

Nixon: 'Full Tilt All the Way'

Following is a transcript of President Nixon's remarks to 200 White House staff members in the Rose Garden yesterday:

Thank you very much for your very warm welcome.

I had heard that while I was out at Bethesda that you were all working and here you are outside. (Laughter)

However, I do want you to know that, after a week away from the White House, it is very good to be back, and particularly good to be back to see all of you.

As I was at Bethesda, I realized that that was the first time in 13 years I had been in the hospital except for my physical examinations. The other time was in the year 1960 when, some of you may recall, I had a knee infection and was at Walter Reed for two weeks.

I told the staff at Bethesda that I got out perhaps a day or two earlier, not because their medication, which was excellent, and their competence, which was superb, but because their spirit lifted me. And I can assure you another reason I am back a little bit early is that your spirit lifts me and I am most grateful for the fact that while I was there, a few papers used to come out, you know, the things you send out to me that I sign without looking at. (Laughter)

In any event, I do want you to know that just the thought that while I was away that the White House was going forward, that all the work was being done, that everything that needed to be done for this country was going forward as I would have wanted it to go forward, and as the people would want it to go forward, that really helped me get back. And I thank you very much for all those extra hours so many of you put in during that time.

As you can imagine, while I was there, I had a lot of chance to think, to sleep, to rest. It is a little difficult, I must say, to do some of those things when you are not used to it. I mean I am used to thinking but — (laughter) — not sleeping and resting.

Also, I had a chance to go through some of the mail Rose sent out to me, selected mail and wires from all over the country. It seems that nothing really touches people more than illness. You know, if you want to talk to somebody and you say, "How are you feeling?" they usually tell you. Then things really get going. So, as far as this was concerned, I found that I must have heard from everybody in this country who had had pneumonia and believe me, there are a lot of them that have had pneumonia. (Laughter)

All of them touched me, but I, as usual, tried to pick one out I thought was particularly interesting. It would come from California,



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On his way to Camp David, Mr. Nixon stops to chat with Girl Scouts hiking on the road.

as you might imagine, Livermore, California, up north. I campaigned it many years ago, in 1950, when it was a small town. It has grown up a little now. It is from an 8-year-old and he prints it.

He writes: "Dear President Nixon: I heard you were sick with pneumonia. I just got out of the hospital yesterday with pneumonia and I hope you did not catch it from me." (Laughter and applause)

"Now you be a good boy and eat your vegetables like I had to." I hate vegetables, but I will eat them. "If you take your medicine and your shots, you will be out in eight days like I was. Love, John W. James III, eight years old."

Well, John W. James III, I got out in seven days, so did a little bit better than he did. But perhaps my case of pneumonia was not as difficult as his. I will take his advice. I will eat my vegetables. Try now and then to take the shots — maybe not the kind of shot that he takes, but who knows — (Laughter) Walter Tkach is my adviser in that respect.

But in any event, there is one bit of advice I am not going to take, and I will not take too much of your time to tell you about that advice, because this is a very serious vein — it will be of interest to our friends in the press, to the whole nation and to the thousands who have written me, and it will disturb my very good corps of doctors who were advising me to do this, do that, and so forth and so on — that is, they said, "Mr. President, now look, you have excellent health, you have been very fortunate that you have established a modern record of 4½ years in the White House without having missed a day because of illness, but you have got to realize you are human. You can't press yourself so much and what you have to do is to slow down a little now and take some time off and relax a little more."

I just want you to know

what my answer to them was and what my answer to you is. No one in this great office at this time in the world's history can slow down. This office requires a President who will work right up to the hilt all the time. That is what I have been doing. That is what I am going to continue to do and I want all of you to do likewise.

I know many say, "But then you will risk your health." Well, the health of a man is not nearly as important as the health of the nation and the health of the world.

I do want you to know that I feel that we have so little time in the positions that all of us hold, and so much to do. With all that we have to do and so little time to do it, at the end of the next 3½ years to look back and think: But for that day, something went undone that might have been done that would have made a difference in whether we have peace in the world or a better life at home. That would be the greatest frustration of all.

I don't say this heroically, because I know that every man who has ever been in this position feels exactly the same way, and has felt as I do.

So, I want you to know when I come back from Camp David Monday morning, it is going to be full tilt all the way and we want all of you to work that way, too.

Another bit of advice, too, that I am not going to take, oh, it really isn't advice, I was rather amused by some very well-intentioned people who thought that perhaps the burdens of the office, you know, some of the rather rough assaults that any man in this office gets from time to time, brings on an illness and, after going through such an illness, that I might get so tired that I would consider either slowing down or even, some suggested, resigning.

Well, now, just so we set that to rest, I am going to

use a phrase my Ohio father used to use. Any suggestion that this President is ever going to slow down while he is President or is ever going to leave this office until he finishes the job he was elected to do, anyone who suggests that, that is just plain poppycock.

We are going to stay on this job until we get the job done. (Applause.)

Because after all, you see, when we put all of the events that we read about, the things we see on television; in perspective and then we think of the ages, we think of the world and not just our own little world, we think of the nation and not only our little part of that nation, we realize that here in this office is where the great decisions are going to be made that are going to determine whether we have peace in this world for years to come. We have made such great strides toward that goal.

It is going to determine whether there is a chance that this nation can have a prosperity without war and without inflation, something we have not had since President Eisenhower was President, and we are making progress toward the goal.

It is going to determine whether or not this nation is going to be on a course that we all worked for, a course in which, rather than having the rate of crime escalating in this nation, the use of dangerous drugs destroying our young people, that we win those battles which we have launched and carried on. It is going to determine whether programs we have to provide fair and better opportunity for all Americans are going to have a chance, whether they are carried forward.

There are these and other great causes that we were elected overwhelmingly to carry forward in November of 1972. And what we were elected to do, we are going to do, and let others wallow in Watergate, we are going to do our job. (Applause.)