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Office of the Vice President
(Portland, Oregon)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT KOIN-TV INTERVIEW BY TED BRYANT
HILTON HOTEL, COUNCIL SUITE
PORTLAND, OREGON

AT 5:00 P.M. PDT

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, some of the recent polls indicate that Senator Mondale is doing Governor Carter more good than Senator Dole is helping the President. How would you assess your value to the President as compared with Senator Dole?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I tell you, I think that Senator Dole is an unusual man and a man of great integrity and great ability. He comes from Kansas and I think he gives a balanced ticket. The Northeast is for the President. That is where I come from. And the Northeast and the northwestern states really were responsible for his nomination, and all the northern states. So I think, frankly, that with the farm vote being as important as it is, and the farm problems being as important as they are, that Bob Dole is a tremendous asset to the ticket.

QUESTION: Have you regretted your decision not to be a candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. I came into this, accepted the invitation with a great sense of appreciation for the honor and also the timing because it was in a period of constitutional crisis. I thought if I could help in any way to bring a little stability and a sense of confidence back into the Executive Branch of Government, I wanted to do it. So I have been delighted, but I am not one cut out for stand-by equipment.

QUESTION: Did you have any second thoughts directly preceding the Convention or have any discussions with the President about the possibility and change your mind and be able --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I had discussions with him right along. What I did tell him was two things. I didn't tell him, we talked about it. One, that perhaps what I should have written to him before, in the beginning, was that when Bo Callaway delivered the southern delegates, I would be off the ticket because, as you noticed, he didn't get any of those delegations. Therefore, this whole thing was what I thought it was, a tempest in a teapot.

But my personal feeling is, as an activist, that the two years during this crisis, fine, I was delighted to be there, but to go for another four years and be in the position of stand-by equipment, it is not my nature.

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QUESTION: I think when you made that judgment, you stated as one reason for doing so Party squabbles, I think was the way you stated it.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. That was a year ago.

QUESTION: Has that changed now?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. Of course, you know the whole thing didn't make any sense to me because I didn't think these people were going to support him anyhow. But I didn't want to be responsible for his losing or thinking he was losing those delegates. I didn't think he would get them, but, therefore, I wanted to get out of the way so that they wouldn't say, "Well, if it hadn't been for Rocky being there, we would have all been for him."

QUESTION: Is that squabble, those internal problems, smoothed out now, do you think?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This is a democracy. You can't expect a monolithic party or monolithic approach to problems in this country. That is the great extent of democracy, we shouldn't be afraid of differences.

QUESTION: Speaking of differences, last year at this time, as a matter of fact, when you were here for the Western States Republican Conference, I attended the news conference and you were asked to define the difference between yourself and Governor Reagan. You said you thought they were largely differences of style. What influence has style had in the Presidential debates, in your opinion?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. 1, I wouldn't really call them debates. They are sort of like a press conference. And the trouble is nobody has seen to it that Mr. Carter answers the questions. I mean that first question on foreign policy as it was put to him was a very perceptive, well-phrased question. He paid absolutely no attention to it. Perhaps if President Ford had said, when he came to his question, "I will give my time, cede my time to Mr. Carter so he has a chance to answer the first question. If the questioner would repeat his question, then he can have my time to answer it" -- which didn't work out.

But I think that the real thing that came through is that President Ford is a strong, honest man who has inner calm and strength and courage, and that Mr. Carter is a very facile talker. He is a fast talker. He talks about on this problem he is going to do this and then maybe two weeks later, he is going to do that, and then the next time he talks about it, after he has been in the White House for a year, he might do something else. I think the American people are beginning to get nervous about it and that, therefore, when they get in the booth, they are going to say, "Well, I just have a feeling of trust and confidence in President Ford and I am going to vote for him." I think he is going to win.

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QUESTION: There are some who have suggested, as you are well aware, that the President would be better off to stay in the White House and not be out actively campaigning and the comment at the debate on Eastern Europe was a mistake. Is that a fair assessment?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. He likes to campaign. He loves people and has great faith in the basic values on which this country has grown to greatness. He stayed in Washington for those weeks not because he didn't want to campaign, but because the Congress was in the closing days of the session. Now, you know how this thing works. The bills all pile up and then the compromises are made and the votes are sought and then the amendments are put in. He wanted to be there to protect the American people in those closing days, so he could take his position and veto those measures that were necessary. And he did.

Now he is out on the road, and he is going to be on it. He was in New York last night.

QUESTION: You don't believe he hurts himself when he appears in personal debates?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. This man is an attractive person. He made a mistake on this thing. But you know, under pressure -- you are briefed, you are talking about a lot of subjects, you are talking 90 million people, and you have some things very sharply focused in your mind. It just came out wrong. I was in Chicago and said the next day he just made a mistake. I knew it because I know what he really believes. He believes in freedom for all people.

QUESTION: What advice, sir, would you give him in regard to campaigning in the later two-and-a-half weeks, now?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I am very careful about giving advice to a President. I can express my opinions on various positions, but I think that he has just got to stress the record of achievement, which is fantastic, that he has done; and his belief in our system, democracy, freedom, and the American enterprise system which is based on the creativity and the genius of the individual. He is for cutting back government interference in the lives of people.

The Carter approach and the Carter platform is for more and more big government dominating all phases of our lives. The President's position is, let the people run their own lives and let's keep government to do those essential things which people can't do for themselves. There is a basic philosophical difference. I think the people believe in the position the President has, and, with the confidence and trust that they have in him, they are going to elect him.

QUESTION: There have been some very human actions by politicians this season.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You can say that again.

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QUESTION: And there was a great deal of public attention paid to them. In your view, was too much attention paid to those kinds of things?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Every newspaper, every radio station, every television station has to pick what they feel each day, what the editors feel are the news items and something often happens. You know, it is the old story of man bites dog, and it gets on the front page. So some off-beat thing happens, and that dominates the news. But the people are pretty aware, I think, of the fundamental problems, and they have an uncanny way -- I have great respect and faith in the American people -- they have an uncanny way of sorting all this stuff out and coming out with the right decision.

QUESTION: There is, again, as there is every election time, talk of moral leadership. How do you assess the morality of the country?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that we have a situation where the mores of our society have changed and people tend to say politics is a dirty business and to say that all of the immorality or the acts which are illegal are done by politicians.

I remember when I first ran for office, somebody said -- I was speaking in a question and answer period -- "Why do you want to get in politics? Politics is a dirty business. You've got it good now." I said, "Look, if you think politics is a dirty business, why don't you get in and help clean it up?"

My opinion is that whether it is business or whether it is education or whether it is kids in school, wherever it is, you have got about the same range, a majority are decent, wonderful people; there are always a few who are cutting corners or trying to take advantage of it and beat the system.

I think the only thing to do is that they should be exposed, and that is why I believe so strongly in a free press -- because you all bring the stuff out, and that is what then gets us back on the track.

QUESTION: Have you discussed with Mr. Ford the possibility of a role in the Ford Administration if he is reelected?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I have told him that I have been 20 years, now, 15 years as Governor, and then 2 years on this Commission, and 2 years as Vice President, and I've got to get back home to Happy and the boys and my own affairs. And then I will get back sometime.

QUESTION: You wouldn't accept, if requested to assume a role?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I have been away too long. As a matter of fact, it is 36 years. I worked for six Presidents, and 37 years, it seems hard to believe. So I have sort of commuted back and forth from Washington. But I've got to catch up for a while.

QUESTION: What is the future of the Republican Party

if Mr. Ford loses?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't think he is going to lose. Therefore, it is hard to speculate. But we have lost before and -- you see, to me, the strength of the Party is that it isn't a national party, really. It is a state party and the strength of the party is in the states and then they join together every four years for a national election. But really, we don't have a national party; neither does the Democratic Party.

QUESTION: But the Republican Party will not suffer irreparable harm?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I think its roots are strong, indeed. I think the two-party system is the essence of democracy and it is the basis of our freedom. The wonderful thing is that people have, in this country, the tremendous sophistication so that they vote for the candidate of their choice and they are willing to switch from one party to another.

QUESTION: What is the role of Nelson Rockefeller in the Republican Party?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have been a dedicated person to the Republican Party because I believe in the two-party system. You've got to pick your own party. There are a lot of people who like to say, "Well, we are independents, and we are going to stick above this." Well, it is sophisticated and it is great, but somebody has to do the dirty work, or the tough work of organizing and picking candidates, and crystallizing the issues and organizing the campaigns. That is our system.

So that I think, really, everybody ought to have the courage to join a party and then do what they can to help shape that party to their thoughts. And, of course, that comes out of debate and discussion.

In New York we never -- and you have the same tradition here -- worry about people with different points of view within the party. We argue it out and then you get down to a point somewhere where the majority wins and the minority waits for another time to come back.

QUESTION: You mentioned picking your party. Have you ever had moments of contemplation and regretted the fact that you have chosen the Republican Party and perhaps if you had switched parties that you might have achieved the higher office you have several times sought?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, the latter part of the question is probably true. I think I would have had a much better chance of getting the nomination, in the Democratic Party, for President than I did in the Republican Party. I am too progressive for most areas, not most, but for many areas of the country as a Republican.

However, going back to the first part of your question, Harry Truman asked me when I was working for him, if I wouldn't shift parties and come over to the Democratic Party. But I have been a Republican all my life. I believe in its

basic principles. I would rather pull people forward than to try and hold them back. In the Republican Party, I can try and pull them forward and in the Democratic Party, I would be trying to hold them back from some crazy ideas that I think are in conflict with our basic heritage.

QUESTION: You said you are too progressive for some areas of the country. Does that mean there are too many areas of the nation where Republicans are not progressive? Is that what you are saying?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I don't say that. I wouldn't put it that way. I wouldn't want to say anything about someone else. I think being Governor of New York on the Republican ticket for four times -- that is 15 years -- where we are a Minority Party by a million registered voters means that you perchance are taking positions to reflect the interests of your constituents which are in conflict with concepts of people who live in rural areas or other areas who don't understand New York's problems.

They think New York is kind of wild-eyed, far out, or something, and are very critical of New York City because it has financial problems. But the interesting thing for me is that New York has come up with a deficit of \$3-1/2 billion. The Congress of the United States has done exactly what they criticized New York for, only they have done it in spades.

They are subject to the same pressure groups. They keep passing all these programs, promise, and then can't deliver. So they have got a \$70 billion deficit. The only difference is they can print the money and poor New York City can't.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a pleasure.

END AT 5:17 P.M. PDT