

NY Times MAY 29 1974  
**FORD TURNS ASIDE  
CRITICISM REPORT**

**Charge That Nixon Belittled  
Him Gets No Comment—  
Earlier Praise Cited**

By **MARJORIE HUNTER**

Special to The New York Times

CHARLOTTE, N. C., May 28

—Vice President Ford declined to comment today on a published report that President Nixon recently belittled Mr. Ford's qualifications to be President of the United States.

"I think any comment on that ought to come from the White House," Mr. Ford said in an impromptu news conference after landing here this afternoon. "I don't think under the circumstances I ought to make any observations."

The report, appearing in the last issue of Newsweek magazine, states:

"There are signs that President Nixon is considerably disenchanted with Vice President Ford. One straw in the wind came recently when former Gov. Nelson Rockefeller spent 90 minutes in the Oval Office with Mr. Nixon. Seated at his desk, the President asked Rockefeller contemptuously: 'Can you see Gerald Ford sitting in this chair?'"

**Earlier Remarks Cited**

While declining to comment on the report Mr. Ford noted that Mr. Nixon had said some "fairly complimentary" things about him when the President chose to become Vice President last fall.

"I can only go back personally to the comments made at the time of my nomination and any modification of that, if any ought to come from the White House," Mr. Ford said.

The Vice President also sought today to quell reports that relations between him and Mr. Nixon have become strained.

"The President and I have had an excellent, personal, social, political relationship and I see no change whatsoever despite what some have speculated" Mr. Ford said. "We are firm freinds. I admire him."

Mr. Ford had met with Mr. Nixon at a Cabinet meeting in Washington this morning. He said that "the President was very friendly and very complimentary in several instances."

**Ziegler's Denial**

A White House spokesman has also denied that relations between the President and Mr. Ford have become strained.

Ronald L. Ziegler told reporters last night that "the Vice President has no difficulties with the President at all."

Despite denials by both the White House and Mr. Ford that his relations with the President have become somewhat strained those close to the Vice President have detected a change.

One of his associates said this week that Mr. Ford no longer regards his relationship to the President as that of a master and slave. "He's been saying he's his own man, and now he's acting it," he said.

The change appears to have come shortly after Mr. Ford conferred with the President last Thursday.

**Disagreement Noted**

It was at that meeting, Mr. Ford later disclosed, that he "laid out quite candidly" his disagreement with the President's refusal to supply further material sought by the House Judiciary Committee that is studying possible impeachment of Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Ford flew here this afternoon for a practice round before participating in tomorrow's Kemper Open invitational golf tournament.

In the Ford foursome today were Representative Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts, the House Democratic leader; Representative Sam Young, Republican of Illinois, and James Kemper, an insurance official.