

CBS Radio (10 a.m.)

Douglas Edwards: Former President Nixon had a busy day in Peking, meeting with Chairman Mao and the acting premier for discussions that were described as friendly. But later on Mr. Nixon's face was red when Mme. Mao caught him in a diplomatic squeeze. Barry Kalb reports from Peking.

Kalb [voice]: Richard Nixon was put in an awkward position Monday evening [23 Feb] at a cultural performance here in Peking. Part way into the program at the Great Hall of the People a singer performed a song vowing to "liberate Taiwan," the seat of the Chinese Nationalist government. Mr. Nixon and his wife were seated next to Chiang Ch'ing, the wife of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. When the performance ended, Chiang Ch'ing leapt to her feet to lead the applause for the song. Mrs. Nixon followed Chiang Ch'ing's lead, standing and beginning to applaud. But she noticed Mr. Nixon had remained seated, realized her error and quickly took her seat again. Mr. Nixon then proceeded to applaud lightly, about as little as he could without offending his hosts. He had stood and applauded, it could have created an embarrassing incident for the American government. As it turned out, it was nothing more than a close call. Barry Kalb, CBS News, Peking.

Edwards: The White House says President Ford does not think certain remarks made by former President Nixon in Peking are critical of U.S. foreign policy. Spokesman Ron Nessen was referring to a banquet toast where Mr. Nixon said, quote, "the mere act of signing a statement doesn't necessarily bring peace."

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CBS Radio (11 a.m.)

Reid Collins: They're still poring over President Nixon's Peking toast remarks, in Washington, and the White House has a comment on that now. Connie Chung reports.

Chung: The White House today sought to disregard former President Nixon's remarks in Peking last night, which were interpreted by some as veiled criticism of President Ford and the Helsinki Accord. Apparently referring to U.S.-Soviet detente, and the Helsinki ~~Agreement~~ agreement, Mr. Nixon said during his dinner toast [that] it is naive to think that the mere act of signing a statement of principle, or a diplomatic conference, would bring instant and lasting peace. Today White House press secretary Ron Nessen said, quote, "We have looked at the entire toast, and we do not interpret it as being critical of U.S. foreign policy." Nessen again said there are no plans for the President to receive a report from Mr. Nixon on his trip, either by telephone or personal visit. If the former President has anything significant to report, the proper place would be at the State Department. Nessen [said] he did not know if a Nixon-Kissinger meeting would result. Connie Chung, CBS News at the White House.

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