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Office of the Vice President  
(Portland, Oregon)

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PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE AIR NATIONAL HANGAR  
PORTLAND, OREGON

AT 3:45 P.M. PDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to be back in Portland. I must say I love your state. I am very grateful to the people here for friendly relations over a long period of time. I think this is my fifteenth visit to the state. I would like to thank Steve Young, the State Chairman, for what he has been doing for the preservation of the two-party system, which is the life blood of democracy, and to Phil Bladine for his running for Congress so we can keep a two-party system in the Congress of the United States.

I would be delighted to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I heard your comments a little while ago in Sacramento that you made regarding John Dean. You said he is doing it all for publicity's sake.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I didn't say all. I said it was coincidental that he had a book that was just coming out and I used the analogy of Playboy Magazine for taking a full page ad with three pictures of Governor Carter. I thought there was some similarity.

QUESTION: Have you talked to President Ford about this latest flap with John Dean?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Listen, Cook, who was the man who was the intermediary, already denied the whole thing. There is absolutely nothing to it. This whole thing was brought out in the hearings. This is just, I think, a publicity stunt.

QUESTION: Do you think it is going to harm the campaign now?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I really don't.

QUESTION: In light of --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a flash in the pan for John Dean.

QUESTION: What about the fact that one of the Congressional committees has called a meeting, reportedly, to discuss this very situation? Do you think perhaps the people are looking at it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a two-to-one Democrat-controlled Congress, why shouldn't they?

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Anything they can do at this moment in the campaign, at the last minute they raised the thing, they say they called the meeting. They already got you out.

QUESTION: Do you think the campaign is going in that direction, sir?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Which direction?

QUESTION: Both candidates seem to be throwing a little mud.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have been through a lot of campaigns, myself, and there is a tendency to. But I have such tremendous confidence and faith in the American people. They are the most sophisticated, receptive, sensitive people in the world. They preserve this democracy. They have the ability to sort through all of this confusion and come out with what is right. And I think when they get in the booth, they are going to say, "In whom do I have trust and in whom can I place my confidence for the next four years?" They have a President who has a proven record, and I think they are going to say, "President Ford." And I think he is going to be reelected, or elected for the first time.

QUESTION: But John Dean, in his tattle tales, has been right so far. Do you think the people are going to believe what he is saying now, or don't you think they are going to believe?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: John Dean isn't exactly what I would call a paragon of moral leadership in this country.

QUESTION: He has been correct, though, sir.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He has been correct on certain issues. But this is a great opportunity to sell a book. I just have to tell you, I don't know what you think these Congressional hearings are like. I went through one of them to be nominated -- not to be nominated-- to be confirmed for Vice President of the United States. I had 500 FBI agents, for six months, examining everything I had ever thought, done, or any relation I had ever had, and then went through the questions of the Congress. He went through the same thing.

This whole thing was brought out. It was all discussed at those hearings, and there is a two-to-one Democrat-controlled Congress and they are not about to select a Republican if there is anything they can find on him. And they have been all through that.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the Congressional hearings that are starting into the Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have got to tell you the honest truth. I was Chairman of the Committee for President Ford on the accusations of CIA massive violations of domestic statutes. There were some violations, nothing massive. And then we were asked to look into the question of assassinations; which we did, and we couldn't find any hard evidence on which

to draw conclusions that would make it seem reasonable to come up with something. I just have a feeling, myself, that if we concentrate on the tremendous problems that lay ahead of us, which are very real -- we are living in a period of extraordinarily rapid change, interdependence, growing nationalism in the world -- I just think we have got so much ahead of us that why go back and try and reopen and dig up tragedies of the past? That is my own personal feeling.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, President Ford admitted that he made a mistake on the statement on Eastern Europe.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is right.

QUESTION: What effect do you think that will have on his campaign and the results?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, I was in Chicago the day after this happened, and I admitted he made a mistake right then, and pointed out, though, that by this the problem, the plight of these captive nations, this new form of colony that exists, colonial empire which exists in the world today, this hadn't had the front page attention in the United States in decades that it has had in this last week. Therefore, out of an unfortunate slip has come, from the point of view of the people involved, major public focus of attention on their problem. So for them, I think it is a great gain.

QUESTION: What do you think the effect will be of this statement on the fate of the three Bulgarians who jumped ship in Goose Bay this morning, or were you aware of it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wasn't aware of it, but I don't see how it can have any effect on them. Our policy is to give refuge to people who seek asylum from political persecution.

QUESTION: When you mentioned the effect of the publicity on the Eastern European communities, what about the effect on President Ford?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think it is going to have any effect at all.

QUESTION: It won't faze anybody.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. I really don't think so. I mean he made a slip. So he made a slip. His record shows, you know, and the Administration has stood for and worked for freedom of oppressed peoples. This is what our country believes in. This is what we stand for.

QUESTION: Don't you think he waited a little bit too long, perhaps, before he admitted his mistake?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sure, he did. So he waited. Everybody has got to do their own thing in their own way.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, we just signed a

major arms deal with Israel. We have also been supplying Saudi Arabia with sophisticated weapons. There are those who are saying that, by supplying both sides with arms with which to wage a bitter war amongst each other, we are doing the wrong thing by saying we are for peace, by giving the weapons to both sides.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, you can make an argument to give them to neither side on that basis, and that is not in the tradition of our support of the independent state of Israel. So we have given arms. As a matter of fact, in the last three years there has been more total dollar value given than in the last twenty years. So that that is one side of it.

But what you haven't mentioned yet in your two-way deal here is that the Soviet Union has been supplying tremendous numbers of arms, or volume of arms to the radical Arab groups. Saudi Arabia happens to be a conservative or moderate Arab group. So you have a third factor here, which is the conflict between the radical Arabs and the moderate Arabs. The moderate Arabs are the ones who are trying to stop what has been going on in the world.

Libya has been using its oil wealth and its arms to stir up political trouble around the world, and the Saudi Arabians have been trying to stabilize this situation.

I think that what the Administration's position has been is a sound one, to try and get some kind of balance there. Although the Prime Minister of Israel made a statement only last week that, as a result of U. S. aid, the balance of power had very materially tipped in favor of Israel.

QUESTION: Do you see in the foreseeable future the danger of a major war breaking out within the Middle East?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the settlement that Secretary Kissinger worked out in the Israel-Egyptian war was a major settlement and a split-off from the Soviet Union by the Egyptians. I think that did more to bring about the beginning of stability and ultimate settlement and peace in the Middle East than anything. I think the tragedy of what is going on in Lebanon, which has got to be so complicated that it isn't funny, but this, where you now find Syria, which was a sworn enemy of Israel, and Israel both supporting the Christians in Lebanon against the radical Palestinian forces and radical Lebanese forces is an extraordinary development. But I think these, if properly handled, which they will be by this country, in the greatest degree we can, could be important steps towards the ultimate achievement of peace, which is in everybody's interest.

This money that you are referring to ought to be spent for people and the investment and the raising of the standard of living of people in the area. There must be, what, 120 million people living in this Middle East area. And they ought not to be spending their money on arms. They ought to be spending it on investment of the funds for the benefit of their people.

QUESTION: Governor, you are a lame duck and you are not running for President anymore, or any office. What do you plan to do in 1976-1977, et cetera?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, let's go to January 20th, which is the day I am focused on. That is when I go home, and I will get back and have a chance for the first time in twenty years to really catch up with the family and concentrate on Happy and the boys, plus my own family, and the family's affairs.

After that, now you get into '77-'78, I have to say I love this country, and always have, and I think it is the greatest country in the world and that we all have responsibility along with enjoying the benefits. Therefore, there are lots of ways you can serve your country. And I will, without any question, find ways of doing so. I have always gotten into government, at least I did in the beginning by just having ideas and then writing the President. You know, I wrote Roosevelt about the Western Hemisphere and I ended up as Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. I wrote General Eisenhower about the chance of reorganizing the structure of the Federal Government and I ended up, for seven years, as Chairman of a Committee on Government Organization.

So that in this world, if you listen to television and read newspapers and listen to the radio and just be in touch with people, you find out what the problems are. Then if you are made like I am, you start thinking, how do you solve that problem. Then you get ideas and then you communicate them and then you get back into some activity.

QUESTION: You are not going to go into public office?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't want to go back on a full-time basis and I don't want to run for office.

QUESTION: You are not just going to retire, then, and go hunting or something?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No -- on the side.

QUESTION: Would this be true even if there should be a Democratic Administration for the next four years? Would you still --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I worked for President Roosevelt for five years. I worked for Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson. But I worked for the country.

I happen to think that President Ford is at this crucial moment the man for this country and, therefore, I am working for him. I think the voters are going to have that feeling when they get in the booth. They want someone they can trust. They know this man and his record.

I think the more Governor Carter talks on issues and takes different positions at different times, and then ends up by saying, "Well, maybe after I have been in government for a year, I will have a different point of view," by this time the American people get confused and

then they begin to wonder, and I think when they get in that booth they are just going to say, "Well, this is too complicated for me. I want Ford."

QUESTION: A lot of people are saying the economy is going to go downhill. The indicators are already indicating that. What's your assessment of the economy?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will tell you very simply that I was worried, when we got to almost a 9 percent growth rate about two or three months ago, that we were going to go back into an over-heated economy, as the economists say it, and we were going to have the demand grow so rapidly for consumer goods and for manufactured goods that we were going to run into shortages and scarcities and get back into inflation.

So from an economic point of view, this slow-down-- and it really only is a slow-down -- is very sound and is going to have the effect of preventing getting back to an inflation.

Now, as far as employment is concerned, this is a tragic situation. At a 7.8 percent rate, it is down one-tenth of one percent. But if the economy continues at a more reasonable growth rate, five percent or six percent, then there are going to be another two to three million jobs in the next year. That will cut in very rapidly into the backlog of unemployed.

But you have to take a very interesting fact into consideration. Two months ago the statistics showed there was an increase in unemployment. But that same month there were 400,000 new jobs, but 700,000 people entered the labor market, most of them women. This is because there is confidence coming back in this country and therefore people are coming back to work. I think the strength of this country is fantastic and that we are going to see a continuation of growth and employment, hopefully, with a stable and lowering inflation rate.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a pleasure. Nice to be with you.

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(AT 4:00 P.M. PDT)