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Office of the Vice President  
(St. Paul, Minnesota)

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REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE NEW '76 SPIRIT BICENTENNIAL  
PROM CENTER  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

(AT 7:55 P.M. CST)

Harold, thank you very much. I have got to say, ladies and gentlemen, that he is a wonderful friend. You know it because he has been a wonderful friend of the party and a wonderful friend of the State and he is my friend and prejudiced somewhat. So we have to take with a grain of salt what he says, but I love him.

(Laughter and Applause.)

Bob and Shawn, for this great evening, believe me, I am grateful to both of them; what they are doing for the party and what they are doing here.

I couldn't help thinking when Bob was telling that story about Moses, and having to follow that statement, I was to Texas on Tuesday, I guess it was. We are having these hearings of the Domestic Council on domestic policies and programs for review of the President.

The Governor of Texas made a little talk about the energy problem we face and the crisis and the fact it has been two years since the boycott, and knowing what has happened, he said if we had responded to Pearl Harbor the way we have responded to the energy crisis, we would all be speaking Japanese in this country by now. That fits right into this other story, too.

(Applause.)

We have got to get back to this spirit in America where we respond to problems with the same kind of enthusiasm and confidence and dynamism which I feel here in this room tonight.

You have more attractive young people; there is more enthusiasm; more money being raised; and the party has had the successes in the elections. I want to tell you this is a wonderful moment, and I am thrilled to be here to share it with you. So I thank you for inviting me.

(Applause.)

I would like to express my admiration and respect to Rick for what he is doing in the leading and handling of the finances of the party. I would like to say to Barbara, his wonderful wife, what a magnificent job she did with the decorations here. We have a lot of lights so we can't see them all. Maybe after I get out of here they will turn these lights off so you can enjoy yourselves. I would like to thank her on the beautiful job of arranging this room in the spirit of the time.

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(Applause.)

I don't know any State that has three finer Congressmen that you can be proud of as your Representatives who understand your problems and who are in Washington to try and represent you. But the exciting thing to me is they are not only representing you, they are representing America and they are representing all of us.

That is what we need in this country, men and women who understand the responsibilities of their own communities but see them in the perspective and in the broad light of the Nation as a whole.

These three, Bob, Al and Bill, are three great Congressmen. We are grateful to all of them.

(Applause.)

To Chuck and Carolyn, they were good enough to ask me to the convention today. I was very excited. I like independent Republicans. We sort of felt that way in New York for a long time. We are pretty independent, been pretty successful.

I think that the spirit that was displayed there, the deep concern, the enthusiasm, but an awareness of the problems and the need to come up as a party with intelligent, constructive solutions, that is what the Republicans stand for. It is good management; the ability to deal with changing conditions.

Let's face it, ladies and gentlemen, we are living in a moment in history of accelerating change and interdependence in the world, and our capacity as free citizens is unique in this world today; the ability to appraise the impact of these changes and, let's face it, difficult to absorb changes.

Change is disturbing. Change is our way of life. It creates a sense of defensiveness and then, sometimes, well, even to the point of anger because people don't like to have their lives disturbed.

But what we have to do is instead of being defensive, we have to have the capacity in the Republican Party -- the country is looking to it -- to lead in shaping change so it serves our purposes and doesn't overwhelm us in the form of crises. That is the way of the Republican Party to go after these problems.

(Applause.)

Iantha and Rudy, you have two wonderful representatives in Washington on the National Committee. Now that she doesn't have to handle her husband's affairs in the mansion, she is handling the mansion's affairs in Washington. She is doing just as good a job there as in the mansion, and he was a great Governor and she was a great Governor's wife.

(Applause.)

I am thrilled to be here with her and her husband because I am deeply devoted to them. We had marvelous times in the Governors' Conference together. We tried to deal with these problems. As I said today at the convention, I had always hoped that the Governors of the 50 States would take a more active role in dealing with the national problems.

That is a little difficult because sometimes national problems cut across State problems and there is some conflict there, but there is no group that is closer to the people, that understands the people, better than the Governors, and who are in a better position to reconcile the differences.

We have the word specialist. Each one of us would like to see things handled for the particular interest that we represent. But the great strength of democracy is the different points of view, the different angles that we have, and then the ability to reconcile those into a common policy that represents the best interests of all. That is democracy. That is the strength of America. That is the strength of the Republican Party.

Let's keep our doors wide open. Like the idea of an independent Republican Party; that gives a sense of openness, an invitation to others to join, increase our numbers, increase our strength, increase our vitality.

As I said today, we have demonstrated that breadth of political thought in our State, and you can't have a finer spectrum of political thought than you do in our senior Senator Javits and our junior Senator Buckley.

It just shows if you really set your mind to it and open the door and stretch out your arms and reach around all points of view; and to strengthen that, ladies and gentlemen. We don't want to be afraid of people that have different points of view. Let's debate and argue them. When we are finished, let's stand united as Republicans. That is what I think is important.

(Applause.)

My interest and my concern about the unity of the party is the reason why I took this little step -- now talking politics for a moment -- the reason why I withdrew my name for consideration by the President in 1976 for the Vice Presidency.

He was good enough to ask me to come to Washington a year ago. It took me a little while to get through the Congress to get confirmed. I want to tell you if you had 500 FBI agents who spent six months looking into your past, you have to think twice.

(Laughter.)

But it is too late. Then the irony of it was after I got confirmed, the President appointed me Chairman of the Committee on Privacy.

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(Laughter.)

I was the only one who knew what it was like to lose it totally, absolutely. But here I am anyhow.

Going back to the situation, I went to Washington to try and help the President. I have the honor of presiding over the Senate of the United States. I had a grandfather who was a leader of the Senate for 17 years, a grandfather on my mother's side.

I have a great respect for this august body, the Congress of the United States, the Senate of the United States. Because I am not allowed to speak without unanimous consent, and that doesn't come very often, I am delighted for this great audience here tonight. If I abuse your kindness, it is just because of my inability to speak there, except to say, "Is there an objection?" or, "Approved," or call the roll, or whatever it may be.

But I just want you to know that other than that, the Vice President has no function. I have known all the Vice Presidents since Henry Wallace. He was so frustrated he used to come out to my house and play tennis at 7:00 in the morning. You have to be pretty frustrated to do that.

(Laughter.)

But I would just like to say that. And then I should mention, perhaps, in the confidence of this intimate gathering here, that when I was Chairman under President Eisenhower of the Advisory Committee on Government Organization, he called me in one day and said, "We have a political problem here with Dick Nixon who is Vice President. We want to find some function. Would you have your committee look into this and see what activity he might carry on?"

We studied it for three months and came up with the conclusion that the Constitution said very clearly only preside over the Senate and any other function might create a separate center of political force or power within the Executive Branch, and that this might cause trouble for allegiance and, therefore, recommended there was no function he could give the Vice President.

(Laughter.)

So I was fully prepared when I took the job. I took it with the full understanding I was going to go down there to help the President as a staff assistant to the President of the United States. That is the center of action. That is where the decisions are made.

He is a wonderful person. You can speak your mind. You don't know what his reaction is when you do. But he is taking it in and listening. At the end, he makes his decision. That is his responsibility, and the opportunity of expressing it is perfect.

But when we got into a situation on the political side where there were squabbles going on within the party

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and where I seemed to be a problem to some -- we don't need to get into details of this -- I just thought this isn't worth it. This man is too busy. He has to deal with the problems of the Nation. He has to come up with solutions. He has to give it his attention. He shouldn't be distracted by this.

When he is nominated at the convention and only then should he make his decision as to who can best serve him in the coming years as his Vice Presidential candidate, or Vice Presidential running mate, and who can best serve the country.

So I wrote him a little note and dropped out. I think it was the right thing to do. Now he is free and he can concentrate, without having this annoyance.

I got into a little discussion in Texas. They tried to get into the question of what I was talking about and who I was talking about. I finally said to those gentlemen, who had lived in Texas all of their lives, "Didn't you ever sit on the porch in a rocking chair on a hot summer day and have flies buzzing around your head?" I said, "That is it. I wanted to get indoors and away from the flies."

(Applause.)

Now the party can be united. But I from the Vice Presidency. I didn't withdraw from the party. I am still there and I will stay there and I will be very active in the party.

(Applause.)

President Ford is my candidate and I am going to tell you, as I stand here, I am confident he is going to be the nominee of the party.

(Applause.)

I only have one interest and that is helping to unite the party. I am behind him, and I would just like to say I am not about to contribute to the fractionation of the party. We have had some problems in the past. We are not going to get into them. We are not going to get into the past with so many young people here. They have forgotten it, anyhow.

We have got a tremendous responsibility. This is a great party. So having said that, now I just want to concentrate on what I think are the major issues that are before us.

I think that as you sit and look at the scene, or participate in the scene, there are two things. One, it seems to me the most serious problem, the most important problem we face today is achieving what the President spent most of his State of the Union address on last January, urging the Congress to establish an energy policy which will result in energy independence for America. This is

essential, ladies and gentlemen.

(Applause.)

We don't have to go into the details, but right now we are importing 40 percent of our oil. It is costing us, or will this coming year, close to \$30 billion a year.

If it weren't for the fact that the agricultural families of America have done such a fantastic job and that you brought in 60 million new acres and that you are producing more grain than you ever did before and that is being exported and you are generating close to \$20 million in foreign exchange, we would have the most serious foreign exchange problem.

What we are doing now, we are continuing to increase our consumption of energy. Production is going down in this country and imports are going up. Not only is it a problem in relation to price, because the OPEC countries are here to stay -- they just raised the price again 10 percent. That is 700 percent over what it was three years ago. They are going to meet again in June and consider whether they will raise it again.

Our entire economy and our way of life depends on energy. This is no longer within our own control. Therefore, he is absolutely right from the point of view of national security that we have got to achieve this; not only from the point of view of national security, but from the point of view of growth.

The development of energy production in this country, and we can thank the Good Lord that we have the human resources, we have the technology, we have the brains, we have the management in private enterprise, and we have the resources to achieve this goal.

So we can. It is just a question of making up our minds, rolling up our sleeves, and doing the job. I think America is going to do it. We have got to get an understanding between the President and the Congress, because in an election year there are problems.

But, ladies and gentlemen, we have got to have the courage and the self-discipline as the greatest free people in the world to do some of the tough things, to make some of the hard decisions, and to take the long view and not just the short view. That is even in an election year.

That is what the President has had the courage to do, and that is why I admire him. He is calling for this and we can do it.

If we had another boycott, God forbid, if we had another oil boycott, we are in a totally different position than we were three years ago. This time it wouldn't be a question of lines waiting for gasoline at the pumps. There just wouldn't be any there.

If you go to the Eastern Seaboard, 80 to 90 percent of all the energy is imported, and there isn't any way of

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bringing in oil from other parts of the country in the volume that is needed. You could have a total economic collapse.

This grew out, before the boycott, of a problem in the Middle East. While the President and the Secretary of State have made major progress between Egypt and Israel in that first important step, still there is a problem and still there is a danger that something might go wrong. There might be another war. There might be another boycott. And we are vulnerable. That is no place for the United States to be.

We need energy for the revitalization of our economy, to get our economy rolling, to get jobs, to get the growth that is necessary; and we can have growth and energy produced here and it is not incompatible with ecology and the preservation of our environment.

We can do both. We have the brains and ability and intelligence to do it. So let's get going on this one.

One other subject I would like to speak on, and that is this: This is a generous, kind country, and we always want to do things to help others who are in need. As Lincoln said, the role of government is to do those things for people which they can't do for themselves.

I have got to say to you in the last 15 years we have overpromised and underdelivered to the American people. I am part of that. I want to take my share of it.

We have got a situation where we have been spending more money than we have. We have overloaded the system of government -- Federal, State, and local -- to the point where it is breaking down in places.

When we talk about people being worried about government, cynical about government, I want to tell you I can't blame them, because we find ourselves in a situation where we have run out of money. I don't want to mention my home town, but I would just like to say to you, ladies and gentlemen, I totally agree with the President that we can't bail out New York City.

(Applause.)

I agree on that. But I want to make two points. If New York City and New York State put the city back on a sound fiscal basis and they took the tough political decisions that are necessary to balance the budget by 1978, then they are going to need some help to bridge over a three-year period before their credit is reestablished in the market.

Therefore, I think that is going to be essential. And the President, in my opinion, if that is done -- although he has felt they wouldn't have the ability to do it and they would probably go into bankruptcy. That is why he went straight to a new legislation on bankruptcy laws because the Federal bankruptcy laws are such that they only really cover private corporations and they don't cover cities. There is going to be chaos unless something is done to change those

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laws, and the President has no power to do the other.

But I would like to say to you as a New Yorker, just sort of again in the intimacy of this group, what New York has done, the Congress of the United States -- with these gentlemen here opposing many of the moves, and the President has had to veto them -- but the Congress of the United States has done exactly what New York has done, only they have done it on a much larger scale.

(Applause.)

They spent this money. They have a \$60 billion deficit. So when Congress ridicules New York, ladies and gentlemen, they just ought to take a look at themselves to see what they are doing. They are responding to the same pressure groups, the same desire to respond to people's needs, that New York City did.

I want to tell you that you can print money in Congress and you can't in New York City. That is the only difference.

(Applause.)

Let's not forget this when we talk about New York. When you print money, you devalue the currency. When you devalue the currency, you get inflation. When you get inflation, it is the most insidious tax on the American people that we can have.

This hits those who can least afford it: our senior citizens, those who are on retirement, those who are working and their paycheck is cut down and is eaten away by inflation.

That is why the President has stood up and vetoed these popular measures. He has been supported by wonderful men like those here to stop this country and to get back to -- what I said at the meeting this afternoon, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Everybody pays for it.

(Applause.)

We have got to accept that. You can't spend more money than you earn or you produce by hard work. That is for an individual, it is for families, it is for cities, it is for a State, and for a Nation. We have got to learn that lesson. We have to get back to fundamental American principles.

(Applause.)

This is not going to be easy because these are very popular programs and there are a lot of organized pressure groups in back of them. That is true in government and out of government.

So I think the Republican Party has a unique opportunity now to come forth as a united party with a program to get America back to the fundamental values and



beliefs on which we have grown to greatness, and the fact that we cannot let private enterprise or entrepreneurship, or whatever you want to call it, be supplanted by bureaucracy. Bureaucracy never solved major problems in this country.

(Applause.)

That is what he was talking about with Moses.

So this is the year for Republicans to pull together and come up with constructive programs that represent the best interest of the American people as a whole, and on the national basis, with the broad spectrum.

I want to tell you the American people, in my opinion, are going to respond to that. I have been all over this country and there is one loud and strong message. The American people are fed up with bureaucracy and red tape.

(Applause.)

The tragic situation is that we are getting into a situation where instead of the government being the solution to the problem, people are beginning to feel the government is the problem.

(Applause.)

I hate to say this, but it is true. So let's stick together. Let's work on the tough realities. Let's not start with that position, "My mind is already made up. Don't confuse me with the facts." Let's start with the facts. Let's recognize we are in a period of change, a period of interdependence, and then come up with new concepts, new ideas, as to how we can build the strength, or rebuild the strength of America based on our traditional beliefs in faith and honesty and integrity and patriotism and love of country.

Ladies and gentlemen, best of luck to you and thanks for letting me be here with you.

(Applause.)

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(AT 8:17 P.M. CST)