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Office of the Vice President
(Chicago, Illinois)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
JIM THOMPSON-FOR-GOVERNOR DINNER
INTERNATIONAL BALLROOM, CONRAD HILTON HOTEL
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AT 8:25 P.M. CDT

Thank you very much, Father Banahan.

Fred, thanks very much indeed for giving me the great thrill and the pleasure and excitement of being here at this gathering this evening. I appreciate the opportunity more than I can say.

For those who talk about the demise of the Republican Party, the lack of enthusiasm in politics in this country, ladies and gentlemen, I just wish they were here in Chicago, Illinois, tonight to see this gathering here. They would know what the future of America is.

(Applause)

Two rooms filled with wonderful people who care about this country, who love this country, who want to see the opportunities for their children, their children's children, which we all have enjoyed that have given us the chance to, as free citizens, each find our own expression in life. And this is revitalized and rekindled by the fact that two young people, two wonderful young men and women who have a future in any field they want ahead of them, have decided that they want to give of their services to the people of this country.

And I think the inspiration of what Jim and Jayne are doing, not only here in Chicago but throughout the State -- and it is already radiating outside the State -- is giving us a new sense of confidence in this country that the best people haven't deserted public life.

And as I said in the other room, one of the things that first rocked me when I first ran for governor, somebody came up and said, "Why do you want to get into politics? You've got it good now. Politics is a dirty business." I was indignant. I said, "If you think politics is a dirty business, why don't you get in politics and clean it up?"

That is what Jim has done. That is why he is here, ladies and gentlemen.

(Applause)

That is why we can have faith and pride in America.

Now, in the other room Jim was talking about sacrifices that people made to politics and public life and

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how deeply grateful he was. I thought he was building up to Jayne, but he made it a little broader and included all those who are supporting him. So I would just like to say, as one who has been in this a long time, I especially thank Jayne, because she has come in this right in the middle. She has got a lot of courage and is going to be the greatest strength for this country.

(Applause)

I have got to say it is a thrill for me to be here with Dick Ogilvie, because I don't think there is a finer governor in this country than Dick Ogilvie.

(Applause)

The fact that he wasn't reelected shows we can all make mistakes. But we learn by our mistakes, and you are not going to make it this time, because you have got a guy who is going to be just as good and do just as good a job. Chicago and Illinois were always on top, along with New York,

Some of you may not know it, but Bill and I started out together as governors. He didn't start out; he was there, and I came and I learned from him. That is why I got started as a governor. And there is another great guy.

This is a State for the Republican Party. Why not?

(Applause)

Now, I just want to tell you I am delighted to be here. I am here for four reasons. The first one was to bring greetings from the President to Jim and Jayne, personal greetings and his respect and admiration for them for what they are doing for our country.

Second was to bring very best wishes in regards to all of you. I would like to thank you, because the only way that those of us who have been fortunate enough to get the nominations of our respective State parties or on the national basis for the President -- the only reason we are able to go before the people and reach the people and to have the support that is necessary is because men and women like yourselves are willing to contribute generously, as you have and as you are doing by your presence here this evening. This is what gives the muscle to the party, and I want to thank you. We are grateful to you.

And we are grateful to all the party leaders. Those are the men and women who are the unsung heroes -- the county chairmen and State chairmen and all the workers in the party.

This thing just doesn't happen. Those are the ones who care about this party sufficiently to devote themselves to the party of their choice.

Here we are this evening, and I am thrilled to be with you. And I am thrilled secondly because Jim Thompson and his lovely wife, Jayne, are wonderful people for whom I have a tremendous respect. And this is the essence of quality in life, respect, and I think that more and more that feeling is just radiating throughout the State in respect to this man who has done such a tremendous job up to now in another capacity and will do it as one of the great governors.

And, let's face it, the third reason is because Jim Thompson is going to be governor of Illinois, if everyone present and all Jim's many admirers continue to go all out for him.

(Applause)

But let's not think because things look good in the polls that things are in the bag and you can relax. That is dangerous. Now can be a dangerous period, so now is the time to turn it on, stay with it.

(Applause)

And the fourth reason I am here is because I wanted to be. I like Chicago and I am delighted to be here. I would like to stay.

(Applause)

Let's face it, ladies and gentlemen, this is a tough election, no matter how the polls look.

First I would like to talk about the President. I tell you, President Ford can win, President Ford should win, and President Ford will win.

(Applause)

We need him. But he is only going to win if the American people really comprehend the ability Jerry Ford has shown in his two difficult years in the White House. Believe me, this has been something.

I have had the privilege of watching him. If the Americans appreciate the character of Jerry Ford in dealing with some of the most controversial matters ever to face the White House, if they respect the courage of Jerry Ford in facing the tough issues, both foreign and domestic, not compromising for the sake of special interest votes but putting the good of the nation as a whole first, if they understand these things, then he will be elected.

If the American people fail to understand Jerry Ford's great contribution to the country in this time of crisis and his capabilities to lead in the future, it would be tragic indeed.

Therefore, let us look at the facts. Three grim crises faced America when Jerry Ford was catapulted into the Presidency. He didn't seek this office, let's not forget. It was just a quirk of fate. But it sort of gives

you a sense of confidence in the democratic process, that there is something special about it, that a man of his quality should at this moment of constitutional crisis be elevated to the highest position.

First it was Watergate and the serious constitutional crises that entailed. Second was the Vietnam War, which divided the Nation as no conflict has since our own Civil War. And third was inflation threatening to run away and already hurting our retired people, our senior citizens and others trying to meet personal and family necessities on the shrinking dollars.

What did Jerry Ford do? Did he do the easy things? Did he allow Watergate and the constitutional crises to pre-empt all of our national energies and attention? Did he permit the withdrawal from Vietnam and the final debacle to alienate all our friends and allies abroad and our self-confidence at home?

Did he court favor with this special interest and that self-seeking group by allowing or encouraging greater inflation through more Federal Government spending for this apparently worthy cause or that apparently important political project?

The answer is resoundingly no. Let me tell you, it takes intelligence, it takes understanding, and it takes sheer courage to do what Jerry Ford did in these last two years.

(Applause)

And he has got all three of these qualities, and they all stem from a deep personal conviction on his part, love of people and a true compassion for his fellow Americans, and particularly the less fortunate who suffer most from turmoil, from war and from inflation.

You know, when one looks back to the dark days of some two years ago, the Nation adrift in a governmental morass unprecedented in history, in a bitter, costly, divisive war, and inflation threatening to run away and destroy our economy, we can be thankful, to paraphrase that commercial, that we had a Ford in our future.

(Laughter, applause)

And when I said all this to a friend not long ago, he replied, "But if this is so, then why is Ford behind at the polls?"

I will tell you my reply. I said, "First, it is because he has been more concerned with getting the proper jobs done than public relations gimmickry. He would rather do the right thing for the country than worry about the political repercussions.

"Second," I said, "numbers of things had to be done that didn't make some of the special interests very happy.

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"And third," I pointed out, "the fault really isn't his. It is ours, yours and mine, for not putting the problems of war and the accomplishments in perspective."

My friends, as Al Smith used to say, "Let's look at the record."

We have survived the cataclysm of Watergate, and the resignations of a Vice President and President for the first time in our history.

We are out of Vietnam, and the President has gained respect from allies, uncommitted nations and potential foes.

He has held down inflation. And at the same time, under his leadership, we have gone through a major recession and are coming out of it with more Americans employed than at any time in our history.

(Applause)

Just look at that record of accomplishment, brothers and sisters -- it just ain't peanuts.

(Laughter, applause)

Jerry Ford is a gutsy, straightforward American who tells it like it is. He acts the way his knowledge and his conscience dictate. He doesn't have to shade the meanings of his phrases so that you are in the dark as to what he means. He tells you like it is and what he thinks should be done about it.

He speaks from a record of accomplishment, from experience. He has shown you and all Americans that you can have trust and confidence in him, and he need not belabor the point.

And now let me tell you of another proven, outstanding leader, and that is Jim Thompson, your next governor.

(Applause)

I know quite a bit about what it takes to be a governor, having been one for nearly 16 years. And let me tell you, Jim has got what it takes.

(Applause)

He has had that essential experience in government. This is no novice. He has had experience at the Federal, the State and the local levels. He understands community and neighborhood and local feelings. Don't forget, journalists voted him the Chicagoan of the Year. He understands the importance of community and the people, and listening to their views.

Don't forget, the broadcasters named Jim Thompson the Illinois Man of the Year. He understands humanity, the deep roots that bind all of us together.

He believes in our moral commitments and has deep abiding faith in our Judeo-Christian heritage. Is it any wonder that the Friends of Israel named Jim Thompson the Israel Bonds Man of the Year?

He understands the elements that make for responsible citizenry and a better life for all Americans. He also knows that we cannot have one without the other.

He wants more service for the taxpayers' dollar -- rooting out waste and mismanagement.

He wants better educational opportunities for our children.

He wants to really meet the needs of the less fortunate but to cut the inordinate costs of welfare.

He is all for the needy but not for the greedy.

(Applause)

Jim is dedicated to honesty in government. He has proven it as a prosecutor of crooks and grafters.

Jim is determined to carry on the fight against crime that already has won him national acclaim as the best Federal prosecutor in the United States.

(Applause)

He is a man owned by no one. He is beholden to no special interest. His only boss is his own conscience. His only accountability is to people.

Jim Thompson not only should be your next governor here in Illinois. He should become a major personality and force in the Republican Party and the Nation as a whole.

(Applause)

I also want to say how I am impressed by the quality of Jim's running mates -- Dave O'Neill for Lieutenant Governor -- and a handsome guy, too. It doesn't hurt in politics.

(Laughter)

George Lindberg, running for reelection as State Comptroller; Bill Scott, that great vote-getter, running for reelection as Attorney General.

(Applause)

I don't know how you do it, ladies and gentlemen; they are all handsome. I think it is great.

(Laughter)

And Bill Harris, running for Secretary of State of Illinois.

(Applause)

And all the other fine candidates. Ladies and gentlemen, I just want to urge you to work hard and long for Jim Thompson and all his associates. And I urge you to work with equal dedication for Jerry Ford and Bob Dole.

(Applause)

And let me tell you, Bob Dole is a first-rate, able and dynamic candidate. He knows what makes America tick, and his whole adult life has been in the service of this Nation.

When a candidate for Vice President is chosen by a political party, it should always be with the knowledge that he may succeed to the Presidency. I can tell you from personal knowledge that Bob Dole has the strength, the intelligence, the character and the ability necessary.

And now, in conclusion, let me say that this campaign is unusual for me. I am not running for anything.

(Laughter)

But I am campaigning here because I am deeply concerned -- concerned about the future of America in a world where our way of life and our very national security is being challenged as never before; concerned about America's continued growth and the ability to provide jobs and meet the needs of her people; concerned about America's government and its capacity to govern in the best interests of individual Americans and their freedom of choice of where and how they live and what they work at, and how they may enjoy the fruits of their labor; concerned for the American enterprise system that has given more people more freedom and more opportunity for self-realization than any system in history; --

(Applause)

-- and, my friends, concerned that the American people have the fullest information before them when they vote this November.

I am concerned that we have a strong two-party system in these United States. It is crucial for our kind of representative government and for the preservation of our liberties and the continued dynamism of our national political life.

I am concerned that we continue to have a President who will stand up to a Congress when it falls prey to special interests.

I want a President who will continue to veto bills -- if necessary, by the hundreds -- if they sacrifice the good of all the people to the selfish purposes of a few.

(Applause)

I want, in other words, a President whose compassion is shown in actions for all our people -- and not just saccharin words.

I want a President in power who does not seek to pit one economic group against another, one section against another section, but who unifies the Nation in the best interests of all Americans.

And I want a President who sees not just the faults, but the true greatness of America; a President who not only can encourage the dynamic growth of our free society here at home but command respect and friendship for us abroad.

In but six weeks the American people will make their crucial decision at the polls. Let us -- you and I -- leave no stones unturned in getting before them the record, the capabilities, the promise in leadership under President Ford and Bob Dole; and before the voters of Illinois the crucial importance of Jim Thompson's going to your State House next January.

These things can be done. They will be done -- if each of us does his part.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

END

(AT 8:50 P.M. CDT)