

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President
(Louisville, Kentucky)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE GALT HOUSE HOTEL
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

(AT 4:05 P.M. EST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure for me to be here in Kentucky and to have a chance to support the two-party system, which I happen to believe in very strongly.

I have fund-raising occasions. I just came up from Miami where I was attending a meeting with the International Presidents of the AFL-CIO on the Energy Independence Authority legislation which is before the Congress, in which they have a great interest, which is designed to encourage this country's development of its own energy resources, to permit us to be independent of another boycott.

Also, we are spending this year \$30 billion in foreign exchange to buy oil abroad, 40 percent of our oil. So that we are far more vulnerable now than we were before. Another boycott, if it occurred, would be absolutely disastrous to the economy of the East Coast of this country.

This bill involves \$25 billion in equity, \$75 billion borrowing capacity to help finance those areas of risk in the private enterprise sector to encourage independence.

I am delighted to answer any questions anyone may have.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, with respect to that meeting, you met with a number of labor leaders, people who had walked out on President Ford after he vetoed the common situs picketing bill. How would you explain your friendship with them and their animosity towards President Ford?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First, they actually didn't walk out of those committees. They stayed on the committees. They didn't attend the meeting, but they didn't resign, which I am very glad of.

These are long-time friends of mine. George Meany worked on Rockefeller Center when my father was building it back 42 years ago. I knew him then.

I knew him when he was head of the AFL in New York State. During the war when I was Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs he was on the advisory committee that I had. He went as a delegate to the Mexico City Conference with me.

His friendship goes back 45 years. We have a community of interest in this legislation. I went down there

MORE

to discuss it with him, discuss the plans as they are developing. So I was with a lot of old friends.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you agree totally with President Ford's position in regard to court ordered busing?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I wouldn't be able to quote you exactly what his position is. My personal feeling is that this has got to be one of the toughest problems that this country faces today.

I happen to believe in the Constitution of the United States. I think it is the great bulwark of this country in facing our problems. You have a court decision and court orders, and we have to support as government officials the laws of the land.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the courts have exceeded their authority in any way in ordering desegregation?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have followed the policy as Governor and subsequently as Vice President of not trying to second-guess either the legislature or the courts. I am not in a position to do so. So I really couldn't tell you because I don't know enough about the case to be able to say.

QUESTION: Would you support some kind of constitutional amendment or some method of change?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You mean in what capacity?

QUESTION: With respect to busing.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Pardon me; but I am not in a position. I am not in the Congress. I am President of the Senate, but as you know, I can't speak without unanimous consent of the Senate. So that I am not in a position there.

QUESTION: Do you feel there are any better ways than busing to desegregate schools?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, there are lots of ways, and this country is working on a lot of them. In many areas it has worked very well. In others it hasn't.

I have to say busing in and of itself has been an integral part of the development of our educational system, and more recently it has been involved -- only recently -- in the desegregation.

There are some communities where this has worked very well. In some others it hasn't. It has got to be one of the most difficult problems we face as a Nation.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, on the way in from the airport, what was your reaction to all of the security? In Louisville we haven't seen this kind of security dating back to the housing marches in the 1960's.

MORE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I tell you, I don't have any reaction to security. I take it as it comes and leave it in the hands of those who are responsible. So as far as I am concerned, I have confidence they will do what they think is right.

And where there are problems, where there is tension, you have just got to recognize the realities. This is a democracy and people feel strongly about things and they want to express themselves, and that is part of our system.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, did you have a chance to discuss politics with George Meany?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't say I discussed politics with him. I listened to him on the subject.

QUESTION: Did the subject of your political future at all come up in that discussion?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what did he have to say about politics that you listened to?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I tell you, Connie, you really ought to ask him. He is more eloquent on the subject.

QUESTION: The ad said you mentioned the two-party system. The latest polls indicate that somewhere between 18 to 22 percent of all enrolled voters are Republican. I would like to know whether in your opinion it could go down any further.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It would be hard, I would think.

(Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But this is not a new situation. I ran for Governor in a State where the Republican Party was a minority party by over a million registered votes.

I think while the registrations are low, and, of course, they have been dropping in all parties and the registration of those who say they are Independents has gone up.

But people in this country are very sophisticated and very flexible. They vote for individuals whom they feel they have confidence in. The only way you can be elected if you run on a Republican line, except in a few spots in this country, is by Independents and Democrats.

I think very simply that anybody who wants to run for office, regardless of what line he is running on, has got to do a job that reflects the best interests of the people. That is what I have always tried to do, regardless of the party.

MORE

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you satisfied with the management of President Ford's campaign?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I have nothing to do with the management of his campaign. I am not privy to the details of how it is being operated. The proof of the cake is always in the eating. We are going to have the primary results coming in pretty soon. I think that the President is going to win in New Hampshire and I think he is going to win in Florida.

QUESTION: Can he withstand losses in both Florida and New Hampshire, in your opinion, and go on and win the nomination?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think it is going to happen.

QUESTION: If it happened.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't like to speculate about what I don't think is going to happen because I think it is bad luck.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, a lot of people have been speculating that President Ford is in trouble both in New Hampshire and in Florida. Have some of those people been talking to you and urging you to run for the Presidency yourself?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, anyone who would say that to me, I would say just what I said now. The President is my candidate. I am supporting him.

I am enthusiastic. I think he is going to win in New Hampshire. He is going to win in Florida. I think he is going to win in Illinois and go on to win the nomination. I don't go beyond that.

QUESTION: Did Meany make such a suggestion to you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, you are going out on a series of speeches. Can you explain what they are about and why you are doing this?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They are about the United States, its future and our role in the world. I happen to be tremendously optimistic about the opportunities which lie ahead of us as a Nation, and that this is the moment for us to grasp them.

I think that we have the capabilities in terms of human resources in this country, in terms of natural resources, to get the economy rolling, to get jobs back which are so desperately needed by people through economic growth.

I deeply believe in growth. I think we can protect

our ecology and restore our natural resources and at the same time produce the energy, the raw materials, and the jobs, and that this is the only way this country can meet its own needs at home and play its role in the world.

Now, I have studied these problems for years. I am tremendously interested in them. I think that it is useful to have somebody talk about these issues which affect the future opportunity of American citizens, the future peace and freedom in the world. Those are the things I want to talk about.

QUESTION: They are not campaign speeches on behalf of President Ford?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, ma'am.

QUESTION: Why not?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can make campaign speeches if somebody asks me to, and I am delighted. And I can do what I have been doing right here, which is going to dinners to raise money for the party.

But there is no reason to exclusively make speeches for political purposes. There are lots of audiences, lots of groups who are interested in these subjects.

I spoke to the Atomic Engineering Society the other day on this question of energy and on this Energy Independence Authority. And, you know, everything isn't done in this country through politics alone. It is done by interested citizens through interested groups.

QUESTION: Are you not campaigning for President Ford because of what Bo Callaway has said and done?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I campaign anywhere and when anyone asks me.

QUESTION: Has anyone asked you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If you take what Bo Callaway said and you take it seriously, which was I was a liability in connection with the President getting the nomination, then you wouldn't exactly expect to be asked to campaign in the States where he is trying to get the nomination. So that was very simple as far as I was concerned.

I just withdrew as a Vice Presidential candidate to remove myself from being a liability, because I don't want to be that. I want to be positive and helpful.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, a recent column alluded to the fact that you have a campaign staff just waiting for the word from you at your beck and call. If there should be a deadlock at convention time, are you going to give them that beck and call?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First we have to take the

MORE

assumption about the staff being available at beck and call. If they are, I don't know where they are. They must be hidden somewhere because I haven't got them, and I am not paying anybody. So that on that, that isn't correct.

Number two, I don't think a convention deadlock will result in anyone starting campaigning. At that point there is not going to be any campaigning. The decision has been made by the delegates right then and there.

QUESTION: Are there any circumstances under which you would be a candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can't think of any now, to tell you the truth.

QUESTION: Would you say the family background holds any liabilities for you as far as being a candidate for the people of this country?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is a good question. That is what all my family thought when I said I was going to run for Governor. They all thought just what you said.

I said, "The only way to find out the answer to that is to run." So I ran for Governor. That was back in 1958. I was way down on the polls, around 36, 35 percent. But I won.

I believe in this country. I love it. I want to serve it. I want to be an authentic representative of the people, and that has to be elected.

I ran in a State, as I say, with a million registered votes starting out against me. I went to the people, got elected, and then went back three times and got reelected. So I served four terms.

So that I have to say the answer to your question is -- and let's face it, New York State has a pretty representative group of people. So that I think it is a pretty good cross-section. I think therefore I would come to the conclusion the answer is that it is not a handicap.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, last week you told a group of us that it was not only a liability but it was actually an asset to be a wealthy candidate.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: And I still feel that.

QUESTION: Why do you think that is?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: For the same reasons I said before. I think people today are looking for men and women to run for public office in whom they can have absolute confidence that they have the ability, they have the experience, and they have the integrity. That is what the people want; and that they are not going to use the office for purposes for which it was not designed.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, it was reported that you indicated in a public statement that should the President

falter, you will be there to take up the mantle.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That was a headline. But when you read the story, it was not substantiated by anything I said.

QUESTION: What is the clarification of that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The clarification of that is I have absolutely no plans as I stand here right now, that I think the President is going to be nominated, going to win these primaries and get nominated in the convention.

Therefore, I just am here relaxed and quiet and doing whatever I can to help those who want help.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you think Henry Kissinger is losing his effectiveness as Secretary of State?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You mean at home or abroad?

QUESTION: At home.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that the actions that the Congress has taken on some of these issues -- for instance, let's take an area that I am very familiar with, which is the Western Hemisphere.

When they passed the law two years ago in the Congress removing all OPEC nations from the most favored nation clause, which gave them a trade, they included Venezuela and Ecuador in this, even though Venezuela and Ecuador had not boycotted us when the oil boycott was on.

This kind of action just undermines our relations; well, it did with the whole Western Hemisphere. We have seen one thing after another of that kind which I think has weakened not the authority of the Secretary of State alone but has weakened the authority of the United States in the world, and our credibility. It is really very serious.

So I think we have a very serious situation on our hands. But it isn't the Secretary of State. It is this situation, for whatever the reasons are, that there has been a lack of, it is not even bipartisan; it is really sort of a difference between the Executive and Legislative branches where policy decisions have not been agreed on prior to the action.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, there is a bill before the Senate, Senate Bill 1, that has certain provisions in it that under certain circumstances, it would be illegal for a government employee to talk to members of the press, and it would also be illegal for him to listen, or her to listen.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That would simplify your life and mine both.

(Laughter.)

MORE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is an interesting bill. I hadn't heard about it.

QUESTION: You hadn't heard about that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. That is quite exciting. I am not sure how you communicate with the people under those circumstances because you would be isolated and insulated from the public.

I am not sure how a public figure would communicate with the American people. And in a democracy the only way he could be effective is communicating with the people. Free press, free radio, free television are the channels by which that communication takes place.

So you would have to tell me what was in the minds of those who wrote the suggested law you are referring to. That is hard for me to understand.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, earlier when we were talking to you in Lexington you said that you were going out on these series of speeches because you think it would be very useful to have people talking who are not running for any office because then they are not worried or constrained by political considerations and can talk and tell it like it is.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is right.

QUESTION: Do you think President Ford is not telling it like it is?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I think he is telling it like it is. I think all the rest of them are, all the other candidates. But I am not sure that they are as free to cover all of the issues as perhaps might be useful under these circumstances.

If you are running for office, you have got to concentrate on those issues which you think are of major concern to voters in terms of getting support; whereas, in my opinion, a lot of other issues are not as interesting for voters at this particular moment as they are important to the future of America.

The tendency in a campaign year, I think, is to discuss and operate on the short-term, immediate problems that are before us; whereas, the future of this country, future opportunities of the American people, is going to be related to some of the fundamental long-term issues which don't get as much attention.

Now, you weren't up there, but I had a meeting up in the Senate the other day with the Senate Operations Committee -- or was it Government Operations Committee -- on the subject of long-term planning, the importance of it. John Glenn has a special subcommittee.

I agree with him. I think we need to do more long-term planning in this country for the future. It was very

interesting because before we got through, all the members of the committee had gone, and I was sitting there talking to the audience.

I said, "This is a perfect illustration of why we don't have long-term planning, because everybody is involved in some crisis operation, and one after another the Senators have had to leave to go to vote, to go to committee meetings, or something else."

This is the problem. We don't have the chance to do the kind of quiet, long-term thinking and relationship to today's problems and tomorrow's needs and tomorrow's opportunities that I think we should. Those are the things I want to talk about.

QUESTION: If I may follow up on that, talking about long-term serious issues, though might be very attractive to voters.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This is not as attractive as the immediate problems that are bugging them. But I think they are important to discuss.

QUESTION: You don't think anyone would misconstrue this into being for the Presidential candidacy?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You might, but I don't think they will.

QUESTION: A philosophical question: This is the home of Abraham Lincoln, which we are very proud of. Ironically, the Republican Party is just about the extremist in this town.

What does the Republican Party need to do to renew itself? At one time it was a radical party. You have practically been driven out of the Vice Presidency because they think you are radical.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I tell you, I just happen to believe in two very simple things. One, I believe in this country & the basic concepts on which this country was founded, individual freedom and economic freedom. I think they are inseparable.

This is one of the subjects I want to talk about in the future because these two go together. If you lose economic freedom in search of security, then the first thing you know you have lost your individual freedom.

Secondly, I think as far as the Republican Party is concerned, in my own belief, that you can't get out of touch with people and their hopes, their aspirations, their fears, and the things that concern them.

What people want are representatives who understand those hopes and aspirations, those fears, who understand the problems and the opportunities and can translate them into action.

MORE

Now, if you go by that, then I think you are bound to have a vital party wherever you are; because, well, let's face it. In New York, as I said, we are a minority party and yet for 32 years, 28 out of those 32 years we had a Republican Governor and Republican control of both Houses of the Legislature -- even though we were a minority party.

Because the people felt we were concerned about them, that we had the capacity to solve their problems and do what they felt was in their interest.

I think it was right. That is what we based our position on: people. That is what makes up a democracy.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 4:27 P.M. EST)