

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 19, 1976

Office of the Vice President
(Bloomington, Minnesota)

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
BALLROOM 4, REGISTRY HOTEL
BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA

AT 10:32 A.M. CDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, I am just delighted to be back here again. It was only a year ago. I would just like to express to Dorothy and Iantha Levander how much the President appreciates and how much I appreciate what they have done in organizing for the President.

This is, in my opinion, a tremendously important moment in the history of our country, and perhaps the decision that is going to be made on November 2nd is going to be far more important than we realize at the present time. It will have an effect on the fundamental direction as we go as a Nation, whether we renew our faith in the fundamental values on which this country has grown to greatness -- democracy, individual initiative, creativity, freedom of the individual, regardless of what he or she is doing to exercise that extraordinary quality that only free people have -- or whether we are going to drift more and more towards Federal control, domination of the lives of individuals in the name of helping them but in actual fact removing their own self-reliance.

Now, there is a happy medium in here where government can, as we have historically, take initiatives to help those who are the creators in our society, who are the people who accomplish the objectives of society.

We built the railroads in this country across the Nation not because of American enterprise alone but because the government wanted them for the people. Therefore, we gave the right-of-ways.

We have the most outstanding automobile industry in the world because government built the highways. We have the greatest aviation industry in the world because of research and development which was undertaken by the military for military planes.

This is an extraordinary combination in America where government and individuals and the American enterprise system work together. I don't think it is "either/or." It is a combination of both. And that takes creativity and imagination, and particularly at this moment when we are living in a moment of such tremendous change, such rapid change and such tremendous interdependence in the world.

Now, it isn't only leadership in this country. It isn't only at the Presidential level. Some of us happen to think governors are important.

(Laughter)

MORE

And there is a great Governor whose son is here, Harold Levander, who is one of the creative governors in this country.

But also in the Legislative Branch, I think one of the most important things is to have the kind of balance in the Congress of the two-party system. The two-party system is the vitality of our country. It is the basis of freedom. So I would just like to say that's what Gerald Brekke is doing in running for the Senate of the United States, to try and help restore the two-party system in the Congress.

We have got a two-to-one Democrat control in both Houses, and we have got to get back so we don't get a situation as we have in the House of Representatives today where the Democratic caucus has meetings and decides the policies and then tells the committees -- which is supposed to be the structure of Congress to formulate policy for the American people, and they are told by the caucus what they are going to do. So I just think that this is a moment when we want to restore that vitality growing out of the two-party system.

I would like to express my respect and admiration for those candidates who are running for Congress on the Republican ticket, the Senate and the House, and for those who are doing the same for your State legislature, because the same applies there. People need the infusion of debate and discussion to bring out the best and the soundest positions.

Now, I am delighted to be here. It is a great thrill for me. I love this State. I love the country. And so I would be glad to answer any questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the recent national polls show that President Ford and Jimmy Carter are very close now, Carter still slightly ahead. How important do you think the final debate this week could be in determining who wins?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, it depends on what happens at the debate, to be perfectly frank. It could be very important. One of them could capture the imagination and excite people, or he could take a position which was counter to the basic feeling of the American people, which is in the center of this political spectrum.

I just honestly think that it is hard to tell what the impact is going to be. But what interests me, and the reason I am so confident that President Ford is going to be the next President of the United States is because when people get into that booth, they are going to say to themselves, "In whom do I have trust? In whom do I have confidence to handle our problems for the next four years, someone with proven experience, proven integrity, proven courage?" And I think they are going to say Jerry Ford.

Now, I have nothing against another governor, because we governors stick together. But I have got to say that being governor is not having experience on the national scene or on the international scene. And I think the positions that Governor Carter has taken on issues, first one

position, then another position, then maybe after a year in the White House he would have had a chance to study the facts and he would have a third position. I think this is beginning to worry the American people, and I think they are concerned. I think this is growing. I think that is why he is slipping in the polls, because they just don't really understand where he stands and they are a little bit frightened about it.

Now, this is the way life is, and I just think we can't afford at this moment in history on-the-job training at the taxpayers' expense in the Office of the President.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, having watched the campaign to this point and now reflecting, would you like to have been on that ticket with Gerald Ford?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I am very happy just where I am. I came in two years ago, when we had a Constitutional crisis, to make what small contribution I could toward a sense of stability and confidence, a moment that was a very tough moment for our country.

I have, frankly, never wanted to be standby equipment.

(Laughter)

And, let's face it, that is what the position of the Vice President is. You preside over the Senate, but otherwise he has no responsibility unless the President gives him some. And to the degree that the President gives the Vice President responsibility, it creates problems with the rest of his organization.

I have known intimately all the Vice Presidents since Henry Wallace. They have been frustrated. I went down there knowing there was no job but feeling it was an important, critical moment in history, so I went.

Now that's over, and it is time for someone who has the qualities to be President but who can learn about national and international affairs by being there -- sort of a graduate course in government. And it is a very exciting one, but I am an activist. And from the time President Nixon was good enough to ask me to be his Vice President in 1960, it is just not for me.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, Jimmy Carter has called for President Ford to show some leadership in relationship to the remarks made by General Brown, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman. He said he shouldn't weigh political consequences as he did in the Butz situation. Would you care to comment on that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will comment on that. What kind of leadership has Mr. Carter made about the people who were buying ministers in California to come out for him and there was some \$150,000 unaccounted for? He said you can't control all the activities that go on in a campaign. I haven't seen the kind of leadership that he presented on that occasion. I didn't see or read about anyone being fired or any action being taken. It was just one of those

things that was unfortunate, that somebody over whom he didn't have control had taken some steps which he personally wouldn't approve of.

I know the President feels the same way, but this business of calling on others to take leadership when something goes wrong -- it's like he said he would fire Mr. Kelley; but when he got to be President, he wasn't so sure he wouldn't keep him. What kind of decision is that? What kind of leadership is that? What kind of leadership does he have in mind? That is my answer to that question.

QUESTION: Do you think there ought to be a change in the method of selecting the Vice Presidential candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, I really don't, to tell you the honest truth. Certainly I am not for the method by which I was selected.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The 25th Amendment is a stopgap for crisis. But I think you would have a hard time getting people to come into government if each person who came in for office had to be investigated by 500 FBI agents for six months and then go through the months of questioning and exposure. Talk about privacy, the irony is that the President made me chairman of a Privacy Committee. I haven't got any privacy.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the President ought to have someone in whom he has confidence, who he feels is qualified to take that position should, God forbid, anything happen to the President. But I don't think that you can turn it over to the convention. I don't think you can have a competitive person in the position of Vice President, second-guessing the President on everything and causing a sense of uncertainty or confusion within the government. So I think the system, with all its weaknesses, is probably about as good as you could get.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, is the Vice Presidency still a stepping-stone to the Presidency, as it supposedly traditionally is?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I haven't found it that. I always wanted to go straight to the Presidency. I have to admit I wasn't very successful.

(Laughter)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: So I can't say anything. But I wouldn't take it as that, but there has to be somebody there should something happen.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, what would you advise future Presidents? What kind of job would you advise them to give the Vice President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I studied this for President Eisenhower. I was chairman of his Committee on

Government Reorganization for seven years. He asked the committee to study what he could give to Vice President Nixon. We studied for three months the Constitution, the history, the tradition and all the rest of it and came to the conclusion that there was nothing, that he was the presiding officer of the Senate by the Constitution, that under the Constitution all executive power was given to the President. And the degree to which he delegated responsibility which he had himself to his Vice President, it created a competing center politically within the Administration and would cause trouble.

QUESTION: One last question for me. In view of what you said about on-the-job training at the taxpayers' expense regarding Mr. Carter, do you feel the Democrats could have picked a candidate who was better prepared for the Presidency, in your opinion?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, we Baptists like to quote the Bible, and I would say, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." That would be my feeling about that. I just think that we have got a very complicated system for picking the Presidents with this primary system, and it has gotten to be a full-time job. You have got to organize for two or three years. Well, now, if somebody has the time and the money, that is an interesting experience.

What is it? Thirty-nine States now have primaries, and this is a very interesting, complex system. But I wouldn't try, until we get through with this present election, to analyze the procedure.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, with only 10 electoral votes in Minnesota, what role does it play nationally? What is the importance to the whole national strategy?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Which is important?

QUESTION: Minnesota.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Minnesota is a key State, respected by all the other States in the country. You have outstanding people here. You have a tradition of having people of great ability and integrity come into government, and I think the States respect it. So 10 votes is 10 votes. It may be 10 votes that put him across. You know? I wouldn't sniff at one vote, to tell you the honest truth.

My objective, when I was running for office, was to get 50 percent plus one. And if I got one extra vote, I was satisfied. Anything more than that, I was grateful.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, given your record in public affairs down through the years, would you accept a position on a commission that would study the energy situation?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I did study for the President and worked very hard on the energy situation for the first year while I was in this present position. He came up with a very comprehensive program which he

recommended to the Congress. This goes back to the question this man talked about earlier -- leadership. President Ford is accused of not having leadership. The Congress of the United States has refused to act on the important programs.

He sent up some 22 bills in connection with energy. One major one was on conservation of energy, which would cut down the use and would encourage homeowners and owners of buildings to put insulation in, to reduce the use of energy. Those who didn't have the money would actually get outright cash contributions to help them make the insulation. And then another one, which was the so-called Energy Independence Authority, which was a \$100 billion federal project, sort of RFC type, to finance those risk ventures that could produce energy from new sources.

I think that this subject has been well-studied, and that it is an important one and that the bills are up there. And if Congress would have hearings on them -- we couldn't even get them to have hearings. This is what happens when you get two-to-one control in the congressional situation of one party, and it happens to be the opposition party.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what is your reaction to General Brown's remarks?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wasn't there. I haven't seen them. So if you tell me actually what he said -- see, this is the trouble, this business of "What is your reaction?" Unless I can look at the text and know what he said and know the context in which he said it, then it is very hard for me to make a judgment.

QUESTION: The quote I heard was that he said the Israeli army was more of a burden to the United States than a positive thing.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, but you see, I am sure he didn't say "positive thing."

QUESTION: He didn't say "positive thing."

THE VICE PRESIDENT: So I hesitate very much to comment on a quote. Now, General Brown is a very strong, outspoken man, and he made an unfortunate statement before and he may have again. I don't know. So I really hesitate to comment unless I can see the text of his statement or the transcript or whatever it was.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, would you have any reservations, should by some chance or another Senator Dole be elected and had to move up to the Presidency -- would you have any reservations about him serving in that position?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I think he is eminently qualified. I think he is a man who has been grossly underestimated, who has been tagged as a conservative, a right-winger, which is not true.

I think he is a man of outstanding ability, great compassion. He knows local government. He was a

MORE

prosecutor at the local level. He was a State assemblyman, a Congressman, a Senator. He has a distinguished war record, a man who has been a strong advocate of civil rights, of the handicapped, a strong supporter of Israel. He and Mondale sponsored the food stamp bill, which was the one that made food stamps available to those in need and tried to cut out the food stamps for those who were just taking a free ride or ripping off the government.

Now, I think this man is a very, very able man, and he has the qualities that are essential and he will learn a lot more while he is Vice President about international affairs, which he hasn't had as much opportunity for.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, who do you think won the debate this past Friday between Robert Dole and Mondale, and why?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, I thought Bob Dole won it hands down, to tell you the truth, because he was aware, he was calm. He is poised. He is a strong man who has a sense of humor, which is an attribute in these tense days.

I thought that Mr. Mondale simply, frankly -- if you will forgive me -- repeated a list of problems. He never came up with solutions. We all know what the problems are. That doesn't take a genius to come up with the problems. But what we are all looking for is what are the answers going to be given by the party running for office, that is, the opposition party. Frankly, he never answered as to how he was going to cut unemployment, how he was going to stop inflation, how he was going to do all the things he said he was going to do, plus at the same time lower taxes and whatever else he said. I have forgotten the list because I get mixed up on what he said and what Carter said, although they are similar, but they take various sides of the issue.

I thought his performance was what I call strictly political, but it didn't reach, I don't think -- this is my impression -- people.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, according to the recent polls, the Democrats have won at least two-and-a-half. I guess the first one was a draw according to the polls. Would you have any advice for President Ford for the upcoming debate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am careful about giving advice. I have trouble enough with my own decisions.

QUESTION: No strategy for that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Everybody has got to do their own thing in this world. That is the great thing about the world. This television medium is a powerful medium, and I think the public looks and sees the people and they get an impression. You can't tell somebody who is running for President, or for any other office -- politics is an art; it is not a science. It is like trying to tell a painter how to repaint his picture. I wouldn't touch it.

MORE

QUESTION: According to the polls, a lot of people are not going to vote. I would like to have you comment on that.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that is true, unfortunately, and I think it is a very sad thing, because participation in the responsibility of preserving democracy is essential if we are going to enjoy the privileges and opportunities of democracy. And voting is one of the responsibilities.

But I have to say, after Vietnam and Watergate a lot of people sort of got turned off, and I don't think they have been fully turned on yet or reactivated emotionally, and this is unfortunate, but I think it is a fact. I agree with you, but I deplore it. So I would urge everybody to get out and vote.

QUESTION: Is what you said consistent with McCarthy taking part in the Presidency and his insistence also that he should be on the debate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You'll have to repeat your question. I didn't hear the last part.

QUESTION: Mr. McCarthy's insistence at being granted opportunity at the debate.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Oh, Gene McCarthy. Well, this is a tough problem. I come from a State where we have got four parties -- Liberal, Conservative, Democratic and Republican Party -- and the League of Women Voters included all four of them. So I used to have to debate. And being Governor, I was getting it from the right and left and all sides, so I am rather used to that.

But the League of Women Voters set this up, and I don't blame Gene McCarthy for wanting to get in on the action. He is running for President, so I don't blame him. But if I am correct -- and I don't know -- I assume the League of Women Voters set the rules and they invited the participants and negotiated with the television stations, plus the candidates. And that negotiation took a long time, and by the time they had reconciled those three groups, I guess Mr. McCarthy didn't get in on the action.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

END

(AT 10:55 A.M. CDT)