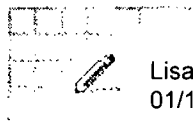


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BOTH SIDES WITH JESSE JACKSON

Sunday, January 16, 2000

JESSE JACKSON, Host
VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE, Presidential Candidate (D)

JESSE JACKSON, HOST: Welcome to BOTH SIDES.

I'm in Chicago this weekend as the nation and the world celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, around the world in a real sense. We have with us the candidate for America's next president.

Indeed, Vice President Al Gore from Nashua, New Hampshire.

Welcome to BOTH SIDES.

VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE (D): Good to be with you. Thank you very much.

JACKSON: It's mighty cold in New Hampshire, and the skis are howning -- are howling. But then there is this campaign primary coming up in just a few days. But the hard issue is coming from South Carolina. Now the NAACP has taken the position it will boycott the state until the Confederate flag comes down. Mr. Bush says that that is a states' rights matter. He supports it. Mr. McCain says he sees both sides. The Confederate flag is a matter of Southern heritage.

As a son of the South, how do you see the flying of the Confederate flag in South Carolina?

GORE: Well, obviously, it is for many Americans a hurtful message that recalls the pain of slavery, the pain of the cause for which the Civil War was fought. And although it's for others a complex symbol, the very fact that it causes so much pain for so many African-American citizens should be cause enough to remove it from public buildings.

And of course there are those who actually like it on public buildings because for the minority, they want to express views of racial superiority and support for discrimination.

And I think that it should be removed from the capitol building there. I don't think it should be on public institutions that should be open to all and should convey a clear attitude and feeling that there's no discrimination in public institutions.

JACKSON: But isn't the matter not just for African Americans, but the Civil War affected us all. More

Americans died in that war than died in any other war.

Gore: Sure.

Jackson: Six hundred thousand-plus Americans were killed. And, of course, to heal those wounds we choose the American flag to be the flag supreme, the flag that flies high. The citizens of good will everywhere must take a position on it and see that in fact the American flag heals us and the Confederate flag divides us.

Why would Mr. Bush, you think, on that matter, say it's a matter of states' rights and therefore not take a national position?

Gore: I think that he is worried about alienating some supporters who he believes have a different attitude. And, I mean, I don't think there's any great mystery about it. The South Carolina Republican contest is one of the big tests for the Republican candidates. And some of the active Republican supporters down there have expressed some, what I regard, as very hateful views toward the NAACP, toward African Americans.

And I think there is too much tolerance of intolerance. And I think that that flag should be removed from the state capitol. That's my position. And I think that he, Governor Bush, has avoided taking a position, or has ducked the issue, because he is playing to some of his supporters that I think have some pretty obsolete and even hateful attitudes.

Jackson: Since this issue of race so much in America's bloodstream will not go away. Last week your own campaign took some heat when Donna Brazile made a statement relative to J.C. Watts and -- congressman -- and General Colin Powell being used. And there was a lot of reaction to that. How has that matter been handled, and is it resolved?

Gore: Well, it's resolved as far as I'm concerned. She's doing an absolutely fantastic job. I have said before and I'll say again, I think that the history of this campaign will note without serious disagreement that she's the finest presidential campaign manager ever to have that position. She's doing a fantastic job. She herself placed a call to General Powell and reached an understanding with him.

You know, I have a lot of respect for General Powell. I do not really know Congressman Watts, but I think that what Donna Brazile said was factually true, that the Republican Party does not have an agenda that is supportive of and helpful to African Americans, especially in contrast to the vigorous efforts of the Democratic Party and those independents who support our Democratic Party's agenda. And I think she just stated the truth about those agendas.

Jackson: Are we discussing the kind of acid divisiveness and name-calling in a campaign on matters of substance. For example, the Republican Party's taken a very strong position, they're really against the Community Reinvestment Act, against the Tax Certificate Policy, which allow minorities there on the radio and TV stations. And even at the media has not challenged visible Republicans to take a position on the Confederate flag issue. Is -- is this issue that she has raised deeper than just name-calling, in your judgment?

Gore: Well, I don't think that she saw what she said as name-calling at all. I think that she intended to speak to the question of what the respective agendas of the two parties is.

And you're quite right that in coming out in opposition to affirmative action, and opposition to the nomination of a vigorous enforcer of the civil rights laws in the Justice Department, in opposition to the Community Reinvestment Act, in opposition to a whole series of initiatives and programs that are designed to lift up those who have been left behind. The Republican Party has not really come up with any effective plan or proposal that would help our nation speed up the arrival of the day when we have a

quality of opportunity in our country.

GORE: The Democratic Party...

JACKSON: We're going to...

GORE: ... I'm proud to note, has.

JACKSON: We're going to come back in just a moment to talk more with Vice President Gore about what he sees for this confederate flag issue in South Carolina, the Gonzalez case in Florida. These are issues that are now capturing the American attention.

We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JACKSON: Mr. Vice President, another issue that has stirred some passion has been the Elian Gonzalez case in Florida. He is in Florida, six years old, his father is in Cuba. His father wants him to come back home, to be sent back home. INS says he should go back home to be with his father. You've expressed a different sentiment. Give us your point of view on that and why.

GORE: Well, the problem is that the father has paid demonstrators, hired by Castro, chanting outside his window. The mother sacrificed her life in her dying wish that the boy would live in freedom and grow up in freedom. And the father's point of view has been expressed in an atmosphere that is clearly full of intimidation and fear. And the best solution would be for him to come to free soil and state his opinion free of this opinion -- free of this fear and intimidation, which many believe is present.

Did he know in advance of the mother's journey? With the kind of...

JACKSON: But we do know that it is...

GORE: ... oppressive atmosphere that he is living under, it is very difficult to tell. And in the absence of his ability to come and express his candid opinion without intimidation, I think the matter should be resolved in the court that normally takes jurisdiction over such cases.

JACKSON: But we do know that it is...

GORE: The only question should be, what is in the best interest of the child?

JACKSON: Well, normally a child should be with his parent. And we do know that there is -- that it is his child. There's intimidation, perhaps, on the Cuban side, lots of intimidation on the Florida side. But INS has made the ruling. Do you support that ruling? Are you willing to wait out the court process and leave this child in suspension?

GORE: I believe that the period for appeal under the INS ruling should be a time when the court of relevant jurisdiction should use its expertise in deciding what is in the best interests of the child. That's what I think ought to be done.

JACKSON: You know, in the case of the Haitians...

GORE: Now nobody is saying that the child shouldn't ultimately go back to the father if that's what the best interest of the child is, and normally there's a presumption in that direction. But I think there are unusual circumstances here. And it shouldn't be made on the basis of politics. It shouldn't be made on the basis of diplomacy. It should be made on the basis of what is in the best interests of that child.

JACKSON: Well, if it's made on the basis of politics, the child will stay here. If it's based on nature, the father-son relationship, the child will be with his father.

It raises another question for Haitians in Florida. We're quick to send Haitians back, it is argued. With the willingness to keep Gonzalez here, do the Haitians have a valid criticism about two sets of rules and the policy?

GORE: I believe so. And I think it's partly for that reason that the INS quickly reversed its initial decision on the child of a mother who arrived in Florida safely. And I think there's no question that, you know, there has to be an even-handed and fair and judicious approach to these cases, regardless of the country of origin, regardless of the diplomatic pressure that in this case Castro is trying to wield.

The question should be determined on the basis of what is in the best interests of this individual child, and in the case of that child of the Haitian mother, what is in the best interest of that child.

JACKSON: Let me ask you a question. There's emerging concern now about increasing negative campaigning between you and Senator Bradley. If the campaign gets personal, does it not take focus away from issues like who has the best plan to wipe out poverty without wiping out the poor, who has the best plan to make public schools work for all of the children and a range of issues of great social policy substance?

GORE: Yes, I certainly agree. That's why -- that's why I have repeatedly challenged Senator Bradley to join me in an agreement to just eliminate all of the 30-second TV spots which account for more than half of all the campaign finance and instead have twice weekly debates. And I would be happy to have a debate on BOTH SIDES now...

JACKSON: But most...

GORE: ... with you as the moderator.

JACKSON: Well, I look forward to that. And I'm certainly going to make this appeal to him, hopefully, as early as next week.

The concern here is that the negative attacks are not coming through commercials as much as they are coming through whether direct attacks either in speeches and on to the media. One of the concerns that so many of us have during this crisis is how do we deal with those Americans who have not participated and grown in this great economic boom, and nothing should happen that should take attention away from these issues as real as 45 million Americans who have no health insurance, issues as real as a vast plight of young children still being unprotected and left behind.

We're going to come right back and talk a bit more now about what you see as the next phase of the Gore-Bradley debates, hopefully right here on CNN with BOTH SIDES, and then how you see the Bush-McCain race shaping up.

We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JACKSON: Vice President Gore, last week, Senator Bradley said you offered up the divisive Willie Horton ad campaign. What point was he really trying to make? Was he telling the truth? What was his point?

GORE: Well, you know, Mike Dukakis is probably the best authority on that. And he said that the

personnel attack by Senator Bradley was misleading and inaccurate. And, as a matter of fact, I recall you were sitting right next to me during the debate in New York, in 1988. And I don't know if you recall it or not, but I do. I never mentioned the man's name, didn't really know his name, didn't mention an individual case. I said that there were 11 people who never returned from their paroles. And two of them had committed murders. And was that a good policy to continue? And he said, no.

So, I think the words speak for themselves. And you know, I agree with what you said earlier, that we ought to focus on the issues. I have never launched a personal attack against Senator Bradley, and I never will. I've focused on the issues, and I've challenged him to twice weekly debates. And you know, if you focus on the substance of the issues, you can make some progress.

Just this weekend, the National Urban League released a comprehensive study of the education proposals of all the candidates. And I'm very pleased that the work I've put into advocating a very comprehensive education proposal resulted in them saying that it was clearly the best, way beyond what Senator Bradley has talked about.

He hasn't even made a speech on education policy.

JACKSON: But, but...

Gore: Senator Ted Kennedy, the leading health care expert in the Senate, said clearly the approach I've offered to get into universal health care is better than what Senator Bradley has proposed in eliminating Medicaid and giving an inadequate substitute.

JACKSON: The deeper issue, it seems to me, is the matter of symbolism and racial profiling. Driven by this zero tolerance policy, African Americans are profiled on highways by highway patrolmen, by banks and S&L's, and insurance and rent lining. In schools our youth are disproportionately expelled and disproportionately jailed. There will be two million Americans in jail by February 14 of this year, 500,000 more than China. Obviously, the blacks been 55 percent. It's a lot to be said about the depth of race and race profiling.

How would you choose to address the devastating impact of these zero-tolerance policies and race profiling?

Gore: Well, I would issue an executive order banning racial profiling in any federal law enforcement context. Attorney General Reno has already said that she is opposed to that, racial profiling. And I would also use the bully pulpit if I am entrusted with the presidency to bring an end to racial profiling anywhere in the United States. I think that it's wrong. And I think that recent episodes, such as the record of what was happening in New Jersey, in the stopping of automobiles. When you really look at the facts, it is clear that we have an awful lot of work to do...

JACKSON: But why was...

Gore: ... in the law enforcement agencies all around the country.

JACKSON: A lot of focus on the profiling in New Jersey and Maryland. But you look at black youth being expelled disproportionately from schools, all with the zero-tolerance policy and disproportionately jailed.

I mean, blacks are 12 percent of the population and 55 percent of the jail population. Is that -- does that not send up a certain flag that must be addressed in a meaningful way now?

Gore: I think that it's useful to raise the awareness in every single institution of our society of the dangers of having an unequal policy, of law enforcement or discipline activity. I mean, I think that where school discipline is concerned, obviously that remains a local issue. Where local authorities make those

decisions, but highlighting the need for a constant sensitivity and awareness of the need to be evenhanded, I think, is a public service.

JACKSON: Clearly, local authorities who are there in Birmingham, Selma, or Decatur must ultimately, under the basic policies set forth by our federal government to assure all Americans equal protection under the law. Clearly, this is yet another matter of substance that we must address, and I'm glad that these matters are going to center stage in the campaign.

We'll be right back in just a moment with a closing segment, with Vice President Al Gore.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JACKSON: Vice President Gore, tomorrow morning will be Dr. King's birthday celebrated around the nation and the world. If people went in that booth tomorrow and there was Bill Bradley and there was Al Gore, what is the difference between you and Bradley that you want to express briefly?

GORE: I respect Senator Bradley. I think he's a good man. I disagree with some of his policy proposals, but he and I agree there must be vigorous enforcement of the civil rights laws. We must create one America and move our nation past the old divisions that have haunted our country for so long.

Now on subjects like health care, I believe we have to get universal health insurance without destroying Medicaid and without putting the future of Medicare at risk. I think we need to move expeditiously, step by step, to get health insurance for all and prescription drug care for seniors.

On education, I've put forward a comprehensive reform plan to benefit all. He has not, and continues to be intrigued with private school vouchers, which I think represent a dangerous draining of money away from the public schools.

JACKSON: So you see a real distinction when it comes to education plan and health plan and your commitment to enforce the laws.

GORE: Right.

JACKSON: Let me express my thanks to you for sharing with us ...

GORE: No, I think -- I think that both of us agree on vigorous enforcement of the civil rights laws.

JACKSON: Let me express my thanks to you for sharing with us today in this vigorous campaign -- it's really heating up now. Dr. King's birthday is on tomorrow. It was he who made the case, even the playing field for all Americans, equal protection under the law. And today all Americans have the right to vote. Thank God for Martin Luther King Jr.

Thanks for watching BOTH SIDES this week.

GORE: May I say ...

JACKSON: Yes.

GORE: I'm going to be...

JACKSON: Thanks for watching.

GORE: ... proud to be in Ebenezer Baptist at the invitation of Coretta Scott King tomorrow. And I agree with you, this is a day for all Americans to rededicate ourselves to justice for all.

JACKSON: You're swinging until the bitter end. Congratulations, Mr. Vice President.

This is another episode of BOTH SIDES WITH JESSE JACKSON.

Next week, 5:30 p.m. Eastern, another exciting, provocative program.

Until then, happy birthday, Martin Luther King Jr.

Keep hope alive.

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