



Former President Gerald Ford, center, appeared at a news conference in Indianapolis with Gov. Otis Bowen, left, and Lt. Gov. Robert Orr. Ford was in town for the Republican State Dinner.

## Former President Ford criticizes Carter for 'flip-flopping' policies

By JAN CARROLL

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — President Carter shouldn't have threatened to prosecute Ramsey Clark for participating in an anti-American meeting in Iran, former President Gerald R. Ford said yesterday in Indianapolis.

"If I had been president and the Iranian situation had developed, first I would not have sent Ramsey Clark representing the United States to Iran," Ford told reporters at Indiana GOP headquarters.

Ford was referring to a mission the former attorney general was sent on soon after the Iranians took 53 Americans hostage on Nov. 4. That Clark mission wasn't allowed into Iran.

"That was a mistake by President Carter. Eight months later when he went on his own, I would not have threatened him with prosecution," Ford said.

Such a "flip-flop" in policy doesn't improve the credibility of a president, he added, but is "so typical of the Carter administration."

Ford, in town for the annual Repub-

lican State Dinner, went on to say that the economy will be Carter's downfall in November. Even a satisfactory resolution of the hostage crisis, he said, wouldn't improve Carter's standing enough to beat Ronald Reagan in November.

Ford said bread-and-butter issues will be more important to the voters than foreign affairs.

"The Carter economic policies have been a catastrophe. They've been disasters. We handed them the economy on a silver platter," Ford said, arguing that the rate of inflation was less than 5 percent when he left office and that unemployment was going down. "The president blew it."

Ford predicted that Carter will go into the November election with a national unemployment rate of 9 percent, double-digit inflation and double-digit interest rates.

"He'll be defending the worst economic policy of any president since the Depression of 1932. That's bad. And he's responsible."

Ford also touched on the selection of a running mate for Reagan. He said it

wouldn't be wise to let the delegates to the Republican National Convention pick the candidate.

"For him just to throw the names into a hopper, some people would allege that was an abdication of leadership."

Ford said that Reagan has a number of prospects for vice president — including Sen. Richard G. Lugar of Indiana — but that it is a choice Reagan should make himself even though "it's not easy to make that choice."

Ford wouldn't say whom he would like to see get the nod, adding that his endorsement might do the candidates more harm than good.

Ford was asked if he would be Reagan's running mate, even though he has said he wouldn't. He replied that "there's a serious constitutional question" involved.

Noting that he and Reagan both live in California, he said presidential electors cannot vote for a president and a vice president from the same state. If the two of them ran as a team, California's 45 electoral votes would be disallowed.