

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President
(Ocean City, Maryland)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
MARYLAND STATE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION
CAROUSEL CENTER HOTEL
DELMARVA ROOM
OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

(AT 4:35 P.M. EDT)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a privilege to be here in Ocean City, and have the privilege of meeting the State Central Committee, and flying over with the two distinguished Senators, your senior Senator, Mac Mathias, and your junior Senator, J. Glenn Beall, two of the outstanding leaders in our Senate. And I have the great privilege and pleasure as Vice President of presiding over the Senate of the United States.

They won't let me speak without a unanimous consent vote, nor have I had the privilege of voting, and I can only vote to break a tie. But this is an exciting time of the year in the life of a democracy, and an important time as far as the future of freedom and its basic values in which we all believe, human dignity and the rights of all citizens.

So that I am delighted to have a chance to participate in a gathering of one of the important political meetings that are taking place. I would like to say that to be here with your State Chairman, Dave, and my very good and old friend, Louise Gore, Dick Allen, those are all things that mean a great deal to me in public life for quite a while, and leader of the Republican Party in another State where we had minority registration, but Republicans elected both Senators and the Governorship, and controlled both Houses of the Legislature.

I would be delighted to answer questions, but would just like to say before I do, how much I respect these two gentlemen that I am standing between. And, also, to say that this is an election year and Glenn Beall is up for election, and it isn't only just Maryland that got interested, the United States has, and we are very grateful to him. We need him badly.

(Applause)

This is a sophisticated State, so I have a feeling the voters are going to appreciate the outstanding representation they have.

Are there any questions?

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, could you give your assessment of the three upcoming primaries next week in Ohio, New Jersey and California?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that one can

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give an opinion on that. I think that the President is the big winner by an overwhelming majority in New Jersey and Ohio. I think that California is a favorite-son State, but I wouldn't write it off as far as the President is concerned. His record is outstanding in terms of restoring public respect and confidence in the Presidency and in the Executive Branch of government, trust.

His record in the economic field is really beyond the fondest hopes of anybody, cutting inflation in half. The employment is up 2,600,000 from just a year ago, which nobody thought was possible to cut down inflation and to get employment rolling.

The growth rate of the Nation now is at a rate of 8.5 percent, which is phenomenal. Personal income is up seven and a half billion. So that things look awfully good, and one has to say that we are at peace in a period of tremendous difficulty. And the President's great skill and wisdom and the great negotiating ability of the Secretary of State are responsible for that.

So, based on those factors, I have to say, despite the favorite-son situation in California, I wouldn't write that off for the President. I think he has a chance.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you think if the balloting went beyond two ballots -- there seems to be great concern in Maryland about the possibility of a lot of politicking going on -- what would happen if it went two ballots? Would the President be able to carry Maryland, for example, if it went beyond two ballots?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't presume as an outsider to try and speak as to what would happen in Maryland or any other State.

I do personally happen to think that the President will be elected on the first ballot, or renominated on the first ballot. I said last Sunday on Face the Nation I thought he would go to the convention with a minimum of 1,102 delegates, which would leave him 28 short, and New York and Pennsylvania together had 30 uncommitted delegates. So that to me, the President is going to get this on the first ballot, both in terms of the political realities, plus the extraordinary record that he has achieved in the year and a half or two years and a half as President.

So, I really don't see going beyond the first ballot.

QUESTION: You have some reason to believe, Mr. Vice President, that he is going to get the uncommitted delegates from New York?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I am very hopeful. And being reasonably well acquainted with the group there, my feeling is that his chances are very good.

QUESTION: Will you be doing any traveling this weekend in any of the primary States?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir.

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QUESTION: You have stayed out of the primary States?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Would you have liked to have done more campaigning for the President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will do anything in my power to help the President get the nomination and be reelected.

There was, as you may remember, some discussion earlier, as I refer to the minority of a minority, that felt my presence on the ticket would be a detriment to his getting the nomination. Although, I had said right along that I wasn't a candidate, that nobody in the history of this country has ever run for the Vice Presidency, and I didn't think the President should make up his mind about a Vice President until after nominated, and at that point he should decide who in his opinion would then best reflect the Nation's interests and the Party's interests.

However, that wasn't sufficient. So I wrote a little letter to clarify the situation, and said that I would like not to have my name considered. So, having done that, it seemed to me it was wise not to intervene in the primaries.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you think it would be wise if the President considered the Senator from Maryland as a Vice Presidential candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can't see how he could make up a list of outstanding Republicans without having his name on the list.

QUESTION: Why?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Because he is such an outstanding person, such ability, such integrity, such dedication to the well-being of this country. such knowledge.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, did you decide to come to Maryland for any particular reason other than --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Primarily because I was invited. I am grateful for the invitation because I have a lot of friends here, been here before. And I love our country, and I love our system and like to participate in it.

QUESTION: Rogers Morton sent a telegram to the Republicans in the State of Maryland, concerning matters that pertained to this State. Do you know anything about that? Are you going to get involved in it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I know about it because I read about it. It is a very delicate position. And I have to think that if you have been in Congress, that you feel responsible for taking an active part in what goes on in States around the country.

If you have been a governor, as I have, you are primarily concerned with the responsibility for your affairs

in your own state and you don't go out and tell people in other states what you think they ought to do, nor do you expect them to come in your state and tell you. So this is a different point of view between the legislature and executive.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you have any reaction to Mr. Reagan's alleged statement concerning the possible use of American troops?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I did put out a statement on the subject, that he was extending his war plans from the tropics in Central America and Panama, to the highlands of Rhodesia in Africa, and I didn't think the American people were interested in getting involved in one or more Vietnam-type wars. Frankly, it is inconceivable to me.

And that is why I support President Ford, because he has kept us at peace.

QUESTION: The situation in Panama, do you believe we ought to stay in the Zone or give it up to the Panamanians?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is not the option. This thing has been oversimplified. I happen to have been closely associated with Latin America a great many years. I was Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs for President Roosevelt. The actual fact of the matter is that we do not have sovereign rights over the territory which is the Panama Canal.

And President Taft, prior to the time he was President, wrote to Teddy Roosevelt and explained the situation to him, that we have privileges which are tantamount, the same as one would have in terms of the use of the area as though one had sovereign rights.

Now, the Panamanians and the President of Panama, have a very strong feeling, which exists throughout the world today, of dignity and self-respect for their nations. The era of colonialism has gone by, the European colonialism. There are certain new forms of colonialism taking shape in the world.

And they want to restore their sense of self-respect. All they want is see the Panamanian flag next to the American flag in the Zone. They want the Americans to stay there. They want them to operate the Canal, and want our troops to stay there, but want the sense of self-respect and dignity that goes with the question of sovereignty.

The idea of our fighting over this issue, every country in Latin America supports Panama in this position. If we get into a war, it would be another Vietnam-type of war. And let's face it, the Cubans would relish that situation, because it would give them and Communists throughout the hemisphere the chance to unite against the United States, and would be a serious thing for our national security.

This is a question that could be worked out, settled to everybody's interest. It is artificially blown up and made into a campaign issue, based on, frankly, either

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a lack of knowledge of the facts or a distortion of the facts. And in either case, they are not qualifications for national leadership, nor calling the President of the country a tinhorn dictator. Anybody who wants to be President of the United States doesn't start out by moving on that plane, because that not only was an insult to the President of Panama, but taken as such by all the leaders of the Western Hemisphere.

QUESTION: If Communists do gain some election strength in Italy, not only would we have to reassess our commitments with Italy and NATO, but how would that affect our fleet strength in the Mediterranean?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First, let me say this: I don't think that is going to happen. This is, of course, presumptuous on my part, because I was talking to an Italian correspondent in Washington, one of the outstanding correspondents from an independent paper in Italy, about that subject.

And when you look at the things in perspective, you see Italy has had in the last 15 or 20 years the greatest period of growth and prosperity and broadening of social progress that it has had in its history.

It seems to me, having been through this period of prosperity which has grown out of this association with the NATO countries, and finding themselves in difficulties today, was not because of something the Government has done, but because of the action taken by the OPEC countries in a 500- or 600-percent increase in oil prices. That is the basis of their problems.

It seems inconceivable to me anyone would want to change a government that has been so successful and go to a government which says they would be independent, but if you look at the record, the Hungarian Communists tried to be independent of Moscow, and the result was they came in with the tanks. The Czechoslovakian Communists tried to be independent and were overrun by military force. And I think any Communist government that says they are going to be independent and, therefore, democratic, and, therefore, have all the evidences of the free-enterprise system that we know, I think it is just a tactical maneuver.

So, I can't believe the people of Italy -- and I was over there to view the tragedy of the earthquake after the President sent an urgent message to Congress, asking for 25 million for relief, and to show the warmth and feeling in this country toward Italy. The Congress acted within the day, both Houses, on this measure.

And I went over, and the reaction in Italy was fantastic. One hundred eighty thousand people in this area, 90,000 made homeless in one minute by this earthquake; 2,000 more killed; another 2,500 in the hospitals; 90,000 homeless, living in tents. All they want is material so they can rebuild.

And the reaction to United States action and the visit was fantastic. They know where their friends are. That is my feeling.

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QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the leasing of offshore drilling sites, I wonder what provisions or recommendations has the Administration made towards setting up compensation for beach communities such as Ocean City, in case the oil spills would adversely affect the town economically?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If you take the record of the past, almost all the overwhelming oil spills have come from tankers, not from drilling rigs. So the precautions taken are fantastic. The Coast Guard is responsible for the controlling of any action, and I can't tell you right now whether the government has taken -- maybe McC. knows -- any provision relating to insurance on offshore drilling.

Offshore drilling is not a new art. It's been going on now for a considerable period in other parts of the country very successfully, and with tremendous security. But I don't honestly know, but will find out and let you know.

QUESTION: What is that new type of colonialism you mentioned?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Soviet. I mean, what happened in Angola is a perfect example, where they organized while they were a colonial country, colonial Communist party in one of the tribes. And when they get independence, they move in military equipment. We moved in to counter it, and were not successful. And went to the colonial troops the way the British used the Gurkhas, and Cuban troops.

I see they are coming out, but this is a perfect example of the growing power and new form of colonial empire, just at the moment when everybody else has pulled back.

Thank you very much. A pleasure.

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(AT 4:55 P.M. EDT)