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Mondale Backs Carter On Pardons

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Senator Walter Mondale said yesterday he agrees with Jimmy Carter's pledge to pardon all draft evaders, saying the decree would not be extended to military deserters.

Seeking to show a solid front on the issue that evoked boos of Carter from American Legionnaires in Seattle Tuesday, Mondale said a blanket pardon would help heal wounds from the Vietnam war without specifically excusing those who refused to serve after entering service.

Mondale made the comments after a meeting with Mayor Abraham Beame during his first visit to New York since being named the Democratic vice-presidential candidate last month at Madison Square Garden.

"We have just gone through the worst war, the most divisive war in American history," Mondale said.

"What Mr. Carter has proposed is that we pardon those who resisted involvement in it . . . Now when we come to deserters, those who would not fulfill a function once they assumed it, they will be dealt with differently."

Mondale said a pardon for draft evaders "doesn't excuse them," but might help patch up lingering resentment from the war.

On the other hand, he said, President Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon shortly after taking office did not reduce divisions in the country.

Regarding Mr. Nixon and persons involved in Watergate, Mondale said, "in my opinion, they were accused of acts undefined which created a double standard for official acts of lawlessness committed at the highest level of government.

"There is nothing more sacred in this country than the notion of equality under the law and that (the pardon) helps create the notion that if you're big enough, powerful enough and rich enough, there is a different law that applies to you than to anyone else."

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