

# NIXON IS SILENT ON U.S. CRITICISM

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Refuses to Answer Queries

During Tour in China  
NYTimes

KWEILIN, China, Feb. 26 (AP)—Richard M. Nixon returned "exhausted" today from a hike through a cave, but lit his stride later at a banquet, saying of all the cities he has visited around the world there is "not one more beautiful than Kweilin."

The 63-year-old former President walked for more than a quarter of a mile in a spectacular cavern of stalactites and stalagmites known as Reed Flute Caves. Chinese hid in the caves from the Japanese during World War II.

Mr. Nixon returned to town "exhausted," said his medical corpsman, Robert Dunn, who trailed him with a resuscitator and a supply of oxygen. The corpsman took Mr. Nixon's blood pressure four times today. It rose "without normal limits" as a result of the cave walk, he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Nixon ignored questions about criticism of his China trip by other Republicans at a pressman indicated he would continue to remain silent about it.

"It would be stupid for him to say anything," said John Brennan, an assistant.

Some of President Ford's campaign aides contend that Mr. Nixon's trip cut the vote for Mr. Ford in the New Hampshire primary. Senator Barry M.

Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, longtime Nixon ally, said he did not agree with that but also said that Mr. Nixon could do the United States a favor by staying in China.

Cost Estimated at \$3,000

Mr. Brennan said that Mr. Nixon tried to pay for a 10-course banquet he gave for the Chinese in Peking Wednesday night but that the Chinese insisted payment was not necessary.

Western sources estimated the cost of the dinner, for 360 guests in Peking's Great Hall of the People, at \$3,000 to \$5,000. A Chinese official, asked who paid for the dinner, said, "I don't know the answers to your questions. If I am a man's guest for dinner, why should I find out who paid for it or how much it cost?"

Mr. Nixon's corpsman, commenting on the former President's health, said his powers of recovery were "amazing."

Two hours after the cave walk, Mr. Nixon appeared revived at a banquet given by Chiao Hsiao-kuang, deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kwangsi-Chuang Autonomous Region.

Official to Interview Nixon

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (Reuters)—A representative of the State Department will interview former President Nixon when he returns from his visit to China in early March, a department spokesman said today.

The department is interested in hearing from Mr. Nixon as the first American to meet the new leaders in China since the death of Prime Minister Chou En-lai.