

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President
(Binghamton, New York)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AND SENATOR BOB DOLE
BROOME COUNTY AIRPORT
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

AT 3:10 P.M. EDT

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, why did you give the crowd the finger?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I was just responding in kind.

QUESTION: Just what?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Responding in kind.

QUESTION: Sir, on the matter of the platform, if indeed, as you said, the morality in foreign affairs amendment represented Ford's thinking, what does not represent his thinking? You said this morning that the platform does not represent his thinking, but --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You would have to go through it item by item. And I will be perfectly honest; I have not read in detail the final document.

QUESTION: But you said it does not represent his thinking.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You hate to commit somebody to something if you haven't read it.

QUESTION: Are you sure that it doesn't represent his thinking? It was you that said it doesn't represent his thinking.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I didn't say that. I said all the items of the platform, which was the result of the Platform Committee trying to reflect the combined thinking of the party, which in the broad spectrum, the party does not necessarily reflect in every instance, every detail the thinking of the President.

QUESTION: But my point is simply that nothing seemed to be further out of line with his thinking than the foreign policy amendment.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That was what was called a morality issues section, which held up certain moral ideals. You can read that as a criticism, or you could say -- which is the truth -- that these are the ideals which have been the motivating force of the Republican Administration in the last eight years.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you deliberately trying to upstage Senator Dole, or do you do it because you can't help it?

MORE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I would like to say neither of those statements are correct, if you will forgive me for crossing the distinguished representative of The Washington Post. I am not upstaging Mr. Dole. That would be impossible. He is a man who has outstanding credentials of his own.

He is coming into New York State, which is a State I have had the privilege of living in for a great many years. I served as governor for 15. I have a great many friends, and all I am doing is introducing him to my friends, who have been warm in their response. That friendship and response is now being transferred to him in his position as the candidate for the Vice Presidency.

QUESTION: For instance, this platform here -- here we are with the candidate for the Vice Presidency and the platform says, "Welcome home, Rocky." It doesn't say anything about Dole.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is one sign. You read another sign and it says, "We want Dole." I want to tell you, he is a great guy.

QUESTION: Will the President be campaigning in New York State?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I'm sure he will.

QUESTION: When?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: When his schedule calls for it.

QUESTION: He isn't going to stay in Washington?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Who is this young man? The President has stayed in Washington during these closing days of the Congress because he is President of the United States. He has the responsibility to represent the American people's interests. As these various bills which have been bottled up and only coming out in these last days are being amended, he wants to be there to protect the American people.

QUESTION: But in the interim Carter has had a two-week jump or so.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He has jumped all right. But it might be have been more advantageous politically to the President to go out during this period, but his sense of responsibility has kept him in Washington, because his first duty is to be President.

QUESTION: Does that mean he will be acting less Presidential the last couple of weeks?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. After the Congress is gone, the danger is gone.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I mean that two-to-one Democratic Congress.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you think it is dignified to give the finger in such a public forum?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, but I didn't think it was very dignified of them to give it to the Vice President of the United States.

QUESTION: Do you agree with the former United States Congressman that they may be future residents of Attica? He said they would be future residents of Attica.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I hope not, but if they find themselves in the situation where the third branch of government puts them in that position, then that would be the case.

QUESTION: Wouldn't ignoring them have been better than playing up to them as you did?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It was very difficult to ignore them and be able to speak, because they do not understand that America's greatest strength is freedom of speech and this is the cardinal underlying fundamental value that is our heritage as a free nation -- the right to speak, freedom of speech. They were abridging the right to speak and they kept it up. Therefore, I had no alternative.

I want to tell you, these people had better be very careful, because this is the strength of America and the strength of freedom. And if you don't defend it and you don't respect it, then we are not going to preserve that freedom.

QUESTION: Senator Dole, do you think Secretary Kissinger is sufficiently tough in his negotiations with the Soviet Union, Helsinki, generally, in the policy of this country?

SENATOR DOLE: Well, I think my view of Secretary Kissinger is well-known. I have known the Secretary for some time. I think whether you are talking about Helsinki or Vietnam or whatever, he has done an outstanding job. I haven't been one to find fault with him and don't do that now.

QUESTION: Vice President Rockefeller, have you made any plans as to what you will be doing after a ceremony in Washington in January?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Coming home to Happy and the two little boys. And then taking it easy for a while and then reading the papers, listening to the radio, seeing the television, keeping in touch with what is going on. There are many ways to serve this country. I love politics. It could be I will stay somewhat active on the peripheral edge of politics.

QUESTION: Would you be developing your grandfather's birthplace as a memorial park?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He was born close to here. He was a great guy. He went to Cleveland, and he got his start there after having left here at an early age. That question of what should be done with the birthplace is something that we have not decided.

QUESTION: Would you consider a Cabinet position on the peripheral edge of politics?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I would not.

QUESTION: Senator Dole, the White House judgment on the alleged Gulf Oil payment was based partly on material which the President requested you to furnish him. Do you agree that Mr. Ford should make public the document which assured him that the allegations were no problem?

SENATOR DOLE: No, the allegations were no problem.

QUESTION: Do you feel that that part of the material should be released to the public?

SENATOR DOLE: I don't think so, no.

QUESTION: Why not?

SENATOR DOLE: It serves no useful purpose.

QUESTION: Isn't open and public reports a useful purpose? You talk about open government a lot.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This issue, I think, has been beaten to a point where we have a dead horse on our hands. There is nothing in it. The allegation has been withdrawn.

QUESTION: Senator Dole, do you think you have a better chance of capturing the Catholic vote in America --

SENATOR DOLE: I think we have a chance of capturing the Catholic vote --

QUESTION: -- with your stand on abortion?

SENATOR DOLE: I think we have a chance of capturing a great many groups of voters. The polls indicate we have strength in that area.

QUESTION: At one point President Ford said he approved an amendment to the Constitution giving States rights on abortion.

SENATOR DOLE: He still does.

QUESTION: That is not a straight right to life amendment to the Constitution that he would support?

SENATOR DOLE: I think when we met a week ago Friday and also in a letter he issued after the meeting, I think his position is sort of the States right Constitutional amendment, and that has been his position.

He is looking into Federal funding of abortions. He would support a constitutional amendment and has.

QUESTION: Do you see a switch from Mr. Rockefeller to Dole as a switch from the left to the right?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The great thing about the Republican Party is it has that broad spectrum of thought in it. We have in our party, as you know, Senator Javits over here and Buckley over here -- or have I got the wrong side?

(Laughter)

No party could have a broader representation. And I think this is the strength of democracy, the ability of people to have the courage to face different points of view, to reconcile them and come up with the best interests of the people.

QUESTION: Senator Dole, this seems to be your most direct experience with heckling. Do you want to comment on it a little bit, and maybe even on responses? Do you respond in kind when people give you the finger?

SENATOR DOLE: Well, I have trouble with my one arm, so my reaction is limited, Chris. But I would say generally it is not a new experience to me. I was chairman of the party during the Vietnam War, and I remember being at Tulane and they tried to upset my car. In other audiences they turned their backs on me. At least they were indoors. This was the first outdoor rally I have had.

I share the view of the Vice President. You know, we are up here to let Republicans know a number of things -- first of all, that we are working together; secondly, we consider the State of New York of utmost importance. It is a priority.

I think up to a point, I disagree myself, and maybe in the Senate I have been known to extend debate sometimes when I disagreed with the speaker or point of view. But there is a point when out of decency you let those who came to hear hear -- maybe not those who came to speak, but you let the ones who came hear.

I had a number of people apologize to me for the outburst of these young people. I don't quarrel with their right to disagree with me. I am not certain they disagree with me. I am not certain they disagree with any one of us. They have that right in America, and I cherish that right. But I think there is a little common decency that enters into it.

QUESTION: That wasn't a very bad demonstration as demonstrations go, was it?

SENATOR DOLE: It was sustained. There weren't many of them. It was just sustained.

QUESTION: Senator Dole, President Ford is against a bill already appropriated by Congress for education. Do

you support President Ford's wording, or would you support full funding of education, including higher education?

SENATOR DOLE: I think I have a good record on education. You check the record. And I don't like to disagree with my President, but I voted to override the education bill.

QUESTION: Is there any particular issue you would like to debate with Carter?

SENATOR DOLE: Well, you could take nearly any one and he would have a different view. But I don't debate with Carter. I debate with Mondale. And I assume that will be sometime in mid-October.

He is a very good friend of mine. We happen to have different points of view and different philosophies. I think it could be a very good exchange.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think it will be great.

END

(At 3:25 P.M. EDT)