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Office of the Vice President
(Nashville, Tennessee)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE
VICE PRESIDENT AT
METRO CENTER
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

(AT 11:45 A.M. CST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure indeed to be here in Nashville. I have got to say as one interested in architecture that this has got to be an experience, visiting this complex here. I don't know when I have seen a more attractive, beautiful setting than this patio over here. I would just like to say I think we need more of these in Washington.

It is a pleasure to be here. I would be delighted to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, let me ask you first of all, now that you have announced that you will not be running in the Presidential election of 1976, what are your future political plans and are you having any second thoughts about having made that decision?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have absolutely no plans at all. I wrote the letter and stand on every word that is in it. It expresses the feelings I had at the time and I still have. I think it was the right decision. I am totally relaxed and happy to be here.

QUESTION: Do you plan to do any campaigning for President Ford in the primaries?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Within the limits of the election laws, which are very strict and take a tremendous amount of interpreting, you cannot spend more than \$1,000 for any candidate during a nominating campaign. That includes travel or anything else.

So, what I have been doing is going on trips for the government and going on trips for fund raisings, related to and financed by the national committee. If the President's committee, President Ford's committee, financed the trip, then I can go on that.

QUESTION: Sunday, Mr. Callaway predicted that President Ford would carry the primaries in New Hampshire, Florida and Illinois, over Reagan and said if he didn't, he would be in serious trouble. Do you agree with those predictions?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. I wouldn't put it that way. I just say very simply that in my opinion, President Ford is going to be the nominee of the Republican Party. I have been in politics a long time. To make predictions about any specific vote or any specific situation on what your margin is going to be, I find always gets you into difficulties. I just think it is a very simple tradition in this country and both parties would indicate it, that the incumbent President will get the nomination.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you saying, back to one of your earlier questions that if the Ford Presidential committee pays, you will campaign for the President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sure.

QUESTION: In the primaries and beyond?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. The Ford Presidential committee will be only for the primaries. Then it becomes the national committee.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you predicting a Vice

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Presidential candidate at this point for Mr. Ford?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. For the last ten months I have been saying ever since I was confirmed by the Congress, that the President should not select his candidate for the Vice Presidency until after he is nominated, at which time he should then indicate whom he thought could best serve the country and the party and that that person would be nominated by the convention.

QUESTION: Could it be a woman?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know why not.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, if by some quirk of fate, Mr. Reagan should win the nomination, will you go out and campaign for him as vigorously as you would Mr. Ford?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If you answer that question in the affirmative, then you are giving credence to the possibility that he will win it. I don't think this is a possibility. Therefore, whenever I am asked that question, I point out that I think it is the fact that President Ford is going to win it. I think Governor Reagan will fade and President Ford is my candidate.

QUESTION: What do you like the most about being in Washington and dislike the most?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Perhaps the nicest thing that has happened is coming here and visiting this building and seeing so many nice people here. As far as Washington is concerned, I have an office in the Executive Office Building. This is the sixth time in 35 years I have been in that building, in one capacity or the other.

I know the city pretty well. I have known all the Vice Presidents since Henry Wallace. They were all frustrated. I came down with the determination and the recognition that the only function of the Vice President is to preside over the Senate of the United States, which is a great honor and a privilege.

Other than that, he is or she is a staff assistant to the President to undertake or carry out any assignments. Having come with that psychological orientation, I am delighted to be here. I have carried out the assignments that President Ford has given me to the best of my ability. I have had an interesting time in Washington.

QUESTION: Will you remain in Washington?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, ma'am.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, if you were President would you veto the tax bill that may come out in Congress?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not the President. Therefore, I have no responsibility. I just explained I am a staff assistant to the President. Any opinions I have, I give to the President. I don't try to anticipate or second guess him on what he is going to do.

QUESTION: Is it going to hurt him politically, running for the President again?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That again is a political question which is one he will have to decide and determine. But I can say to you that my observation of the President during the last year -- I really hadn't known him very well before -- is he is a man who tries to determine after the most careful study and examination of the issues and the problems, what is the right course of action for this country, what will reflect the best long term interests of the American people.

Then he takes that position regardless of short term political consequences. This quality I admire and respect. I think this country needs this. We have got to get off the short term political expediency purposes and take the right steps for the long

term best interests of America. That is what this President has the courage to do.

QUESTION: It sounds like you are campaigning for him.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am answering a question which you asked me, sir, trying to give the best I can to give the background on the issue.

QUESTION: Why is it that you are speaking at a fund raising event that competes with the Ford fund raising event at the same setting?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We have to rephrase your question. This is not a fund raising event. This is a bipartisan meeting. It is not competing with the Ford campaign this evening. If you want the background, I was asked by the State Chairman to come here for a fund raising meeting almost a year ago.

Unfortunately, the Congress deferred my confirmation until after the election. Therefore, I was unable to attend. I have been trying to come and then when the situation developed, that totally unbeknownst to the State Chairman, a Ford campaign committee was set up, a dinner. In order not to compete with that this was changed to a bipartisan meeting.

It is not fund raising.

QUESTION: It is Democratic and Republican?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir, a very happy occasion, very distinguished gathering.

QUESTION: Weren't you supposed to be attending a \$1,000 a plate luncheon meeting during the day today, but something came of that because of the Ford fund raising dinner?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think I had just explained. I never heard of \$1,000. But if you go back to what I said, originally there had been a plan a year ago to have a fund raising lunch. The price tag was never identified.

Then, I couldn't make it. But I wasn't confirmed. So, that postponed that. Then, I couldn't come before. Now I am here. This other dinner has been scheduled. Let's face it, in the Republican Party and in the Democratic Party, the national committees have to raise money.

Each of the candidates have to raise money. The Congressmen and Senators have to raise money. The local and State parties have to raise money. This is a very active period in terms of money-raising.

QUESTION: If I understood what you said, the Republican State Chairman did not know about this evening's Ford campaign dinner.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Let's put it the other way around. The Ford campaign group didn't know about this lunch when they set up the other party. But the State Chairman being a man of great discretion, perception, distinction, shifted his lunch to a bipartisan luncheon. I know that it is going to be a very pleasant, delightful occasion. I am thrilled at the opportunity of being here.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, yesterday Governor Hugh Carey made a hurried trip to Washington, to the Federal Reserve Board Chairman, asking for, I think, emergency funds of \$160 million for the State. Do you think that Mr. Burns should comply with that request?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wasn't at the meeting. I couldn't tell you what was said or what the arguments were. But now that you have raised the question of New York, I would like to say that New York City has a problem and that the President has recommended to the Congress and the Congress has passed a program to allow the guarantee

of some bonds during an interim period, while the credit of the city is being reestablished with the buyers of the bonds. Because the budget will have been balanced by 1978. There is a very serious question which I would like to take, in view of your thoughtful question, the opportunity or the advantage of that question to say, that unless revenue sharing is renewed in the next two weeks by the Congress of the United States, New York City's budget will not be in balance because they depend on \$243 million from revenue sharing.

That is in the budget to balance it. The whole action of Congress is to help New York, not to bail them out. Now they have taken this action which is based on a balanced budget. Without this money the budget won't be balanced.

I am not sure the action of the Congress will qualify for assistance during this period. Therefore, we face a very -- as Congress does, the city does and the State and the effect on other cities throughout the country -- a very serious situation. They have got two weeks to get this out of the committee and pass it.

Otherwise, it cannot be included in the budget. This is going to be the budget of every city and every state and every county throughout the United States. They will not be able to include these funds which they have had for the last four years.

QUESTION: Do you think it is very likely that Congress will extend revenue sharing in the next few weeks?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am praying for it every night. I just think it is the most important single thing that Congress has to do between now and celebrating Christmas.

QUESTION: What kind of response are you getting from those prayers?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: My reading is not very clear yet. But it is an awfully important question. Every municipality, every state has got this problem. A lot of other cities have got fiscal problems. If this pushes them over and Congressional action has not been taken, there may be some Christmas vacations spoiled.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, Secretary Treasurer Simon said he would oppose any so-called new international economic order at the upcoming meetings in Paris. Does this reflect your opinion?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: One, I don't know what they are. Two, I didn't know he made the statement. Three, this is out of my field. I am afraid I can't be helpful to you on that.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the latest Gallup poll gives President Ford only a 41 percent approval rating. Would you comment on his chances in the general election next year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The second time I ran in New York, I had a 24 percent approval rating. I won by 500,000 votes. So that I would like to put it this way: That when someone is an executive in a period of transition of the kind we are going through and makes tough decisions because he thinks they are in the best interests of the country and they have an adverse short term political effect, it is bound to affect his rating.

But, in the long term, when people go to the polls, they vote for people who have the courage to do what they think is right for this country or for a state. I wouldn't put too much weight on that.

The other thing I would say is that the approval rating of Congress, if you will forgive me, is down around 17 percent. On the theory that you have just proposed, I would have to assume that nobody would get reelected from Congress.

QUESTION: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. It is a pleasure.