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Office of the Vice President  
(Columbus, Ohio)

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PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
EMERALD ROOM-NORTH, FORT HAYES HOTEL  
COLUMBUS, OHIO

AT 1:18 P.M. EDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, I am just delighted to be here. It is an exciting time in the political life of our country, but it also has very, very important significance in terms of the future economic life in our country and of all the American people.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, could you speak a little louder?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know why not. It is my modesty, ladies and gentlemen, that causes me to speak with such a low voice.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But I will repeat that I am delighted to be in Columbus. I have a very special feeling about Ohio, nostalgic feelings from a family point of view. And I am a very, very great admirer of your governor, Jim Rhodes, who, to me, is one of the great Americans, believes in the fundamentals of this country and the future of this country.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, perhaps if you could just hold one of the mikes --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They may think I am one of those singers. I watch them myself. Then they always have the end of the cord sort of like this.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The last time I held one of these, it was the phone; I was holding up a phone.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I won't give any other recent events. I am just happy to be here. And I am not going to try to make a statement. I will answer questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, could I ask you specifically -- a lot of big-name Republicans are flying in and out of Ohio like almost daily here.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a great State.

QUESTION: Besides being a great State, how crucial is it to the Presidential election bit or to Mr. Carter's?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to think this is going to be a very close election. Now, we haven't seen the debates

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yet. We will tomorrow. And I think we all feel this is going to be very exciting and very important. And individual citizens, as they watch these debates, are going to form impressions about the two personalities, the two individuals, and particularly about their feeling of trust and confidence. I think they are going to have a clearer picture.

Now, Ohio is a very important State, let's not kid ourselves. It is a big State, has got a big electoral vote, and this is a very important part of the country. Of course, some of us happen to think New York State is important, too, but I won't get into that right here.

QUESTION: Do you think it is close right now in Ohio?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, I do. I think that there has been a wider gap than some of us would like to see, but that is closing up.

QUESTION: You acknowledge you are behind?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir. I believe in facing the realities, telling it like it is.

QUESTION: If I could, there have been some recent comments about Governor Carter's recent interview for Playboy magazine. Have you heard about that? Do you have any reaction to it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I saw some things in the newspapers. I haven't seen the article. I have read some comments about it. My reaction, frankly, was that this was rather an unusual place or backdrop or whatever, forum, to discuss Christ's teachings, if you want to be perfectly honest. That was my original feeling.

QUESTION: What do you think is going to happen with the debates beginning tomorrow?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wish I knew. I think that it will show the two candidates together and that the American people are going to form some very clear individual impressions and that those impressions will carry over when they get in the booth. And I think the basic fundamental is going to be which man do we trust? Which man do we feel has the capacity, the experience, the capability, the integrity to meet the problems we will be facing as a Nation at home and abroad in the next four years?

QUESTION: Do you think the best candidate of the debates will be elected President, sir?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't say that is the only thing, but I think it certainly is going to be an important factor.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you recently made some gestures with your hands, in speaking with your hands. Could you tell us about that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am now giving a victory signal.

QUESTION: I believe it was half of that, sir.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I get the feeling I know what you are talking about. I have to say that was not anything that was planned, that it was a spontaneous response to a prolonged salute which I had received from a group of students from one of the SUNY campuses. It just happened to be one that was built while I was governor. I tried to explain to them it was only thanks to their humble servant that they happened to have the privilege of an education, but that didn't seem to make a very big impression.

So they continued with their salute and finally I was inspired to respond.

(Laughter)

QUESTION: Today on three or four occasions you have used the situation of entering the voting booth and you think the voters will think of who can they trust. The trust word is familiar to us, listening to the Carter campaign and Mr. Carter's words. Are you trying to draw that parallel? Do you think the trust issue can be turned against Carter?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I didn't really think of the word in terms of being pro or against a particular candidate. I just think that as a citizen, that this is something that is pretty important. I don't know. This is my analysis of the situation today. I don't think the issues are as clear in the minds of people in this country because they are more complex, because the individual citizens have problems in meeting their own needs and their own situation and the concern about the future.

I think that really this is my analysis of what they are going to feel when they get in that booth. And they are not going to think, well, did they say this about that or this about that. They are just going to think, "Well, who will I feel more comfortable with in the White House in the next four years?" And trust is a very important factor, and that is based on integrity and experience and ability and courage and all of the factors we know.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, can you tell us at this point, if Ford should win in November, do you have any knowledge as to whether or not you would be holding any kind of a position in his administration?

QUESTION: No. I have been away for 20 years, now, and I am looking forward on January 20th to getting back with Happy and to the wonderful little boys and catch up with them and then catch up with some of my own affairs, the family affairs. And then I do admit I do have a deep love of this country, and there are many ways you can serve the country. I am sure that there will be ways in which I can be useful. But my place will be at home.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, there have been some reports of interest by the prosecutor in some records from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Do you know anything about that? Does that concern you at all?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It doesn't concern me. I don't understand it, to tell you the truth. I don't know where they were when the 400 FBI agents were investigating the President. And I suppose the FBI does work for the Justice Department. The Justice Department is involved. This is part of the 25th Amendment, and there had to be the most thorough investigation of President Ford and then myself of any two citizens in the history of our country.

Now, it does sound unusual, just in the heat of the campaign, coming along with something. You know, I just don't know. Frankly, I am sure that if there had been something, it would have come out before. Let's not forget that the Congress that voted to approve to confirm both President Ford and myself was two-to-one Democratic. So there wasn't anything partisan, there wasn't anything that was done here that wasn't done by both the nomination and then the confirmation process. So, therefore, I just cannot believe there is anything.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, for several years the United States has refused to join in efforts at the U.N. to condemn South Africa and Rhodesia for racism. In the last few months Mr. Kissinger has now condemned the racial policies. Why only in the last few months has this change occurred?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to say I am not sure Secretary Kissinger is going over there to condemn one group or another group. I think he is going over there trying to prevent a bloodbath, an unnecessary killing of hundreds of thousands of people and destruction of factories, buildings, property, et cetera, and trying to find a peaceful evolutionary change from minority control to majority control.

Now, the United States cannot run the rest of the world. We feel that we do a reasonably good job at home, but we can't tell every country in the world what to do. And you could make an equally good case about some Communist countries, that people don't have freedom, that the Jews are not allowed to migrate from the Soviet Union, and we ought to go over there and tell them how to do it. We have tried to be persuasive. There have been certain provisions made. There are certain provisions that were made in relation to these other countries to encourage them to move along lines that bring people in tune with the current thinking about equality of opportunity, about human dignity, about respect for all individuals.

I think Secretary Kissinger is entering a situation which is extremely difficult. And I happen to think that he is one of the most brilliant Secretaries of State this country has ever had, if not the most brilliant. And he alone, among anyone, may well be able to find the solution for this problem.

QUESTION: Do you believe the U. S. taxpayers should pay to compensate Whites that want to leave South Africa?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think if it can prevent the kind of unnecessary killing and bloodshed, that this country has always been a haven for the oppressed or for those in trouble or for those seeking the opportunity. It is written on the Statue of Liberty. It has been one of our great traditions.

When Castro took over in Cuba and so many were driven out, our doors were open. And I think that would probably be the case in either of these other countries.

QUESTION: But should we give money to compensate the South African whites that are leaving?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If that is a means of bringing them out, a solution which prevents the bloodshed, it is a lot better to lose a few dollars than it is to lose hundreds of thousands of lives.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, there have been stories recently, speculating about your new relaxed, almost relieved public attitude. How do you account for this new image, if there is one?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, let's put it this way: I love this country and I have tried to serve this country through both appointive office, and then as my friends in Latin America would say, I wanted to be an authentic leader of the people, and in their definition that is an elected official, so I sought elected office. And I have to say that I did seek the Presidency on a number of occasions -- not what you call successfully, but I sought it.

We now have an outstanding President. We have an outstanding Vice Presidential candidate, both of whom are men with great integrity, belief in America, faith in the ability of this country to preserve values and enhance them and enhance the quality of life for all Americans and freedom in the world.

And so for the first time, as you point out, I am not running for office. I am not running for anything. And I have got to tell you, that is a very happy situation. So I had a wonderful time at the Republican convention. I did get into a little fracas out there. That is just because, you know, red-blooded Americans respond to challenges.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But I am having a good time. You are absolutely right.

QUESTION: Can a man with your history and your ambition really be that relaxed and having a good time watching Bob Dole come into Columbus as the Vice Presidential candidate and you come in in the afternoon?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I am coming in as the Vice President.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You have forgotten that. God forbid, but I might be President tomorrow morning. Then what

would you say? No, I understand what you are saying. And you are absolutely right. I have no feeling at all, because my ambition is what everybody has written about. It isn't ambition. I have been very fortunate, thanks to Ohio and what you did for my grandfather, or what he did to you, or whatever happened.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: So I really am not under pressure in that sense. But I love this country. I want to serve this country. And I have felt that being President of the United States was where you could have more capacity to lead, not only for the values we love and cherish and have fought for in this country, but for the extension of those in the world.

Now, I am satisfied that that is in good hands, and that I am not in a position where I have left any stones unturned to fulfill my responsibility. Therefore, I go out with a clear conscience. I have done everything I can. I have offered myself over a period of about 16 years for this spot. We have an outstanding team coming in, and therefore, I go back with a clear conscience and a feeling that there are many ways you can serve your country. And I will find those as time goes by. So I am relaxed and happy.

QUESTION: Is this a resignation from active politics? Is that what you are announcing to us this morning?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, I think that if you just look at the record, you are going to see that after a new Vice President has been elected, that the old Vice President terminates his position on January 20th. So I am not announcing anything. That is in the record, because that is a part of the Constitution. My term of office terminates on January 20, and I go home.

So I am not announcing anything. I am just commenting on this very handsome gentleman's earlier comment about what is happening and why I am so relaxed and so delighted to be here in this warm and friendly atmosphere.

QUESTION: But come January 21st, will you --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is even better.

QUESTION: Are you satisfied, in light of what we now know as the context of Mr. Carter's comments on median income vis-a-vis raising and lowering taxes -- in light of the transcript of that entire interview, are you satisfied Mr. Dole in his criticism is being intellectually honest in portraying what Mr. Carter actually said?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I didn't see what Mr. Dole said or hear what he said, nor do I know what he said. But I was in the Senate, presiding -- just for a matter of interest, I am President of the Senate, even though I can't speak in that position. I don't want anyone to think that is more of a job than it is, but I do sit there and preside.

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I did listen to the debate two days ago in which Senator Bob Griffin read the transcript from the Associated Press of Mr. Carter's interview. Now, frankly, you don't need to do more than read the transcript. You don't have to comment on it. It speaks for itself. I assume you have read it.

He starts out by saying he wants to lower taxes for the middle income, low and middle income, and raise them on the high income. And then he was questioned as to what they mean, and somebody pointed out that the median income before deductions is \$11,000 and the median income after deductions is \$15,000. So does he mean he would raise or lower all taxes below \$11,000 or below \$15,000 and raise all taxes above \$15,000?

Well, people with incomes of \$15,000 or over don't consider themselves rich, and they consider themselves as middle income, or maybe not even that, some. So that that got a little complicated. And then he said, well, he wasn't really an expert on the subject, and he really wasn't prepared to discuss it, because he didn't know what he would do.

Then he said it would take him probably a year to figure it out. Then you began to wonder, why did he say it then, if it was going to take him a year and if he didn't really know and if he wasn't an expert and if he didn't know about the median income? Why did he say it in the beginning and was it for political purposes that he said he would raise taxes on the rich and lower them to the lower income families, which is something which is a little hard to understand, seeing that all of the tax structures which we have in this country at the present time have been forked over by the Democratic majorities in the Congress who have been there for the last 30 years.

So they are Democratic taxes. And while they are described by Mr. Mondale as Republican taxes, all these taxes have been written by Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. He said these things were done in secrecy. Carl Curtis got up and made an eloquent speech. He said, "Look, I have been on the Senate Finance Committee for 12 or 13 years. I was on Ways and Means for 10 years before that. All our meetings are open. We have had no secret meetings. We have just completed the revision of the tax structure, and it has been done with input from the Republicans, but the Democrats control the entire operation. So it is a little hard to figure exactly what the purpose of the original statement was."

QUESTION: Do you think in principle Nelson Rockefeller pays a fairer share of taxes than someone making \$14,000 a year?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any question. I don't think it; I know it, because I pay them.

QUESTION: You don't see any need to raise taxes on the higher incomes and lower them on the lower incomes?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, that is the popular version, of course, because you look at numbers and not percentages. What you get into in this whole question on taxes from the median level up, \$15,000 and up, is where is capital formed in this country for investment in new plants and equipment, which is the basis of growth? It comes through savings of individuals or corporations. Corporations pay taxes, individuals pay taxes.

Investment for a job today is now running as high as a quarter of a million dollars, \$250,000, sometimes, for one job in terms of machinery and equipment and plants. Therefore, it takes a tremendous amount of capital.

Now, certain jobs you can get, maybe, for \$15,000 or \$20,000, or a \$40,000 investment. But to create jobs today requires capital -- capital for machinery and equipment -- because we have a highly industrialized, technologically advanced society. If we want to continue to grow, we have got to have capital. If we want to continue the American enterprise system where individuals make the decisions and not the government, then this is the system. There have got to be savings.

Maybe they come from insurance, maybe they come from pension funds, maybe they come from individuals or corporate holdings, but they are savings. Those are invested. That makes jobs. That makes for expansion. That produces goods and services for people. That is the American system.

If you don't believe in that system, the Soviet Union has the opposite system, where they have State capitalism instead of individual capitalism. They take your money in the process, through ad valorem taxes, or just taxes, by just increasing the costs of goods. And they collect the money and then they invest it where they want it. So they are having a problem.

After 60 years of Communism in the Soviet Union, they are now shopping around in the capitalist world to get private American capital or European capital to come and build consumer goods factories in the Soviet Union. They are buying food from American farmers. Less than five percent of Americans are producing more food than any other country in the world. In the Soviet Union 45 percent of the people are on the land, and they can't produce enough food to feed themselves.

You begin to wonder, maybe our system isn't so bad. We not only take care of our own needs, but we are in demand; the products of a private enterprise system are in demand in the Communist world. So this raises some very fundamental questions.

QUESTION: Why are you saying increasing taxes on upper income people would be destructive?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I am not. I am saying you have to take that into consideration. And that is what they have been doing in review of the taxes. You have to have



balance. These things are all complicated. That is all I wanted to say.

QUESTION: Do you favor State-by-State competition to give corporations breaks for getting jobs into their States?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a highly competitive situation. And we really have balkanized this country. In New York, while I was governor, we raised the income tax up to 15 percent and then went to 17. That last was a temporary tax. And a lot of States, our neighbors, didn't have any income tax. And I was the one who pushed these taxes because I believe in a progressive tax system, which this gentleman that was discussing this before -- I am talking to him, but he is now talking to somebody else so he is missing this.

I was just saying that I in New York raised the income tax to 17 percent, which is the highest anywhere, because it is a progressive tax and, therefore, a tax that reflects the ability to pay, as distinct from the sales tax or real estate tax.

So this is a very complex situation, which you asked about, is very real. We raised our taxes in order to render greater service to people. And because our taxes were high and our services were good, people came from States where they had less good services so they could get them in New York. Then that cost their States less, their taxes were lower, so then our industries go to those States because the taxes are lower.

We get the people who need help, and they take our people who are the producers and pay taxes. This is why I have been for a Federal universal program of aid to those in need and not have it on the basis of individual States, where the Federal Government would meet the needs of people on a national basis with adjustments for cost of living, instead of the distortions which now exist.

These are all interesting complex situations. This is why I love government. This is why I have spent my life in it, and this is why I am interested in it.

Hugh says I have run way beyond my time discussing taxes.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, are you happy with the way Ford's campaign is being run now, or --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am glad you mentioned it. I know the President would like to be on the road campaigning, because this is a natural instinct. He loves to. But he is President of the United States, and he has a tremendous sense of responsibility. The Congress is in the last days of this session of Congress. This is when all the bills jam up. All the tough bills are saved, so then they trade off one bill and another bill. You know how it is. Then they come to amendments of the bills and so forth.

The President has to be there, because every half hour there is some new amendment coming up he has to have

his people working on so as to protect the best interests of the American people. He can't leave Washington, as a responsible President, because that is his job. He would like to be on the road; but as soon as that Congress is finished, then he can get out.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you feel public trust in Jimmy Carter is eroding?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I will tell you, it could be.

QUESTION: Why?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think, just like situations where he said, "I am for the Humphrey-Hawkins bill," which would have cost \$100 billion, maybe up to \$200 billion for the programs there. Then he shifted and said, "No, I am for a balanced budget in 1980."

And then you begin to wonder, well, if you have a balanced budget in 1980, you obviously couldn't be for the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, because that involves a bunch of new expenditures. There would be deficit spending. So if he is for a balanced budget, he couldn't be for that.

You begin to wonder, how does he think about these things? Then you begin to wonder, which one was said for expediency's sake, or has he changed his mind? And whichever way you follow it, logically you begin to be a little uncertain as to what he really does think.

QUESTION: Do you see any parallel between Carter and McGovern and the response they have had on flip-flopping of issues?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I was brought up on the concept of comparisons are odious. I don't know. I just think it is very hard to make comparisons. Each one is different. Each one has got his own.

QUESTION: What do you think about the way the campaigns are being financed?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is an interesting experiment, a lot of complications, and you really need a lawyer at your elbow. On this trip, it is being financed by three different groups, my trip -- the President's committee, the Republican National Committee and the local Republican Party. You know, everything has got to be balanced out. It is really quite complicated. But it is an interesting experiment. And that is the great strength of America. We don't mind experimenting. That is why we get ahead and we learn from experiments and then improve them.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It is nice to be with you.

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(AT 1:48 P.M. EDT)