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sanctioned tax fraud."

Dec. 12, 2022



*By Patricia Hurtado and Greg Farrell, Bloomberg News (TNS)*

Last week's convictions of two Donald Trump companies for criminal tax fraud may help ensure Trump's business remains under court-ordered supervision, former Manhattan district attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. said.

Vance, whose office secured the indictment of the two companies last year, said the guilty verdict could help New York Attorney General Letitia James keep a court-

appointed monitor in place on the Trump Organization in her civil lawsuit against

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they lied to lenders and insurers by overvaluing assets by billions of dollars. She is seeking \$250 million and to bar the Trumps from serving as officers or directors in any New York corporation.

“That conviction in the tax case is helpful for the New York attorney general’s case,” Vance said. The jury’s swift verdict on all 17 counts, including scheme to defraud, conspiracy, criminal tax fraud and falsifying business records, “will presumably resonate with the Court of Appeals on whether or not there’s justification to have a monitor,” he said.

Clifford Robert, a lawyer representing the Trump Organization in its challenge of the monitor, didn’t respond to an email or phone call Friday seeking comment on Vance’s remarks. Alan Garten, the company’s general counsel, and Steven Cheung, a spokesman for the former president, didn’t respond immediately to a request for comment.

Vance, 68, is now a partner at Baker McKenzie LLP, having left office last December. Bragg got a guilty plea in August from former Trump Organization chief financial officer Allen Weisselberg, who was indicted along with the two business units and agreed to testify truthfully at trial against them in hopes of a lighter sentence.

While Trump himself wasn’t charged, prosecutors argued at trial that he “explicitly sanctioned tax fraud.” Nonetheless, Vance said he determined that proving Trump knew of the scheme would have been difficult without being “vulnerable at trial” and to an acquittal.

“We did not believe evidence supported fixing charges of those tax violations to him,” Vance said. “The extent of his knowledge would have been a vulnerability.”

Vance said that as his term in office drew to a close, he believed the Trump investigation would proceed under Carey Dunne, his general counsel, and Mark

Pomerantz, a former federal prosecutor he had recruited for the matter.

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Bragg has said his investigation is “ongoing” and recently announced the hire of a former senior Justice Department official to work on the office’s most important investigations. Vance commended the move, saying it was “maybe later than I would have wanted, but I think this is a good step.”

Reflecting further on why he didn’t charge Trump, Vance said his investigation was hampered by the pandemic and an 18-month battle to secure Trump’s tax returns.

“To the question of were there regrets of leaving it to someone else, the answer is we did everything we could in the time we had,” he said. “The calendar won.”

He said his proudest achievement was the office’s victory at the Supreme Court in obtaining the tax records. The high court rejected Trump’s argument that he had broad immunity as president.

“The decision of the Supreme Court was in some sense to me the high-water mark of the work we did,” Vance said. “It was a very tricky area when you’re talking about, first, during a period when he was president, the limitations of investigating a sitting president, even for potential prior misconduct.”

He called it a “fascinating experience.”

The two Trump companies now face fines totaling about \$1.6 million, according to Bragg’s office. Vance said he has long advocated for fines for companies in New York state to be increased to as much as \$1 million for each felony conviction.

His concern is related to a case he prosecuted of an Ecuadorian worker buried alive at a New York City construction site in 2015. After the construction company was convicted of manslaughter and other charges, it was fined \$10,000.

“That’s just ridiculous,” Vance said.

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