

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 1976

Office of the Vice President
(Kalamazoo, Michigan)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
AIRPORT TERMINAL
KALAMAZOO MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

AT 10:40 A.M. EDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be here and to be with the Lieutenant Governor, two distinguished Congressmen, one of whom is leaving the Congress to go to the Senate, which is a very important thing for this country.

Having presided over the Senate for two years, now, and listening to the debates and listening to the discussions and the fact that so many of the important measures on vital issues have not gotten the attention that they deserved, in the best interests of the Nation I think that we have got to resort more to the strength of the two-party system in the Congress of the United States to give us a balanced government.

We have a two-to-one Democratic majority which has been able to totally disregard some of the President's most important measures. And with Marv in the Senate I think that is going to help very importantly there in the Senate.

Of course, Garry Brown is a man of outstanding ability, and his role in the House is of tremendous importance.

I am here in the closing days of the campaign. It is a very important period, in my opinion. This election is going to have a very important impact on which direction our country goes -- whether we stick with the basic concepts of democracy as originally conceived and the American enterprise system, or if we drift off down the course which the British have followed and which does not seem very helpful to them at the present time.

I would be delighted to discuss any question that anyone may have.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, what are your political plans after you conclude your term as Vice President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you, I have been for the last 20 years in active political life and 36 years off and on, and I am looking forward to getting back with Happy and the two boys and catching up on my own affairs.

I have to say, though, that I love this country and there are many ways you can serve your country. And I am very interested in politics. But politics is a means to an end, and the end is good government. My basic objective is

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good government. So I have no concern that along the way I will find ways -- not on a full-time basis -- of being useful.

QUESTION: Would you have done anything different in regard to the Earl Butz affair than what the President did? Would you have fired him immediately?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, to me this was a great tragedy, a tragedy for the implications to a very important segment of our whole society and a tragedy in terms of the individual himself, who had served the country under various administrations. I first knew him when he was Assistant Secretary of Agriculture under President Eisenhower.

I think the President recognized both of these, and I think it was a very difficult situation. But I think he did the right thing.

QUESTION: Do you have any reflections on Jimmy Carter's charges that the Ford policy isn't moral?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Is immoral?

QUESTION: Our foreign policy.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, having been very closely associated with our foreign policy now for 36 years, -- I was Assistant Secretary in 1944 and 1945 and have worked with six Presidents since then -- I just think that the concept is totally unrealistic and baseless. I mean, I have never been able to understand what Mr. Carter was talking about when he said it was immoral.

I think no Nation in the world has done a better job than the United States over the years, including during the last two periods with Secretary Kissinger as the Secretary of State. He is a very close friend of mine, as you know.

This man has a deep belief in freedom and human dignity. He is one of the beneficiaries of this country, having escaped Nazi terrorism himself, and there is no one who understands better or who believes more deeply than he does and the President does. So I just think that it is really a cheap shot, trying to capitalize on situations in an election year.

But I have no idea as to really what point he is trying to make. Now, if he does it on the basis of lack of knowledge, that I can understand, because Mr. Carter has no experience nationally or internationally. So all these questions are new to him. If he is briefed on something, he can take a superficial fact without understanding the background and very easily come to some conclusions which are superficial but meaningless.

QUESTION: Do you think that promoting voting Republican more or less on a matter of principle, as you have just done and which has been a particular train in Republican thought this year -- do you think that supercedes voting for the man in each individual case?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think they are both important, but I happen to believe myself that a two-party system has been the great strength of democracy and the basic support of freedom; that if you get a one-party system, which we are really getting close to with the Congress in the condition it is in, where the majority, through caucus, will make decisions and then dictate to the committees, that is not the way the founding fathers conceived of setting up the structure.

So I think that one has to think of it in both terms. And the American people are very sophisticated and very intelligent, and they somehow work their way through these things.

I don't know about your State, but in our State, they will go up and down, Democrat, Republican, back and forth, and vote for the person they like. But I think that basically it is up to the party leaders of both parties to pick men and women who have the capacity and the initiative, as is the case here, to represent the party of their choice effectively so that the public has a good choice.

QUESTION: What do you think is the political future of Henry Kissinger?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I happen to think that Henry Kissinger is the greatest Secretary of State this country has ever had. Whether he stays in office or whether he goes out of office is a question that I think he alone can tell. The President stated on an interview the other day that he would like to see him stay, and I think that that is very wise.

From the Secretary's point of view, he has been there eight years, and this has got to be a killing job, so that I can understand why he would leave. Now, if he left, he could do one of two things -- one, obviously, write, because he is a brilliant writer, and probably nobody knows more about the history of our international relations in the last eight years than he does. So from a historian's point of view what he writes would be very important.

I think also he is a man of great versatility. Therefore, he could move into almost any field he wants, because I think he would be very much in demand.

I hope, personally, that he stays.

QUESTION: Why haven't you been campaigning more actively this time around?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, first, your statement is wrong. You can't campaign more than four days a week and take care of your family, which I have been doing. So that I don't know how you could be more active than I am.

QUESTION: Are you intensifying it in this last week?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The intensity has been so great that it would be impossible to intensify it.

QUESTION: Can you tell me -- recently the Republicans, both nationally and in various State elections, have been more or less closing the gap. Do you attribute that more to Democratic mistakes or Republican virtues?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think there are two things that I would say. One, I think slowly it is emerging in the public concept that there is a fundamental difference in the two party positions -- perhaps more clear this time than it has been in a good many years -- well, maybe that's not right, but, anyhow, very clear.

At all levels of government we have been over-promising and underdelivering to the American people, plus the fact that we are running out of money at all levels of government, plus the fact that the programs, many of them, have not accomplished the objectives which were contemplated by the legislators who passed them or the governors or the Presidents who signed them.

Now the question is whether we just go on with more of the same, promising more and more, or whether we now try and reexamine the programs, reshape them and live within our means. If we don't, we are going to get in the situation in which New York City found itself where it was on the verge of bankruptcy.

Now, this President Ford clearly understands and clearly sets forth. I listened to the Vice Presidential debates the other night, and it was very interesting to me because Mr. Mondale listed all of the issues, but he said we will deal with unemployment, we will deal with inflation, we will do all these things -- we, the government. Now, the government has been trying to do that as a government. And he didn't say how he would do it. So it wasn't based on substance; it was simply listing the issues, which everybody knows are there. And they are serious issues.

Now, President Ford feels that many of these issues cannot be effectively dealt with by an evergrowing, more powerful Federal Government with an increasing bureaucratic red tape structure. And he wants to get the decision-making back to the people, to the private groups and to the State and local government. And I happen to feel very strongly that he is right.

Now, the other part of your question, there have been things said or done during the campaign which have been picked up and made major issues which, I think, have influenced the public's understanding of the individuals. So I think both are factors.

QUESTION: Sir, what kind of strategy, or how is the President going to be taking of his time towards the end of the campaign here with the election so close? And Harris called it today a toss-up.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that after Wednesday he will be on the road or out campaigning until election day.

QUESTION: Is he going to continue the same style, attacking Jimmy Carter as a lack of inexperience?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As lack of experience.

QUESTION: As lack of experience, yes, and his not detailing --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I would hope so. That, to me, has got to be one of the most important issues, that this man is making a great many promises according to the area in which he happens to be. And he says the things that are popular in that particular place. Now, they are not consistent, so he says one thing here, another thing there. And I think that the public needs to see this clearly, plus the fact that he did the same thing when he ran for governor and then he did not carry out those promises as he had anticipated. Now, I think these are important items for the President to bring out.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, has the President made any political blunders this campaign, and if so, what are they?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I suppose everybody, in retrospect -- it's just like Sunday morning quarterbacks who decide what football players or baseball players did that was right or wrong.

There is nobody infallible. Therefore, I am sure that you can make mistakes and then you can say that is one thing, or you can say it is a political blunder, which is another thing which is related to mistakes. But political blunders I would include in the category of judgment as to a position on an issue or so forth.

I don't think there have been any major political blunders. I think there have been some misstatements of facts. But compared to Mr. Carter's, it is like one to ten.

QUESTION: It has been suggested by the Carter campaign that Ford is just interested in the farmers right now because of the election coming up. How do you feel about that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I just think that that is another campaign statement which has no basis of fact. It was under the Ford Administration that 60 million acres of new land was brought into production, that exports for agricultural products under this Administration have gone from about \$8 billion to \$22 billion.

The poor man just doesn't know the facts, so he is handicapped in trying to make issues and so that he just has to hope that by making a flat statement that is not based on fact, that it will be accepted without anybody having time to check it.

Thank you very much.

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(AT 10:55 A.M. EDT)