

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 12, 1975

Office of the Vice President  
(Dallas, Texas)

---

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
FOR MULTI-STATION TELEVISION TAPING  
COMMUNICATION CENTER, STUDIO A  
DALLAS, TEXAS

(AT 11:40 A.M. CDT)

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, welcome to Dallas and welcome to our broadcast.

Your political future in the Republican Party is of much concern and generating much talk these days. Do you have any assurances from President Ford that you will be his running mate in 1976?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: From the moment I was approved, confirmed by the Congress, I said when asked about '76, I wouldn't discuss it because the President should have, when he is nominated, total freedom to select the person at that time whom he feels would be most helpful and useful to the Nation and to the Party. Therefore, I didn't want to say anything, do anything that would in any way encumber his freedom of action.

QUESTION: Why shouldn't Nelson Rockefeller be that person?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is a decision he would have to make and nobody else.

QUESTION: What are some of the factors involved in that decision as you see them?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think you have to really ask him because he is the President. He has to make them.

QUESTION: Sharon Noble has the next question from KXAS-TV.

QUESTION: Many Republicans have said if you are President Ford's running mate they will not vote for him. What would you do to convince particularly Southern Republicans that you are the man for the number two spot?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First, I am not a candidate. So I have to say that. Secondly, I think that the President's record and, of course, my position, is simply one of being assistant to the President. I am a staff member. I have the responsibility under the Constitution to preside over the Senate of the United States, which is a great honor, a great privilege, and I am delighted.

Other than that, I do what he wants me to do. I want to be helpful to him in any way I can. I think that his record is going to be the dominant factor with the American people, and, of course, with the Party, on his nomination, and then nominated and elected.

MORE

Whatever he does, I am there with him. So if he picks me to go again with him or, if he doesn't, whoever goes with him, will run still on the Ford record.

QUESTION: He expresses great confidence in you. But, of course, George McGovern gave notoriety when he said he was 1,000 percent behind Tom Eagleton.

Do you see anything like that happening to Ford and you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You mean what happened to Mr. Eagleton?

QUESTION: He not continuing his support of you?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am totally relaxed, to be perfectly frank. I have had a wonderful life. I was Governor for 15 years. I have worked for five Presidents over the past 35 years, starting with President Roosevelt.

I want to serve my country in any way I can to be useful. There are many ways you can serve your country so I am totally relaxed about it. That is his decision. And he ought to do what he thinks is in the best interest of the country when he gets to that point.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, we hate to even think about what almost happened in Sacramento, California, eight or nine days ago. But my question to you is how well prepared do you feel you are to assume the Office of the President of the United States if the unthinkable were to happen? How well prepared has President Ford allowed you to become?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: President Ford is an extraordinary man. He is totally open, totally relaxed, has total integrity. His sole concern is the long term best interests of this country.

As far as my role with him is concerned, is is one of complete frankness between us. I participate in major meetings relating to all problems affecting this country domestically and internationally.

I have spent my life in and out of government, Washington, State government, local government, for the past 35 years. This now, I guess, is about my 14th year in Washington. So that I have been Under Secretary of HEW, Assistant Secretary of State, assistant to two Presidents before. I feel that I want to be available to be useful, whatever the circumstances; and all I can say is, that, the other day, my reaction was, "Thank God," he was alright.

QUESTION: Short of locking the President's door and, for that matter, short of locking your own door, what more can be done to protect the President and the Vice President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the Secret Service and the State and local police in the various areas of the country have done an excellent job and are fantastic, in

the job they do. I remember I was a candidate or running for the nomination for the presidency at the time that tragic assassination of Senator Kennedy, who was also running for the nomination on the other side. At the time there was a great deal of speculation as to whether campaigns should not be then run by television and people shouldn't go out and take the risks and so forth.

It was in the middle of the Vietnamese war. My feeling was if American boys can be drafted and serve their country abroad and run the risks and many of them get killed, why should a politician who is seeking office feel any different? You try to serve your country and you take the risks that go with it. That is my feeling.

QUESTION: Tom Wicker wrote this week along these lines and he concluded that there is not a lot that can be done about the problems you and Walter were just discussing. He is worried about the problem of presidential succession. Had Lynette Fromme succeeded in her terrible mission you would have become President without a shred of public sanction, to quote Mr. Wicker, and he feels that the country should address itself to this problem, the Congress should address itself to it.

Do you agree, and if so, what would you suggest?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course the Congress did address itself to it. I know Tom Wicker very well. I don't know why he doesn't understand the Constitution was amended in the Twenty-Fifth Amendment, which provides for the absence of the Vice President that the President should nominate someone for that post. This is done in the Twenty-Fifth Amendment. That is how I got there and that is how President Ford got there.

In the absence of a President due to illness or death then there are procedures spelled out in the Constitution of the United States. So it is strictly a constitutional question as to the succession of the Vice President to the presidency.

QUESTION: Of course, but I think what Mr. Wicker is suggesting is perhaps these changes that were brought about haven't worked out very well. He wasn't speaking of you personally. I think he worries about --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He might well have been. You never know.

QUESTION: He didn't say he was.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He probably has somebody else in mind he would like to see as President.

QUESTION: He didn't say that. He said he is worried about an unelected President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He has got one. There is nothing he can do about it because President Ford is unelected until 1976, and then we will see.

QUESTION: Should there be a provision for an election to be called?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You are asking me whether I think the Constitution should be changed.

QUESTION: Right.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to feel that this procedure, while it is a rough one for anybody who is trying to be confirmed by the Congress -- it took me four months -- and a very interesting experience. But I think it is a very good system because it is automatic, it is immediate, there is no delay, and continuity goes because it goes to the Vice President and then to the President.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I don't want to kick a dead horse. I realize you have answered this question earlier. However, I would like to take it one step further.

Should the polls continue to indicate that you would perhaps be a liability to Mr. Ford next year in the election or other sources other than the polls would indicate, have you considered or would you consider removing yourself from that ticket?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course I would have to rephrase your question because the polls you are referring to are Republicans and Independents. Republicans are the minority of the voters of this country representing 18 percent. The Independents represent a little more. The Democrats happen to be a majority by a considerable proportion. In an election all voters vote, not just Republicans at the convention, the Republicans vote.

I was nominated and elected four times in New York where the Republican Party was a minority party by a million registered votes.

So that I usually started out anywhere between 24 percent and 35 percent. I am not a candidate. But you have asked this question. So I am trying to give a little background. It may have no relation to the present situation, but at least there was a Democratic State in which a Republican had been nominated who started out the first time 35 percent of the vote in the polls, the second time 24 percent in the polls, and was advised not to run.

I just did run each time and each time by going to the voters and discussing the issues, and on the merits of the record got reelected.

QUESTION: Again let me come back to the heart then of that question which is would you, if sources indicated, or if there were ways in which you could tell you were a detriment to the President, would you remove yourself from that ticket?

MORE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This is the President's responsibility. He is the one that has to judge. I am not even a candidate. So when you say remove myself, I am not on it. I have said that I wasn't a candidate. I am doing nothing to become a candidate. I am out supporting the President's programs. Therefore, you have got to rethink your question in terms of what is the President going to do and what would his judgment be. That is where the judgment is coming from.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, we now have this agreement that Dr. Kissinger has worked out in the Middle East, this Sinai agreement. It calls for 200 civilians to be sent to the Sinai to observe the peace. Yasir Arafat has already said he would instruct his guerrillas to kill those 200 Americans.

If you were sitting in the Oval Office to what extent would you go to protect those 200 American civilians if their lives were in jeopardy?

MORE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think in order to try to answer the question, one has to understand the circumstances. It was the Egyptians who first asked for American technical representatives and the observation station.

Then the Israelis did, and then they both did, and then the number grew to 200 as a maximum. These are technicians. They are not military. They are civilians, and they will not be under the military. They will be under civilian assignment. They are in a zone that is controlled by the United Nations, which is between Egypt and the present territories held by Israel.

They are there to observe the accuracy of the use of the radar stations which would detect any attacks coming in from either one side or the other. They can leave at any time on their own discretion. Or if one side has requested them, they would leave.

So I don't see myself in any real danger. I don't see how the terrorists are going to get in through Egypt, and I don't see how they are going to get in through Israel. They are in an area which is patrolled by the United Nations Forces, in which there are very few people.

QUESTION: Suppose they did?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Then the United Nations Forces would take care of them. You don't have people wandering around in no-man's-land without being observed. The only people there are the United Nations Forces.

Anyone who is not a United Nations personnel would then be identified and immediately taken into custody. I think they couldn't be in a safer position.

The other part would be if war broke out, they would leave because they would know what was coming. Therefore, they would leave prior to having seen that the information was being given.

The alternative to not allowing 200 Americans to participate was a failure of the agreement or would have been a breakdown in the achievement of the agreement and the very real danger of the two parties going to war and then even greater danger as far as we are concerned and the world is concerned of this becoming escalated into an international Third World War, which I think is the deep concern of everybody plus, let's face it, the possible, also danger, of another oil boycott. Our nation is far more dependent on imported oils today than it was two years ago..

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the White House maintains that the economy is looking better. However, many wage earners do not necessarily see it that way. Certainly, locally, that is the case.

In your earlier speech, you mentioned the difference between the have-nots that see what the haves enjoy through television. Do you think money is becoming so concentrated at

MORE

the top that we are going to have severe problems, workers' revolts throughout the country, or what do you see that the Administration could do about this?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: First, I don't think there is a concentration of the money at the top. I think there is a greater diffusion of money throughout the economy than there ever has been before; that with the growth of the economy or during the past, particularly since World War II, there has been a constant rising of income at lower levels and less and less percentage of the population who suffer from poverty.

The most important thing, and I think all workers feel this way whether they have a job or don't have a job, they want jobs in industry, business and they don't want to be on government relief or welfare.

They would rather be working where they can do for their families. Therefore, basically, the fundamental problem is to stimulate the economy and, as I mentioned at the convention, the Republican Women's Convention, there are two facets.

One is energy independent to solve the energy problem, because energy is essential to an industrial society.

Two is the stimulation of the economy itself to produce jobs, to produce goods and services, to reestablish our strength and be able to meet our responsibilities outside of this country.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, New York City is almost -- well, it is flat on its back financially. I know this is a matter very close to our own heart. The first part of my question is do you think the Federal Government should step in and help bail New York City out?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. The word bailout is a word I am afraid to use because the basic problem was that New York spent more money for a good many years than they had income.

Each time they would sell short-term notes as a float to make up for the deficit. They have to come up with a balanced budget, but each year they overestimated income and underestimated expenditures. That built up to \$3,200,000,000.

Then with another deficit, they finally got to the point where nobody would buy their bonds. The answer isn't to go in because somebody spent more than they had and bail them out. The answer is for them to get their house in order so they can reestablish their credit and the State has helped tide them over.

I hope with the action that the City is taking and the State is taking, and the future action the City has got to take that they can reestablish their credit.

If we ever get to a point where cities or States feel they could spend what they want, and then they get in trouble and the Federal Government will bail them out, I think we have no sense of responsibility and we destroy the stability and the integrity of the country.

MORE

QUESTION: That leads me into the second part of the question.

Do you think this is a portent of things to come for other major cities, Dallas, Fort Worth, for instance?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I saw that Dallas County had \$10 billion credit in the banks. So the city doesn't look as though it is moving in that direction.

I think, myself, this is a very tragic but timely warning to all of us in this country that we have got to live within our means.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, when you were Governor of New York you were considered the leader, the progressive leader of the Republican Party or, I should say, the leader of the progressive wing of that Party.

David Broder wrote this week that you are mooting your progressive theme and talking more about States' rights than about civil rights. Is this true, and do you consider it politically necessary?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I have always been a strong States Righter. That is why I fought to do the things that as Governor and fought Washington in not interfering with our doing things.

I have always felt that States' rights had to be coupled with States' responsibilities. This is where the Federal Government has used the excuse of coming in and intervening in States because they say a lot of States don't assume their responsibilities to their people.

I always maintained that if the State did assume its responsibility, then they ought to leave us alone from Washington, and not interfere with us. I haven't changed on that at all.

On the spending side, one of the problems in this country is that we have a Judeo-Christian heritage of wanting to help those in need. This, when added to certain political instincts, sometimes leads people to promise more than they can deliver. I think this nation has overpromised, underdelivered, overspent, and now we are in financial trouble.

To the degree that I was a party to it, then all I can say is one learns the hard way and that now we see what has happened and that the Federal Government has a deficit of \$60 billion and maybe \$70 billion coming up. We just can't go on this way.

QUESTION: But that is a Republican deficit, isn't it?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a deficit that has accumulated out -- we have a deficit now in this country for the last 20-some years almost every year.

QUESTION: But the Republican Administration has not cut the deficit. Indeed, it has grown larger.

MORE



THE VICE PRESIDENT: The Republican Administration is in the Executive Branch but the Democratic Administration and control is in the Congress. These programs are all voted by the Congress.

If you notice, the President has been vetoing these programs, some of which have been overridden and some haven't. This is the problem. We have now got to face the hard reality that we can't spend more money than we have and if expenditures go on at the present rate, we will be up to 55 percent of Gross National Product by the year 2000 going to government and that will destroy the society.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, one thing that we haven't mentioned in the political area is Ronald Reagan. How do you assess his chances of overtaking Ford and gaining the Republican ticket?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He is a good friend of mine. I have known him as Governor. We were Governors for eight years together. I would say that if you go by the polls which have been mentioned before, he has been slipping in the polls as against President Ford, even in his own State.

So that every day that goes by and as his position weakens in relation to the President in the Republican Party, I think it becomes more and more difficult for him to make the decision to get into the race.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I would like to go back to an earlier question asked by Lee which had to do with the conservative stance that is being assumed now by President Ford.

The New York Times tells us that recently when a dozen moderate Republicans visited with the President they asked him to ease off on this conservative stance saying he might win the election with it, or rather, the nomination with it, but not the election.

Since you have been identified as a moderate to liberal Republican, how do you feel about that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You see, this whole thing, conservative and liberal, to me is to begin with, misleading, because they are labels. I don't think problems are solved by labels. I think they are solved by analysis and then doing the right thing.

The problem is today we have got inflation and Federal deficits, the bigger they are, the more it contributes to inflation.

He is trying to hold down the Federal deficit. That is why he vetos some of these spending programs which are very popular, housing, schools, education, et cetera.

But we haven't got the money to spend. The worse thing that can happen to this country is the insidious tax of inflation. That hits everybody. The other benefits -- specific groups.

I am all for doing these things, and we did them in New York, provided you can pay for them. But if we haven't got the money to pay for them, we can't do them.

That is what he is doing. That isn't a liberal-conservative, it is just a sound stand he is taking trying to protect the American people against the most insidious force there is, which is inflation.

QUESTION: Are you for suspending the oil price controls? Congressman Staggers says if those controls were taken off it would cause a revolution in America.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They have been taken out. They went out of existence. The President's veto of the extension was sustained in the Congress and the Senate yesterday. So they are off. So we have no controls. There hasn't been a revolution yet. I don't think there is going to be one. I think it is a sound approach.

The President wanted a 45-day extension. Then he has asked -- I sat in on the meetings month after month with the leaders pleading with them in the Congress to pass a phased out decontrol, 39 months with a very small change each month which would be almost imperceptible as far as the country is concerned. They have refused to do that.

So now we have no control, but I think, I hope that the companies that are involved will exercise the kind of self-restraint which is in their interests and in the national interest.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I believe you said earlier that you have worked with or for five American Presidents, beginning with F.D.R.

How would you assess Mr. Ford's contribution compared with the contributions of earlier Presidents you have worked with?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think it is tremendous. Each President is different. Each period has been different. I started with President Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon and President Ford, and each one is different. The circumstances are different.

I think this man has tremendous courage. He is willing to do what he thinks is right just like what you were talking about before, what he thinks is right, because of the interests in this country.

He believes on fundamental principles on which this country is built. He will do things that are very unpopular for the moment because he thinks it is essential for our future. I think that is the kind of man we need right now.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, a few months back you headed a commission that investigated domestic spying by the Central Intelligence Agency. Their primary responsibility, of course, is international intelligence, and we have learned very recently that somebody dropped the ball, or at least there was not enough intelligence available for us to predict the 1973 war in the Middle East.

Is this not a serious failing on the part of the CIA?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to go to the first part of your question.

Domestic spying, really, the commission was set up because of allegations of violations of domestic statutes by the CIA. We investigated them. We made a report, identified the areas and then made recommendations as to how to prevent them.

The allegation originally was there was massive violations and we found that that was not true, there were not massive violations, there were violations but they were in specific cases.

Going to the international thing, the war, I think that probably no country -- well, I wouldn't say no country, certainly the Israelis have one of the best intelligence systems in the world. The Soviets have a tremendous operation in the United States. The Israelis did not detect this action and neither did the United States. There were indications but they were not interpreted. They were very cleverly handled and they were not interpreted as being the actual thing, namely war.

QUESTION: There has been some talk of a rift between yourself and Mr. Kissinger, of a power difficulty between Mr. Kissinger and the President. Can you shed any light on that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I can very quickly, we are the closest friends that you could find anywhere, Mr. Kissinger and myself, and the President has total confidence in him and deep respect. No rifts at all.

QUESTION: Is there going to be a new majority party?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I doubt it.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, our time is up. Thank you for being with us today.

END

(AT 12:10 P.M. CDT)