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Election

Dukakis, Bentsen discuss debate, economic policies at Texas rally

LONE STAR (AP) — Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis on Thursday told former employees of what once was a healthy northeast Texas steel plant that he would help bring back their jobs.

"I don't have to tell you what's happened to jobs and industry, to your jobs and your future in the past eight years," the Massachusetts governor told supporters, many of them former employees of Lone Star Steel Co., at a rally on plant grounds.

Dukakis and his running mate, Texas Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, campaigned in Texas the day after Bentsen's 90-minute debate with Indiana Senator Dan Quayle. Dukakis praised Bentsen's performance in the debate, saying, "Last night, the eyes of Texas and the whole nation were on you, and they liked what they saw."

Dukakis said choosing a vice presidential running mate is the first national security decision a president makes. "There was only one man on that stage last night to fit that bill, and his name was Lloyd Bentsen," Dukakis said.

Turning back to economic matters, Dukakis said the reason many workers had been laid off from the plant and other industries is because of unbalanced trade with foreign nations.

"Foreign companies are buying up real estate, buying up companies, buying

up plants in the country. Pretty soon, we're going to be tenants in our own country," Dukakis said.

"We're going to give you a national energy policy that makes sense for America and helps to bring jobs back to this plant in the east part of Texas," Dukakis said.

After being presented with a plaque bearing a star representing Lone Star Steel, Bentsen took the podium.

"After listening to Dan Quayle for 90 minutes last night, I can understand why he kept talking about job training," Bentsen said.

"We're going to stand up for the working people of this country," Bentsen said.

Hundreds of sign-waving Democrats — some dressed in suits and ties, others in overalls and seed-company hats — yelled for the two Democrats and chanted, "Where was George?"

One man held a sign saying: "Like God Made Agent Orange, Bush Is A Texan."

The rally was in a park on the grounds of the Lone Star Steel plant in a clearing among the tall pines trees of northeast Texas.

The rally included barbecue lines, a rap song from local elementary school children and the Ore City High School band.

Doug Davidson, 33, was laid off from

the plant at the end of July after working 10 years for Lone Star.

"I'm here to see what the man's got to say," Davidson said. "Republicans for eight years have been hurting Texas industry. Because of them we can't compete with cheaper imported steel."

The company employed 4,500 hourly workers in 1981, and the president of the local steelworkers union said that number has been whittled down to 700 through layoffs.

"I've seen a lot of my friends leave

here because of the layoffs," said Bill Hampton, president of United Steelworkers of American Local 4134.

"If I wasn't union president, I wouldn't have a job," he said.

The plant makes flat rolled steel and oil field pipe products and has gone down with the oil industry.

Dukakis and Bentsen left the rally and drove to the Gregg County Airport to meet with East Texas newspaper editors and reporters for about 30 minutes.

Dukakis praises Bentsen, labels Quayle insecure

LONE STAR (AP) — Michael Dukakis on Thursday trumpeted his running mate's performance in the vice presidential debate and characterized George Bush as a "weak candidate" and Dan Quayle as "extremely insecure" and "programmed beyond belief."

The harsh attack on the Republican ticket by the Democratic presidential nominee came during a flight from Boston to Texas and at a rally in East Texas with his sidekick, Texas Sen. Lloyd Bentsen.

"My friends, strong presidents look for strong vice presidents," Dukakis told about 2,500 people gathered in this depressed steel town. "Weak candidates look for something else."

Dukakis, with a sparkling lake and the struggling Lone Star Steel Co. plant as a backdrop, was in a jubilant mood as he praised Bentsen and asked voters to judge the presidential standardbearers on the strength of their running mates.

"When a nominee selects his running mate, he's choosing the first member of his Cabinet, the first member of the National Security Council and the first member of his diplomatic team," Dukakis said.

"You've got to choose somebody who's ready to step into that Oval Office at a moment's notice and who knows what he's going to do when he gets there," Dukakis said in a swipe at Quayle's responses when asked repeatedly what he would do if suddenly elevated to the presidency.

"There was only one man on that stage last night who fit that bill and his name is Lloyd Bentsen," Dukakis said. He referred to picking a running mate as a nominee's "first presidential decision" and asked:

"Judge us by the way we made it and who we chose. Ask yourself which one of us fulfilled our presidential obligation."

Dukakis, whose campaign was seeking to capitalize on Bentsen's performance by airing two ads attacking Quayle's qualifications for the vice presidency, said the Quayle selection "was the first time that George Bush has failed," and then cited what he called Bush failures in the Iran-Contra scandal, the war on drugs, trade relations with Japan, and reforms in the nation's banking industry and regulatory practices.

"It was very disturbing," Dukakis said while en route to Texas. "I thought he was programmed beyond belief, extremely insecure, this fellow. He didn't have a sense of strength or control or anything."

Dukakis briefly touched on his economic promises and vowed to bring work back to Lone Star, which the campaign says has lost 5,000 steel jobs in the Reagan years.

But he spent most of his time discussing the debate, chiding Quayle for accepting massive foreign investment in U.S. real estate and business.

"As Senator Bentsen said so wisely and well, we cannot let others take over our economic destiny," Dukakis said.

Dukakis aides said neither of the two ads featured excerpts from the debate but that one portrayed Bentsen as the clear winner of the event and raised questions about Quayle's qualifications. The second ad raises the issue of whether Quayle is qualified to be "a heartbeat away" from the presidency. Both were debated Thursday night, part of the campaign's largest advertising foray to date.

Bush unveils plans to help oil industry

MIDLAND (AP) — Republican George Bush, returning Thursday to the city where he got started in the oil business 37 years ago, unveiled an energy policy designed to help domestic oil and gas producers.

"The American oil industry is too important to our national security to have its economic underpinnings totally dependent on the political climate in the Middle East," the vice president told about 1,000 people — most of them in the oil business — at the Permian Basin Petroleum Museum.

Bush, who moved to Midland in 1951 and started the independent Zapata Offshore Co., said he favors tax incentives to stimulate oil production, exploration and research and development.

Bush seemed well at ease with his audience, many of whom he counted as old friends. He called for the deregulation of natural gas. "That's what would be best for both the industry and the American people," he said. He also said he would encourage the use of alternative fuels such as methanol.

Bush, who was standing before an array of motionless pumpjacks at a museum display, told the crowd he understood the consequences of falling oil prices. On Wednesday, the November delivery price of the benchmark West Texas intermediate crude fell to a three-year low of \$12.60 a barrel. In early trading Thursday, the price rebounded 22 cents a barrel.

To make oil exploration and production more profitable in the light of such low prices, Bush said he favored tax incentives for low-output wells and tax credits designed to encourage drilling of new wells and more production from existing wells.

"It sounded encouraging," independent oilman Kevin Butler of Midland said. "It'll be hard to get through Congress, but it gives us a little hope."

Before the speech, Butler said he hoped Bush would recommend tax incentives to give producers a break.

Another independent oilman, John Dorr of Pecos, agreed with Butler and said, "It's been three years since I've sunk a bit into the ground."

Earlier Thursday, Bush delivered a tough-on-crime speech in which he told

an audience of law-enforcement officials in Fort Worth that he advocates the resumption of a federal death penalty in some cases.

"Some crimes are so brutal, so heinous, that those who commit them should pay the ultimate sanction," Bush said at an appearance sponsored by the Dallas-Fort Worth Crime Commission.

The vice president proposed doubling the national budget for prison construction and developing a Cabinet-level program to combat street gangs. He attacked Democrat Michael Dukakis as being a soft-on-crime governor who likes to furlough dangerous prisoners.

Bush said he would seek a four-year, \$1 billion program to incarcerate the hardened felons and rising number of drug offenders, and advocated converting obsolete military bases into prisons.

He said he would use assets seized from drug traffickers to help finance new prison construction.

After his Midland visit, Bush headed for Little Rock, Ark.

Bentsen continues Quayle assault at post-debate rally in East Texas

LONE STAR (AP) — An exultant Lloyd Bentsen flew home to Texas Thursday, taking new jibes at Dan Quayle's need for job training while accepting fellow Democrats' accolades for his performance against Quayle in the vice presidential debate.

"Last night, the eyes of Texas and the whole nation were on you, and they liked what they saw," Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis told Bentsen before a cheering crowd in this rural East Texas community.

Bentsen and Dukakis, who usually campaign separately, united for the joint post-debate rally. Bentsen normally introduces Dukakis when they do appear together, but Bentsen followed Dukakis to the microphones this time.

"After listening to Dan Quayle last night, I can understand why he kept talking about job training," Bentsen said, getting a roar from the 2,500 people in a lakeside park.

Across the lake was a steel factory that he said has lost thousands of jobs to foreign competition. Bentsen said the Republicans don't want to talk about that.

"My friends, if you don't speak of these concerns, you're

endangering America," he said.

The Texas senator appeared elated by poll figures suggesting most television viewers thought he won the debate.

"Gee, those polls were great, weren't they?" he told supporters traveling with his campaign. "Well, I knew I scored some points, and I thought I was winning, but it's difficult to be objective about yourself."

The Dukakis campaign planned to take advantage of what they felt was a clear Bentsen debate victory by airing two television spots questioning Quayle's qualifications for the presidency. Dayton Duncan, Dukakis' press secretary said.

The flash point of Wednesday night's debate came when Bentsen told Quayle he was "no Jack Kennedy." Bentsen acknowledged that the topic had been raised during his preparations, but denied his answer was a "canned" response.

"What happened there was Quayle kept comparing himself with (John F.) Kennedy, just overreaching himself, and I fed up with it," he said. "I deeply resented him trying to put Kennedy's mantle over himself when he didn't have a record that compared with Kennedy."

Bush outlines crime fighting program

MIDLAND (AP) — George Bush on Thursday proposed a "common sense" attack against crime with emphasis on breaking up street gangs as his campaign manager played down the importance of the vice presidential debate.

In a speech that made no mention of running mate Dan Quayle, the Republican presidential candidate said: "Gangs that started in one city are now expanding into new cities, opening criminal 'branch offices,' fostering contacts with terrorists in Libya and with drug lords in the Caribbean and South America. It's time to gang up on the gangs."

While Bush and his strategists struck an upbeat note about the debate, the first polling indicated that Bentsen was the clear winner.

Arguing that the debate will have very little impact on the outcome of the presidential race, Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater said "an event like that has very little to do with the election."

"This race is going to quickly get back to the two candidates for president," Atwater said.

Bush, while warming up for a morning jog at Texas Christian University, brushed aside a question about Bentsen's tart response when Quayle said he is as experienced as John F. Kennedy was when he sought the presidency.

"I'm not going to tell you what I think about that because I'm out here to have some fun," he said. He told the Fort Worth audience, "Perhaps on no other issue, none at all, is the dividing line so clear, on no other issue is the gulf so great between my opponent's philosophy and mine as on the issue of crime."

In particular, he assailed the prison furlough program in Massachusetts under Democratic rival Michael Dukakis, saying: "1,905 times he gave free, unsuper-

vised weekend passes to first-degree murderers, many sentenced to life without parole. Fifty-nine criminals convicted of violent crimes never came back from the governor's generous vacation program."

Bush's "common sense" anti-crime program contained a variety of proposals, old and new, including use of the death penalty, doubling the federal prison budget to build new facilities with an additional \$250 million each year, and converting unneeded military bases into state and federal prisons.

Money seized from drug dealers and racketeers should be used to help pay for more prison space, he said. He proposed creation of an anti-gang unit within the Justice Department's criminal division to coordinate resources of federal, state and local agencies.

He called for new mandatory sentences for gang activity involving interstate drug and weapons trafficking and racketeering. A fact sheet distributed with the speech said Bush would urge states to permit the execution as an adult anyone 15 years old and up who is charged with murder, rape, armed robbery, armed burglary, felony assault or drug trafficking.

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