

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President)  
(New York, New York)

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REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
UKRANIAN-AMERICAN CONGRESS COMMITTEE ANNUAL DINNER  
AMERICANA HOTEL  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

AT 9:35 P.M. EDT

Professor Dobriomsky, distinguished members of the  
Ukranian Congress and friends:

I come before you as a friend, a long-time friend.

(Applause)

And as Lev said, I believe in telling it like  
it is, and that is why I asked if I could come here this  
evening, because misunderstandings are unfortunate, particu-  
larly in a democracy. Therefore, I wanted to come here and  
talk to you for just a moment this evening about a situation  
which has received a great deal of attention in the press  
about which I feel very badly.

Let's face it, ladies and gentlemen, we all make  
mistakes, and this was a mistake, period.

(Applause)

When you are talking to 90 million Americans on  
television in a Presidential campaign, and you are working to  
familiarize yourself with all of the possible subjects which  
could be discussed and you get into a debate, there is a  
certain amount of tension. And none of us are totally immune  
from tension. And when you have something in your mind,  
sometimes you just put it exactly the reverse of what you  
mean to say. And in my opinion, that is what the  
President did.

He is for the freedom of all nations and the free-  
dom of all peoples, including the Ukrainians.

(Applause)

He is your friend, and I know. I have worked for  
him for two years now. I have sat in these meetings and  
listened to the discussions, and I know where he stands on  
these issues. And he is a man who believes as deeply in those  
values on which this country grew to greatness, on which you  
and your parents and your grandparents and my parents and  
grandparents and all of us came to this country -- freedom  
and opportunity, to get away from oppression, to have  
religious freedom and to have opportunity to do for thier  
families. That is why we are here, and we want to see  
everybody throughout the world have that same opportunity.

We can never let our zeal and our devotion to  
that cause slacken. And that is why you are meeting here  
tonight.

(Applause)

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Now, I have been in politics for a long time, and in a strange way sometimes things happen --

Someone is tinkling out there; thank you.

(Laughter)

But, as I was saying, in a strange way things happen that you don't expect. And in the 36 years that I have had the privilege of being in public life -- and I started with President Roosevelt in 1940, was Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs -- I don't think the cause of oppressed people has ever had as much attention on the front page as it has in the last two days.

(Applause)

And I said that in Chicago two days ago, and it is true. It is very easy to accept things because they exist and forget the fundamental values, the fundamental beliefs, the fundamental heritage, and especially the heritage of freedom that we believe in, and forget the problems of other people in other lands. And now, due to an unfortunate statement which was the reverse of what the President meant to say -- it really is. I know him, and I am telling it like it is.

(Applause)

You know, some people make a mistake and they don't want to admit it. Okay. I preside over the Senate of the United States. It is a great honor, but I am not allowed to speak without unanimous consent. The only two times I have had unanimous consent was when I was asking unanimous consent to apologize to the Senate for what I said about them.

(Applause)

You know, it is not the easiest thing to apologize, but I understand it.

I just want to tell you that this country has been, is and will always remain dedicated to freedom for the Ukrainians and all people throughout the world.

(Applause)

I have gotten into trouble making some very frank statements about some great powers, or a great power. In fact, the President had an official complaint. He has been very decent to let me say what I felt even though I might disagree with him on some things. And I respect and admire that in him. There are very few Presidents who let their Vice Presidents out of captivity.

(Laughter, applause)

Now, there was an official complaint, and I met with the ambassador of a distinguished nation, who shall not be mentioned on this occasion, and I said, "Look, how can a democracy function if we don't tell the truth to its people?"

And I believe that. The only way there can be stability in a democracy, the only way a country like ours can take the steps that are necessary is if the people understand the facts and the true nature of the problems they are up against.

So I have been speaking out, and I said to this ambassador, "If I ever say anything that is not true, that is a misrepresentation of the facts, let me know."

He said, "Well, it wasn't so much what you said as the way you said it."

(Laughter)

So I just happen to feel very strongly that we have got to keep our eye on those basic principles which have made this country what it is. And the fundamental principle is freedom, human freedom and national freedom. And that is why I wanted to come here, because I would like to say to you that I know that is what President Ford stands for. That is what he believes in. That is what I stand for. That is what the American people stand for and the Congress of the United States. And, ladies and gentlemen, we are with you, and I wanted to come here and say that personally.

(Applause)

END

(AT 9:45 P.M. EDT)