

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Williamsburg, Virginia)

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PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
JACOB K. JAVITS  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
AND  
JAMES BAKER  
CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE

WILLIAMSBURG LODGE

11:37 P.M. EDT

MR. GREENER: Some of you have asked for Jim Baker and Senator Javits to come on up front and answer some of your questions. They are both here now.

Q What about Dick Cheney? Is he going to come?

MR. GREENER: I don't know. We will try to find out. They just happened to be here.

SENATOR JAVITS: If I may have your attention for a minute, as I analyze the debate, personally I don't believe one can pick winners or losers in this debate. It is a question of who is best equipped to be President of the United States, and I think upon this debate President Ford demonstrated the superiority in this way: First, his experience told very heavily in respect to the question on Yugoslavia.

I don't think there is any question about the fact, from a foreign relations point of view, that the United States should not commit itself yes or no on whether it would or would not use force in respect to a major international development like a Soviet invasion of Yugoslavia. I think that was a very significant point in the debate, and the President made it -- and quite properly -- very strongly.

Secondly, I think the general attitude the President displayed is that his concern is with economic stability and that the 88 million employed are, for all practical purposes, the first priority for the Ford Administration.

As for Governor Carter, I think the general position he took, epitomized by his closing, is that everything is bad and that the Nation is in some kind of economic debacle, which it is not. And the expression that our people want to go back to work, well, there are 88 million people at work and heavier deficits will not do what even these deficits are not doing.

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Finally, which I think is the key to his whole campaign, is his statement that "I believe the American people are ready for a change in Washington." I think the President, by his positive showing of experience and stability at the helm, has the edge on that.

Now one thing I would just like to say for myself, I think it demonstrated that both men are centrists and, of course, that is the great strength of the two-party system. That is why people like myself fought so hard for President Ford's nomination as against Governor Reagan.

And second, there was really in many areas a rather considerable amount of agreement. So, I think the question of presence, as the President's steadiness, and experience, and the fact that the country doesn't necessarily want big crashing new programs, represents the strength of President Ford's presentation, and I think superior in commending itself to the American people.

Jim?

MR. BAKER: I don't have a formal statement, and I have very little to add to what Senator Javits has said. I think we might best proceed simply by taking your questions.

Q Who won?

MR. BAKER: Well, I think, as Senator Javits indicated to you, Fred, the question is who is best equipped to govern the Nation in the next four years, and the answer is President Ford.

I would go a little further and say that in my opinion the President did an excellent job tonight. He was in command of the debate, in control of the facts, and he was obviously relaxed. In my opinion, he won the debate.

Q Will that debate tip the election, in your opinion -- what you said tonight?

MR. BAKER: I don't have that kind of crystal ball, Dave. I think experience has shown us that the winner of the debate over the course of the last six weeks has picked up about two points in the polls. The Harris Poll, which came out today, shows us three points back, so I would have to say it would be significant to the extent of two points.

Q The Roper Poll, Jim, right after the debate, shows the President at 29 and Carter at 40, and 31 undecided. Any comment on that?

MR. BAKER: You mean a debate poll, strictly a debate poll?

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Q Yes.

MR. BAKER: I have no comment on that.

Yes, Rudy?

Q What would you say has been the sum total of all the debates now that they are over? Will they influence the outcome? Have they amounted to anything?

MR. BAKER: If you look at it from the standpoint of the polls, we gained three points after the first debate, we lost roughly three points after the second, and we are yet to see the effects of the third.

Q Jim, he very rarely attacked Carter frontly, or specifically tonight. There were only one or two occasions where he did that. Was that deliberate? Was that part of the game plan -- let me start over.

Was part of the game plan to take a very cautious low-key approach?

MR. BAKER: Well, I think this was evidence of his relaxed approach to the debate, Tom. I think the advice was that he be himself. He was himself in the first debate and he did a very good job. I think he was himself tonight. He was aggressive although he was not strident.

Q Why didn't he answer the Carter charge on the political commercials? Carter seemed to make quite a bit of that and I expected the President to answer that. Why didn't he answer it?

MR. BAKER: I can't answer that.

Q You won't answer the political commercial thing?

MR. BAKER: I am not sure I recall the charge.

Q The charge that they were unfair and distorted. It is in the transcript.

MR. BAKER: You are talking about the reference to the Newsweek cover?

Q It was in the early part of the debate when Carter was talking about the political commercials.

MR. BAKER: I think what he said -- I thought the President had answered it by simply saying right after Governor Carter said he had made some mistakes during the course of this campaign and his criticism of the President--the President pretty much said we have both made mistakes in the course of this campaign.

I thought that was an answer to the --

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Q Jim, I have the quote here. Carter said during the next 10 days the American people will not see the Carter campaign running television advertisements, newspaper advertisements. Based on a personal attack on President Ford's character, I believe that the opposite is true with President Ford's campaign.

MR. BAKER: Well -- yes, I will answer that. We are not running any ads attacking his character or integrity and have none such planned.

Q Jim, I have a couple of questions. First of all, have you taken any instant polls on the results?

MR. BAKER: Have we?

Q Yes.

MR. BAKER: No, we have not. I didn't know about the Roper Poll until just as I walked in here.

Q Were you asked about that, your reaction to the Roper Poll?

MR. BAKER: Yes, and I said I had no immediate reaction to it. I just this minute heard about it.

Q Jim, could you tell us how you thought Carter did in this? You said it wasn't a question of who won and who lost. How do you think Governor Carter did?

MR. BAKER: I don't think that he exhibited the same qualities that Senator Javits has just outlined to you that the President did, to the same extent, certainly.

Q In what way did he fail?

MR. BAKER: I just don't think -- I think perhaps the remark on Yugoslavia might be one example.

Q Any others?

MR. BAKER: The question of judgment in bringing that up.

Q Were there any other besides Yugoslavia?

MR. BAKER: You know, throughout these debates the President -- and I think it is generally acknowledged by all -- has been a lot more specific in his answers to the questions. And Governor Carter has not really answered the questions to the same degree that the President has. And this has been the case, too, throughout the campaign.

I think maybe Senator Javits has a response for you.

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SENATOR JAVITS: I will give you what struck me as a very good example. That was the first question, and that was a question of preserving the peace. The President said he believed in adequate military preparation in the policy now being pursued respecting the Middle East and Southern Africa, which would mean the Lusaka doctrine, and he believed also that he had to deal with the budget question and not add to the deficit and to undertake tax reduction for middle income families and so on.

The answer of Governor Carter was let us get together, labor, management and the public and work together. We can solve everything. It seems to me that that is a very clear demonstration of a man who is actually doing it and ready, willing and able to run the ship of State in an affirmative way with a knowledge of the details and the practical decisions that have to be made.

The second, I think Yugoslavia is a very striking example of a man's readiness to handle the foreign policy of a country in terms of peace and war. I happen to thoroughly agree with the President that we cannot state in advance what we will do in a given, grave, international crisis.

That is a grave mistake. Indeed, that mistake has cost the United States heavily on other occasions. The President mentioned one -- that is, Dean Acheson's references to the arc of the Pacific -- which many, many think may have induced the North Koreans to invade. So, I think there are in this debate very clear indicia of this question of who is the better able to run the ship of State, especially through hazardous waters. There was no doubt about that today.

Q Senator Javits, you said in the White House several weeks ago the President should get tougher with Carter. He did in the several weeks afterwards. Do you think he should continue this now?

SENATOR JAVITS: I think the particular instance I referred to related to Governor Carter's harshness in leaping on the gaff -- and I am saying this, not the President's people--respecting Eastern Europe. An assertion by a Presidential candidate to the President of the United States to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, especially when it turns out that none of the prosecutors agree with him, is an assertion which I think is not worthy of a Presidential campaign.

That chapter is closed. He said what he said. The President has reacted as he has. I don't see any point to continuing it, and I agree with both candidates that an elevated effort with spirit and deep division to discuss the issues right now, who can do the best job for the country overall. I wouldn't be here if I didn't think that Ford could.

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Q One question for Jim Baker. Did anything happen tonight, Yugoslavia or whatever, that you are going to suggest that they make some changes in the President's campaign style or content? Are you going to stress Yugoslavia or anything else that happened in the debate tonight?

MR. BAKER: Nothing that we know of right

Q Jim, one question. This is not on the debate. Would you describe the ads that will run, the media ads that will run next week, the Ford ads?

MR. NESSEN: Let me say something about that, Mort. Would you hold that just a second because I have something. Have we had all the questions about the debate?

Q Jim, do you think Carter's remarks about Yugoslavia will be as controversial as the President's remarks about Eastern Europe?

MR. BAKER: I have no way of knowing, Dave. I can't anticipate the significance which others will attach to those remarks.

Q Jim, regardless of who won the debate tonight, so you see it or Roper or anybody sees it, what are the things that have happened in recent weeks? Carter's personality has become an issue in this campaign. The polls show that. Your people have talked about that. Tonight everybody seemed to think this was very polite, very civilized, very tame, and I wonder if you think that Carter didn't succeed somewhat in solving this part of his problem tonight, some of the feeling people have about him by the way he conducted himself in this debate?

MR. BAKER: He has clearly backed off the approach that he was taking as recently as ten to 11 days ago when, as Senator Javits indicated, he called on the President to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and referred to the President as more secretive than President Nixon.

I don't know the degree or extent to which his demeanor tonight might cause the American people to forget that side of his -- or that former approach that he took to the campaign.

Q Why is it you are not saying anybody won? Have you given up victory statements?

MR. BAKER: Where were you?

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Q I can't believe you have given up victory statements.

MR. BAKER: Where were you earlier on? We have made a victory statement.

Q It is kind of lame, though, isn't it, Jim?

MR. BAKER: No, I don't think so. In our opinion there is no doubt that we won the debate, as I indicated earlier.

Q Jim, is there some kind of reluctance to say how significant this debate is? Early on you said that the debate could cost two points and that Ford is three points behind, so it would be helpful. A few minutes later, though, you said the first two debates threw it three points either way. If that is the case, and your man is three points behind, this decides it.

MR. BAKER: No, it doesn't. I would disagree with that because I think you could make up five points, even if we accept your assumption, which we don't.

Q You think you can make up those points between now and election day?

MR. BAKER: You bet your life. We have made up more points in a comparable period of time in the course of this campaign already. But, I don't think you are going to see that. I think you are going to see the polls that come out after this debate showing that the gap has narrowed even more.

Q When are you going to go ahead?

MR. BAKER: November 1.

Q Jim, does anything that happened tonight change your campaign strategy, travel strategy?

MR. BAKER: No, it doesn't, Phil. That is not to say that somebody might not have an idea that we will put into effect, but there are no changes in our strategy that I am aware of.

Q Jim, on abortion, did the President mean to say that he supports an amendment which outlaws abortion, flat outlaws abortion?

MR. NESSEN: There was no change in his position.

MR. BAKER: He didn't change his position one iota.

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Q When did the President reprimand General Brown? I don't recall that..

MR. BAKER: Shortly after that article or the excerpts from the article were called to his attention.

Q He didn't call it a reprimand.

Q When did the reprimand come?

Q We are talking about the other day. He didn't reprimand him, did he? He said he didn't agree with his remarks.

MR. NESSEN: He talked about a reprimand about two years ago.

Now, for you Jim Baker briefing fans, I want you to know that in just eight short hours you are going to be able to have another Jim Baker briefing. This one is in Richmond at the press center at the Sheraton Motor Inn.

Q What time?

MR. NESSEN: Eight o'clock tomorrow morning, some new media plans that will be carried out for the remainder of the campaign. I think that will answer your question, Mort.

Q I won't be there. Sorry, I have to go off with someone else. I won't mention his name.

MR. NESSEN: There will be a briefing at 8:00 in the morning by Jim Baker at the Sheraton Motor Inn press center, which is the Imperial Room, to announce some media plans for the remainder of the campaign. I think you will find them interesting. Other than that, I think we will go ahead and put on a lid for this evening.

One press bus has already gone to Richmond, and the second bus will depart as soon as we have enough people who want to go.

Q How long will you hold the third?

MR. NESSEN: The third will stay until everybody has finished filing, within reason.

Q Will you announce the departure times?

MR. NESSEN: Those of you writing books will not be able to finish tonight.

The second press bus will be announced from up here, the bus for Richmond.

THE PRESS: Thank you.