

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 28, 1976

Office of the Vice President  
(Dover, New Jersey)

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PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE THREE SISTERS RESTAURANT  
DOVER, NEW JERSEY

(AT 12:12 P.M. EDT)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, first I want to salute His Honor, the Mayor, and say what a pleasure it is to be here with Dave Norcross, who is a candidate for the Senate of the United States. And Bill Schluter has got his button on. I just would like to make a prediction. That is, that President Ford is going to be elected in November for two reasons.

One is because of his extraordinary record of the last two years despite the lack of cooperation of the two-to-one Democratic Congress. That is why we need these two men down here; and secondly, because of his experience and the trust and confidence people have in the President and his deep belief in the values which made this country what it is today, his deep faith and concern for people and belief that the best way that people's interests can be served is by strengthening the vital forces that made America what it is today.

We are at peace. We have respect in the world. When the people in this country get in that booth, they are going to say we want a man that we can trust, and they are going to vote for Ford.

It is a pleasure to be here, and answer any questions. I also feel like I am back home again.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you talked with confidence in Mr. Ford. Do you think these reports on an investigation of campaign funds while he was in Congress will erode the confidence that the people have in him?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I don't because as you remember it was only two years ago under the 25th Amendment that he was investigated by 400 FBI agents for five or six months, and then went before the committees in the Senate and the House and finally was approved by a two-to-one Democratic majority in the Congress.

I don't think there is a thing anywhere that hasn't been scrutinized and gone over, first by the FBI investigators and then by the Congressional staff and then by the Congress itself.

QUESTION: Do you think it is a fishing expedition?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I really have no idea. But this is a political period we are in.

QUESTION: Are you saying this is nothing but politics, sir?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not saying anything. I said we are in a political period. I have just said that in my opinion after the investigation that he went through -- and I speak of one who has been through this investigation myself.

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I had 500 FBI agents and had been questioned for months. If anybody has been through that, it is an experience. When you talk about privacy, forget it as far as Jerry Ford and I are concerned. We lost our privacy. So, I have no concern about that.

QUESTION: What is your unbiased opinion as to how Jerry Ford did last Thursday? Did he win or lose in that debate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I thought, frankly, that his strength as a human being, his deep convictions came through loud and clear. I thought that his knowledge of government and the facts and the issues came through loud and clear. I thought that his opponent, while he said some of the things that everybody likes to hear that are very popular, that as he discussed them, he did not seem to have a grasp of the facts as to how you would accomplish those things, such as reorganizing the government, some 1800 agencies down to 300 or 200.

I happened to be head of President Eisenhower's Government Organization Committee for seven years. At that time there was a Reorganization Act in the Congress which permitted the executive to send up a Reorganization Plan. If it was not disapproved, it went through in 90 days.

Now that has elapsed. There is no system for reorganizing. This whole concept will violate all of the committee structures of the Congress and all of the special structures which have been created by the Congress and he never mentioned the fact that the executive can't do this without the Congress.

QUESTION: Again, sir, on the question of the debate, an awful lot of Americans said both participants put them to sleep. What did it do to you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I stayed with it right through the television going blank on us, if you excuse me, and the sound went off. I stayed right there until they came back on, and then listened to the conclusions.

QUESTION: There are a number of Americans who say maybe the sound should have failed earlier.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As I remember there was a fight between the media and the League of Women Voters over the procedures and that you all didn't like the way it was set up. I hope your judgement is not prejudiced in the way you are asking the question. You asked for an honest opinion from me.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, CBS News has confirmed that the Special Prosecutor is investigating Former Congressman Gerald Ford in possible shenanigans regarding the seafarers and mariners union. Why do you think the Special Prosecutor is doing that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The CBS didn't have to confirm it. They said it. They have been saying it for a week. There is no great secret about that. I don't know where you have been.

QUESTION: It is my company. CBS has found this is the case.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They announced they were doing this.

QUESTION: The FBI was involved as well.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is right, they investigated. They have investigated all of this. They have investigated for five months. I know this administration doesn't want to leave anything where it isn't totally -- if anyone wants to raise a question, let's take a new look at it.

QUESTION: Why doesn't the White House, Mr. Ford respond to questions from CBS on this particular matter?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know what his relation with CBS is. I have a very high regard for CBS.

QUESTION: I am a reporter for CBS.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have a high regard for you as a reporter for CBS. I would assume that the President, if I were in his position would not want to comment on something when an investigation is being undertaken until it has been completed. Otherwise, what is he going to say?

QUESTION: Mr. Jaworski says if such an investigation is taking place now, it would be poorly timed. Would you agree with that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: An investigation is an investigation anytime. I just happen, as I have said in the beginning, to have confidence that the FBI and all those investigating the President when he was up for consideration as Vice President, and then the approval of the Congress would not have happened if there was any suspicion or shadow of a doubt on anything. I know because I went through this stuff.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, considering the scrutiny that you and President Ford were subjected to, would you favor such a procedure before Senate committees in public for candidates of major parties after they have been nominated as a regular procedure?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: To tell you the honest truth, they wouldn't have time to get to the business of the country because they would be too busy doing investigations. I think it would be pretty hard to get people to run for these positions, frankly. This was a grueling process, that in my case lasted, because they kept adjourning, for about six months, very expensive. I don't think you would get very many people to run for office on that basis.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, in New Jersey the Republicans are down to a congressional minority of twelve to three. They lost four seats in the Watergate election two years ago. How vital do you regard it to the GOP that they recapture these seats and if they don't, do you think the Republicans are a permanent minority in the Congress?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, no. I think it is vital that they recapture them because I think the President is

going to need a balanced Congress to face the issues and to take the actions which are essential. He has sent more legislation to Congress. I listened to the Democratic candidate in that debate we were discussing before, talk about what he would do in the energy field and how he would set up a single agency.

Former President Nixon recommended exactly the same thing. The Congress paid no attention to it. President Ford has four major pieces of legislation on the conservation of energy and they, the Congress have not paid any attention at all.

They haven't been able to get hearings on them. Therefore, I think it is essential we have more Republicans in Congress. That is why I am excited to be here with outstanding men standing on both sides of me. Let's face it, when I was first elected Governor there were, what, 12, 14 Governors, Republicans.

We went up to 32 or 34 Republicans. Now they are back down to 12. This thing swings back and forth like a pendulum. The American people believe in a two-party system. That is the lifeblood of democracy.

Therefore, in my opinion you can count on the American people to preserve that balance, even though it will swing like a pendulum.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, do you favor the sale of more missiles to Saudi Arabia and if so, why?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I favor a balance in the Middle East that will not encourage military action by any one side or any one country. That has been the policy of this government, to preserve a balance that did not encourage injudicious action. I think that Saudi Arabia has been a balancing force against some very radical actions that others in that group would have taken. I think that this recommendation the President has made and then modified after an agreement with the Congress, was correct.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you just used the words "injudicious action." Do you think what you did with your finger recently was an injudicious action?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I would say this, it was not planned. It was a spontaneous reaction to a sustained salute from a group of students.

QUESTION: Are you indicating you won't do it again?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I hope not. But --

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, did the President say anything to you about that?

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, on this subject of the candidacy it has been reported that your brother has contributed to Mr. Norcross' opponent, Senator Williams.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have heard that. But I have

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no knowledge of that fact, if it is a fact.

QUESTION: What is your reaction, is there a split within the Rockefeller family, politically?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Listen, this is a free country. Everybody has to do his or her thing in this country, and they do. I would not be in a position to know first, what the facts were and secondly, what the motivations were. But I don't know whether this was something that was done through individual employees of the bank or whether it was done by a member of the family. But I happen to have another member of the family who is a cousin, my father's brother's son who is running for Governor in a State in the south on the Democratic ticket. I can't go grab him on the neck and drag him back to New York, and tell him not to do it. It is a free country.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, Zbigniew Brezinski was described in one national column as your brother's version of Henry Kissinger.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think both of them would resent what you have said. That is that Mr. Brezinski and Mr. Kissinger, neither of them are -- I just happen to have admired Henry Kissinger for a long time and have worked with him.

My brother David employed Mr. Brezinski as a staff director of the Trilateral Commission of which he was a sponsor. He is a bright, individual with great ability.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, it has been reported that oil imports have been up some 16 percent. Some people feel there might be a reinstatement of the Arab oil embargo. Do you think that that might come about and if not, why not, and do you think that the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia will have anything to do with that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The answer is no. If you want me to analyze your question which was a very exciting one, first the rumor that there was to be another Arab boycott as a result of action taken was denied yesterday by the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister. That was put to rest.

It had nothing to do with the sale of arms. So, we can take that out. What was the end of the question, when I said no?

QUESTION: Shall we go on to something else?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There is some other point that I can answer if I can remember.

QUESTION: Just if you thought that there would be another Arab oil embargo.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is going to be. But if war flared up in the Middle East again, which God forbid, but if it did, then I think there is that danger that there would be an OPEC boycott. If there were, it would be a far more serious disaster for this country than it was before because we on the East Coast here, New York, New Jersey,

Pennsylvania and so forth, we depend now 80 percent for our energy on imported oil. It would put the lights out. It would stop the cars from moving because we don't have, in this country, the ability to transport oil internally. So, the East Coast would take a tremendous beating. I think we would have chaotic economic and social conditions.

QUESTION: Don't the Saudi Arabians have adequate missiles for their own defense where it wouldn't be required that we sold them more missiles?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is so nice to have advice from other countries as to what you ought to have or ought not to have. I have followed a policy of not going into another State and telling the Governor or the people of that State what they ought to do or going into another country and advising them on what they ought to do. These are sovereign states.

They have a right to make up their own minds. They are paying cash for it and they said they need it and they want it. There is an agreement between the Executive and the Congress on the amount.

QUESTION: Couldn't we be accused of being the individuals who are encouraging an arms race in that area?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Are you suggesting we cut off arms aid to Israel?

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, correct me if I am wrong, but I am left with a definite impression as a lame duck leaving office on January 20, you are a lot more relaxed.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You got it.

QUESTION: My question about the effect of Republican losses in the Congress, we have measured that against President Ford. My question was how do you measure it in terms of the Republican Party in this country?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Your original question was if they did not gain back the four seats from New Jersey would it be a permanent disaster for the Republican Party. My answer is no, it wouldn't be.

I think they are going to gain them back. As I say, the pendulum swings back and forth. I think it is swinging now. How far it swings in this election, time will only tell. I think we are going to see a Republican victory in November and I think it is going to be from the grass roots right up to the top.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, how would you advise President Ford to win a State like New Jersey?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Do just what he is doing.

QUESTION: Which is what, sir?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Being a responsible President who has got the courage to not go out on the campaign trail when he would like to go out right now, because he feels he

has got to stay in Washington in the closing days of the Congress. As you know, the legislation jams up and then it is passed in the closing days with compromises that are made on this legislation or that, to get votes and amendments.

He wants to be there to protect the interest of the American people. I think the American people respect him for his courage and his ability to do what he thinks is in the long term best interests of the country and not necessarily short term politically popular actions.

QUESTION: In hindsight, do you think now you would not like to have written that letter last year withdrawing as a Vice Presidential nominee?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There are two parts to this. One would be the form of the letter, which might have said to Bo Calloway, "When you have delivered the seven delegates, I am off the ticket." That might have been a better way to write it.

That is number one. Number two, as you know I have never believed in being standby equipment. I have accepted the Vice Presidency under President Ford because we were in a constitutional crisis. I was honored by his invitation and maybe by accepting, I could help bring in a little stability and confidence back in the government of the Executive Branch.

However, now we are going to the electoral process. Frankly, I am an activist. You have got to have a good Vice President and you have got one in Bob Dole.

But the Vice Presidential spot, as you know, is presiding over the Senate and that is it. The difficulty for me is you can't speak without unanimous consent.

QUESTION: Sir, you say that Mr. Ford will be elected and win the election. Who is going to win the fight tonight?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will tell you, I have not placed any -- that is wrong. I will withdraw that statement. We are in the middle of a campaign. I have a feeling that Ali is going to win, but in what round, I couldn't tell you.

QUESTION: You mean is he going to win by a knock-out?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Who knows? I wouldn't want to be in with him myself.

QUESTION: Sir, you spent the better part of your adult life in politics. What are you planning personally after January?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: To go back and have time with Happy and the two boys and catch up on my own affairs and families and then preserve an interest in public life, politics, which I have always enjoyed. And I think it is essential for the vitality of this nation and its freedom. There are many ways you can serve your country. I have no concern about finding ways that are not in elective office. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure.