

Excerpts From the Interview Granted

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WASHINGTON, March 9 — Following are excerpts from an interview with President Nixon conducted here yesterday by C. L. Sulzberger, foreign-affairs columnist of The New York Times. The transcript, which is unofficial, was prepared by Mr. Sulzberger from his notes.

I would strongly commend to you my second foreign-policy report, which I think you should read carefully. I have noticed in some quarters a tendency to discuss this matter sneeringly or condescendingly, saying there is nothing new in it.

But that isn't so. It sets forth new policy directions and outlines, the goals we hope to achieve—the goals not only for this Administration but for subsequent administrations. This is a long-range effort. It doesn't get into a country-by-country analysis except in connection with the Soviet Union.

However, everything you see there is a new philosophy of United States policy. It is the most complete and accurate description of the Nixon doctrine. This doctrine is designed for the specific purpose of maintaining a U. S. policy role in the world rather than a withdrawal from the world and international responsibilities.

The irony today, for those who look at the Washington scene, is that the great internationalists of the post-World War II period have become the neo-isolationists of the Vietnam war period and especially of the period accompanying the ending of that war. And it is ending.

This is also true of the attitude of those former internationalists with respect to our defense posture and defense spending. And, for some, it is even true of our foreign trade policy. There, of course it depends on individuals. For example, Senator Javits is an all-out free-trader and a "European," but he takes a dim view of the United States role in Asia. He would also be for a lower defense budget. I merely cite him as an example of what I mean and the varying attitudes I mention.

The point is, why has this happened? Why have many former internationalists developed neo-isolationist tendencies, at least in some degree? Part of the answer is simply that Americans, like all idealists, are very impatient people. They feel that if a good thing is going to happen it should happen instantly.

And a great many of these people are very disillusioned with the United Nations. I am not, personally, because I never expected it could settle all problems involving major powers but could nevertheless play a useful role in development and in peacekeeping in areas where the superpowers were not directly involved.

The older a nation and a people become, the more they become conscious of history and also of what is possible. Now I will explain to you what I mean. I rate myself as a deeply committed pacifist, perhaps because of my Quaker heritage from my mother. But I must deal with how peace can be achieved and how it must be preserved.

I know that some national leaders and some countries want to expand by conquest and are committed to expansion, and this obviously creates the danger of war. Moreover, some peoples have hated each other for years and years.

Look at the divided peoples of India and Pakistan. Look at the situation in the Middle East. You can't suddenly eliminate these differences, these hatreds, just because some political leaders get together. All you can hope for is to bring about a live-and-let-live situation.

With this in mind, I am deeply devoted to a desire that the United States should make the greatest possible contribution it can make to developing such a peaceful world.

It is not enough just to be for peace. The point is, what can we do about it?

Through an accident of history we find ourselves today in a situation where no one who is really for peace in this country can reject an American role in the rest of the world. Of course, we had our own period of colonial expansion as typified by Theodore Roosevelt and the idea of Manifest Destiny. But that period is fortunately gone.

Since then this country has fought in four wars which we didn't start, and really what they have in common is the effort to bring about a better chance for a peaceful world.

And this applies for the Vietnam war as well as the two World Wars and Korea. Obviously it was a political temptation when I started office to state simply that we would get out right away without any responsibility for what came next.

But I knew too much about history, about Asia, about the basic feeling in the United States. If we failed to achieve our limited goal—to let a small country exercise the right to choose its own way of life, without having a Communist government imposed upon it by force—if we failed to achieve this, we would not help the cause of peace.

For a time, perhaps, we would be seen as a kind of hero. But soon it would be seen that we had left behind a legacy of even greater dangers for Southeast Asia and for the Pacific region. And, after all, we are a Pacific power.

Americans Tiring of World Role

In 1966 and 1967—culminating in 1968—the American people began to tire of playing a role in the world. We had fought four wars, selflessly and for no gain. We had provided some \$100-billion in foreign aid, much of it to former enemies who are now our competitors, like Japan.

And we found ourselves committed in Vietnam, in a war where there are no heroes, only goats. Our people became sick of Vietnam and supported our men there only in order to get them out—after this period of change in mood. Somewhere a great change had taken place.

We had used our power for peace in four wars but this new attitude gained force: "If we can't handle this one, to hell with it."

We got caught up in a vicious cross fire, and it became increasingly difficult to make people understand. I must say that without television it might have been difficult for me to get people to understand a thing.

The cross fire I referred to was this. The superdoves opposed our commitment in Vietnam and all world responsibilities—Korea, the Philippines the Middle East, Europe. This was the kind of isolationism of those who felt the United States shouldn't have played any role at all in Southeast Asia from the



White House Photograph

President Nixon during the interview

very start. For these people Vietnam was a distant, small, foreign country in just the terms that Chamberlain mentioned concerning Czechoslovakia at the time of Munich. These were the superdoves.

But on the other side, the opposite cross fire came from the superhawks. This group stood by their Commander-in-Chief, the President, but became fed up with the war for their own reasons. They felt that if the United States can't handle a distant little war, why then let's just pull out and build up our strength at home. Their logic also favored isolationism, but from another angle. And they want to develop a Fortress America at home and cram it full of missiles while the superdoves want us to pull out of the world also, but reducing our strength at home.

And Those in the Middle

In between there are those of us who stand in the middle of the cross fire. The superhawk feels it is his duty to support the President even if that same superhawk isn't sure he wants to see us do what we are doing. The superdove has a different attitude.

He is a good-hearted fellow, but when he looks around and sees the problems of the poor, the blacks, the Indians, the poor whites, the pot-smoking kids, crime in the cities, urban slums, the environment, he says: "We must get out of the

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by President Nixon on Foreign Affairs

war right away and concern ourselves only with our problems at home."

The fact is, however, that there has never been so great a challenge to U.S. leadership. This war is ending. In fact, I seriously doubt if we will ever have another war. This is probably the very last one.

In any theoretical question of a war on the basis of "either them or us," I am sure everyone in the country would join in behind me. But this is not the case in a small country so far away involved in a situation so difficult to explain.

I am certain a Gallup poll would show that the great majority of the people would want to pull out of Vietnam. But a Gallup poll would also show that a great majority of the people would want to pull three or more divisions out of Europe. And it would also show that a great majority of the people would cut our defense budget.

Polls are not the answer. You must look at the facts. The Soviets now have three times the missile strength (ICBM) of ourselves. By 1974 they will pass us in submarines carrying nuclear missiles.

Mrs. Meir Understood Him

All of these things are very directly related. For example, when Mrs. Meir, the Israeli Prime Minister, visited me, she understood me right away when I said that if America winds up the war in Vietnam in failure and an image is developed that the war was fought only by stupid scoundrels, there would be a wave of isolationism. This would embrace the U.S. role everywhere—including the Middle East. Mrs. Meir saw the point immediately.

As I see it, we have to take certain specific steps. First of all, what we now have to do is end the war—as we now are doing—in a way that gives South Vietnam a reasonable chance to survive without our help. But this doesn't mean we would withdraw all our responsibilities everywhere.

As I stated in first explaining the Nixon doctrine, our idea is to create a situation in which those lands to which we have obligations or in which we have interests, if they are ready to fight a fire, should be able to count on us to furnish the hose and water.

Meanwhile, in Europe, we can't cut down our forces until there is a mutual agreement with the other side. We must stand with our European friends if they will only do a bit more themselves in NATO—as they have indicated they will do.

And we cannot foolishly fall behind in the arms competition. In the United States, we remain ahead in the navy and in the air, but the Soviets are ahead in ICBM's and soon will pass us in modern submarine strength.

But each has a kind of sufficiency. The Soviets are a great land power opposite China as well as having far-reaching interests elsewhere. We are a great sea power and we must keep our strength. I am a strong Navy man myself. I believe in a strong conventional navy which helps us to play a peace-keeping role in such areas, for example, as Latin America.

These are all elements that must be considered with respect to each other. The main thing is that I'd like to see us not end the Vietnamese war foolishly and find ourselves all alone in the world. I could have chosen that course my very first day in office. But I want the

American people to be able to be led by me, or by my successor, along a course that allows us to do what is needed to help keep the peace in this world.

We used to look to other nations to do this job once upon a time. But now only the United States plays a major role of this sort in the world. Our responsibilities are not limited to this great continent but include Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, many areas whose fate affects the peace of the world.

We must above all tend to our national obligations. We must not forget our alliances or our interests. Other nations must know that the United States has both the capability and the will to defend these allies and protect these interests.

Unless people understand this and understand it well, the United States will simply retreat into isolationism, both politically and diplomatically. We would, of course, continue to be an economic giant; but that is not enough.

Let us look at the world today. There are two great powers facing us, Russia and China. They are great powers and great people. Certainly neither of them wants war. But both are motivated by a philosophy which announces itself as expansionist in character. This they will admit themselves.

And only the United States has sufficient strength to be able to help maintain a balance in Europe and other areas that might otherwise be affected.

U.S.-Soviet Cooperation

What I am saying is not a cold-war philosophy. I hope that we can further develop our negotiations with the Soviet Union. For, although we recognize that their ideology is expansionist, they know what it means if the genie comes out of the bottle and that their interest in survival requires that they avoid a conflict with the United States. This means that we must find a way of cooperating.

For obviously pragmatic reasons, therefore, we can see peace slowly shaping up. First, as we are doing, we must end the war in Vietnam. We must continue our Soviet negotiations and open the door of cooperation to China. And in this way there will be a chance of building a world that is relatively peaceful.

I deliberately say relatively peaceful. That doesn't mean everyone will be disarmed, safe and loving everyone else. The kind of relative peace I envision is not the dream of my Quaker youth. But it is realistic, and, I am convinced we can bring it about.

Yet, to do this, we can't heed either our superhawks whose policy would ultimately lead to war or to our superdoves who believe that only they are capable of achieving peace and that everyone else is a heretic. The trouble is that their policy of weakness would also quickly lead to war.

The day the United States quits playing a responsible role in the world—in Europe or Asia or the Middle East—or gives up or recedes from its efforts to maintain an adequate defense force—on that day this will become a very unsafe world to live in.

I can assure you that my words are those of a devoted pacifist. My very hardest job is to give out posthumous Medals of Honor.

I don't question the motives of those who oppose me. But I know this world. I have traveled about and talked to many leaders, and I know we have a chance to play a role in this world.

Another thing: People should be under no illusion that you can play a role in one area but wholly ignore another. Of course we're not going to get into every little firefight everywhere. The Nixon doctrine says only that we will help those who help themselves.

Sometimes people tend to forget the real situation prevailing today. When considering Asia, the great problem is that everyone overlooks the fact that non-Communist Asia—excluding India and Pakistan—produces three times as much as China. Why, Japan alone produces twice as much as China.

What is going to happen if we ignore such basic facts? The United States, as I said earlier is a Pacific power. And the SST will be built—if not by us, by someone else. And then we will be only three hours' flight from Japan.

There will be 400 million people in non-Communist Asia relying ever more upon us. Why Prime Minister Sato said not so long ago that Japan depends on the U.S. nuclear field.

In past times the No. 1 nation was always in that position because of military conquests. But the mantle of leadership fell on American shoulders not by our desire and not for the purposes of conquest. But we have that position today, and how we handle ourselves will determine the chances of world peace.

Do you know, in all my travels, not one leader I have talked to ever said to me in private that he feared the United States as a nation bent on conquest. And I have met many Communist leaders, as you know. Whatever some of them may pretend in public, they understand our true troubles and they are also thankful that the United States wants nothing—nothing but the right for everyone to live and let live.

Confidence in the People

The big question to my mind is: Will our Establishment and our people meet their responsibilities? Frankly, I have far more confidence in our people than in the Establishment. The people seem to see the problem in simple terms: "By golly, we have to do the right thing."

But the real problem, what worries me most, is: Will our Establishment see it that way? I am not talking about my critics but about a basic, strange sickness that appears to have spread among those who usually, in this country, can be expected to see clearly ahead into the future.

These are the people who, after World War II, supported the Greek-Turkish aid program, the Marshall Plan, NATO. But today they are in disarray because of two things. They are terribly disillusioned about Vietnam, which is so hard a problem to understand. And they have an enormous concern with home problems of a sort and a degree that did not face us a generation earlier.

I understand these factors. There is a vast need for reforms, for improvements in health, education and environment. But we have to assume our responsibilities both abroad and at home. We have to do both. After all, if we manage to improve the environment and living conditions in this country we must also assure that we will be around to enjoy those improvements.