

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
ROBERT DOLE
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS
THE VICE PRESIDENT
ROBERT GRIFFIN
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN
AND
PAUL LAXALT
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA

THE CROWN CENTER HOTEL

12:05 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: It is a very great occasion for me, it is a very proud moment for me, to have the opportunity of introducing my running mate for this campaign in 1976.

I am really thrilled with the opportunity of having Bob Dole as my running mate. I am enthusiastic for a number of reasons. I have known Bob Dole a good many years. I served with him in the House of Representatives for eight years. He served with great distinction not only in the House but in the Senate of the United States, representing the great State of Kansas.

Bob Dole, of course, had an outstanding record in the military service in World War II. Bob Dole has been a team player. Bob Dole's philosophy and mine coincide identically. Bob Dole is a good campaigner. Bob Dole will help to heal any divisiveness within the party.

I have talked to Governor Reagan and told him of my selection. Governor Reagan has endorsed my selection of Bob Dole as my running mate. I have consulted with others who were very, very strong as potential candidates as my running mate and all of them have indicated their support, their endorsement, of Bob Dole.

So, it is a great pleasure, privilege and I am extremely proud to introduce to you Senator Bob Dole of the great State of Kansas as my running mate for victory in 1976.

Bob?

MORE

SENATOR DOLE: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mrs. Ford, Mr. Vice President, let me first introduce my wife, Elizabeth, from the State of North Carolina, and that will be part of our Southern strategy. (Laughter)

Let me also indicate that I did not expect to receive a phone call this morning, but I am very pleased that we were in. (Laughter)

I have known, of course, President Ford at a time when I could call him Jerry. As he has indicated, we served in the House together. He has been in many places in Kansas on my behalf, and I remember in 1974 when the going was tough and I was trying to be re-elected one of the President's -- I think the President's last -- campaign stops was in Wichita, Kansas, in the rain, and he came there to help me and I won by a very narrow margin after trailing some 12 points in the polls.

I say that to indicate his great help and also the fact that you can catch up if you are behind. (Laughter)

The Vice President, of course, was one of my earliest supporters in Kansas, and he came to Kansas, I think, to visit Alf Landon, and while he was there I had him do a little work for me. That was very helpful, too.

One of my other great supporters was Governor Reagan. He came to Wichita and did an outstanding job on my behalf. He is a great Republican, and I am certainly pleased that he has indicated that I will be all right. (Laughter)

So, I am just very pleased to be here. I am very proud to be on the ticket with President Ford for many, many reasons that I will go into as I go along the campaign trail.

I think he has an outstanding record. I am realistic. I know there is work to be done between now and November -- in fact, in a little over eight weeks -- but I want to be a part of a winning combination.

It is my opinion that we can win based on his leadership. I am not certain what I can add to the ticket but I will work hard and do the best I can, not just for the Republican Party, but because I think America needs President Ford's leadership for four more years.

Thank you very much.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: We have on the podium, just to indicate and to show the unity that has come out of a tough struggle and very hard competition, some people that I think will be extremely helpful and beneficial in the 74 days between now and November 2nd.

Of course, the Vice President has, himself, been a tower of strength in the two years that I have been President. He has not only done a great job as Vice President, but he has been of inestimable help to me in making some tough decisions. He fully supports this choice. He was in on the final decision-making. But I think, in addition to that kind of support, we are fortunate to have here two outstanding United States Senators who, for the last few months, have been on the opposite side, but who have, while they were performing their Senatorial duties, worked together on many occasions.

I think the fact that Senator Paul Laxalt, who was Chairman of Governor Reagan's campaign, and Senator Bob Griffin, who has been a long-time friend and supporter of mine and the Minority Whip in the United States Senate, can be here indicates their joint efforts. I think it would be nice if Bob and Paul came forth and maybe said a word together, or individually.

Bob?

SENATOR GRIFFIN: Paul and I have been very good, close friends in the United States Senate and one of the great experiences of my participation in this campaign is to work with a counterpart like Paul Laxalt, who is always straightforward, who is always responsible and whose word was as good as gold.

Paul, you have been a great leader of the opposition. We are so happy that we are going to be working together from now on.

SENATOR LAXALT: Thank you, Bob, very much.

We worked for months in an effort to have a harmonious Convention and I think we achieved that and it has been due, in great part, to Bob Griffin.

I might say, also, that I couldn't be more delighted than to hear the news this morning about Dole's selection. In my judgment, he is going to make a tremendous candidate. He is sound philosophically. My daughter, and others, consider him to be a fox. (Laughter) And he is going to bring to the campaign, I think, a delightful sense of humor which we are going to need in the next eight weeks. (Laughter.)

I think we have in these two men the potential of a winning combination and I am looking forward to working with both of them in the next several weeks.

Thank you.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Last, but not least, as I said, a man who has done a super job as Vice President. I would like to introduce to all of you, so he can indicate his feelings, the Vice President of the United States.

VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER: Mr. President, Vice President-designate, distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

To me, this is a very important moment for every American and for the world because the United States has been through, as have other countries of the world, a most difficult period. If we think back two years ago where this country was and where the world was and think what President Ford has done to restore the confidence of the American people in Government, to restore the vitality and dynamism of our economy, to stop inflation, to move forward on employment, to regain the confidence of the leaders of the world, of the people of the world and America -- America has been waiting and the world has been waiting -- for this decision. I think we are fortunate, ladies and gentlemen, that the people of this country and, therefore, the people of the world, are going to have the chance to select these two leaders to carry on the kind of responsible Government in which America, and the world, can have trust and confidence; to preserve freedom, respect for dignity and equality of opportunity for all.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you might like to get a picture of the beauty of the Ford-Dole team and I think both Bob and I couldn't be happier to have them out helping and assisting. And believe me, the Ford-Dole team is not just the two of us, we have four of us.

We have some other members of the Ford family -- Mike and Gayle, Steve and Susan, I don't know whether we have got Jack or not, yet, but he, as you all know, has been doing quite a bit -- and Michelle, Senator Laxalt's daughter. I think you ought to get a good chance to see what this kind of outfit is going to be and we are going to get Bob's daughter. We didn't have much time to get that coordinated, but she will be here.

Thank you all very much. You will see a lot of us. We will be out there battling. We will be out there doing a good job. I couldn't be happier having Bob Dole as Vice President.

Thank you all very much.

END

(AT 12:17 P.M. CDT)