

Text of the President's News Conference

Following is the transcript of a news conference by President Nixon in Washington yesterday, as recorded by The New York Times through the facilities of A.B.C. News.

Opening Statement

Won't you be seated, ladies and gentlemen. I guess I should say all those who can find seats.

Dr. Kissinger, as you know from an announcement that I understand got out about 30 minutes ago from Peking, will visit Peking on Oct. 26 to 29.

This is part of the continuing dialogue between the Peoples Republic of China and the United States which began with my visit to China last year. The subjects that will be discussed include those that have been discussed on previous occasions. Trade, for example, where it's interesting to note that the amount of bilateral trade between the two countries, which was approximately \$6-million in 1971 will be an estimated \$800-million in 1973.

Scientific and cultural exchanges will be a major subject for discussions. And, of course, other matters of mutual concern to the two nations.

In addition, Dr. Kissinger has been invited by the Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Ohira, to stop in Japan on his visit to the Far East. He will do so.

The timing of that visit, however, has not yet been agreed upon and will be announced as soon as we hear from the Japanese.

Incidentally, I learned that 12 to 15 members of the press will be invited, if they desire to go, to go on the trip with the Secretary of State. And if you put in your application at the State Department in this instance, I think they will be honored in the order in which they are received.

Now I'll be glad to take questions on other subjects since I understand that Mr. Warren's been rather busy with his briefings lately.

QUESTIONS

1. Harlow to Arizona

Q. Mr. President can you tell us why you sent Mr. Harlow out to Arizona last month just after the Vice President and Mr. Goldwater conferred? A. Well I didn't send him to Arizona, as far as I know. I think he went to Oklahoma. But . . .

Q. He was reported to have gone to Phoenix.

A. Well he might have. He might have. I think that what had happened is that Senator Goldwater had indicated an interest in the status of the situation with regard to the Vice President's case and Mr. Harlow, being somewhat familiar with that matter, was the best man to provide that information for him.

2. Agnew Resignation

Q. Mr. President, do you think that the Vice President should resign if he is indicted?

A. Well the Vice President has addressed that question and his answer is an altogether proper one.

The Vice President is in a different position, for example, than a member of the President's Cabinet or a member of his staff. I have indicated that if a member of the President's Cabinet or his staff were indicted he would have to resign pending the outcome of the trial.

However the Vice President, like the President, is elected by all the people, he holds that office in his own right and the decision as to whether he is to resign is for him to make. He has indicated that he will not resign if he is indicted and therefore that decision on his part should be respected.

3. Resignation Not Requested

Q. Mr. President, have you asked the Vice President to resign?

A. No, I have not. I have noted the lively discussion about resignation here in the press room and I understand that. But let me say that in all the conversations I've had with the Vice President, I have never asked him to resign. I have always told him and he understands this position, that this matter is one for him to decide. I would say further that as far as our discussions are concerned they are privileged and I will not go further than that other than to say that we both agreed that we could make public the fact that the charges that have been made against him and which he has denied publicly he has denied to me privately on three occasions.

4. San Clemente Property

Q. Mr. President, at your last press conference you said that some of the government work done at San Clemente had diminished the value of the property for use as a home. I'd like to ask about two items that are in the G.S.A. reports on that. First, do you think that the \$13,500 electrical heating system that was installed diminished its value? And second, do you think that when the G.S.A. hired a local landscape architect to redesign the flower beds on the west side of the residence four times a year, that they were spending the taxpayers' money wisely?

A. Well I can plough that ground again, I guess. If any of you have lived in California you will know that gas heat costs less than electric heat. I preferred the first, gas heat; for security reasons, apparently, they decided that it presented a fire hazard which could not be tolerated. And so that decision was made.

With regard to the other matters that have been brought up I think full statements have been made over and over again on this and I really think anything I would say in answer to your question in view of the way you have already presented it as a statement, would not convince you or anybody else.

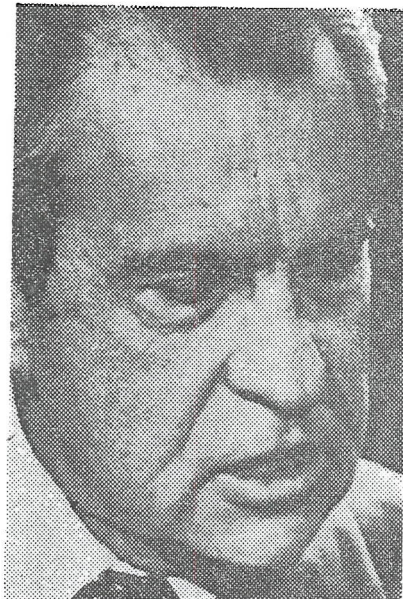
5. Unfilled Posts

Q. Mr. President, may I ask you two questions, one, because both relate to . . . A. Mr. Mollenhoff you can ask three if you like.

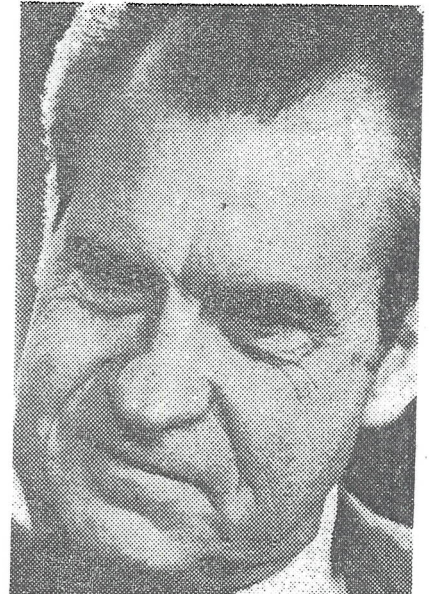
Q. Only a double-header. Both are related to unfilled jobs, that's why I'm putting them together. A. Louder.

Q. We have not had an Ambassador in the Soviet Union now for going on to nine months and the chairman of your Commission on Civil Rights--that

DAY, OCTOBER 4, 1973
PART 1
on Foreign and Domestic Matters



Associated Press



United Press International

President Nixon during his news conference yesterday in Washington

job has been unfilled about eight or nine months already. What are your plans on this?

A. Well, the Ambassador to the Soviet Union is a very important post and, as a matter of fact I discussed that with Dr. Kissinger just yesterday. I think we will have an announcement on it within the next two or three weeks.

With regard to the other position, that is one also that we consider to be very important and it is at present being considered within the Domestic Council. I'm sure a recommendation will be made to me soon and we will try to fill it.

The main thing about these appointments, as I'm sure you all know, is to get the right person, man or woman, for the job rather than to do it in too much of a hurry.

6. Percy and the Presidency

Q. Mr. President, can you tell me if you will actively oppose Senator Percy's efforts to win the 1976 Republican nomination, and if you will not, will you tell us what has changed since February when you suggested that you might?

A. Well, I've noted that particularly in the Chicago papers, not only The Tribune, but The Sun-Times and The News and—is there another one there, too?—and today, that there's been much speculation about my meeting with Senator Percy.

It was a very candid discussion. I did say at one point, due to a misunderstanding, that I thought that Senator Percy should not be a candidate in '76 and as I told him when we met that statement was made because I had understood that he had opposed Elliot Richardson for Attorney General, right after I had announced that I was sending his name to the Senate, which I thought was a highly irresponsible thing to do, in view of the fact that both Elliott Richardson and Senator Percy are in what we call the more liberal wing of the Republican party.

Senator Percy, however, later explained that his resolution in that respect that would have affected Elliot Richardson had been misinterpreted, that he had actually introduced it prior to the time that I had made my announcement.

Now so much for the statement that was made in February. Second, to put it all in perspective, whether it's Senator Percy on the one side, or one or several Governors or former Governors who might be a candidate, the Mayor of Indianapolis, or a number of Senators and one or two House members, all of them have a right to seek the Presidency if they so desire.

As far as I'm concerned I will make no decision with regard to supporting or opposing any one of these candidates until they have been tried in the field of battle.

I think that we learned in the year 1972 that when an individual moves from the Senate—and I'm referring now to the primaries—to the big leagues, or when he moves from the Governorship to the big leagues, and we learned this in other years, that sometimes he can't hit the big league pitching and I'd like to see how these various potential candidates handle themselves in the primaries before making any decision with regard to who should be the candidate.

I'm not saying now, incidentally categorically, that I will endorse a candidate before the convention. I reserve the right to make that decision at a later time. But certainly I would say finally that Senator Percy has been a vigorous campaigner for the Senate, an articulate spokesman, not always on the side of the Administration, but I respect differences of opinion, and he has every right to seek the Presidency. He will not be opposed at this time and should he prove to be the strongest candidate he will not be opposed certainly if he receives the nomination.

I will support whoever receives that nomination.

7. Agnew Replacement

Q. Would you tell us, Mr. President, if you've done any contingency planning about a possible Vice President in the event that Vice President Agnew leaves office for any reason?

A. Mr. Richards, certainly not. It would be highly inappropriate to have any contingency planning with regard to what should happen if the Vice President leaves office. As far as the Vice President is concerned, I have said in my statement of the 25th of September that he has denied the charges that were made against him, that he is entitled to the presumption of innocence, which is the right of every American citizen.

And I urge all of my fellow Americans to give him the presumption of innocence, as I certainly do. And particularly that presumption of innocence, I think, should be underlined in view of his years of distinguished service as Vice President; having in mind, too, the fact that the charges that have been made against him do not relate in any way to his activities as Vice President of the United States.

I would say further in that respect that I would hope that in this rather white-hot atmosphere—which I understand has developed since the Vice President's case came to public

attention—that he will not be tried and convicted in the press and on television by leaks and innuendo and the rest.

There is nothing really that is more harmful to the rights of an individual than to be tried and convicted in the press before he has an opportunity to present his case. And I would urge all of you ladies and gentlemen, because I know you want to be responsible in this respect, to make your judgments on the basis of all the evidence, not on the basis—

Q. Mr. President— A. Let me finish. Make your judgment on the basis of all the evidence, and not simply on the basis of a unilateral charge that is made not under oath.

8. Charges Against Agnew

Q. Mr. President, on that particular point, you have been briefed in some detail on the evidence in the Agnew trial. You are also a lawyer with some expertise. You can tell us whether there is any substance to Mr. Agnew's charge that this is frivolous investigation, that it's a frame-up and it is, in fact, a smear.

A. Well, Mr. Mollenoff, when you say that I have been briefed on the charges, I should respond to that by saying that I have not heard the witnesses. I have only been briefed on what it is believed the witnesses might testify to.

As far as the charges are concerned, they are serious and not frivolous. The Vice President's complaint, as you know, is that the leaks that have come out on this particular matter have convicted him in advance. And it is that particular point that concerns him, and it concerns me as well.

As a matter of fact, in the strongest terms, I have spoken to the Attorney General about this matter. He shares my view. He has taken personal charge of the investigation with regard to leaks.

And incidentally, he has assured me, Mr. Mollenhoff, that the Assistant Attorney General, Mr. Petersen, whom as you recall I praised rather highly in my 22d of August press conference in San Clemente, was in no way—neither he nor members of his office in the Justice Department—involved in the leaks involving the Vice President.

9. Petersen Backed

Q. Mr. President. Thank you. In view of that remark, do you then still support Mr. Petersen's handling of the investigation?

A. If I did not support Mr. Petersen's handling of the investigation, he would have been removed at this time. But it would be a disservice to an individual who has served both Administrations with distinction for many, many years to remove him from handling the investigation unless there was clear evidence that he had been guilty of an indiscretion.

And I've taken this matter up quite directly with the Attorney General. The Attorney General assures me that his investigation—his, the Attorney General's investigation—indicates that Mr. Petersen has handled this investigation without prejudice in advance, and without, of course, engaging in what in my view is the totally inexcusable and inappropriate conduct of leaking information on a grand jury investigation.

10. Trip to Europe

Q. Mr. President, in view of your sidewalk remark the other night about travel plans, can you pinpoint for us any better your timing of your trip to Europe?

A. Well, Mr. Theis, it's difficult to pinpoint the timing of the trip to Europe, but in order that all of you can make your plans a little better: The trip to Europe will be made within the next few months, and the timing will be based on these factors:

First, the progress which is made on the discussions now going on with regard to a declaration of principles with regard to the alliance and with regard to economic matters as well. The latter, as you know, I discussed with Mr. Ortoli when he was here.

That progress is going on, incidentally, well ahead of schedule, according to Dr. Kissinger.

As soon as those preliminary negotiations are completed and as soon as it is clear on both sides of the Atlantic that this will be a trip not for protocol purposes but one that will have real substance in it, then we will work out a date.

Now the second factor, however, which enters into this is the Congressional schedule. I cannot take a trip to Europe or any place else at a time when there are matters before the Congress of very great significance.

That is why I cannot pinpoint this in terms of saying that just as soon as the Europeans are ready, we will go. If the Europeans are ready at a time that we have a heavy calendar in Congress, I shall have to postpone the trip until that. But I would say within the next—I'm thinking in terms of the next three or four months but it might be sooner than that, probably not much later.

Now with regard to Japan, I agree with Mr. Tanaka when he was here that I would visit Japan in—before the end of 1974.

We will, of course, make those plans again consistent with our developments

on the bilateral side and at a time when we think that there is a matter of substance to be discussed or matters of substance to be discussed and at a time which is consistent with my responsibilities on the domestic front.

Q. Mr. President. A. This lady—this lady is—you don't mind a lady going ahead of you, do you?

11. Austria and Emigres

Q. Thank you, sir. Have you any comments to make on the Austrian decision to close the Russian immigrant facility. A. Excuse me. . . .

Q. . . . the Austrian decision to close the Russian immigrant facility?

A. I heard your question but I wanted the radio to hear it too. Yes I have. The Austrians are in a very difficult position here. As you know, I stopped in Austria on my way to Moscow and—the first time—no, the second time that the Prime Minister, Mr. Kreisky, and anybody who knows his background knows that he is certainly not anti-Semitic.

But Austria is the eye of a hurricane and Austria, therefore, is being a relatively small country and relatively weak military etcetera, is making a very what I'm sure for Mr. Kreisky painful decision in this respect.

I recall, for example, that at the time of the Hungarian revolution, Austria opened its arms very generously to thousands of refugees and I know that that's the Austrian tradition and custom.

I would hope and I would express this. I would hope that the Prime Minister would reconsider his decision even though I know he has even lately reiterated it.

We consider it for this fundamental reason it goes far beyond his country and even ours, and that is that we simply cannot have governments—small or large—give in to international blackmail by terrorist groups.

That's what's involved. Not to mention, of course, the fact that we all have a concern for the emigrés. They must have a place to come. And so, on humanitarian grounds and on geopolitical grounds of the highest order, I believe that that decision should be reconsidered. But naturally I'm not going to put my friend, Mr. Kreisky, in the position of trying to dictate to him to what should be.

Now you go ahead with your question.

12. Watergate Tapes

Q. Sir, there is at least a possibility that if you don't give up the Watergate tapes, some of the cases or po-

tential cases against your former aides might be aborted. I wonder if you're concerned about this and further whether you might see some room for compromise in the appellate court suggestion.

A. Well, since the appellate court is still considering the matter, it would be inappropriate for me to talk about what should be done with regard to compromises. You know discussions—extended discussions—took place between Mr. Buzhardt and the special prosecutor in this respect and they agreed to disagree.

As far as the tapes are concerned, I have stated my position and I restate it again today. The position is that the confidentiality of Presidential discussions must be maintained and whether it's a Presidential paper, a memorandum of conversation prepared by a member of his staff after meeting with the President or whether it is a tape of a conversation, it is the responsibility of the President with regard to the separation of powers principle to defend the integrity of those conversations so that Presidents in the future will be able to conduct free-wheeling extended conversations with no holds barred with foreign visitors and, of course, with those who come to see him from the United States.

13. Unemployed Goals

Q. Mr. President, do you agree with the proposition put forth by your C.E.A. nominee, Mr. Fellner that the country will have to abandon its goal of 4 per cent unemployment and move to 5 per cent or perhaps higher to fight inflation.

A. Well I notice Mr. Fellner's rather, shall we say, outspoken comments and also his comments with regard to Phase 4 where he said he thought that we should apparently—at least the press indicated it—he thought that we should junk Phase 4 pretty soon or sooner we certain intend to do so.

Before answering that question, let me say that I have found that economists are the most independent breed of the human species except for members of the press. And the reason for that is that the American economy is highly unpredictable. It's a free economy.

I have found that my economic advisers are not always right but they are always sure in everything that they recommend.

Now as far as Mr. Fellner's concern whether the goal should be 4 per cent or 5 per cent is not really the point. The main thing is to get unemployment down as low as we can. At the present time

this economy is going at full bore ahead. That's on the plus side despite the unacceptable rate of inflation.

And unemployment is, we trust, going to either stay where it is or come down. But I'm not going to say that we're going to abandon 4 and go to 5 or go to 6. Our goal is to see that every American who wants to work and who is qualified to work can get a job. That's one that we must never give up on. And the percentages are not the main factor.

14. Inclusion of Japan

Q. Mr. President, a point of clarification. A. Sure.

Q. In your discussion of the declaration of principles, there was an intention to include Japan as well as the European community. Is that still the case or has that been changed?

A. Let me explain what we feel now with regard to including Japan. I have told all of four foreign visitors—Chancellor Willy Brandt and, of course, Prime Minister Heath, President Pompidou that it is vitally important that Japan, which is now the second major economic power in the world and of course in the Pacific a potential very great force for peace and stability that Japan not be out of the club.

Now, they all agree the difficulty is in writing a declaration with regard to the Atlantic Alliance which fits Japan. The difficulty is in writing one with regard to the European economic community which fits Japan.

And so what we presently are thinking of is three declarations—one for the Atlantic Alliance, one for the economic community and then a more general declaration to which the Japanese might be willing to adhere.

Now I have gone beyond what we have worked out but that is what we can expect.

Let me say, finally, that in that respect I know that these declarations may not seem too important when we consider the domestic problems that presently obsess us. But it is essential at a time that we are having negotiations with the Soviet and with the Peoples Republic of China, it is essential that we breathe new life and new purpose and new spirit into the American Atlantic alliance and into the free world community, which includes Japan.

And unless we do so, unless for example, the Atlantic Alliance speaks to our times rather than to the times 25 years ago, it is going to fragment. Our European friends realize this and I am glad to note that even the economic experts like Ortoli recognize it too.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.