

8-20-1974

Remarks of the President Upon Introduction of Governor Nelson Rockefeller As Vice President-Designate and Press Conference of Governor Nelson Rockefeller Vice President-Designate

Nelson A. Rockefeller

United States Office of the White House Press Secretary

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Recommended Citation

Rockefeller, Nelson A. and United States Office of the White House Press Secretary, "Remarks of the President Upon Introduction of Governor Nelson Rockefeller As Vice President-Designate and Press Conference of Governor Nelson Rockefeller Vice President-Designate" (1974). *Watergate Era*. 8.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 20, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON INTRODUCTION OF
GOVERNOR NELSON ROCKEFELLER
AS VICE PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE
AND
PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
GOVERNOR NELSON ROCKEFELLER
VICE PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE

THE BRIEFING ROOM

10:20 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

I think all of you have probably heard by now that my nominee for Vice President is Governor Rockefeller. I told him I was going to bring him over to all of my friends to have some discussion and so if you would like, I just want to reiterate the fact that I stated, that after I looked at all of the choices, and they were difficult; after I looked at all of the people, there were many, but the one who in good judgment under all of the circumstances was Nelson Rockefeller.

I think he will make a great teammate. I think he will be good for the country, I think he will be good for the world, and I am looking forward to working with him.

So, Nelson.

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Thank you.

Needless to say, ladies and gentlemen, I am deeply honored and should I be confirmed by the Congress, I will look forward to the privilege and honor of serving the President of the United States and, as I said in the other room, through him all of the people of this great country.

I am fully cognizant of the fact that the responsibilities of the Vice President are to preside over the Senate of the United States and to otherwise simply carry out any assignment that he or she may receive from the President.

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I will look forward to that opportunity of serving him in any way that can be useful to him, and I think and feel very strongly that already his own dedication and openness has reawakened hope and faith and that under his leadership we, as a people, and we, as a Nation, have the capacity, the will and the ability to face the tough realities and overcome them that exist in our country and in the world today. I am optimistic about the long-term future.

Q Governor, do you have any understanding at all with President Ford on what specifically you will do as Vice President?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Nothing in detail. There has been a discussion on that subject, but he said nothing today about it.

Q Governor, you have turned down this job so many times since 1960, why did you accept it now?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, let's not exaggerate the number of times -- twice (Laughter). But two different factors: One, the situation that exists in our country and the world, a situation resulting from an accelerated change, tremendously difficult and serious problems, as the President pointed out in his address to the Congress, very difficult problems that have to be faced and faced realistically. And so the solution of them is going to involve and require all the people of this country, their dedication to the common interests, so that this situation puts an entirely different light on the problem.

I just would say also I have been privileged to serve my country and State of New York, so that I am in a position of relaxed desire to be helpful to this Nation in any way I can.

Q Governor, have you discussed with the President the possibility of campaigning for the Republicans this fall?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

Q Will you?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I am delighted.

Q Governor, if you are confirmed, do you believe that your role as Vice President will be different than other Vice Presidents had in the past?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I have known all the Vice Presidents since Henry Wallace, who was a very good friend of mine, and the role of a Vice President totally depends on the President. If the President wants to use him, wonderful. If he doesn't, fine.

Q Governor, what will you do about your financial assets to meet the requirements of the Vice Presidency?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I will just conform to the law.

Q Well, specifically?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I assume that it is putting them into trust.

Q Is that what you plan to do?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: To tell you the honest truth, this thing has moved rather rapidly, so I haven't really studied the details, but I will now talk to the lawyers and see what is appropriate.

Q Would you tell us when you were first contacted by President Ford about the nomination?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: He first talked to me on Saturday afternoon and then made a final decision which I got word about last night.

Q Governor, are you prepared to detail your personal finances for Congress, including your tax returns, make those public?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I am glad to do whatever the Congress asks me and to conform to the law in every respect.

Q What is your net worth now?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: You are not a Member of the Congress.

Q Governor, did you talk to the President about his plans for 1976?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: No, sir.

Q What is your hope and expectation?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: That he would run for re-election.

Q You want him to run for that job, do you?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I think he has already -- as I said before -- I think he has already, by his dedication and his openness, that he has recreated, reawakened a sense of faith and hope, not only in this country but in the world, and I think it is tremendously important for us.

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Q Governor, do you plan to be his running mate in 1976.

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, to tell you the honest truth, I just got through this, got nominated, I haven't even been confirmed, and you are way down the road ahead of me.

Q What about running for President again? Let's go further down the road.

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: That is too far. All of that stuff is too far.

Q You are not ruling that out?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: I am just going to wait and see if I get confirmed.

Q Governor, will you wait on confirmation before you campaign for any Republican candidates?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, I have to say that I was asked to fulfill an engagement tomorrow night that was an invitation to meet the President of the United States, a fund-raising meeting -- no, it was to meet Vice President Ford.

That is the way the invitation reads, in Providence, Rhode Island, and I was a substitute. Unless I get any comment to the contrary, I guess I will go.

Q Governor, why is your wife not present for this historic day?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Because until 9 o'clock last night there was no suggestion that she be present. This was billed as a Cabinet and leadership meeting. And when I finally got her off the beach at a picnic in Seal Harbor, the prospects of her getting here, and for those ladies, the prospects of, you know, getting properly presentable to this extremely impressive gathering, just seemed impossible. (Laughter)

Q Governor Rockefeller, could you give us an estimate of about how much you are worth?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, I would think that if that subject is to be discussed, it would be before the committee of the Congress.

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Q It is a natural question.

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: That is right, and I have been asked it by happenstance before. (Laughter.) But I will do two things. I will conform totally to whatever the law requires, and secondly, I will answer any questions that the Members of Congress and the committees feel is important.

Q Governor, do you think it is a good idea to have full disclosure of finances by a candidate?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, that is an interesting question. I haven't really given it too much consideration, as I really just got to be where I am now, which is here before you, not even confirmed, see. So I will be prepared to do whatever I am asked by the Congress.

Q Governor, you just lauded the President's openness.

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Yes, sir.

Q You seem to be a little less than open with us.

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, you are not the committee of Congress. I haven't been confirmed and I haven't gone before the committee, and my understanding is that protocol says that you don't discuss matters that are going to be taken up by a committee before you get to the hearings.

Q Do you doubt that you will be confirmed?

GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER: Well, I would never take anything for granted in life, particularly action of this kind.

It has been a pleasure. I may see you again.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Governor.

END

(10:30 A.M. EDT)