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Office of the Vice President  
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PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

(AT 12:47 P.M. PST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry to have kept you waiting. As some of you who were in the meeting know, the meeting has gone on much longer than was anticipated, but there were so many interesting and important statements that people wanted to make that we didn't want to cut it off. It is still going on now, as a matter of fact.

I would just like to say we are delighted to be here at the Domestic Council conference in Los Angeles. It has been a pleasure, and I think that very significant and important statements and contributions have been made.

I am delighted to answer any questions you may have.

QUESTION: In your opening statement you said that you found in your previous forums people are unhappy with inflation and high unemployment. What have you learned in these forums that you didn't know before? Aren't these sort of obvious things people are concerned about?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether you were in the meeting this morning and whether you listened to the two ladies from Samoa who are living here and gave the problems of the Samoans here in California. That was a problem that I was not aware of.

I thought the gentleman who spoke at the very end just before I left representing one of the Indian tribes made probably the most sensitive and eloquent statement on the problems and plight of American Indians in this country that I have ever heard.

This is a situation which certainly doesn't do us as a Nation any credit. But I think that, as I said in response to his comments, the American Indians are now coming to meetings such as this. Their problems, their concerns, are being considered.

I don't know whether you are a Californian or not, you the reporter who asked the question. If so, I don't know whether you have written any articles on the fact this gentleman brought out.

The State of California doesn't recognize contracts with Indians and, therefore, they are not eligible for Federal benefits.

If that is the case, and I am not a lawyer and I am not aware of it, this is a subject which I think you might

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write a series of articles on that would be very interesting for all Californians. So this is one thing I learned that we will check on. I am going to find out about it.

QUESTION: Realistically speaking, how much do you think the public's opinion is going to affect Rockefeller policies?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It isn't Rockefeller. It is Ford. I am just Vice President. I have no responsibility other than being a staff assistant to the President and presiding over the Senate. But I cannot speak in the Senate without unanimous consent.

QUESTION: How about Ford's policies?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will be making recommendations to him based on these hearings reviewing both policy and programs affecting the broad range of domestic activities in the Federal Government.

I don't think there is any question but that these recommendations will reflect the concerns which we have heard here, and that we are hopeful that they will be of real significance in terms of, at this critical moment in the history of our country and the world, taking a fresh look at and revising a lot of the structure of the Federal Government.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, Governor Evans sort of summed up his position by saying in effect the Federal Government should get off our back. Do you think that is the message you are getting from all the individuals?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I thought Governor Evans' testimony on Federal-State relations was the most succinct, the most effective I have heard anywhere.

I think he is without doubt one of the most knowledgeable and understanding individuals in public life today and that his statement was invaluable.

Literally the statement has to be qualified. It isn't a question of get off our back as such, but it is give us a chance to meet our people's needs without the restrictions and the changing regulations which make it impossible for State government, local government, corporations, individuals to plan for the future and to be responsive and responsible to their constituents.

So that I must say I was tremendously impressed with and grateful to Governor Evans for coming here and putting so concisely the problem we face.

It is a problem that older societies have faced before; namely, getting all tied up in bureaucracy and red tape. That is the way I would summarize it, that the public is fed up with bureaucracy and red tape.

QUESTION: Can you be more specific about, say, one or two recommendations that you would like to see made to the President now as a result of the hearings?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will be talking to the President. But, unfortunately, I am not an independent operator. Therefore, I cannot say to you, as I would be very happy to say, what I think the answers are. Those we will give to the President within the next week or 10 days. And what he does with them then, of course, is his responsibility as the President of the United States.

But whatever he does will be reflected in the State of the Union message in January of next year.

QUESTION: Most of the people that came here were talking about dollars and cents. How many dollars and cents are going to be available --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't honestly, if you will forgive me for differing with you, I don't think most of them were talking about dollars and cents. When Dan Evans said get off my back to the Federal Government, he wasn't talking dollars and cents. He was talking bureaucracy and red tape.

I think that was really the message, that the programs -- well, as one lady said, when a program goes unfunded, why not abolish the program. I think there is a problem of dollars and cents, and the Federal Government has a deficit of \$60 billion, \$70 billion this year.

Deficits feed inflation. Inflation is the most vicious and insidious tax. It hurts those who can afford it the least: the elderly, those on retirement pensions, those who are working on salaries.

Therefore, we are in a very tough, serious dilemma relating to the expenditure by the Federal Government of more money at a time when they are running a deficit and when the deficit contributes to the inflation.

I think that what comes out of this is simplify the structures so that more of the money that is paid for by the taxpayers gets through to those who need it and doesn't get caught along the way in the bureaucratic structure and in this red tape that has been discussed.

I have said it before publicly, and to the gentleman who asked the question before, I say that these 1,009 categorical grants need to be put into block grants where they are grouped. And each time you take a group of categorical grants and put them into a block grant, all of the bureaucracy that goes with each one of them gets eliminated because you simplify it and put it into, instead of 60, you get 6 or you get 2 or you get 3. That simplifies the whole structure.

QUESTION: What major view did you gain from these hearings that you didn't know already?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The degree of sophistication and awareness on the part of the people everywhere about the relationship between the Federal Government and State and local government; the Federal Government and the private enterprise; the Federal Government and individuals, and the

impingement on their freedom and their ability to act and operate.

I had been talking on these subjects myself while I was Governor in the last four years of my administration. In the message to the Legislature I discussed these problems.

At that point there was very little interest in them. Now the American people are awakened to these. That is what is coming to me loud and clear, that this country realizes that this situation cannot go on the way it is going because it is really coming to a point where it is inhibiting the effectiveness and the functioning of our system and of individuals' lives and their ability to act, make decisions and be effective.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, I am a news correspondent with Televisa. My question will have to be in Spanish. I wish your answer would be, too.

(Question and answer in Spanish.)

QUESTION: About the problems of New York City, Mr. Vice President, how do you feel about the possibility of the Senate problem in getting the appropriations bill through? Do you think that New York will be bailed out?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think it is a question of bailing out. That is sort of one of those catch words that everybody has picked up now and used. This is not a bail-out.

New York City and the State have taken very tough measures to balance the budget of the city by 1978. And three months ago I recommended, or two months ago, Columbus Day, that the Federal Government would have to assist the city in that bridging over those three years before their credit is reestablished by 1978 in guaranteeing a certain number of bonds, or buying them, to help them through that period after they have taken the necessary measures.

Now, they apparently have done that. The President has now recommended that the Federal Government appropriate or authorize the funds. They will then recommend them. I am confident those funds will be appropriated.

I would like to say one thing that hasn't come out very clearly yet. In the New York City balanced budget, there is an estimate of revenue from revenue sharing which amounts to a number of hundred million dollars which they have been receiving. That is the basis, one of the items which brings about the balanced budget.

Congress has now authorized this guarantee. It is based on a balanced budget. But they have not as yet renewed revenue sharing. Unless they renew revenue sharing in the next two weeks, then the whole budget is going to be thrown out because they are not going to get this in the next year's budget.

To make this operative, Congress is going to have to pass a renewal of revenue sharing before going home for

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Christmas or the whole thing is going to blow. That to me is a very serious and important question.

QUESTION: Are you satisfied that you are in fact hearing from the American public, or are these in the main bureaucrats talking to other bureaucrats?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have got to be perfectly honest that I have been working with bureaucrats for years, and a lot of those people don't look like bureaucrats to me. I think they were American people.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, how do you relate this type of meeting which is being held today with the campaign of President Ford for the renomination?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Totally unrelated. Totally unrelated.

QUESTION: No political objectives?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, barring something unforeseen happening to President Ford, what would it take to get you to run or campaign for President next year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You are very thoughtful in making the point you seem to be making. I would just like to say I have absolutely no plans for the future, except what I stated in the letter to the President, that I would not be available.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, most of us on this coast have not had a chance to talk to you since you submitted that letter.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: I have been wondering, was part of your reason for taking yourself out of contention a feeling that you found yourself having to assume political postures that weren't comfortable and you were bending your own image of yourself, so to speak?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. I said exactly the reasons for my withdrawal as far as availability was concerned. Of course, I had been saying right along that I was not a candidate and that I thought the President ought to make the decision as and when he was nominated by the convention, and some people didn't seem to believe that.

I did not want to get involved in the petty squabbles that were going on in certain elements of the party. Therefore, I thought the simplest thing to do was to do what I did. I think that clarified the atmosphere for the President. I didn't want him to be encumbered with political considerations when he has to focus on the major national issues.

Where I have had a disagreement with him, as I did in the case of -- it was not a fundamental disagreement; it was a question of form and manner -- the case of New York City, I spoke out on this. This is something I said from the

beginning, that I will always give him my best judgment if he asks for it. If I feel strongly enough, I will give it to him on my own initiative. What decision he makes I will support, unless I feel there is some basic problem that I don't agree with.

QUESTION: You don't feel uncomfortable being farther to the right of where you were?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That was no problem.

QUESTION: Is Ronald Reagan what you mean when you talk about petty squabbles in the party, when you talk about his challenge to the President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I wasn't. That was not really what I was talking about.

QUESTION: Can you be more specific?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. If you had been in the East Coast and read some of the stuff that was coming out in the papers through leaks and so forth about my being a disadvantage to the President's ticket and so forth, these things don't grow out of thin air. They get planted.

QUESTION: Who planted them?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: How do I know? You fellows know more about that than I do. We have that shield law that protects the press from their sources so I wouldn't expect to go in back of the press.

QUESTION: Once again in Spanish.

(Question and answer in Spanish.)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, were you surprised by the decision of the Republican National Committee to deny the President the use of the traditional campaign list?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, I was. Then as I got to thinking about it, although I haven't talked to anybody about it, as I got to thinking about it, they figured that if they gave it to him, they would have to give it to everybody else.

With the plethora of candidates -- I think virtually half the Senate is running or thinking of running for President -- that maybe this raised a question and that they just figured with the new election laws that was something they couldn't do. I don't really know.

QUESTION: But it did surprise you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. I had no idea.

QUESTION: Do you think what some people interpret as the lack of compassion on the part of President Ford towards New York's problem some months ago was the factor in the decline in the public opinion polls? Do you think he lost ground?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Let's put it this way: He certainly didn't gain ground in New York City.

QUESTION: How about beyond the Hudson?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Who was it asked earlier, I guess you did -- this nice young lady over here -- about bailing out. Nobody wanted to see a city that is spending more money than it has income bailed out by the rest of the taxpayers, because the obvious answer is that if that gets started, then why should any city balance its budget. They might as well just spend what they want and the Federal Government will bail them out. It is an impossibility.

I think that his stand against the bail-out was sound. But my point was that when the city took the steps to do the tough things that had to be done, then before their credit was reestablished, they were going to need some assistance to sell their notes. That was where he and I had this slight difference.

QUESTION: Do you think he lost ground politically as a result of that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You can take a poll to find out. How do I know? Those are technical questions you find out from polls. Otherwise you are making a guess. I already said what I thought about New York. I don't know about the rest of the country. Maybe he gained.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, three years ago an economist at the University of Wisconsin proposed for relief of personal property taxes that the Federal Government support higher education. That is State universities, because so many students come from other States.

The second proposal was then the individual State government handle secondary education and your local communities take care of elementary education.

My question is, New York City has been a tremendous burden in the educational field in the university support. Would not that proposal be one way to help the City of New York and the whole State of New York as the rest of the other 49 States in the Union?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I understand what you are saying and, of course, the answer is yes; if the United States and New York City, either one or both, can afford to have free tuition, open enrollment, pay the highest salaries of anywhere in the country, including Harvard. I just don't think they have got the money to do it.

The State has a policy, New York State, that any student who pays a tuition of \$600 or more now, or up to \$600, will get scholarship incentive up to that amount who needs it to help them go to college.

I suggested to the city that they ought to put in tuition, that they could not afford to carry the cost of that university the way they were running it. It turned out to be true.

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We would have given them money from the State, about \$180 million or something. But they wanted, and they are a sovereign city, they wanted to run it the way they were running it, and that was their privilege, as long as they could pay for it.

I have got to say, and the President said this to the Mayor when the Mayor first came six months ago and asked for help, he said, "How can I go back to Lansing, Michigan, and say to my people who don't get free tuition and who don't have open enrollment and pay for their education that we ought to help out New York so they can keep free tuition and open enrollment?" He said, "I don't see how you are going to persuade the rest of the country to do it."

That would be my point on that.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, let's get back to the reason why you are here. There is a group of demonstrators who are talking about this as the Rocky Horror Picture Show. Is this forum really going to have any change in the economic status of especially the poor people?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether you believe in the democratic system or not. If you do, then you have to believe that those who are elected officials have got to be responsive to and aware of the feelings and thinking of the people that they represent.

We don't happen to have an elected President or Vice President at the moment because of unfortunate circumstances. We have one who has been nominated and confirmed by the Congress, so it is an indirect operation. But still we feel responsible to the American people.

We are here prior to the President's formulating his policies for his State of the Union message for 1976, which happens to be a pretty historic year, so he can better reflect the thinking and feeling of the American people.

Now, I don't see what could be sounder or more democratic. But I also defend the right of pickets, and I would feel neglected if there were no pickets.

(Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They have their right to propose and to state whatever they want. That is part of our American system.

QUESTION: Do you share in the criticism that many people have for President Ford, specifically his trip to China, as a mere window dressing?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I didn't think so. I heard the statement that was made at the meeting today. But it seems to me that this relationship with China, Mainland China, is a very important one and a very delicate one.

We have a new President and they have a new government, or at least Chou En-lai is no longer active. It was very important that this new President have contact



with Mao Tse-tung and with the new leaders. I think this was a very useful thing.

Now the other part of that criticism at the meeting was all of these television stations and members of the media were going along and spending hundreds or thousands. They didn't say how much it cost. But I think that is a reflection of the judgment on the part of the media of the importance of the meeting.

If they didn't think the meeting was important to this country, they wouldn't have gone along. I think the fact they went shows they thought it was important. I think it was, too.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, when I was a little girl, I asked why was there a Republican Party and a Democratic Party. I was told that the Republican Party was for the rich and the Democratic Party was for the poor.

As I look around today, and at any convention in any room, there are 90 percent white and 10 percent black, or less. Could you answer that question? Was that question true?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Which part of your question are we talking about; the first part or second part?

QUESTION: That the Republican Party was for the rich.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: How did the blacks get into that question?

QUESTION: We don't have any blacks in the convention.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, you do. I went and spoke at a black Republican dinner in New York.

Let's take the two questions. First, I think the best answer to that is I am a Republican and I have been very fortunate as far as inherited wealth is concerned. But I ran in a State which has a Democratic plurality of about a million registered votes. So I was running as a minority representative, both politically and otherwise.

I was elected four times by Democrats to represent them. We had both Houses of the Legislature which were Republican controlled in a State which is heavily Democratic.

All I can say is that those Democrats who voted Republican must have felt we were better representing their needs and their positions and their problems than was the opposition. I think that is true.

I don't accept as a concept the one you have given. I think that both parties in this country should and only can be elected if they represent all the people and not a select group of the people, because this is a country in which the voters elect their representatives. Unless they

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feel they are representing their best interests, they don't elect them.

As far as percentage of blacks in the room, it comes pretty close to the percentage in the country. I happen to have appointed a great many blacks and women to key positions in my administration.

The head of our Civil Service, which had 144,000 employees, was a black woman, Ersa Poston. She left office when I did. She was hailed as being one of the most brilliant, successful and inspiring leaders in the Civil Service in the history of the State. So I am totally with you on this.

I have one other lady and then I am quitting.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, on this date, what is your assessment of Republican Party politics in 1976; specifically, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think President Ford is going to be nominated.

QUESTION: What about Reagan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If President Ford is going to be nominated, it would be hard for both of them to be, so I have to say I don't think he will be.

QUESTION: The polls show a decline in Mr. Ford's popularity.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You asked me what I thought on this day. If you have some different ideas, I respect those. You asked me what I thought. I am telling you.

We are going to have to call this off.

QUESTION: As you are probably aware, the issue of leasing the offshore oil property is a hot one here in California.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I understand.

QUESTION: We have heard accusations from the office of one of our Senators that while these oil companies who are to receive the leases pay 60 percent royalties to foreign governments, they will only be paying the American government 16 percent. Why does the American government accept such a small amount of money?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that you have got to say that the 60 percent which you are talking about is a decision which has come recently in foreign countries.

The United States wants to get the oil produced. There is a shortage of capital. If we want to become self-sufficient in energy, which I happen to believe in very strongly as being essential to our security and well-being and growth of our economy and employment, then we are going to need to invest in the next 10 years in energy in this

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country between \$600 million and \$800 million.

Now if the government is going to put up that money, that is fine. If private enterprise is going to put it up, they have to earn it. So it is a very simple arithmetic question.

I have read and supported very strongly the creation which the President recommended to the Congress of an energy independence authority which would have \$100 billion of borrowing capacity -- \$75 billion borrowing capacity and \$25 billion of capital -- to take the risks in getting this. It is like priming the pump and getting this program of energy self-sufficiency off dead center.

If you take a look at the figures, you will see that \$30 billion will be spent for importing oil next year. That \$30 billion if spent in the United States to increase production of domestic sources of energy would result in the employment of about a million more workers.

Why should we spend our money abroad when we can produce it here and employ Americans, and when we are short of employment?

Without energy, we are not going to have a rolling economy and a growing economy. I think we can have energy, economic growth, and protect the ecology and produce the jobs and the revenue for government.

I thank you all very much.

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(AT 1:20 P.M. PST)