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Nixon Denies He Criticized Helsinki Pact

Peking

Richard Nixon denied today that his toast at a Peking banquet implied any criticism of the Helsinki agreement signed by President Ford and leaders of 34 other nations last August.

"My God," said the ex-president. "I've used that statement a dozen times before, and I used it in a general context. It could apply to the United Nations Charter or the Shanghai Communique or any international document."

In response to a toast Sunday night by China's acting Premier Hua Kuo-feng, Mr. Nixon spoke of the Shanghai Communique he and the late Premier Chou En-lai signed in 1972. Then Mr. Nixon commented:

"There are of course some who believe that the mere act of signing a statement of principles or 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."

Some correspondents reported that Mr. Nixon's remarks were interpreted as criticisms of Mr. Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for accepting the Helsinki agreement.

Associated Press