

WXPost FEB. 17 1976

Two Recall

Nixon's

A-Remark

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 10 — Two congressmen who were present at a White House meeting with President Nixon during the time he was seeking to dissuade House members from impeaching him confirmed today that Nixon had spoken of his capability of killing millions of people in a few minutes.

Rep. Charles Rose (D-N.C.) said he recalled Nixon as saying, "I can go in my office and pick up the telephone and in 25 minutes, millions of people will be dead."

Former Rep. Clem McSpadden (D-Okla.) recalled Nixon as saying, "I can pick up the phone and 70 million Russians can be killed in 20 minutes."

Their accounts differed from that related last week by Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.). Cranston, who was not present at the meeting with Nixon, said he was told by two congressmen that Nixon said, "At any moment, I could go into the other room and press a button and 20 minutes later 60 million people would be dead."

In a second press conference, Cranston said he understood that Nixon made his statement after telling the congressmen that his work in maintaining world peace was far more important than any "little burglary" at Watergate.

Rose and McSpadden, in telephone interviews, both said that the Nixon observation did not seem to be a threat, but that it came out of context with the rest of the conversation and that they had viewed it as peculiar.

"My concern at the time," Rose said, "was why he found it necessary to make the statement at all."

McSpadden, reached at his home in Tulsa, said "It was a very awesome thing to me, him putting this just in terms of what 'I can do.' That's what scared me."

In San Clemente, Nixon aides refused to accept calls asking for comment from the former President.

For other refs, see
SFChronicle 7 Feb 76