

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 1976

Office of the Vice President  
(San Francisco, California)

---

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

AT

KOG-TV STUDIOS

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW BY JIM DUNBAR AND NANCY FLEMING

FOR THE JIM DUNBAR SHOW

(AT 9:05 A.M. PDT)

MR. DUNBAR: Vice President Nelson Rockefeller is with us today. We are delighted, of course, to have a chance to talk to the number two man in government.

I might add that what you saw a bit ago, the arrival, was taped to give you an idea of what that procedure is about. This is live, as live as we can all get.

I am delighted to have you in San Francisco, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Jim, I am just very happy to be here. I appreciate you and Nancy letting me come on your program.

MS. FLEMING: We are more than honored.

MR. DUNBAR: We would like to talk about a couple of things making news this morning --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Good.

MR. DUNBAR: -- that deal with President Ford. Since you are here, and as a news maker, I would like to get your views on Mr. Ford's admission today that he has goofed with respect to the European domination question that came out during the debates last week.

I am just wondering, is it your opinion -- I think a lot of folks might agree -- that Mr. Ford might have taken a lot of the hate off, had he admitted that immediately or the next day, "I made a mistake," as he has now said. We have had about a week of that as an issue and a lot of folks think that is not much of an issue. Do you agree with that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, I agree with you. I was in Chicago and I said the next morning at a press conference that he had made a mistake, that I knew he didn't feel that way, that it was a mistake and he was under pressure. You know, you are briefed and you get a whole lot of facts and figures and 90 million people watching you, and so forth, and you are under the pressure of this thing, and he just put it backward. So, I just said so.

MORE

But I made the point, which I think was really quite valuable, that the groups who have suffered this captivity have never had such publicity. They are now on the front pages for the first time in the United States in I don't know how many decades, so that really in a sense it was a fantastic break to bring that cause to the American people. It was a little at his expense though.

MR. DUNBAR: We have got that out of the way, I guess, as an issue, at least for the time being.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is right. I agree with you though, it is always simpler to say so. I have apologized to the Senate twice for criticisms. It is much simpler when you got a problem just to say, "Look, I made a mistake."

MR. DUNBAR: Let me ask you about what some might consider to be a mistake in your recent behavior. I have reference to a famous flipping finger incident, and also in connection with that moment at the Republican National Convention, and I am still not clear on the details.

Apparently you grabbed a sign out of someone's hand and someone ripped a phone out of your hand, or something of that sort. To some, that might seem to be kind of a nonpolitical, a nonpolitic thing to do, particularly for a man of your stature.

Others might suggest, now this is a little impersonal, but others might suggest, sir, that this kind of signifies that you are throwing up your hands and calling it quits. That doesn't sound like the behavior of a politician who has ambitions to continue in office.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You know better than anyone how these conventions are, and the public likes some fun. We had a North Carolina delegation that was big for Reagan and we were solid for Ford. Right behind them was this guy standing up there, holding the sign, so we couldn't see the podium.

I talked to the chairman later and said, "If you want to bring amateurs to a Convention who are provocative, then they have to be able to take the consequences." Your trouble is, they are not used to this.

So I am coming back -- I got sent around the floor to talk to delegates and I am coming back and this guy comes out on the aisle holding a sign out, so I just took it. I sort of had to.

MS. FLEMING: I think a lot of people could appreciate that kind of ingenious behavior. You just do what is there to be done.

On the other hand, a number of the group made some remarks about the campaign was winding down.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You are getting these two mixed up.

MS. FLEMING: No, I am not. Do you feel perhaps you are being sent around the country to clean up this act a little bit after the fact?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. No, I have been doing this. You said, when I was listening to you, that the campaign was winding down. I wasn't quite sure about its winding down at this point. I thought it was winding up.

MR. DUNBAR: That brings up another point, talking about issues. Talking about Mr. Butz wasn't an issue. We are talking about the Playboy interview. We were talking yesterday about Carter's so-called infidelity. I don't know where that stands.

We are also talking about the famous Rockefeller incident. Those don't seem to be issues.

It seems to be a campaign in search of issues. Do you agree?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to tell you something, if you will forgive me.

MR. DUNBAR: Yes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There are issues being discussed, but they are not reported. This is a very interesting combination. What a candidate does -- and I used to be a candidate over a period of years in New York State, but I never got beyond the local scene -- you could say a lot of things, but what is picked up for the media is what they think the public is going to be excited about.

The truth of the matter is that there is a lot of discussion of issues, but they are not exciting enough to make the headlines.

MS. FLEMING: Isn't that unfortunate? Shouldn't there be some really great issues that are exciting?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There are a lot of great issues in this country.

MS. FLEMING: Why don't you detail a couple of them? I think our viewers would be interested in hearing them.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: For example, the whole question of international relations. How do we conduct international relations as a power which no longer is the supreme power, either economically or militarily -- which we were. This is an evolution which is a complicated one.

We have moral values. Should we impose our moral values, or try to impose them, on other nations? Is that a form of moral imperialism?

Or should we build up a defense that is capable of coping with this extraordinary expansion of the Soviets? They have now become a world Naval power. Freedom of the seas, to me, is something we take for granted as a nation. And yet, freedom of the seas now is seriously threatened by the Soviet.

MORE

I think oil, for instance, let's say 85 percent of our energy comes by ship from overseas. If those ships are sunk or if there is a boycott -- either one -- these are issues which are life and death issues for our country. They are complicated.

The President sent up four messages to Congress on energy, trying to get energy self-sufficiency, trying to get conservation bills. These are things which are complicated and, therefore, how do we put them in a headline? How do we put them in one minute on TV?

MR. DUNBAR: If you will give us a pause, we will do it and call on our viewers.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That would be exciting for you to do it.

MR. DUNBAR: We would be delighted to. That is our business. As you probably know, we are a telephone talk show here.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Oh, good.

MR. DUNBAR: And we give our viewers an opportunity to talk to the guests we have on the program. Mr. Carter was sitting right where you are a week or so after the debate. I would like to invite our callers to get their calls in now.

We have the Vice President for just a couple of minutes, so if you have some questions for Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, that is why he is here. Let's get to the phones in San Francisco.

You are first, go ahead.

QUESTION: Good morning, Vice President Rockefeller.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

QUESTION: My question is, Mr. Ford was reported to have said that Mr. Carter was ruthless before in his Georgia governorship campaign and is now doing the same thing in this campaign. Why hasn't President Ford pointed out at the White House that conflict in moral integrity?

MR. DUNBAR: Did you get that question?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Not as clearly as I would like to. Because I think it is a serious and important question, I would like to be sure I understand the question.

MR. DUNBAR: Mr. Caller, we are having trouble hearing you. You were asking about moral integrity, but none of us quite understood the question.

QUESTION: My question is, President Ford said that Mr. Carter wanted the Georgia governorship and it was a ruthless

smear campaign. He is now doing the same thing, especially in the past week. Why hasn't President Ford pointed out to the American people that conflict in moral integrity?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is a very sensitive question and I understand what she is saying. As a politician, I would say that the very fact that this lady has picked this up herself -- by just listening to the campaign -- is by far the most important and effective way to get that position known.

If President Ford said it, then people are going to question whether he is playing dirty ball or dirty pool, or whatever you want to call it.

I think that often the candidates who make mistakes or do things that don't fit into what they are saying make a far greater impression on the public. And this all gets back to this question of trust and confidence, which I think is going to be the key issue when the voter goes in the booth. So I think the public is already feeling exactly what that lady said.

MR. DUNBAR: Okay.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. DUNBAR: I might just add -- and I add it only because it came on the wire today and it is news and you will be hearing about it later -- Mr. Ford has been quoted as calling Jimmy Carter a minor leaguer, and saying he is making fuzzy and contradictory proposals. That was from New York City.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I was there last night, but that doesn't quite get to the moral conflict the lady is talking about.

MR. DUNBAR: And you quite agree with that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I wouldn't want to say. I think that everybody has to draw their own conclusions, but I understand what she is saying.

MR. DUNBAR: Okay. All right, I thought we had ourselves a "late" for the 5 o'clock tonight.

San Francisco is next for a question of the Vice President. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Good morning.

MS. FLEMING: Good morning.

QUESTION: I am interested to know if you feel that there is a possibility that Henry Kissinger's diplomatic career may be in a slip? Since Carter, if he wins, says he will not continue with Henry? But also it is rumored in the Christian Science Monitor that President Ford would also replace him.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First, I think that President Ford is going to win, so that the decision will be there in

the Ford Administration.

Secondly, the Secretary has been there nine years. He has been a very close friend of mine for 20 yearss, and I admire him tremendously. I think he is the greatest Secretary of State we have ever had. I know the President wants him to stay.

Then the question becomes, can this man financially and just in terms of sheer energy take another four years. That is a subject that I think we won't know until the time comes.

MR. DUNBAR: Okay. A good question.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. FLEMING: Along that same line of questioning, I don't think it has ever been quite clear to me as to why you are not running for Vice President of this country.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Because I asked that my name not be considered as a candidate. I have to tell you, frankly, that the vice presidency, even though it is the second highest office in the land, is a standby equipment job. It is important because if anything happened -- God forbid -- to the President, the Vice President has to step in. So it is important who he is.

But during the interim, except for the honor of presiding over the Senate -- where you can't speak without unanimous consent -- there is really no function, except as a Staff Assistant to the President to do whatever he may want, which is what I have done.

MR. DUNBAR: Your decision not to run, Mr. Vice President, was not a conversion to the Reagan elements in the Republican Party?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wrote that letter, but that was a year ago, to stop Bo Callaway's worries. Of course, what I should have said was, "Mr. President, when Bo Callaway delivers the southern delegates to you, then I am off the ticket." Because he didn't deliver one of them, so all of this thing was built up overnight.

MR. DUNBAR: It might have been unwise then, had that been the condition?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. Then I would have just done it, which I would have anyhow. I came in because there was a constitutional crisis. I turned this job down two times or three times or four.

MR. DUNBAR: You did?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. DUNBAR: Could you tell us when? That is a very interesting thing.

MORE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: In 1960 President Nixon asked me to run with him, and then in 1968 Hubert Humphrey asked me to run with him.

MR. DUNBAR: Hubert Humphrey asked you to run?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But I said that I just wasn't standby equipment. I am too much of an activist. And the more activist you are in that position, the more you get in the hair of the people who are around the presidency.

MR. DUNBAR: I am not sure that I ever heard that before. I am delighted to hear you tell us this morning on this program -- Hubert Humphrey asking Nelson Rockefeller to serve as his Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He is a good friend of mine.

MR. DUNBAR: Let's take another call from San Francisco.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I would like to know what your feelings were about the situation at Attica. Do you feel that your actions were exactly necessary to the extreme that you went?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: In retrospect it is always easier to deal with a problem. Our tradition has been in New York, and it is now again, that when there is an uprising of this kind, where hostages were taken, the State Police assemble and they go in.

They went in without guns. They were trained. They were riot trained and they had already retaken half the prison.

But then the new Superintendent of the State Prisons, whom I appointed, who was a reformer, arrived on the scene and said, "Stop. I will negotiate this and we will run no danger." He, for four or five days, tried to negotiate. Finally, he didn't even dare go into the Prison because it got so rough. Then we had to take the action to save 54 hostages.

In my opinion, in retrospect, we never should have stopped the taking by the troopers in the beginning, who were doing it without guns. It would have been rough, but it would not have been the way it turned out. This became politicized, and when we agreed to all of the 28 demands for reform, then they asked for a total amnesty and free passes to a non-imperialist country, which does have sort of a Marxist ring to it.

QUESTION: I wanted to ask one more question.

MR. DUNBAR: All right.

QUESTION: Dealing with the situation of China, does the political structure in China have much of a hand with the United States in foreign affairs?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that it won't have an effect on the United States objective of maintaining ties with

eight or 900 million people. But it is very hard to tell what actually is going on in China and whether their foreign policy will change. My guess would be that probably it won't.

MR. DUNBAR: Okay.

QUESTION: Thanks very much.

MR. DUNBAR: As you may notice, Mr. Vice President, in Hong Kong this morning the Chinese military apparently has been used to suppress what they are calling a radical movement which involves the widow of Mao Tse-tung. She may be under arrest along with several other leaders in the so-called radical movement. So there is a condition of unrest in Mainland China.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is closer to Chou En-lai's position. So it would indicate on that basis, if it is true, that it would continue as is.

MR. DUNBAR: Thank you very much. It is nice to have you here in San Francisco.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The time flew by so fast. For a man who has been up for four hours, you look wonderful.

MR. DUNBAR: I fall asleep instantly after the conclusion of this show.

Thank you, sir. It is nice to have you with us, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END (AT 9:20 A.M. PDT)