

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 1976

Office of the Vice President
(Huappauge, New York)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
COLONIE HILL RESTAURANT
HUAPPAUGE, NEW YORK

AT 7:52 P.M. EDT

QUESTION: Can you tell us, Mr. Vice President, what you observed on your trip up here, sir, and what your purpose is in making the survey and what the President may have said to you regarding your trip?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First, in the order you asked me, we flew in low, coming into New York Harbor, and then flew about 60 miles along the beach. I didn't see a person, saw two trucks, with Jack Wydler, Norm Lent and Jim Cannon, standing right behind you, who is head of the Domestic Council, the President's Executive Assistant.

The President, who I saw and talked with this afternoon and who asked Jim to come up on this trip so he can take the boat trip tomorrow morning, said he was ready to support the Federal share of whatever action is necessary to deal with the situation. He authorized me to quote him on that.

QUESTION: That's Jim Connors?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That's the President of the United States, named Gerald R. Ford.

QUESTION: We had that earlier.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That's right.

QUESTION: What are you going to recommend, Governor?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, it's not a question of what I recommend. It's what is needed, and that is going to depend on what the experts say is the cause of the problem and the nature of the problem and how it can be solved.

QUESTION: The fact that no one is on the beach in 90 degree heat, doesn't that give you an idea?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's the tragedy of the situation. And, of course, the extraordinary situation is the source of this and the cause of this is not really understood as yet. They are going out tomorrow morning, Jim Cannon and his environmental assistant, plus some EPA people.

MR. CANNON: Yes, sir, and representatives of other government agencies that may be involved.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Hopefully, the State has sent someone to participate.

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QUESTION: How long do you think before we will have an answer?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You mean an answer as to what the cause is?

QUESTION: What the immediate solution might be.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You've got to find out the cause. There are two facets, I suppose. One is whatever action is necessary in the clean-up. But fundamentally, the question is where is this stuff coming from and why is it appearing now, which is not too clearly understood. But it is a very, very serious situation.

The President is very concerned about it, and that is why he wanted us to fly over this afternoon and Jim Cannon to come up here to take this trip tomorrow and try and get at the heart of the problem so it can be dealt with.

QUESTION: Leaving out the cause of the problem, just with the pollution problem alone, do you think that Federal aid is appropriate for cleaning that pollution up and getting the beaches back to their normal position?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That statement, I assume, is predicated on the assumption that the source of the pollution is abated. But I'm not sure that is true yet. And if the source of the pollution is not abated, then a single clean-up is going to result in maybe a temporary relief. But if the water is polluted, it's not going to solve the problem. That's what worries me.

I saw the Jones Beach, for instance, as we flew over. You could see the mark of where they had had drags on the beach, where it looks like they cleaned it up. And I don't know whether it is true they are going to open Jones Beach tomorrow.

QUESTION: Yes, and most of the Nassau beaches, too.

QUESTION: Not Jones. They're not opening Jones.

QUESTION: Some of it will be open tomorrow. Two sections of beach are closed tomorrow, the west end.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This is why we have got to get more information.

QUESTION: Other business, sir; I understand you are here to court some of those uncommitted delegates.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think there are any uncommitted delegates in Nassau. No, I am up here to be with my old friend Joe Margiotta. It's sort of like a reunion, as far as I am concerned, and just to be with him and a lot of old friends who are here from the Nassau Assembly and the Congress and in local positions as well as good loyal Party supporters.

QUESTION: Sir, you have said in the past that you believe that President Ford will be the victor in August.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: Now it's coming down to the fact it is going to be a very close race. Do you still hold to that stern, hard belief you gave us about two or three months ago?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir. I think he is going to get the nomination. I think he is going to be elected.

QUESTION: Will you be recommending Maurice Nadjari for a Federal judgeship?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not aware of the fact that Mr. Nadjari isn't presently occupied.

QUESTION: Obviously, he won't be occupied at the end of this month.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

QUESTION: If he weren't occupied, would you recommend him?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He is an outstanding man, and if I were asked for recommendations, I can't imagine anyone with more courageous dedication to the best interests of the people, who opposes corruption in any form.

QUESTION: Does that mean you would be recommending him for a Federal judgeship?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know that he is going to be available.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, going back to a few years ago, when you were governor and you were out here, you promised Long Island the finest railroad in the world.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: And you've got it.

QUESTION: One of the gentlemen who was with you in those days, Harold Pryor, wants to tell you he's here tonight.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Good for Harold, and I want to see him. He is my friend.

QUESTION: He will be delighted to hear that. We'll carry the message to him.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Will you do that?

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, there is still speculation that you might be a running mate of President Ford's in the campaign.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There is only one person that is qualified to do the speculating, and that is the President. He makes the nomination. The rest of them are just guessers.

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QUESTION: If he makes the offer, what might your answer be?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have already written him, withdrawing my name from his list.

QUESTION: How close is this really going to come down to between Mr. Ford and Mr. Reagan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It's close, but that makes it more exciting, you see. It gets lots of interest.

QUESTION: What might the turning point be? What might the pivotal point --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I have to think the turning point was when New York State went 119 delegates for President Ford.

QUESTION: The Vice President had something to do with that.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I spoke, but so did Jake Javits, Frank Horton, Dick Rosenbaum. And we have got lots of very able, independent delegates who came to the conclusion that President Ford represented the best interests of their country. And I think his record in the last two years is just fantastic.

Nobody would have thought two years ago that faith and trust in the Executive Branch of government would be restored in this short period after what we went through and that we would have inflation cut in half, 3,200,000 more jobs today than there were a year ago and a growth rate of 8.7 percent for the first quarter of this year.

QUESTION: What is your reaction to the latest Gallup poll that Carter could beat either Ford or Reagan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: My reaction is simple. That is what the polls showed when I started running against Harriman. It showed I was 36 percent and he was 64 percent. The next year I was down to 24 percent. I never let that bother me. I was interested in what happened in the ballot box or in the booth, and each time I just got across the line.

QUESTION: Do you think Governor Carey is making a mistake in letting Nadjari leave office?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I wouldn't want to get into a local political situation. I appointed Mr. Nadjari, and I think that the man has shown extraordinary courage, independence and a deep concern for protection of people's interests. I don't know what more you can ask.

QUESTION: Do you think if you were governor, Nadjari would be still in there fighting?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't want to put anyone on the spot, but I would have to assume what you say is true.

QUESTION: If you weren't Vice President after 1976, would you like to come back and be Governor of New York again?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. To tell you the truth, I would like to come back to New York, period,--

QUESTION: And do what?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: -- which is what I expect to do. Well, I am always interested in people and problems. And all you have to do is read the papers or listen to the radio or look at television and find out what is going on. And you get ideas what the problems are, and then you get ideas as to how you can solve them.

QUESTION: You would want to solve problems as a private citizen?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There are lots of ways you can serve your country. The public has got to understand the problems if they are going to support effective action by the Congress or the legislature. Therefore, I think this is a very important time to concentrate on public understanding of the critical issues facing this great Nation of ours.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure.

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AT 8:02 P.M. EDT