

Reaction of Ford, Kissinger To Nixon's Remarks in Peking

Washington

President Ford does not feel Richard Nixon was being critical of current U.S. foreign policy in his banquet speech in Peking, White House press secretary Ron Nessen said yesterday.

In what appeared to be a reference to Soviet-American detente and the 35-nation Helsinki pact signed by Mr. Ford in June, Mr. Nixon told a Peking banquet Sunday, "There are some who believe that the mere act of signing a statement of principle or a diplomatic conference will bring instant and lasting peace.

"This is naive," he said.

Some news reports from Peking interpreted Mr. Nixon's remark as disagreeing with Mr. Ford's action in signing the Moscow-Sponsored pact, but Nessen said, "We have looked at the entire toast. We do not interpret it as being critical of U.S. foreign policy."

In Bogota, Colombia, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said, "I have read the entire text of Nixon's toast and there is no justification for interpreting those remarks as a slap at detente or me."

Kissinger said it is "inconceivable to me that Nixon would attack U.S. foreign policy in Peking."

China's invitation to Mr. Nixon, Kissinger said, was a way to signal the United States that despite the internal situation in China, Peking is interested in continuing to improve relations with Washington.

The White House continued to



Mao Tse-tung and Richard Nixon held talks at Mao's home

AP Wirephoto

treat Mr. Nixon's journey to China as that of a private citizen with no official mission or connection.

However, the fact that the former president was the first foreign visitor to hold substantive talks with new acting Premier Hua Kuo-feng and that he spent an hour and 40 minutes with Mao Tse-tung is expected to interest the State Department.

Nessen said if Mr. Nixon "feels that he has anything significant to report, I expect him to report to the State Department."

He said Mr. Nixon sought no guidance from the government before going to China, and that Mr. Ford has no plans to contact Mr. Nixon on his return.

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