

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President  
(Charleston, West Virginia)

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PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT WEST VIRGINIA STATE HOUSE  
GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM  
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

(AT 12:00 P.M. EDT)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, George.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here, this close to heaven. It is a great pleasure and an honor. If anyone has any questions or comments he would like to make, I am delighted to do my best to answer them or to comment on them.

QUESTION: What discussions have you had with the President regarding funds for New York City? The Mayor this morning was saying 8,000 persons may well have to be laid off.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have been talking on that subject with the President for about six months, and prior to that for about 15 years as Governor.

QUESTION: What immediate discussions have you had with him in the past couple days?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yesterday.

QUESTION: Is he flexible on that decision as far as giving aid to that city?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The President is not going to bail out a city that is spending more money than it has revenue and that is not willing to or has been unwilling to meet the fiscal responsibilities which any family, any city, any State, and government has to apply.

I think he is right, and I share that feeling. And I know the City of New York very well and worked each year for 15 years with the Mayor and the City Council and the Board of Estimates in Albany to work out their budget and get a budget that would keep the ship on the seas, as it were.

I think that the city now got into a bad enough situation because their expenditures outran their income, although they have to present a balanced budget. Therefore, the estimates of income were usually overestimated and the expenditures underestimated. At the end of the year they ended up with a deficit which is covered by what is called a float, short-term notes.

Those accumulated to where they had \$3 billion 200 million. They finally got where they couldn't get anybody to buy them. That is where they are.

The State, which is the right body to step in,

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stepped in and passed legislation. The State has created a board which virtually has taken over the responsibility of the fiscal management of the city.

On the 15th of this month, which was yesterday, the city was to come up with a balanced budget for 1978. If the board approves that budget, that is fine; it will be the budget. If the board doesn't, then the board has to make up their own budget and the city has to adopt the budget. That budget then should result in restoration of fiscal integrity and sound management in New York.

At that point the city still has \$3 billion 200 million of short-term notes which they have got to handle.

My feeling is that that is going to be a critical point and they are going to need some help in bridging over that three-year period in order to get to a point where investors' confidence has been re-established in the city's finances.

The Congress of the United States is the only one that can act. The State has taken its action. The President has no powers. Therefore, what I said last Saturday night was that I thought the Congress as a whole better focus on this problem; because if the city does take these actions, if they take them to restore fiscal integrity, they are going to need some assistance bridging that three-year gap. That was the position I took.

QUESTION: You stand by that position?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, President Ford reportedly has stated that he is in favor of relaxing the enforcement of marijuana laws. Do you support that position?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That he is what?

QUESTION: In favor of supporting relaxation of marijuana laws.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Are these Federal laws or local laws? Federal law?

QUESTION: This is in regard to a Federal report that came out this week.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I would stand by the recommendations that are made in that report which he was generally endorsing. Relaxation is a word that is pretty broad. So you would have to read the report in order to get the specific thoughts they had in mind.

But I think the real tragedy in our country is hard drugs. I tried to deal with that problem when I was Governor for 15 years, first to try and rehabilitate those who were hooked whose lives were being destroyed. And then, after spending a great deal of money -- because the Federal

Government wasn't interested in this problem -- we found that about 80 percent of them went back, even after they had gone through the cure. So we then cracked down very hard on pushers or sellers of hard drugs.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, would you support then decriminalization of marijuana for users?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't know that you exactly mean decriminalization. If you relax the laws, I would think that that -- I really think the best way to do it is to stick with the report which goes into this thing in great detail.

Of course, there is a problem and I think we ought to face it, frankly, that heavy marijuana users do have their initiative, their drive, their total abilities dulled and reduced. As I have said on previous occasions, I don't think if the founders of this country had been on marijuana, they would not have founded the United States. I don't think the heavy use of marijuana helps anybody.

QUESTION: Are you here today campaigning against your nephew?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. I am here today as Vice President of the United States, Republican Vice President of the United States, supporting the Republican Party as I have done in other parts of the country, but primarily to support the President's programs.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you are here today; the President was here earlier; and he is supposed to come next month. Why all of a sudden the concentrated attention on West Virginia?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a great State. You have nothing against it, have you?

QUESTION: Do you have any particular reason for the three visits in such a short period of time?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can't speak for him. This is the first time I have been here in a long time, so I am just delighted. I am going over to Virginia. I was down in North Carolina two weeks ago, South Carolina three weeks ago. I was out in Ohio yesterday. I am just quietly moving around the country visiting.

I think it is important that officials in Washington be seen and are available around the country.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you support Governor Moore in the 1976 gubernatorial campaign?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I didn't realize he announced he was going to run. But I am not telling anybody what to do. That is a decision which they have got to make themselves. I think he has been a very good Governor.

QUESTION: If he does run, you will support him?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is right.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, the President's campaign manager, Bo Callaway, has come under some criticism recently. You once called him a pre-campaign manager. Do you still believe he will be the pre-campaign manager?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I am simply speaking on the basis of what I understood the function was, which was to facilitate and assure the President's nomination by the Republican Party for the re-election as President. Now, maybe there have been other discussions, but I haven't heard about them.

QUESTION: Do you believe he should carry on in the duties of campaign manager?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is not my responsibility. I am not a candidate. I haven't stated whether I would be available to go with the President because I didn't want in any way to put any pressure on him about his freedom of choice after he is nominated, which I believe is a great American tradition and should be preserved; that the President when nominated should at that point pick whoever he feels is best qualified to be his running mate to help the country and to help him in the election.

QUESTION: You are well experienced with the Presidential campaign.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Not too successful, but I have had a lot of experience.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION: Would you say Bo Callaway is doing what he should for the President, he is a good manager?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I have to tell you the honest truth. I am not involved in that exercise so that I am not privy to the work that is being carried on. I have no reason to think that he is not.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, I would like to pick up an issue that you raised yesterday in which you seemed to be trying to write off Ronald Reagan as a potential opponent.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I wasn't trying to write off anybody. I was asked a question and I answered it. But go ahead. I will answer the question. That is just for the record.

QUESTION: If Mr. Reagan runs in New Hampshire and Florida and defeats the President, does he not then become a problem?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, let me tell you, I ran in New Hampshire. That is some time ago. You are young. Probably you weren't around. But I ran in New Hampshire against Senator Goldwater.

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QUESTION: I was there.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: And you won't believe it, but the person who won the primary was Cabot Lodge, and he was Ambassador out in Vietnam. You can draw your own conclusions about the significance of that primary. Barry ultimately got the nomination for the Republican Party, and he is a very good friend of mine. But I don't think the New Hampshire primary was the be-all and end-all of that election, and I don't think it will be this year either.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, will you be running in the West Virginia primary?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: For what?

QUESTION: For Vice President?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Listen, I told you I am not a candidate. I am just here as Vice President under the 25th Amendment.

QUESTION: Will President Ford be running in the West Virginia primary?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, that would be a decision that he would have to make. I don't know what your primary laws are. Some States have laws where the Presidential candidate is automatically in. If it is optional to the President, he would have to decide.

Now, there are 37 States -- I think there are 37 -- that have primaries. Maybe New York is missing something. We should have gotten in on the action.

But anyhow, this has got to be a decision he has to make. How much time can he give to it and how much energy and how much money under the new campaign laws and how does he raise the money, this is a tough problem. It is a new ball game.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, with the peace agreement finally implemented between Israel and Egypt, if American volunteers --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: American technicians who are volunteers.

QUESTION: If those Americans should somehow become endangered, do you think the United States should send in troops to rescue them?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. I don't think there is any chance their lives will be endangered. We are limited to no man's land, or whatever you want to call it in modern terminology. They are in that area between Israeli occupied territory and Egyptian occupied territory where two highly technical observation stations are located.

They are there as technicians to assure that the observations are carried out so that each side can

know what the other side is doing back in their own territory. This is a device to give each side confidence in the other side that this has been carried out with integrity.

Either side has the right to ask for their withdrawal. There are United Nations troops in that area. These people are unarmed. If there is any trouble, they come out.

QUESTION: If somehow they should be caught in fighting, you would not support American --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: They are not going to get caught in fighting. It is crossing some imaginary bridge that you can't even say is there. I don't know there is a river to cross with a bridge on it.

I can't answer that question. I don't think there is any chance of the speculation which you raise.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, you say you have been touring the country in a low-key manner, talking to both Republican leaders and talking with people. What have you found out?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, it is a great country. It reaffirmed what I already thought, having been around quite a few times before.

I will be going out again starting next week for the President as his representative with the Domestic Council on a series of hearings relating to review of domestic programs and policies which he wants to review, which the Council is reviewing, hopefully to come up with recommendations for him in relation to welfare and the various areas that affect States, such as categorical grant programs, regulation, et cetera.

So we will be listening to the Governor, the Mayor, citizens, labor, business, professional, on various subjects that relate to the Federal Government's activities, programs, policies that affect the United States.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, how would you assess Ronald Reagan's chances of capturing the Republican nomination?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Not very good.

QUESTION: Why?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Because if you look at the polls you get a pretty good idea. He is also a good friend of mine; a man I like very much and respect.

But traditionally the President in office, if he wants to run again, it is the second term, that this has been the tradition of the party. In this case he wasn't nominated because he came in under the 25th Amendment, as I did.

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QUESTION: But you still think despite that he should be the one the party selects?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I think he is the best.

QUESTION: As you may or may not know, Mr. Vice President, Ohio delegate candidates for the national convention have to list both their first and second choices. Did anybody up in Columbus last night or this morning suggest that you might be the second choice?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir. It was not discussed.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, as far as President Ford's programs are concerned, are there areas that he looks to you for special advice?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I sit in on the National Security Council meetings as Vice Chairman, on the Domestic Council meetings as Vice Chairman, on the Cabinet meetings, and on meetings of the Economic Council and the Energy Council, so that I am there.

He welcomes comments from anybody who is in the meetings, and he is a very patient man who wants to hear all sides of every issue before making up his mind. So he encourages everyone, including myself, which I am very grateful for.

QUESTION: As far as your Energy Council duties, do you talk to the President much about West Virginia coal and its role in that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: West Virginia has coal and so do a lot of other States. Coal has got to be the most important immediate source of energy for this country.

As you know, the President in his State of the Union message said we have got to in the next 10 years double the number of coal mines and production of coal in the United States. West Virginia obviously is one of the important sources.

In addition to that, coal as a direct source of energy he is very interested in, and this new corporation would finance, if private capital will not finance, gasification of coal and liquefaction of coal, not only on the surface but hopefully would experiment with other methods; namely, production of gas from coal, namely, driving down in deep mines, setting off an explosion, setting off a fire, then taking the gas off and getting the gas that way, which is the same process underground that you would have on the ground if coal were mined.

So they will be working on all phases. But coal has got to be major for the future economic well-being of the United States. Energy is essential and coal is the greatest resource we have in the fossil fuels in this

country. So that it has got to be right out in front.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, what would you like to see happen with the national food stamp program? Should it be drastically cut back? Who should be eligible for food stamps?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Obviously those who need it and not those who don't. That is a simple approach to it.

This country has gotten to a point where if we stick with Lincoln's basic concept, that government should do those things people can't do for themselves.

We don't want to get into a situation that was related to me by a member of the Board of Regents in the State of New York at a meeting about eight years ago, whenever it was -- six, seven years ago -- where he was a banker in an up-state city in New York and a well-to-do gentleman.

He said, "You won't believe it. My son came home from NYU and announced to me last week he had just gotten on welfare. He was all excited about it." Of course, the father was very upset and really quite annoyed and unbelieving, and the son was crestfallen. He said, "Gee, dad, everybody is doing it."

Now this is something that our country can't afford. We have got a \$60 billion deficit now, and sons of bankers have no business getting on food stamps. We have got to have a system where people who need help get it. But those who don't need it don't get it. Because the hard working people paying the taxes cannot afford to do these things. They can't afford to put this kind of money out, or the whole country is going to go bankrupt.

That I hope gives some feeling as to my thoughts on the subject.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, after your talk with President Ford yesterday, do you believe or under what circumstances do you believe he might change his position on giving financial assistance to New York?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But, you see, you pose the question a way that I cannot answer it because financial assistance is the same as a bail out in the sense that it has been used in the past and is popularly used. In other words, is somebody going to come along and help save the city.

Until the city and State have done those things which are essential to restore fiscal integrity, once they have done that, then the only help they need is to help them in a transition period over this three-year period to take those short-term notes and translate them into long-term bonds.

Now, that could be done in a series of different ways. If I heard it correctly, this matter was discussed



this morning on the Today Show by some Congressmen. They were talking about the Senate Finance Committee coming out with a bill which would permit a Federal guarantee of city bonds after they had taken the action, if they were taxable bonds, to be sold.

There are all kinds of ways, but it is not a bail out. It is simply after they have done the things that are necessary, then to help them get back during that interim period before investor confidence is restored in the city.

QUESTION: Do you think President Ford could possibly change his position and support some of those kinds of things?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: But, you see, the point that I would really like to try and make on that is he has not discussed that phase yet. All of his conversation has been related to the situation prior to the city's having taken action to restore their fiscal integrity.

QUESTION: So there is a possibility that he could be in favor of some sort of intermediate assistance?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I can't speak for the President, obviously, because he speaks for himself. I am not his spokesman.

If, as, and when the situation I described took place, the President could not do anything unless the Congress had acted. This is something that everybody seems to overlook. The President has no power to do anything.

Now, Mr. Simon has talked a lot about this situation. But it is the Congress that would have to pass enabling legislation. Then and only then would the President be in a position, if the city had done what we are talking about, to give consideration to the appropriate action.

QUESTION: Do you think the President is considering some kind of action in the event Congress does something?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the Congress better do the considering first, because you have got to be in sequence here. The President can only act on a bill if it is passed. I have to say to you that I think there is an extraordinary lack of focus on the Congress by everybody and a very large focus on the President.

The President cannot do anything unless the Congress acts. When the Congress has acted, if they do, and when the city has acted, if they do, the President is a very intelligent man and he would then appraise the situation and, as he always does, do whatever is appropriate and right.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, could his position change?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You are trying to get me to

say his position changed. He has never discussed this situation. He has only discussed the present situation, which is bailing out the city before they meet their own problems. That is the only thing he has talked about. He said he is not going to do that.

QUESTION: Do you think that your statement, though, helps open his mind?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: His mind is very open. It always has been.

QUESTION: It doesn't seem to be from his statements. He seems to be consistently opposed to any help for New York City.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Any kind of bail out, until the city does something to restore its own fiscal integrity. He is absolutely on the right wicket on that.

Those of us who have lived in that area -- some of you have and some of you haven't -- know that if the city thinks the Federal Government is going to pick up all these checks for them, they are not going to do the tough, hard things that are necessary.

I was faced with a situation in New York State where we had a \$1 billion 500 million deficit in an ensuing 15 months. We cut around 11,000 people off the payrolls. This is a very, very difficult and tough thing to do. And we did a lot of other things. We froze all of the programs of the government, and we did a whole series of things, plus raising a billion dollars of new taxes.

We didn't go running to Washington to try and solve our problems. We recognized the sovereign States have got a responsibility to meet their own problems, and we did. And the city, with the help of the State, is in the process of doing that. If they think the Federal Government is going to do it for them, they will stop.

QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, do you intend to discourage the President from going and committing himself in the New Hampshire primary?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I haven't even thought about it, to tell you the honest truth.

QUESTION: You seem to be pretty much convinced that it wouldn't be much of a true test.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: What is that old saying about one swallow doesn't make a summer?

This makes good news and it is a good something to write about and it is the first thing and it is a big story. But if you are looking to the long pull, which is the nomination, which is what the President is looking for, then I think New Hampshire has got to be seen in the perspective of the entire 37 States with primaries and the States that don't have primaries and then a convention.

And at the convention you are going to see, I think, exactly what is reflected in the polls. The polls show the President's strength is growing and that Governor Reagan's strength has dropped.

QUESTION: But the President didn't help Mr. Wyman in the Senatorial campaign.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Neither did Mr. Reagan. They both went up there. Mr. Wyman already had conservative votes. What he needed was the moderate and progressive votes.

It was a complicated political situation from which, if I were you, as a good political writer, I wouldn't draw too many conclusions because there were so many local peculiarities that you can't draw any national decision.

QUESTION: Do you think this country can maintain an energy production level and at the same time maintain a clean, healthy environment? Can we become self-sufficient in energy production and protect our environment at the same time?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I like the second way you stated it because it is not to maintain. We haven't got the production, nor have we got the ecology straightened out. So the second half of your question is right: Can we produce the energy and protect our environment.

In my opinion, the answer is not only yes, but we have to. This is essential.

QUESTION: How?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: How? By just producing energy in a way that protects the environment. Now, I have seen operations. I went and visited a surface mine out in Gillette, Wyoming, which to me was one of the most interesting revelations I have ever seen.

They have 125 feet of gravel and topsoil on top of a 70-foot seam of coal and underneath that is clay. They have 6,000 acres in this particular property. The whole thing is mechanized. They take off the topsoil and stack it. Then they take off the 120-some feet of gravel and put that behind where they mine the coal. Then they put the topsoil back on top of it, and then they plant it.

They are making six lakes because there is clay underneath so the water doesn't sink down. Otherwise there aren't any lakes in this area because the water goes down through the gravel, which is mostly what the soil is made of.

This has got to be one of the most interesting experiments and proofs that you can, by spending a little more money, produce the energy and improve the environment. That to me was a marvelous illustration.

I think the ingenuity of the American people

as individuals and through private enterprise is unlimited. Once the Nation, as we have, sets its mind to do both, we can do it. There is nothing this country can't do if it sets its mind to it. That is why I am so optimistic about the future. I think we are going to do it.

I think the young people of America, who are really the ones who got us excited and enthusiastic about the environment, I think we owe them a great deal of gratitude. That we have done a great deal in the past of despoiling our environment and now we are in the process of cleaning it up, only doing the two together can be the basis for the future.

QUESTION: Do you think there has just been too much to-do about whatever minimal difference there is between you and President Ford about New York City?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes.

QUESTION: Why?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Why? The very reason you asked the question.

QUESTION: Some people think the differences are more substantial than you do.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I tried to explain to that very attractive young lady across the way who has already left that the President has been talking about the situation in New York as it now stands; namely, before they had done anything to restore fiscal integrity.

I don't care, and I will repeat it again, if it is a family that spends more money than it has in income, sooner or later they are going to get into trouble. It is true of a city, it is true of a State, and it is true of a Nation.

We have just got to realize those fundamental values, or fundamental truths is even better. The United States itself is faced with a \$60 billion to \$70 billion deficit this year. The rate of growth of spending under the social programs, without any new programs, is a growth rate that is averaging about \$50 billion a year. Revenues are not growing at the same rate.

Therefore, we have all got to face the hard realities that you can't spend more than you have got in the way of income, or more than you produce. We have got to encourage production. We have to protect the environment in the process of doing these things. Okay, these are realities.

The President has been trying to bring home a fact that under the present circumstances, this would just open the floodgates if the Federal Government said, "From now on we are going to pick up the check for the cities."

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Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, I don't know what it is like down in West Virginia, but I will tell you in New York those floodgates would really turn on because they would just tap that Federal treasury.

This is just an impossibility for the American people. Everybody is overburdened with taxes already.

I thank you very much. I am very happy to be this close to heaven. God bless you.

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(AT 12:31 P.M. EDT)