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Office of the Vice President  
(Seattle, Washington)

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PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE OLYMPIC HOTEL, COLONIAL ROOM  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

AT 10:15 A.M. PDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a real pleasure for me to be here, back in Seattle, and to have the opportunity of representing some outstanding candidates in this political season of the year. I am just very thrilled to be here with Joel, Joel Pritchard, your Congressman, who has done so much for you and for all of us in Congress and for those who are going to be in Washington again next year -- meaning the President. It's going to be great for him to have Joe back again. Some of us will be home by that time, so I am counting on him to represent all of us.

I also was very delighted to have a chance to join two breakfasts this morning, supporting John Spellman. I think he is a man of outstanding experience and a proven record. When people say that there is certain cynicism in this country, and there isn't the interest there used to be in public life, and so forth, when you see men of his caliber standing for office, it sort of renews your confidence.

Just like I was in Chicago a couple of weeks ago, maybe three, at a fund-raising dinner for a gubernatorial candidate Jim Thompson -- 2400 people, enthusiastic. He has been campaigning for a year and a half. He happens to be a Republican. The situation, I think, proves that the two-party system is alive and is strong and this, to me, is the essence of democracy, and it is the assurance for the future of freedom in our country. Everybody has got to support the party of their choice -- which I do.

I am delighted to be here and speak on behalf of the President, as I have been doing around the country. I think the trend is up. The polls in California yesterday looked very exciting. He has now moved ahead in the field poll -- 44 for the President and 43 for Mr. Carter. We witnessed a phenomenal shift, which almost is unique in history, in the polls after the Democratic Convention in New York where Mr. Carter was so far ahead and this slowly moved and now we are seeing a turning, the gradual tip-over.

I think when the people get in the booth, they are going to say, "Whom do we have confidence in? Whom do we trust to handle the problems of the next four years at home and abroad?" I think the answer is going to be Gerald R. Ford. It is a free country and everybody is going to make up their own mind, and that is what the polls will show on November 2nd.

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I am delighted to be here and to answer your questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, a few minutes ago you suggested there ought to be a rule in Presidential debates that candidates be required to answer the questions. Are you suggesting that the candidates so far haven't answered the questions?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that there has been a certain lack of clarity. There was a very interesting and concise statement at the opening of the debate on foreign policy by Mr. Frankel, in which he asked Mr. Carter a very direct and a very strong question. Mr. Carter successfully sidestepped and avoided answering that question entirely.

It is all sort of Sunday morning quarterback stuff but maybe if Mr. Ford had said, when he got to his turn, "I would like to cede my time and have Mr. Frankel restate his question so that Mr. Carter has a chance to answer it." It would have been quite an innovation.

QUESTION: Do you think he might do that at the next debate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am not on the inside of how these things are operated, but it ought to be interesting.

QUESTION: Have you suggested to the President that he might take that kind of tack?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. But I have been thinking out loud on the subject.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Vice President Rockefeller, do you feel that President Ford has been any less guilty of this particular problem in the debates? Do you think his presentation has been more forthright in answering direct questions?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think that he has stuck to the facts. And, of course, he is in a better position. It is tough. If you are in office, you then have to explain what you have done, but at least he has discussed what he has done on the basis of the record, which is known.

Mr. Carter, a former colleague of mine as Governor -- and I wouldn't speak ill of any Governor -- has tended to shift his position on issues and more recently, when he got pressed by members of the fourth estate, has said, "Well, perhaps after I have been in office for a year and had a chance to study the facts, I will have a different point of view."

I think the result is that increasingly people are getting a little uncertain, a little uneasy as to just where he stands on what he would do. I think that is why, when they get in the booth, they are going to

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say, "At least we know where he is. We may not agree with everything Mr. Ford is doing, but at least we know where he is and we have confidence and we have trust in him." And that is why he is going to be reelected.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, would you care to comment on John Dean's allegation that former President Nixon brought some kind of influence to bear on Gerald Ford when he was in Congress regarding the Watergate problems?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If John Dean wasn't trying to sell a book, I would be a lot more concerned about, first, what he is saying as an initial reaction. I saw the weekend full-page ads in the papers in the East for Playboy with three photographs of Mr. Carter. I don't blame Playboy for trying to capitalize on the situation. They are trying to sell Playboy. John is trying to sell his book.

If you look at the record, Mr. Cook, who was the man who was representing Mr. Nixon on the Hill in the House, categorically denied what Mr. Dean says. So if you start with that, and secondly, you have got to remember that this was a two-to-one Democratic Congress. Having been around Washington for 36 years, and worked for six Presidents, I know enough to know that when the Democrats have that kind of control, and they want to do something, they do it. And they are not inhibited by the fact that a Republican President doesn't want something done.

This all was investigated and aired fully at the time of the hearings when the President was up for confirmation and was confirmed by a Democratic Congress. Therefore, I just have to come back to the same conclusion where I started -- it is just a means of getting on the front page for a day or so, to help him to sell his book.

QUESTION: Do you fear it will become a real issue?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir, no fear at all.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, as you probably know, about two years ago, U. S. Judge George Bolte, issued a ruling on Indian fishing rights of Treaty Indians in our state.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If you say so. I didn't know it, but if you say he did, I am sure he did.

QUESTION: Well, the impact of the ruling is to say that half the salmon catch goes to the usual custom waters of the Treaty Indians and it has caused some dislocation among our fishermen. It is probably the key issue in the Second District, where I think you are supposed to go in the next hour or so to campaign.

Can you tell us what the Ford Administration has in mind to assuage or solve this problem that has sorely afflicted a number of our citizens

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. 1, I don't know.

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No. 2, it seems to me this is a local issue. One of the things that I used to feel strongly about when I was Governor of the State of New York was that I did not particularly welcome people coming from other parts of the country to tell us how to solve our problems when they knew nothing about them and we had very competent elected and able administrators and legislators to deal with them.

QUESTION: Does this mean, then, sir, the Ford Administration has no policy, no program that it might offer the Congress to relieve this particular issue out here?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As I said when you first asked me the question, the truth of the matter is I don't know, so that I start from that.

My second comment was that it sounds like an issue that relates to the State of Washington, and that it is going to have to be dealt with by your own local officials.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, it is a little more than a local issue because the U. S. Attorney had indicated in one of the last hearings before a Federal Judge that there was talk of calling out the Coast Guard, and other Federal forces, to enforce the Judge Bolte rule and make sure that there was not illegal or white commercial fishing to the detriment of the Indian tribes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can see how the issue is broadening here.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: And I think Mr. Skaits' question is to the question as to whether or not the Administration has investigated this problem or has even talked about the problem or has it surfaced at the White House level?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I know that politicians don't like to say they don't know. But the truth of the matter is I don't. I have not heard this issue discussed and therefore I regret that I cannot shed any light on the situation. But I sympathize with any group dealing with a difficult problem where there are strong conflicting interests, because this is the strength of democracy, that we are not afraid to have issues that raise these questions and that sooner or later, they are worked out. I am confident that the right answer will be found.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the man that I think you are going to endorse has said that if he is elected to Congress, he made a pledge that he would go back and make certain that Congress works to change this law or this Federal ruling by a Federal Judge. I think the question now is, would he have the Administration backing in such an endeavor?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is an interesting question.

(Laughter.)

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: One would have to ask him whether he has already taken it up, whether this has come up, and whether his colleagues in the House and then in the Senate would join in the action. Having been around there quite a while, these things don't move too fast. It is an interesting, complicated process. I would think that one would anticipate that this problem was going to be some time in the unraveling and settling of the issue.

QUESTION: Has the Maine land claims problem come to your attention here?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The Maine? The state of Maine? I was born there. What I am not familiar with is the land claim, but I would be interested to hear about it because I am very interested in the state.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, could I ask you a question in your role as a big city boy and a big city supporter?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: I note that in the city of Seattle, and perhaps every other city, the community investment of revenue sharing is now being phased down, causing some consternation in the cities. I think there are a number of big city Mayors who are looking at two small town boys who are seeking the Presidency, wondering how well the big cities are going to fare in the next four years, regardless of who is elected.

As the big city boy, leaving the Administration, looking at smaller city boys moving in, do you have any fears, for example, for New York or other major cities of this nation?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. 1, I have got to understand what the first sentence of your question meant.

QUESTION: Well, what I was getting at was --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You say, "Community investment is phasing down".

QUESTION: Community investment revenue sharing, for example.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: What does that mean?

QUESTION: There is a six-year plan from the Federal Government. It is one of the various portions of the revenue sharing bill that is being phased down in the amount of money that is going in to help rebuild the inner cities. There is also concern that revenue sharing is not being escalated at the pace to make up for some of the special revenue sharings which are being phased down, and city officials are looking at a decreasing level of Federal support coming in, wondering what is ahead. I wonder if -- since you had had disagreements with the Administration on, for example, help for New York -- you had any concern about the next four years as it relates to the major metropolitan areas of this nation.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Now you are on a question I do know something about and I can speak on. Therefore, I am delighted to speak on it.

First, I would like to say that it was the Governors of the fifty States who unanimously enforced the concept of revenue sharing.

Secondly, I was the leader in getting the action in Congress to get it through. And, very fortunately, Mr. Wilbur Mills was running for President at the time and therefore this was a very interesting issue for him, although a new one. So he was very instrumental in seeing that this got through the all-powerful Ways and Means Committee before he got interested in other pursuits.

So that revenue sharing was adopted and it is not popular in Congress because they do not get credit for the individual programs that are supported. The money goes back to the states, to the local governments, and it is distributed by them.

President Ford, when he was Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Republican Minority Leader, gave us his support. So he is the man who has totally oriented this program during that period.

Then when the renewal of revenue sharing was up, he asked me if I would personally take responsibility for steering this through the Congress -- whatever that means. It is persuading Congress to reenact it.

Jim Cannon, who is Director of the Domestic Council, was the man who had worked with me in getting it through in the beginning. So we worked on this together.

I can categorically assure you the President is totally dedicated to this program, whether he comes from a big city or a little city. I would like to say that it isn't only a city program, it is a state, county, town, village, and city program. They all benefit. This is very important.

Wilbur Mills wanted to make it solely a city program. I will never forget a conversation we had on the subject when I said, "Wilbur, this is great. So you are going to take over the responsibility for New York's problems. New York State is giving three and a half billion dollars a year to New York City, and you want to give them all the revenue sharing that would go to the City of New York. That is fine with me. But I just want to tell you from now on my speeches are going to be based on the Federal Government's taking over the responsibilities of the cities, and the states can focus on their problems."

This worried him a little bit because he saw the implications, so he backed away from it. They then divided it. I think he was right in dividing it because states have problems and states are the creators of the cities. The cities are creatures of the state under our Constitution, under its structure. So they have a responsibility.

I can assure you that when President Ford is reelected that his interest in and support of revenue sharing will continue. He recommended an increase in the amount of money, just what you are recommending. He recommended five and some quarters years instead of the three and three quarters that came out and the cutback to a flat amount. He recognizes and understands very clearly the reason for the importance of revenue sharing.

As a matter of fact, he went yesterday to Yonkers, New York, which probably most of you never heard of, unless you saw Hello, Dolly. Yonkers was the setting of Hello, Dolly. Yonkers is in trouble financially. He went to Yonkers and on the steps of City Hall he signed revenue sharing. So that you are very fortunate that he has that concern.

Mr. Carter, on the other hand, has said that he thinks it is unnecessary and the wrong way to approach it. I don't know who advised him on it, but whatever his source of advice is, he is wrong and, as a Governor, he ought to be ashamed of his position because he ought to know the importance of revenue sharing.

We are all tied up at local government -- state, local, county, town, village, and so forth -- with 1,007 categorical grants which each say you have to enrich and improve your program; you have to live by all of these standards; you have to then have all the administrative procedures. We are reaching a point today in this country where government closest to the people no longer can be responsive to those whom they represent, either in administering the program or in making the changes the public wants. It is a very sad thing.

I am delighted you are for revenue sharing. I share it with you and I would like to see it increased. I am sure that President Ford will continue that support on an increasing scale if he can get more men like Joel back into Congress to support him.

You touched on a very sensitive nerve, as far as I am concerned, excuse me.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: What kind of reaction has there been since you gave some hecklers the universal sign?

QUESTION: And my question also -- and so the photographers will be prepared -- do you plan one today?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am sticking to the "V" for Victory.

QUESTION: The full "V"?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: (Indicating "V" sign) And this was a totally unplanned, unanticipated, spontaneous reaction to a sustained salute from a small group of students who, based on what they were saying and the gestures which they

were giving, were not fully supportive of the basic concepts which we seem to be living in and believe in in this country.

What really burned me up was I kept saying, "Look, democracy depends on freedom of speech. This is what it is all about. This is the essence of freedom. If you don't want to allow people to come to your community and speak, then I have to believe that you don't fundamentally believe. You have got the right to speak. I have got the right to speak."

But if you heckle for one hour -- and heckling is a very polite word for what they were saying and what gestures they were making -- and if you think it is undignified for a Vice President, I do, too. But I also think it is undignified for people to salute a Vice President that way.

It was an unfortunate incident.

You asked what the reaction had been, and I just say there seemed to be a great many Americans who were similarly frustrated, either from personal experience or vicariously, and they were very sympathetic to my response.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: So that is it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: So now I am back to "V" for Victory (indicating a "V" sign.)

QUESTION: Continuing the question on hecklers, would you agree with the U. S. Labor Party's assessment today that, rather than promoting John Spellman, you are in fact enhancing the chances of Dixie Lee Ray to become elected Governor?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, that is always a chance, and only the voters can tell. Your voters are the ones who will be the ones who will make a decision. Whatever you do in public life, you run a risk -- and sometimes counter-productive, sometimes it is not. I have to say that I have had a great deal of experience with this group on the Labor Coalition. The SDS--as a group, they have no affiliations with Labor at all. They just use that umbrella to give the impression they are for the people. They are mostly from middle-class families who are financially well off, who have gotten into the SDS concepts which were basically Marxist, basically antagonistic to the fundamental philosophy and beliefs of this country.

I sometimes point out to them that Mr. Solzhenitsyn had to come over to the United States to have a chance to speak freely and that if they feel the way they say they do, maybe they are in the wrong country. These are all questions that one can speculate about.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sir?

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QUESTION: Do you have anymore questions in your mind about the loyalty and integrity of Dorothy Fosdick?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The loyalty and integrity-- that is a subject over which I made an apology to the Senate of the United States. I have never made any accusations against Dorothy Fosdick. I made, in a private, off-the-record meeting, a hypothetical case to illustrate a point. I unfortunately used some names, thinking it was an off-the-record meeting, as a possibility that if somebody wanted to do something -- you know, this is the subject which, as I say, I got unanimous consent from the Senate, because I can't speak without it, and the only time I have had it is to apologize to them. It is the second time I apologized, and I have nothing more to say on the subject because I made no accusations. I said in the beginning there was no need for apology because I made no accusations. But that meant if I were going to explain it that I would have to get into what I said, and I didn't want to do that, so I just got up and apologized.

MR. MORROW: One last question.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you have been talking about local control today. One of the questions that has come up recently here deals with Federal jurisdiction over local jurisdiction concerning tanker traffic in Puget Sound.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: A recent Federal Court ruling threw out a state law banning super tankers. With Alaskan oil about ready to flow, there is a great deal of concern in this area that tankers will be brought into the Sound.

Is there anything that the Ford Administration is going to do, or is doing now, to rearrange Federal legislation so that the state law would stand?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I understand from what you say that the Federal Court made a ruling. Usually a state, when there is a ruling in a lower Federal Court, appeals the case to a higher Federal Court if they don't like the ruling. I think this idea, that because a lower Court has made a ruling you rush to Congress and try and change the laws, is a little unusual, frankly, to me. I think you go through the constitutional process. In the process, if you lose your case in one Court, you go to the next Court. And if you don't get satisfaction there, you go to the Supreme Court. If you don't get to the Supreme Court, or you get an adverse ruling in the Supreme Court, then you go to the Congress of the United States and say, "We don't think the law of the land is right as interpreted by the Court. Therefore, it needs clarification from the Congress."

Until the Courts have had a chance to go through the normal processes that the state has had with the Courts, I don't know why Big Daddy in Washington should get into every case that is happening everywhere all over the country. I think the Founding Fathers set this country up very well, with three branches of government -- Executive,

Legislative, and the Courts -- and that we ought to keep the system as we have it and not try and short-circuit it and circumvent it. I have no position on the issue. It is an issue for the people of the State of Washington. But the processes and the procedures are clear.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, President Ford this morning is getting his flu shot. Do you intend getting one?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They say that senior citizens are the ones most vulnerable to the flu. Since I am a senior citizen, maybe I ought to. You've got something. I hadn't thought of it that way. I have been so busy running around campaigning, but maybe I have now got to give very serious consideration to it. I think the program is good.

I think that the unfortunate deaths that have occurred are, from what I read, coincidental rather than causal in their relationship to the shots. I think that, when you take the number of deaths from flu epidemics in 1958, which were 60,000, and in 1968 were 33,000, we cannot afford to run the risks of the virulent nature of the swine flu and what it could do in this country. Therefore, I think the program, while no vaccines are popular, is an essential program.

MR. MORROW: Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a pleasure, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being so patient.

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(AT 10:41 A.M. PDT)