

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President
(Chicago, Illinois)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE GRAND BALLROOM
CONRAD HILTON HOTEL
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AT 8:15 P.M. CDT

QUESTION: What do you think about President Ford's statement that the East European nations are not under the domination of the Soviet Union?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You know, in the heat of the debate -- I don't know if you have been in a debate -- sometimes you are trying to say one thing, and it comes out as though you were saying something else.

President Ford is dedicated to the freedom of the peoples of Eastern Europe. And what he was thinking when he said that was that the people of Eastern Europe should not be, and the United States is dedicated to their not being under the domination of the Soviet Union.

QUESTION: How do you assess the impact of what he said and what people thought he said, regardless of what he might have meant? What is the impact of that statement?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You correct these things, you know. It is just like Mr. Carter saying about Lyndon Johnson something that was not very complimentary. And what he said about taxes, he was going to lower taxes on lower income and raise them on the rich. Then he found the median income was around \$11,000 or \$15,000. So they have to raise taxes on everybody over \$11,000 or \$15,000. So he said he really didn't know; he would have to study it for a year before he did anything about it.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what kind of campaign is it that you have to go back out and correct yourself?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I tell you, you get under the heat of this debate, so-called, and, let's face it -- some of us have been around a long time, like myself, so I am used to this. But if you are talking to 90 million people, you know, they are going to affect you.

QUESTION: Should it affect the President of the United States?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, 90 million people is 90 million people. That is a lot of people. And under the heat of the debate, he just put the thing the wrong way. He didn't mean it; therefore, I am sure his statement is already out clarifying it.

QUESTION: The polls are showing the President didn't win last night's debate. Do you think he will make a better showing next time around?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: What polls?

QUESTION: The Associated Press polls.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: Oh. I thought he meant the people of Polish descent. I understand.

You know, everybody has got their own opinion. I would say, from what I have seen, that what is going to happen is that on November 2, we are going to go into that booth alone with the curtain pulled and say, "Who do we trust? Who do we have confidence in to handle the problems of the next four years?" And I think they are going to say, "President Ford."

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, in light of the situation that has developed in the latest debate, do you think it was a strategic error to offer to debate Mr. Carter?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it is a good idea. I have been through these League of Women Voters debates four times in New York. I had only one chance; he has four.

It is not easy. Your head is filled with all kinds of statistics and facts, and the pressure is on. We are all human. It is easy to sit back in our homes and say he should have done that or should have done this. But when you are right there with the gun on you --

QUESTION: Do you think the President is running a good campaign?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, I do. I think the President was right to stay in Washington. He wants to be out on the campaign trail, but he had to stay in Washington while the Congress was there because, as you know, the legislation all piles up in the last few weeks of the session, and that is when the trades go on to get votes and the amendments and so forth. He has got to be there to protect the interests of the people.

He wanted to be out on the campaign trail, but he stayed in Washington because he is deeply concerned about the people and their future. Therefore, he wanted to be there to protect it.

QUESTION: Did the President also mistate himself when he said the Administration had backed the Arab boycott legislation?

THE VICE PRSSIDENT: Well, he backed his own legislation. He did not back the legislation that was proposed by Ribicoff in the House. The President thought it was discriminatory. But he had his own, which nobody passed.

This has been a two-to-one Democratic Congress, and he has got more measures up there to deal with energy, to deal with all of these problems affecting ecology and conservation, and this Congress has not acted on that.

QUESTION: Did he mislead the American public when he also stated that the Department of Commerce would release the information regarding those companies participating in the Arab boycott?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I am sure what he said was what he thought. I think that the information has been given to the Department of Commerce by the corporations with an understanding with the corporations that this information would be held confidential. I don't think the President knew that when he made his statement. Therefore, he would have been violating a trust which these corporations had

lived up to in giving the information to the Department of Commerce. And they are under a moral obligation not to make it available to the public.

QUESTION: So he didn't misspeak himself on that point?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that is absolutely right. You know, this is a fast-moving show here.

QUESTION: In spite of the comments last night, do you think the East Europeans are going to vote for Carter anyway?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I don't.. I think this is a very important thing, because what it will do is focus attention to this problem, and therefore, they will gain from it. In other words, this has not been a big issue. All of a sudden it becomes an issue because of a misstatement. Now they will gain by the fact that their problems, their concern for freedom -- whether it is Poland or Hungary or Lithuania or Latvia or Czechoslovakia or whatever it is -- has come to the fore.

I think this ought to be a good thing because I think it is going to bring it to attention. I know where the President stands on this. He has been with these countries to demonstrate his personal concern for their independence.

QUESTION: Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END

(At 8:25 P.M. CDT)