

WHITE HOUSE SEES NO SLAP BY NIXON

FEB 24 1976

It Disagrees With View That
Remarks in Peking Were
Directed at Detente

NYTimes

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23—The Ford Administration disagreed today with press interpretations that former President Richard M. Nixon's dinner remarks in Peking yesterday had amounted to criticism of the policies of President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

The White House spokesman, Ron Nessen, said: "We have looked at the entire toast and we do not interpret it as being critical of United States foreign policy."

A senior State Department official who said that he had no admiration for Mr. Nixon said that, nevertheless, he had seen nothing to suggest that Mr. Nixon was not supportive of Mr. Ford in his remarks.

Officials Are Annoyed

[In Peking, Mr. Nixon met for an hour and 40 minutes with Chairman Mao Tse-tung described as a "friendly conversation" in which the Chinese leader asked his visitor to convey his regards to President Ford. Page 3.]

White House officials, with the important New Hampshire primary tomorrow, were annoyed by the stress placed on one paragraph in Mr. Nixon's toast by some news accounts—and particularly by two front-page dispatches in The New York Times today, one a news agency report from Peking and the other a dispatch from Hong

Continued on Page 3, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

Kong by a Times correspondent.

In his toast, commemorating the fourth anniversary of his own trip to China as President in 1972, Mr. Nixon said China and the United States must continue to work together and "build on the document which set forth the principles on which we had agreed."

He said the future not only of the two countries, but of all people, "depends on the reliability and the capability and the determination" of Peking

and Washington "to work together for the cause of peace with security for all nations."

Then followed the following controversial paragraph:

"There are, of course, some who believe that the mere act of signing a statement of principles or a diplomatic conference will bring instant and lasting peace. This is naive. There cannot and will not be lasting and secure peace until every nation in the world respects the security and independence of every other nation, large or small."

News reports yesterday said observers in Peking had seen this paragraph as implicit criticism of the United States' participation in the 1955 Helsinki conference, which culminated in the signing of a declaration setting forth principles on security and cooperation in Europe.

But White House and State Department officials said Mr. Nixon's statement on the surface at least, could be generally applied to include documents he signed as President with the Soviet Union.

"I really think that Nixon was truisms—that what is important are deeds and not words—and that if he wanted to interpret it as anti-detente that's fine with him" on State Department official said.

Officials said Mr. Ford, in his speech at Helsinki on Aug. 1, made the same point when he said "peace is not a piece of paper." Mr. Ford said the conference would be judged "not by the promises we make, but by the promises we keep."

Many China experts in the Government have viewed the invitation to Mr. Nixon as a sign that Peking wants the United States to know despite the recent high-level political changes following Prime Minister Chou En-Lai's death, relations with the United States have not been impaired.

There is curiosity within the diplomatic community here on the substance of Mr. Nixon's conversations with Mao Tse-tung and the Acting Prime Minister, Hua Kuo-feng.

It is widely believed that Mr. Kissinger himself may meet with Mr. Nixon in California next week to get a first-hand report, although the White House and State Department insisted that no plans had been made on how to debrief Mr. Nixon.

Kissinger Going to California

Mr. Kissinger's wife, Nancy, is in Palm Springs, Calif., convalescing from a recent stomach operation, and it is expected that he will fly to California this weekend to be with her. He returns from Latin America late tomorrow night.

Because of the New Hamp-

shire primary, the White House has tried to keep distance between Mr. Ford and Mr. Nixon. Officials have stressed that Mr. Nixon is making his trip as a private citizen.

A discrepancy between the White House and Mr. Kissinger has developed over how and whether Mr. Nixon would make any report to the Administration upon his return next week.

Mr. Ford in an interview with The Boston Globe on Saturday said "at the present time" there were no plans for any debriefing. He said that would be decided after Mr. Nixon returned to the United States.

"I would assume that if he has any valuable information that he would communicate it to us, but we have no plans at the present time," Mr. Ford said.

That has been the position of the White House, in effect leaving it up to Mr. Nixon to report to the Administration.

But Mr. Kissinger, in Brasilia, said on Saturday that "we will of course wish to learn about the nature and the result" of Mr. Nixon's trip. This reflected his desire for a thorough report on the discussions with Mr. Mao and Mr. Hua.

Kissinger Revises Estimate

Special to The New York Times

BOGOTA, Colombia, Feb. 23

Secretary of State Kissinger said today that he interpreted the invitation extended to former President Nixon to Peking as an attempt by the Chinese to signal the Ford Administration that relations between the two countries would not be affected by any political shifts in China.

Mr. Kissinger said he thought at first that the invitation might be an attempt by the Chinese "to needle" the Ford Administration.

But after reading reports and transcripts of the toasts offered at a banquet attended by Mr. Nixon in Peking, the Secretary of State said he concluded that "this reception is one notch below what they gave" to President Ford during his visit to Peking last year.