

Nixon's Chat in Peking -- He Talks of Japan, SST

Peking

A relaxed Richard M. Nixon chatted with news photographers yesterday on subjects ranging from the bars of Tokyo to the Lockheed scandal in Japan.

It was Mr. Nixon's first exposure to any sizeable group of news representatives since the worst political scandal in U.S. history forced him out of the White House 18 months ago.

Mr. Nixon was waiting for his second talk with Acting Premier Hua Kuo-feng after meeting with Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

"We'd liked to have had you in to make some pictures with Chairman Mao, but that's just not allowed," he told the photographers. "It's their custom."

He talked about the bars in Tokyo: "There's a famous place there called Gordon's. Ever been there? Don't go. Very expensive."

He talked about geisha girls: "They serve drinks. They play games, not the kind of games you guys..."

He talked about Tokyo's traffic problems: "Freeways are the only thing that will save them."

"Do you think they'll let the Concorde land there?" Mr. Nixon asked.

"I doubt it," said Max Desfor of the Tokyo bureau of the Associated Press.

"I'd say," Mr. Nixon continued, "that within ten years the SST — if we had built it — would be a much larger plane than the Concorde and therefore would have been viable economically. The Concorde may turn out to be too. It's inevitable that since they have the technology that the SST or some form of it will be built... Probably they'll have to develop airports far out of the cities if they can find the space."

"Will you be visiting Japan again?" Desfor asked.

"I'll be coming sometime. I've been there many times, of course. So many of my friends there say come back, including some who used to be in the government.

Former Premier (Nobusuke) Kishi, for example, is still around."

"He is now president of the Japan-American Friendship Society," Desfor said.

Nixon (smiling): "I hope he doesn't have any Lockheed stocks."

Desfor: "It's the hottest scandal in Japan."

Nixon: "Must be."

Desfor: "They're eating it up."

Nixon: "The interesting thing is, I imagine, so many of them are in it."

Desfor: "have you read the testimony in the Diet (parliament)?"

Nixon: "A little. And everybody denied it?"

Desfor: "Everybody denied it."

Nixon: "A lot of money was involved, wasn't there?"

Desfor: "Thirteen million dollars."

Nixon: "Thirteen million dollars!"

He spoke with an air of wonderment.

Associated Press