

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 11, 1976

PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
JACOB K. JAVITS
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK
VINCENT CIANCI
MAYOR, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
RALPH PERK
MAYOR, CLEVELAND, OHIO
DANIEL J. EVANS
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
AND
HARRY DENT
MEMBER OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

BRIEFING ROOM

4:07 P.M. EDT

MR. NESSEN: We promised you that we would bring out some of the members of the Steering Committee to tell you about the meeting.

Let me make one point before I introduce them. Some questions we got this morning indicated there was a feeling that this meeting had been called to discuss some events of last week, and so forth. Actually, the meeting was scheduled and arranged about 10 days ago.

Let me introduce you, first, to Senator Javits, who you know; Mayor Cianci of Providence; Mayor Perk of Cleveland; Governor Evans of Washington; and Harry Dent of South Carolina.

I think Senator Javits would like to briefly summarize, first, what went on at the Steering Committee meeting, and then all the guests will be available to answer your questions.

SENATOR JAVITS: This is the third meeting of the Steering Committee which they have had among themselves, and also, which they have had with the President. It was a very satisfactory meeting with a very intimate and frank interchange of views between my colleagues -- about 25 of us -- and the President.

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We felt the President had had a splendid four weeks. His last week was not as good as before, but we feel that his trips to Oklahoma and Texas have shown a recovery of his momentum. We are expecting him in New York tomorrow. I think he is going to have an excellent reception in New York.

Each of us has a particular point of view respecting the President's campaign, from now on, in these last three weeks. I would like to express mine.

I believe that we are now beginning to see the President's opponent, Governor Carter, in true character, and the tone of rather reckless charges, notwithstanding the facts in many cases, I believe is not going to overween the President or overween the American people. But I do believe the President is now in a position to take this on in character, and for this reason -- he is not only a candidate, he is the President of the United States. Therefore, if he sees, in the position and character of his opponent, what may be harmful to our country, if he should be elected President, it is my judgment that it is his duty to state it to the people of the United States.

That is for myself -- and, as I say, my colleagues will speak for themselves -- that I strongly urged upon the President of the United States -- let me give just two examples and then I shall be through.

One, a statement that the commitment to the support of Israel, which took so much of the debate, is uncertain. I think I know about that for 30 years, and I see no uncertainty, whatever, about a United States commitment under this President, which has given unstinting support to Israel to the tune of \$4 billion in aid in the last two years, has shown the United States' willingness to stand alone in the Security Council and veto hostile resolutions against Israel, and to take the position it did, even though a minority against the resolution on Zionism and racism -- that is hardly any uncertainty as to the policy of the United States.

The second assertion is that the Administration has frittered away the friendship of the People's Republic of China. Again, it came, this statement by Governor Carter, only one day after the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China had castigated in the U.N. the Soviet Union, had said practically nothing about the U.S., which, in terms of U.S.-Chinese-USSR relations is praise as far as the United States is concerned, and so on.

My colleagues will deal with others.

But the important thing is that as we now see an effort to kind of rush the American people into a Presidential decision because the Presidential decision is only three weeks away, I have urged upon the President his duty, whether he is elected or not, because he is their President, to tell the American people what he sees in his opponent and in America's future.

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Q Senator, Will you take some questions?

SENATOR JAVITS: All right.

Q Senator, you said that as President, it would be important for him to show out things that he might see in the Governor's character that could be harmful to the United States.

SENATOR JAVITS: That is right.

Q Could you give us some examples --

SENATOR JAVITS: I have given you two examples.

Q But those are statements. What about his character?

SENATOR JAVITS: I think the tone, the rather derogatory tone, about the President's character without any proof to support it, in terms even of his personal honesty is going very far in American public life and even the folks in the press are beginning to pick that up.

That is what I think the President could see in America's future in terms of a Carter Presidency and it is his duty to say so if he feels that way.

Q May I just follow that up? In other words, you are saying Governor Carter has been dishonest?

SENATOR JAVITS: I said no such thing. I just said the reckless charges about the President's dishonesty without any basic proof demonstrates a kind of campaigning which I think is out of bounds in American public life.

Q Are you recommending that the President discuss those charges, Senator?

SENATOR JAVITS: Without any question, and I hope he will.

Q Senator, do you have a timetable as to when the President will release the list of American companies which are cooperating with the Arab boycott?

SENATOR JAVITS: I have not.

Q Some companies have cooperated with the Arabs.

SENATOR JAVITS: As to the have not, you have got that story respecting the fact that these filings were confidential and if we expect any filings, we have to respect the representations we make and nobody is more against the Arab boycott than I. But as to the future, I expect them to be made immediately, that they are disclosed to the United States.

Q Senator Javits, what was the President's reaction to your suggestion?

SENATOR JAVITS: I am going to have to leave that to the President. I think that is the convention of speaking with Presidents.

Q Are you saying the President should go out with gloves off now and call them as he sees them or attack --

SENATOR JAVITS: Call them as he sees them, attack or not attack.

Q What you are really saying is he should toughen up his campaign?

SENATOR JAVITS: He should call them as he sees them. That is an exact description of what I have in mind.

Q Has he been restraining himself?

SENATOR JAVITS: I think the President has been bearing in mind the fact that he is the President of the United States and I think it is part of that Presidential obligation now to say what he really thinks, as his opponent's position and character have now been revealed by this new encounter which represented the second debate.

Q Do you think it is going to help the campaign?

SENATOR JAVITS: I don't know whether it will help or hurt, but I know one thing: It is the duty of the President to tell the American people what he sees. He is the President, after all, the 37th President of the United States, and he is also a candidate.

MR. NESSEN: Why don't we let some of the other spokesmen have a chance before we get all the questions.

Q I would like to ask Mayor Perk a question.

MAYOR PERK: I don't have a statement. Go right ahead.

Q Since you come from what we call an ethnic city -- a lot of Eastern Europeans -- Polish, Bohemian, Romanian -- would you give us your assessment of the President's debate statement on the voters in Cleveland and what you think the President should do to improve that situation?

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MAYOR PERK: Number one, I believe it was a very unfortunate choice of words and perhaps that had something to do with temporarily sidetracking the momentum of the campaign.

We have now regained that momentum and primarily because the President's record on self-determination for the captive nations is outstanding.

No one can dispute it. So, all of us understand that the President has been working toward self-determination for not only the Eastern European nations, but also, for the captive nations of the world.

He has signed the Captive Nations Proclamation several times. He has issued it in the third week of July in 1975 and 1976. I think his efforts at the Helsinki Conference show that the President is not ever going to allow the Eastern European countries to be annexed to Russia.

This is what the President, obviously, was trying to say when he had the unfortunate choice of words which, I think, have been badly misinterpreted.

But the nationality people of America are now beginning again to realize -- at least, let me say this: That that unfortunate slip has really made them aware of the fact that they do have a President who is working for them and working for self-determination for the Eastern European countries. I believe it is turning now in the President's favor.

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Q Would you suggest any changes, Mayor Perk, in the President's campaign?

MAYOR PERK: No, I believe we all suggested the same thing to the President, that he is doing a marvelous job in campaigning, no one can do it more effectively than he can, and that he should continue to do exactly what he is doing.

Q Was it the consensus of the Steering Committee that he should get tougher with Jimmy Carter?

MAYOR PERK: I think somebody else ought to answer that question.

Governor?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I speak from perhaps a different viewpoint than some others. I have, for the past several weeks in speaking to audiences in my own State and in other States, said there are just two simple reasons why I am for Gerald Ford. The first is that I know Gerald Ford, and the second is that I know Jimmy Carter. I served with him as Governor and I know him. I think I know him perhaps better than a lot of others, and the campaign in the last few days has turned into a mean, nasty, little campaign from Jimmy Carter's point of view. He has distorted and misled the American people in so many instances that it is hard to keep track of them, and I am very familiar with a good many of those.

He brags about a job done in Georgia in reorganization and management, and I am a Governor and I think I know a little bit about what it takes. During the four years as Governor, spending rose faster and the number of State employees rose faster than in all but about eight States. He was one of the biggest spenders and the biggest expanders of Government of any Governor during that period of time. That is just one example of many distortions which he is attempting to foist onto the American public.

I think, finally, in a much broader sense, this campaign comes down to some very fundamental decisions regarding how we run this Nation and where the power of Government ought to reside.

Jimmy Carter runs on an anti-Washington platform. Well, he comes from Georgia but if he were to get to Washington he would bring the power and the strength of Government to Washington with him. The President is in Washington, but he consistently, through his term and consistently now, advocates the return of governmental power to the States and the local communities and to the people themselves.

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It is not where you are now but what you would do in terms of governmental direction in the future that counts. And I think ultimately the people of this country are going to realize that the strength, the stability, the honesty and the integrity of this President is beyond question, while that of his opponent simply is not.

Q Do you see anything unfair about the use you are making here today of the White House as a forum for the incumbent in this race? Don't you think these politics should be taken out of the White House?

MR. NESSEN: Every time we do, Sarah, you ask why can't we bring them down to the Briefing Room, so we brought them down to the Briefing Room.

Q I am asking the Governor if he doesn't feel today that as you stand there and make these statements, it is something that maybe you should make on a platform when you have him as a debater?

GOVERNOR EVANS: No.

Q I would like to ask Mr. Dent about a statement Mr. Spencer, the Deputy PFC Director, made last week that he regarded the polls show that Ford is behind in much of the South. Would you address yourself to that statement?

MR. DENT: Yes. Here is a headline from a South Carolina newspaper this morning. A UPI story out of Atlanta said, "Carter's Once Solid Lead in South Slipping." It says, "The Democrats grudgingly admitted, and we Republicans are gleeful and gloating." And it is true, because what has happened (Laughter) is the people in the South, now Jimmy Carter's own back yard, have come to realize they can't trust Jimmy Carter. He is a political chameleon. When he is speaking before a union audience he is one way, and when he is speaking before a Southern Baptist audience he is another way. When he is speaking before Playboy Magazine, my goodness, it is in another way totally different from the Southern Baptist Convention. There is nothing he can do now. Rigor mortis has set in on Jimmy Carter in the South and the President is coming on as being more Presidential by far than Jimmy Carter.

What has happened since Wednesday night's debate, for example, and the way Jimmy Carter has conducted himself with his excesses, his distortions, and so forth, brings out the little mean streak in his character that I have had so many Governors tell me about, such as Governor Evans was referring to just now, and again, I think the way he has conducted himself and the way he handled himself with his impertinence in the debates proves that he is not of Presidential caliber.

Q Would you be kind enough to give us the authority for that sheet you held up?

MR. DENT: Yes, United Press International.

Q Who does it quote?

MR. DENT: It is a State paper, the largest paper in South Carolina.

Q Yes, but somebody as having polled or somebody gathered?

MR. DENT: It quotes Republicans and Democrats all through the South. We just had a briefing, also --

Q Is this a UPI poll?

MR. DENT: It is a UPI story based on its canvass.

Q Who did it poll?

MR. DENT: It says UPI did it.

Let me say this: We just had a briefing, also, from Bob Teeter, the pollster, which further reinforced the view that we have, and that is that the States in the South where they have been repolling in each instance the President has been gaining more and more momentum, and to the point now where he is ahead in States such as Mississippi and Louisiana.

As I told you before when I was here, the Cotton South is blooming. Now we are producing the actual cotton and we are going to have it baled on November 2.

Q Is the President ahead in any other Southern States besides Mississippi and Louisiana?

MR. DENT: Yes, in Virginia, of course, he is ahead.

Q Did Bob Teeter mention any other States?

MR. DENT: He discussed particularly Mississippi and Louisiana.

Q Is he ahead anywhere else?

MR. DENT: Yes, I found that out the last time I was here. In my own State of South Carolina, the race is very close. It is moving closer in Tennessee and all of these Southern States. We have come from a long distance back. I haven't seen polls in some of the other States, but the point is that Jimmy Carter has trouble in his own back yard because his own people -- remember, he was the favorite son -- his own people no longer trust the favorite son. That is what it is all about.

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Q Was that polling done before last week, during or after last week?

MR. DENT: My understanding is it has been done since then.

Here is my point: I don't know about the rest of the country, but down where I come from the momentum is still moving with and for the President.

Q Do you expect the President to return to the South?

MR. DENT: Yes.

Q When?

MR. DENT: I don't know.

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MR. NESSEN: Let's get Mayor Cianci over here. He is the last spokesman. Then, you can direct questions to anybody.

MAYOR CIANCI: I am the Mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, which is a solid Democratic State, as everybody knows.

I have noticed a tremendous change in the last three weeks in the campaign efforts of the President in Rhode Island. It may be a small State, but it has been the bellwether for an awfully long time. There are only four electoral votes there, and it is a highly ethnic State.

I think one of the things that changed quite a bit of the thinking in the State of Rhode Island is the statement that Governor Carter made concerning taxing church properties. I know the mayor of a city that has a \$102 million budget, that if, in fact, those statements of Mr. Carter are followed through and become a reality, we would have to raise the taxes in my city because those parochial schools would have to close automatically within a matter of two or three years.

We would have to absorb those children into our school system and it would probably cost the taxpayers about another \$4.00 or \$5.00 a thousand.

I think, as we look to see the ethnic situation, I happen to be an Italo-American, and some of you might happen to remember I gave Mr. Carter an elocution lesson at the Republican National Convention. I think it goes back to what Harry Dent was saying, you have to say the same thing all the time. You can't change your mind.

What really bothered me about Mr. Carter--and Rhode Island is a highly ethnic State with Italo-Americans--and he refused to meet with the Italo-American Caucus, and that disturbed a lot of ethnic people -- ethnic-minded people.

We are making some good moves in the State of Rhode Island and I believe the neighborhood situation, which was something I campaigned very hard for, this Administration has shown, with the Office of Minority Business Enterprise, with the Small Business Administration, things that a Democratic Administration hasn't done, we have done.

In the Republican Platform in Kansas City, we included planks on neighborhoods which made an awful lot of difference because the Democrats didn't put it in their platform. So, I think the American city is going to be turned around an awful lot because of this President.

We talked, at the Steering Committee meeting, about that, and also, about the inconsistencies -- there were about seven or eight of them -- in the Carter campaign. Certainly, the middle income taxpayer was discussed, and also, the inconsistency of the \$15 billion defense cut.

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So, I think the people are starting to see that Governor Carter, and his record as Governor of Georgia, is not really what we are looking for in the White House.

I think revenue sharing is also very important. Hopefully, within the next couple of days, the President will be signing that legislation. That makes a big difference to mayors who are on the front lines every day trying to meet economic problems. And if revenue sharing is signed by the President, I am sure it will take an awful lot of pressure off a lot of mayors and off an awful lot of citizens.

President Ford's record on revenue sharing is consistent and it has been complete ever since he was involved in it from the very beginning, not just while he has been President.

Those are the kinds of things mayors are interested in and those are the kinds of things I think every American citizen is interested in.

Governor Carter, if we take his position, we would be in serious trouble in the cities.

Q Can you explain why your city is in such trouble, now, economically?

MAYOR CIANCI: Probably because it was controlled by a Democrat political machine for 35 years, until last year.

Q Governor, could we ask you to explain the mean, nasty behavior of Governor Carter so we are not put in the position of saying, apparently, he meant, or he means that, what exactly do you mean?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I think his use of terms in talking about brainwashing, and what I think is really a level not fit for a Presidential campaign. He has given the tone to a campaign which just simply isn't justified in a major debate over the future of this nation for the next four years, and I think the President, as a marked contrast, has consistently, throughout the campaign, conducted himself in a manner befitting a President. After all, that is what we are selecting.

Q Governor, isn't it true Georgia was too far behind other States, that by increasing spending was the only way they could improve things in Georgia?

GOVERNOR EVANS: That may be true, but you don't say, on the one hand, I have reorganized and I saved money, and claim a \$50 million Administration saving that his own State auditor, from his own party, says is fiction, and then deny that perhaps there was an increase in spending, and an increase in some of these other things.

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If there was a needed increase, he ought to talk about it. But to again mislead the people into somehow thinking that his reorganization efforts in and of themselves saved Georgia an enormous amount of money, which I, as Governor -- and I think other Governors in the nation -- just know very well isn't true, I think, is misleading.

Q I didn't think he ever claimed that.

GOVERNOR EVANS: He certainly has claimed a \$50 million administrative savings and his own people in Georgia, his own State auditor --

Q Governor, was it only Senator Javits, or was there a consensus of advice that the President should focus more now on what he said was Governor Carter's character and what someone else characterized as untrustworthiness or chameleon? Is there a consensus now that there should now be a greater focus on Carter's character?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I don't think I would put it in terms --

Q And integrity?

GOVERNOR EVANS: -- of character. You are using the term "integrity."

Q You said the President's integrity and honesty were beyond question and his opponent's was not.

GOVERNOR EVANS: That is right. I think the difference is between a known quantity, a President who has been there, and in the arena, and has made progress and occasionally has made mistakes, as we all have in political office and almost anything we do. But he is consistent and he is known and he has all of these attributes that I think are terribly important in building the stability of this country for the next few years.

Jimmy Carter, for all that everybody has followed him and written about him, is still, in many respects, an unknown quantity, mostly because he can't say the same thing twice on many important issues. It is difficult to peel away the skin and to find out what is really in that heart and to find out, really, what he means consistently.

Q You said there was a marked contrast between the President's demeanor in the campaign and Mr. Carter's, and Senator Javits, to suggest that he personally was suggesting that the President should become tougher. Can you give us some idea of the consensus of the meeting, whether there was a sense of the conference as to whether he should stay in marked contrast, a quiet demeanor, or become tougher?

GOVERNOR EVANS: There is a considerable difference between toughness and meanness, and I think we ought to leave all the meanness to Carter. The President is plenty capable of being tough.

Q Governor Evans, aside from the qualifications stated in the Constitution, is Jimmy Carter qualified to be President of the United States, in your view?

GOVERNOR EVANS: The question isn't between qualified and not qualified. The question is between two men -- I suppose three, if you include Senator McCarthy. It is between those who are running as to who is the better qualified, and I think when you put it on that level, which is what we are voting on, there simply is no question who is better qualified to be President.

Q I am sorry. I got here a little late. How did you characterize it in the beginning?

GOVERNOR EVANS: Mean and nasty.

Q If you all gave President Ford a good report card, do you really all think things are going swimmingly?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I don't think we gave President Ford a good report card necessarily. I think Senator Javits was accurate in saying we have had a whale of a four-week consistent effort that has brought the campaign from a place where few, if any, thought the President could win to a point where no one on the Democratic side is reserving inaugural ball gowns any more.

The last week wasn't as good as the four weeks preceding it. I suppose you can liken it to a football season. We had four straight wins and we might have had one loss but we don't have to have an undefeated season. All you have to have is 51 percent of the vote, and I think we have now regained that momentum which has been coming our way for such a long period of time.

Q Why do you say that?

GOVERNOR EVANS: I think the President's efforts in the last couple of days have been good efforts, excellent efforts, and I think there is an increasing awareness and an increasing public exposure of the misleading statements of Governor Carter and increasingly the focus is back on the Governor.

Q Governor, you have said that Carter has distorted, he has misled, he has been mean, he has been nasty, and you have all come awfully close to calling him dishonest, but nobody has quite done it. Was that the feeling, that Ford ought to call a spade a spade and call him that?

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SENATOR JAVITS: I think the feeling was that Ford ought to call a spade a spade and let the people decide what that adds up to. For example, I will read from a statement here in one of our prominent newspapers.

"Without specifying that Mr. Ford subsequently rectified the errors, Mr. Carter asserted that the IRS had determined 'campaign money was used by Mr. Ford and his family to buy clothes and to pay for a vacation trip'" It is that kind of thing I think we are talking about.

The record is now replete with it. You have but to read the lead story in the daily news of today or a lead story by Jim Wieghart to the same effect. There are other stories throughout the country, so we are not inventing something new.

Q Would your advice to the President have been the same if he were even or ahead in the polls and do you think he was a little easy or reticent with Governor Carter in the last debate?

SENATOR JAVITS: I can't hypothesize that. I really don't know. All I know is that the present situation requires him to speak his mind as to what he sees if there should be a Presidency by his opponent based on the record, which is now being made. That is what I advised him.

Q Do you think he should travel more?

SENATOR JAVITS: I think he is going to travel a lot. Like all of us, I have run the same way, you have always a struggle between should I be here or should I be there, but now I think he is going to be all-out.

Q Will Mr. Baker answer some questions?

MR. NESSEN: I think Baker had a news conference on the plane.

Q What about Dole?

MR. NESSEN: Dole has a cold and wants to go home and nurse his cold and will not come out afterwards.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END (AT 4:56 P.M. EDT)