybe there would be a reappraisal of the situation.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, why didn't you feel it necessary to hear testimony from our poor people on the economic nightmare that they are experiencing now, but instead choose only to hear from your fellow bankers and corporation presidents?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Pardon me?

QUESTION: Why were poor people not heard from on the economic questions, but instead only their employers?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The head of the AFL-CIO hardly comes under the category you have just been describing.

QUESTION: The Building Trades Council is hardly composed of workers.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Hardly? They are the workers, of course. I thought we had a pretty good representation and that representatives in the audience were people from all walks of life.

QUESTION: How much did this forum cost today; cost the Federal Government?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you.

QUESTION: Who could?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You would have to find out from each one of the departments, what it cost them to have their representatives come here.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, might you consider the position of Secretary of State?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir.

QUESTION: Thank you.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you think the President might have hurt himself with the Party with the Cabinet shakeup and then on Monday saying he wanted his team and then the next Sunday coming out and admitting what everybody seemed to know that it was dissension within the Cabinet that caused the firing?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't see anything inconsistent with those two statements, though.

If you want your own team, there is nothing inconsistent with not wanting dissension in your own team.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, would you comment on your opinion of the status of continuation of revenue sharing?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, I will. I am very concerned that there is a lack of enthusiasm on the part, or sense of urgency on the part of Congress to pass revenue sharing at this session right now.

If it isn't, then it will be postponed for consideration until next year and if that happens, then none of the States nor municipalities, nor counties, nor townships, nor villages can include in their budgets the funds which are part of their structure at the present time.

Therefore, I think there is an extremely serious situation and that any representative of local government at any level should communicate this situation or inquire as to what their representatives' attitude is and be in communication with them.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, to what extent do you share views with Mr. Hubbard from the Texas AFL-CIO on the need to control immigration into this part of the country because it affects, according to him, the unemployment picture?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is very interesting. Maybe we could just have one news conference at a time here. It is very interesting.

I happened to be Assistant Secretary of State when we negotiated with Mexico in 1945, '44 and '45, the contract between the two countries, the treaty, whereby labor came from Mexico to this country and under guarantees of payment of fixed wages, housing conditions, health conditions, et cetera, et cetera.

This was a very successful program, I thought, and workers came up, worked for X number of months and went back.

QUESTION: Would you favor passage of the Rodino bill?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I heard them discuss the Rodino bill, or somebody today, but I haven't personally read the Rodino bill, so I am not familiar with what is in the bill.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a great pleasure. Thanks. Nice to be with you

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(AT 1:20 P.M. CST)