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Office of the Vice President
(Lansing, Michigan)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE
VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
"HOLIDAY INN"
LANSING, MICHIGAN

(AT 4:45 P.M. EST)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to be back in Michigan, to have the pleasure of flying out with Congressman Brown, your distinguished Congressman, to have the opportunity of seeing again your Governor and his wife, for whom I have not only a great affection, but a tremendous admiration and respect. I served with him, knowing of his dedication to responsibilities and opportunities of State government under very difficult circumstances in the times we are in.

I would be delighted to answer any questions that anyone has, if I can.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, John Connally suggested that he might become an active candidate for the Presidency if Mr. Ford is either voluntarily or involuntarily removed from the race. Would you have any similar thoughts along those lines?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. My feeling is very simple, that the President of the United States is going to win in New Hampshire. He is going to win in Florida. And he is going to win in Illinois and go on to win the nomination.

I think that the response of the public to him is now really moving forward. I think that Mr. Reagan, Governor Reagan in his campaign, peaked too early.

Therefore, I don't think that opportunity that Mr. Connally is referring to is going to materialize.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you going to be talking to Governor Milliken on new ways to spare Michigan and to lower unemployment, especially in Detroit and especially now when the \$6 billion job bill has been vetoed?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As you know, in the President's veto message, he recommended congressional consideration of a bill introduced in the House by Congressman Brown and that that bill would be an extension of the present law. It would add \$750 million to the Community Development Program, which could result, in the first quarter after the bill is enacted and signed, in 38,000 jobs.

This is operated by the Department of HUD under Secretary Carla Hills. The President's feeling has been, and I share this concern on his part and this awareness, that to get action fast, this is the best way to do it. The bill as proposed which was passed in the Senate first, last year, before there had been this big increase in employment, 800,000 in January and that the bill, the bill in which the veto was sustained, while it had a lot of money in it, the effect of that

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bill would have taken a much longer time in terms of employment, perhaps one, at least to two years before the people would be employed. At the present rate at which the economy would be recovering, this would have been too late for what they wanted.

QUESTION: How does it look in Congress, that bill that was just introduced?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I would think myself that it would have a very good chance of passage.

QUESTION: How many jobs would be available this year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The bill is triggered by a seven percent unemployment rate and it applies in areas where the rate is eight percent or more.

It is weighted so that the higher the unemployment rate, the more money goes to the area. Therefore, this would have very significant implications in Detroit, where there are plans already in being, where these programs had been in the works and therefore, they would be ready to go.

I think it is very good. Of course, I also feel very strongly about the President's proposal on the Energy Independence Authority, which would call for the creation of an authority by the Federal Government with \$25 billion of equity capital and \$75 billion of borrowing power to take those risk investments which private enterprise can't get the capital for in the field of energy production in this country.

Whether it is for an atomic power plant that had been planned and then cancelled because they couldn't get financing, which this corporation could finance, I understand there are perhaps four such in Michigan, or the rehabilitation of railroads or the financing of pipelines where they could not get private capital or gasification of coal, there is a whole list of possibilities.

This bill to me would stimulate both employment nationwide and most importantly would get us out of the vulnerable position we are in now where there is an increase in importation of oil. We are up to 40 percent now, spending \$30 billion this year.

If we spent that \$30 billion in the United States we then would have 1,200,000 jobs from that expenditure, annually.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, there is growing speculation that if the President does not do well in the New Hampshire primary that you might step in and try to run for President yourself. Would you do that in any way, shape or form?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can't visualize any possibility of that situation developing. I am confident the President is going to win in New Hampshire, despite some of the despondence, and that he will go on to win in Florida.

These speculations are interesting. I think many of them are inspired by the opposition who hope to create an atmosphere of uncertainty. I think the President is gaining in popularity. I think he has had the courage to stand for

those things which are in the best interest of this country, the long term best interest. He has the courage to take positions that were of short-term political unpopularity.

This is the kind of leadership this country needs. This is what he is giving. I think it is coming through to the people. I think they are beginning to appreciate it.

With that surge of employment that began in January and is continuing in February, I think this is going to be a situation that is going to surprise a lot of people.

QUESTION: What do you think, on that same vein, of Ronald Reagan's chances of beating President Ford out of the nomination?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I thought I just covered that. But I will go back over it. If Mr. Ford, as I am confident he will, wins the first three primaries, I think it would be very hard for Mr. Reagan to maintain any momentum at all. And it wouldn't be long before it would be difficult to raise funds. Therefore, with no momentum and no funds, one is faced with a decision as to whether to continue. This is a very expensive business.

QUESTION: Yesterday in your speech to the National Press Club, you indicated a degree of unhappiness with the primary campaigns, Presidential candidates. You indicated the vital issues before the nation were not being discussed. You indicated you felt the primaries were merely personality contests.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: And promises.

QUESTION: It was interesting that you did not exclude any of the candidates from those remarks. Does that indicate that thus far you have not seen evidence that Mr. Ford or any other candidate is raising those issues and bringing forth this national discourse that you called for?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, as you know, Mr. Ford has done very little campaigning since the primary started. He has been concentrating on the problems in Washington and has been dealing with the specific issues before him just such as the one we have been discussing, this veto.

But he has not had the opportunity to go on national television to discuss these major issues. He has got a great big responsibility carrying the load as President of the United States. To have a Lincoln-Douglas debate you have to have two sides of the debate.

I think, myself, that these are the issues which need to be discussed. I intend to do it.

QUESTION: Do you see anything improper in President Nixon's visit to China, and do you think it is in any way going to hurt President Ford in the New Hampshire primary?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the American people would really judge for themselves. I think the visit speaks for itself. I wouldn't comment on that.

QUESTION: Do you think it is a nonpolitical visit?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I didn't say that.

QUESTION: Would you comment on whether you think it would have any effect on the President's chances in New Hampshire?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I really don't think it will. I don't think it will. But whether that was the intent or not is another question.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, in the event --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There was a lady asking a question here. I beg your pardon.

QUESTION: Ron Nessen says you are actively campaigning for President Ford. How are these campaigns being financed, your campaigns?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ron Nessen, is that what he said?

He said that I was going to campaign and that there were arrangements made. What has happened factually, to give you the answer, is I have spoken at fund raising occasions for the President, for the National Committee and for local fund raising programs as tonight, mostly for State Republican Party fund raising occasions.

I have not actually campaigned in a primary. As I explained yesterday, that is quite simple to understand because as Mr. Callaway said, he thought I was the President's biggest liability in getting the nomination. So, I didn't expect to be asked to go to the primaries to campaign. But I have not actually gone to any campaigning occasions.

QUESTION: Will you be going? Will you be starting campaigning?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I would be delighted to do it if I am invited.

QUESTION: Is Mr. Callaway perhaps a liability himself to the President's effort?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not involved in any way in the campaign strategy. Therefore, I am not in a position to appraise liabilities or assets based on firsthand knowledge. In politics I am very careful not to speak on the subject unless I have the information as background on the basis of which to make a conclusion. I wouldn't be able to answer your question.

QUESTION: A moment ago you suggested it seemed, in your answer on the New Hampshire question, that perhaps you feel Mr. Nixon might be trying to embarrass the President by going to China now. Is that an accurate assumption?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That would be the same kind of question as the one about Mr. Callaway. I really don't know why he is doing what he is doing.

QUESTION: What is your feeling?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have no basis for judging what the motivations are for what he is doing. If you asked me, would I do the same thing under the circumstances -- well, not under the circumstances because I wouldn't have been in the situation.

(Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Let me put it this way: I think the timing was unusual.

QUESTION: Is it unfortunate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I would say it was unusual. Let me say I think the American people are extremely intelligent; very intuitive and that they are not fooled by acts that are not, in their opinion, related directly to the substance up for discussion. The substance up for discussion is the primary in New Hampshire.

QUESTION: Do you think it may be political?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think it will have any effect, is what I think.

QUESTION: Would you have done it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I said that.

QUESTION: If in fact Gerald Ford is nominated at the Convention, do you think the conservative wing will get behind him and support him as he moves back to the center?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. The conservative wing of the party is the wing that has its important strength in New Hampshire and Florida. Those are two areas, two States. If he wins the nomination as I am confident he will in those, then I think that he just goes on with that support and with broader support in the party as well.

I think he is in the center. I think he is a centrist who has the confidence of the broad spectrum of the Republican Party.

QUESTION: Do you think the President's stand on abortion calling for another constitutional amendment on abortion will hurt him in his campaign? Will it cost him the votes?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think, in New Hampshire.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you said something about the States that were most conservative. Would you repeat that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I said that the Republican voters in New Hampshire and Florida, in my opinion, are basically conservative voters.

QUESTION: That might be the place where President Ford might get in trouble?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I think he is going to win them. The reason I answered the question as I did was, will he have conservative support? I said yes because having won in New Hampshire and Florida, this would be the evidence that that group was supporting him.

QUESTION: Do you think he is going to win in his home State of Michigan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am sure of that.

QUESTION: By what percentage?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know. When I ran for office, I was always satisfied if I got a plurality of one. Then you were elected. Anything beyond that was just something you were grateful for. But I never wanted to take anybody's vote for granted.

QUESTION: Would you want Governor Milliken to be a Vice Presidential candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am for Governor Milliken for anything he wants to do.

QUESTION: Would you support him for Vice President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I would support him for anything.

QUESTION: Would you encourage him to run for it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I don't believe in trying to influence anything into anything.

QUESTION: Would you try to influence somebody in the party to get him to run?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. This is President Ford's responsibility, not mine. He is the only man who should make that decision. He should not make it until after he has received the nomination. At that point he should then have apprised the situation, see who he felt could best serve the nation as a whole and at that point, announce his candidate.

QUESTION: Has President Ford ever given you any short range or long range goals in helping higher education meet their ever increasing costs?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: President Ford, as you know, is deeply concerned about the size of the Federal deficit which will be in the neighborhood of \$70-75 billion this year. Next year his budget called for a deficit of \$40 billion.

Therefore, he is not in a position and has not recommended additional programs to add to the deficit. What he has tried to do is to hold down the growth of the present programs and only meet those absolutely crucial or essential needs.

Having been a Governor for 15 years, the Federal Government's role in education has always been very small. I think we got five percent of our budget from the Federal Government. It was very interesting, just a matter for those

who are interested in politics, when we were working on revenue sharing which I was working for very hard. All the Governors were for it, but I was sort of taking the lead in working on it in Washington. We were trying to gather the support of the cities, the counties, the towns, the villages and education to join in with us.

The education lobby, if you want to call it that, or the educational groups, teachers associations, federations and so forth, they decided that they would rather go on their own and get their own money and not join in revenue sharing.

They didn't join in revenue sharing. We got revenue sharing and they didn't get their bill through. That doesn't mean though that in many States or many cities or many counties or many towns or villages where they get revenue sharing that they are not using that money for education. They have the freedom to do it. That is what I think is so great about revenue sharing.

QUESTION: How do you assess Republican congressional chances this year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think there will be a substantial gain in seats.

QUESTION: Why do you think that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Because I think that the public has changed tremendously in its thinking and feeling about what has been going on in this country in the last two years.

These deficits, inflation, unemployment, if you take what Governor Brown is saying in California, what the Governor of Massachusetts is saying in Massachusetts, the Governor of New York, all of whom are Democrats, all who you thought would come in with liberal programs, they are talking more conservatively about expenditures than any Republicans that I have known in a long time.

This message has not gotten through yet or has been recognized yet by many of the Democrats in Congress. Therefore, when I think they go up for election, they are going to find that their constituents have changed their attitude, are worried about inflation, worried about jobs and want somebody who is going to hold those things down. They don't want dead-end jobs, make-work jobs in Government.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, does the United States have any intention of recognizing the MPLA in Angola?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have no idea.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, several weeks ago Senator Goldwater said that he could accept you as a Presidential candidate after your conversion from liberalism. Is that the same kind of conversion that you were making reference to with Governor Brown and Governor Carey and others?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It depends on how you define the word conversion. If you have run out of money, you stop spending or you go into debt and finally go into bankruptcy.

All of our levels of government today have run out of money, except a few governments who happen to be in States where they have oil that is under property owned by the State or something of that kind where you get large revenues.

I think this is an evolution that is taking place in the nation. Anyone who is intelligent and who is aware of the forces and the factors and the realities would obviously change to meet those realities. Whether you call that a conversion or whether you call it a simple recognition of the realities, that is a choice.

QUESTION: Would you say Senator Goldwater would support you as long as you don't have any money?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is an addition which neither he nor I made. I think it would sound like a good headline, but I don't think it has anything to do with the realities.

It is a pleasure. Nice to be with you all.

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(AT 5:10 P.M. EST)