

NYTimes MAY 26 1977

Excerpts From Nixon Interview on

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 25—Following are excerpts from the fourth televised conversation between former President Richard M. Nixon and David Frost, as transcribed by Mr. Frost and televised tonight:

FROST: On September 16th, 1970, after Salvador Allende had won the most votes in the Chilean Presidential elections, Henry Kissinger glumly remarked that if the Chilean Congress confirmed Allende as President over the non-Marxist runner-up candidate, his rule could spell the end of democracy in Chile. What Kissinger did not reveal was that on the day before he spoke, Richard Nixon had himself taken action to subvert Chile's democratic process by ordering the C.I.A. to prevent Allende's accession to power, not even excluding a coup d'etat. Whether or not the subsequent actions of the C.I.A. did, by themselves, prevent the overthrow of Allende, three years later, is in dispute. That the C.I.A. did take action is not. The Church Committee reported the following facts:

The U.S. collaborated with groups that kidnapped and murdered General Renee Schneider, a Chilean whose belief in constitutional democracy outweighed his opposition to Allende.

Between 1970 and 1973 the C.I.A. spent some \$8 million in Chile supporting the political opposition and establishing a network of those committed to Allende's downfall. And, when the coup occurred, the C.I.A. used additional funds to support a public relations effort on behalf of the newly installed right-wing government headed by General Pinochet.

Can you think of any other example of where the United States, in recent United States history, attempted to interrupt the constitutional processes of a democratic government?

A. You mean the last four or five years? No, I can't think of any.

Q. What did you have in mind, in Chile, when you said that you wanted the C.I.A., or you wanted America to make the economy scream?

A. Chile, of course, is interested in obtaining loans from international organizations where we have a vote, and I indicated that wherever we had a vote, where Chile was involved, that unless there were strong considerations on the other side that we would vote against them. I felt that as far as Chile was concerned, since they were expropriating American property, they expropriated, Allende did. . . . it took him only three years to expropriate 275 firms.

Q. He hadn't done that on September the 15th.

A. I know. I know, but I knew that was coming. All you had to do was

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read his campaign speeches. There wasn't any question but that he was cooperating with Castro. There wasn't any question that Chile was being used by some of Castro's agents as a base to export terrorism to Argentina, to Bolivia, to Brazil. We knew all of that. I am not here to defend, and will not defend repression by any government,

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Agnew, Chile and His Decision to Resign

be it a friend of the United States, or one that is opposed to the United States. But, in terms of national security, in terms of our own self-interest, the right-wing dictatorship, if it is not exporting its revolution, if it is not interfering with its neighbors, if it is not taking action against the United States, it is therefore of no security concern to us. It is of a human-rights concern. A left-wing dictatorship, on the other hand, we find that they do engage in trying to export their subversion to other countries, and that does involve our security interests. As far as the situation in Chile was concerned, he was engaging in dictatorial actions which eventually would have allowed him to impose a dictatorship. That was his goal.

C.I.A. on Allende Future

Q. But, the C.I.A. reported, shortly before his death, that he was no threat to democracy; he wasn't planning to abolish democracy and he was going to lose in the next election.

A. Based on the C.I.A.'s record of accuracy in their reports, I would take all of that with a grain of a salt. They didn't even predict that he was going to win this time. They didn't predict what was going to happen in Cambodia. They didn't predict there was going to be the Yom Kippur War. As far as the C.I.A. was concerned, at that point, and now I understand it is being improved, and I trust it will be under the new leadership, at that point it's intelligence estimates were not very good on Latin America. I also go back to the point that in terms of what we really have here in Chile. I remember months before Allende came to power in 1970. An Italian businessman came to call on me in the Oval Office and he said, "If Allende should win the election in Chile, and then you have Castro in Cuba, what you will in effect have in Latin America is a red sandwich, and eventually it will all be red." And that's what we confronted.

Q. But that's madness of him to say that.

A. It isn't madness at all. It shows somebody cutting through the hypocritical double standard of those who can see all the dangers on the right and don't look at the dangers on the left.

Q. . . . What I really wanted to say was that Allende won the election as you said, albeit with 36 percent. We wanted to prevent him coming to power. In retrospect, don't you think that the Chileans were a better judge of what would preserve their democracy than you were?

A. Who do you think overthrew Allende? You see, there's the point you've missed. Allende, at the time he had been in charge of the government, with his programs that destroyed agriculture, with his programs of confiscating property and discouraging foreign investment, because obviously I wasn't

going to approve any American loans to companies to invest in Chile when it might be expropriated. That was one of the economic squeezes we put on them. Allende lost eventually. Allende was overthrown eventually, not because of anything that was done from the outside, but because his system didn't work in Chile and Chile decided to throw it out.

How Nixon Sees Regime

Q. If you had to choose a word to describe the Pinochet regime, what adjective would you use? Brutal?

A. Well, when they are brutal, yes. When they are dictatorial, I would say they are dictatorial. I would also have to, on the other side, indicate that they are non-Communist, and that they are not enemies of the United States, and that they do not threaten any of their neighbors.

Q. When the Attorney General told you (on Aug. 7, 1973), that there was a strong case against Agnew, what did you say?

A. I told Richardson what I had earlier had Haig convey to him, that I felt that in this case, that he, Richardson, had to be very sure not only that the case was strong, because of the rights of the individual involved and the position that he held, but very sure that he, Richardson, was not in a position where it would look as if this were a political motivation on his part.

I mean, there was no secret Richardson and Agnew didn't like each other. There was no secret that Richardson had ambitions to be Vice President or President in 1976, and earlier if possible if somebody had picked him. But on the other hand I didn't want his judgment to be the judgment, which I would use as the final word in making recommendations to Agnew or in discussions with Agnew. And I suggested at that point that Henry Petersen, the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division, a Democrat, conduct an independent investigation.

A Six-Weeks Investigation

Q. And then Henry Petersen did conduct an investigation. Yes, we investigated as a matter of fact which took about six weeks. Petersen reported to me on September the 25th, Petersen in his very detached way and not in anger, but in sorrow, said that it was his professional judgment that the



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Mr. Nixon making farewell speech, Aug. 9, 1974. Daughter Julie is at left.
"I was just tired, terribly tired, mentally, emotionally, physically"

charges first were serious and second that they could be and were going to be corroborated. He went on to say, and also Richardson went on to say, that, the charges were of such magnitude that he would have to recommend, and Richardson strongly said this, too, that they would have to recommend prison sentence for Agnew.

I won't sum up what they said the charges were, that's all been in the record. I remember Richardson saying there were 40 counts or something like that, but after Sept. 25th, the day that I met with Petersen and Richardson and got the Petersen report, as I would call it, after that day I told them then what had been my belief, that under the circumstances, that I didn't think that Agnew could or should be tried by a jury over in Baltimore; that he should be treated as the Constitution requires a President to be treated when he's in office. In other words, that he can be tried only by the Senate after an indictment, in effect, or an Article of Impeachment had been approved by the House.

So I got in Bork, the Solicitor General, a great Constitutional lawyer, and that was about three days later on the 28th of September, and Bork said that it was his opinion, as he interpreted the Constitution, that since the Constitution did not specifically include the Vice President in the clause with regard to impeachment being the only recourse against a President, that, therefore, a Vice President could be tried on charges by the regular court.

When we got this news, then frankly, Agnew had come to the point, and he realized that he had no alternative but to do everything that he possibly could to avoid going into a court.

And therefore the resignation option became absolutely indispensable. The point here was not that resignation would lead to no charges, but the point is that resignation was a step that if it were not taken, would probably mean that he would get a tougher rap.

Agnew Maintained Innocence

Q. When you met on October the 9th, the farewell meeting, did he still maintain his total innocence?

A. Yes, there was not a time during the course of this whole period that I met with Agnew that he did not maintain that he was innocent.

Now, we have to understand what

he was talking about. What he was talking about was being innocent of bribery. He said that for years contractors who did business with the state of Maryland contributed to expenses that the Governor, or the county official, or what have you, might have. That was common practice.

But, Agnew always made the point, that there was never an instance where a contract did not go to a highly qualified individual. In other words, his point being that he did not, in effect, accept money from somebody who would not have otherwise been entitled to the contract. I was very pragmatic. In my view, it didn't really make any difference. There wasn't any question after hearing Petersen and his version that he was frankly going to get it. So under the circumstances, it became an irrelevant point. I'm not going to sit here and judge Spiro Agnew. I know that he feels he didn't get enough support from the White House. I know that he feels that some people were undercutting him. I know that he has bitter feelings, certainly, about me in this respect. All that I can say is that it was a no-win proposition.

Q. When you say that he has bitter feelings toward the White House and toward you, does that mean, really, there's been no contact with you since he left office?

A. No, we have not had any contact.

Q. There's one question that a great many people have asked me about Mrs. Nixon's recovery. How is Mrs. Nixon, in fact?

A. Mrs. Nixon is coming along remarkably well. She's been through a very difficult time, but she has a strong character. That's what you have to have when you have a stroke. And this will please all of our audience who remember her, all of the paralysis is gone from her face. And all of it from her left leg. She still has some in her left arm, and the doctors think that within a few months, that will be gone. So, she will have a complete recovery. I've mentioned the stories that have been written, and some written by some book authors, and so forth, which reflected even on her on occasion, and what her alleged weaknesses were. They haven't helped, and, as far as my attitude toward the press is concerned, I respect some, but for those who write history as fiction on third-hand knowledge, I have nothing but utter contempt. And, I will never forgive them. Never.

And, let me say another thing on that point. You have to bear in mind, you and the media, you and your

friends in America, not in Britain, but you have here a very interesting decision of the Supreme Court, Sullivan vs. New York Times, which is really a license for the media to lie.

And, so my point is: let's just not have all this sanctimonious business about the poor repressed press. I went through it through all the years I've been in public life, and they never have been repressed as far as I am concerned.

Nixon Assets Abroad

Q. To keep the record straight on the other point you mentioned, you don't have any assets abroad?

A. I not only don't have any assets abroad, I never had a foreign bank account in my life. I sold all my stocks. I didn't have many, much in stocks when I entered the Presidency. I owned only real estate during the time I was President. I had no outside income whatever while I was President.

And yet I think most of our audience probably think I'm sitting here with a whole bundle of cash some place that people have paid me through this year. I have nothing but what I have earned.

Q. A Congressional committee on taxation that looked at the Nixon tax returns for the years 1969 to 1972, con-



United Press International

Vice President Agnew announcing his resignation, Oct. 10, 1973.

"... he was frankly going to get it ... it was a no-win proposition."

cluded that Mr. Nixon had underpaid the Government by some \$432,000. Most of the underpayment resulted from a single transaction. Mr. Nixon claimed that in 1969 he gave papers, dating from his days as Vice President, to the National Archives worth nearly \$600,000. Because of this donation, he was allowed, under the then tax law, a massive reduction in the taxes he had to pay. But, the Congressional committee uncovered the fact that a deed purportedly conveying the papers, and dated March 1969, had actually been signed in April 1970, more than three months after the law had been changed to make such donations no longer profitable. Moreover, the name had been signed on the backdated deed, not by Mr. Nixon himself, but by a White House aide, Edward Morgan, who has since been jailed for his role in the transaction.

A. All I did was this: I ordered the papers to be delivered to the archives. I said, "Now, follow the proper proce-

dures and take whatever deductions the law allows." That's the last instruction I gave. The instructions, as far as I recall were oral, and the only action that I took was to sign the tax return with no knowledge whatever that it was not in order.

Pressure for Pardons

Q. How much pressure was there on you, either from them or just from your own thinking, to grant people like Haldeman and Ehrlichman pardons before you left? I mean, had you ever given them any indication that you might, or?

A. The only discussion of that came two days before I made my resignation speech and after I had made my resignation decision; it was on Tuesday that I received a call from Haldeman and followed by a letter, and when Ehrlichman called, members of my family, I think Julie, and passed on their strong recommendations that I pardon everybody involved in Watergate, of course, including themselves, before I left office, and at the same time, couple that with a general amnesty for the Vietnam draft-dodgers, as well as those who had been deserters. Well the second part of it, of course, was totally out of the question as far as I was concerned.

Q. Reading the account of the last days, it seems almost as though your most emotional moment was, in fact, on the Wednesday evening in that heart-to-heart that you had with Henry Kissinger.

A. Yes. It was, perhaps, as an emotional moment as I have had. Henry came over and we began to reminisce and we reminisced about all the great decisions we'd participated in. He said, "Well, Mr. President, I just (wanted) you to know," he said, "It is a crime that you are leaving office. It's a disservice to the peace in the world which you helped to build, and history is going to record that you were a great President."

I said, "Henry, that depends on who writes the history."

And, then he said, "I just want you to know that if they harass you after you leave office, I am going to resign, and I'm going to tell the reason why."

And, his voice broke and I said, "Henry, you're not going to resign. Don't ever talk that way again." I said, "The country needs you. Jerry Ford needs you and you have got to stay and continue the work that we have begun, because if we don't have continuity, everything that we have done could be lost."

And then, Henry said, "Well, that's the way I feel about it."

And at that time, I just can't stand to see somebody else with tears in their eyes, crying. And, I started to cry. And here we were, two grown men who'd been through mountain-top experiences and great crises and so forth. We were crying.

When that was over I said, "Well, Henry, let us understand, you're going to stay on. Never talk about that resigning again." And, I put my arm around him and said, "You've got to go home now. Go back. Go over to the office, and I've got to work on this speech."

And, then on impulse, I said, "You know, let me tell you something that I've never told anybody before. About something I've done. There we were in the Lincoln sitting room. I said, "When I've had these really tough decisions I've come into this room for the purpose of praying."

I said, "Now, Henry, I know you and I are both alike in one way. We don't wear our religion on our sleeve. I'm a Quaker and you're a Jew and neither of us is very orthodox, but I think both of us probably have a deeper religious sensitivity than some of those that are so loudly proclaiming it all the time." I said, "If you don't mind, could we just have a moment of silent prayer?"

So we knelt down in front of that table where Lincoln had signed the

Emancipation Proclamation: where I used to pray. And, then we got up. We were only there a minute.

Q. Did either of you speak?

A. No. Not a word. That's not the Quaker fashion.

Q. No it isn't. There was one report that afterwards you called him and said, "Henry, please don't ever tell anyone that I cried and that I was not strong." Did you do that?

A. Yeah, I did call him. I felt, you know, and probably I may have been wrong about this in terms of my appraisal, but I thought Henry might have been a bit embarrassed about kneeling down and praying, and frankly, I was a bit embarrassed about having even asked him to do so. And of course, I don't like to show my emotions. And he doesn't like to show his, either. And under the circumstances, I just by impulse picked up the phone and I said, "Henry, if you don't mind, why don't we just keep that incident to ourselves."

As He Left Capital

Q. And, can you remember what your feelings were as that helicopter took off from Washington? What were you thinking?

A. The thoughts that ran through my mind were, were mixed. My first feelings, I mean, I have to admit, I was just tired, terribly tired, mentally, emotionally, physically. I'd had only four hours of sleep the night before, in fact, somebody's figured out I think over the four nights prior to the resignation, I had a total of about 18 hours of sleep, which is about four and half hours a night.

There had been very great emotional strain, with the family, with the staff, preparing the speech, meeting with the leaders; and, just the strain of thinking about what I was doing; what it meant to the country, what it meant to our friends, what it meant to the world, what it meant to the American political system, what it meant to the family, and what it meant to me. I admit, I thought of what it meant to me, too.

All of these things interreact. I had just given Julie the thumbs up and speaking to noone in particular, but only to herself, I heard Pat, Mrs. Nixon say, "It's so sad. It's so sad."

Q. Were there any discussions on the subject of pardon, in fact, between you or your representatives and Vice President Ford and his representatives before you left office?

A. Absolutely not. No. No. President Ford has answered that question under oath, and I consider that I'm responding here, in effect, under oath. There were not such discussions. The White House lawyer, Mr. Buchen, got a hold of Jack Miller, who was my attorney; informed them of it; and Miller flew out to California and talked to me about it. It was a terribly difficult decision for me. Almost as difficult as re-

signing. I said, "A signing of this pardon, acceptance of this pardon, is going to be interpreted as a confession of guilt." Well, Miller's answer, as a good lawyer, I guess he is, was that, he said, "First," he said, "a pardon isn't necessarily an admission of guilt." Of course, that's legalistic, pettifogging. It isn't, of course. Sometimes, people are pardoned because there's a question about guilt, but my point was: it didn't make any difference. I said, "Most people, including even President Ford, considered that the pardon was, in effect, an admission of guilt."

I sat for an hour in the chair by myself; I asked Miller to leave the room; and here in my office in San Clemente; and, I called him back in and I said, "Well, I will sign it." I said, "I'm not sure that it's the right thing to do because the process has to go forward." And then he, Miller's a rather sensitive man, apparently, and he could rather sense that I wasn't quite up to par physically. I didn't realize that I was quite beaten down mentally, and frankly, I was so emotionally drawn; mentally beaten down; physically not up to par; that I said, "Well, ok, I'll do it." And, so I signed it. And it had exactly the effect that I expected. It exacerbated the issue. It was embarrassing to Ford. It cost him a great deal. I called him a couple of days afterwards, or the day afterwards, and I said I was terribly concerned about the criticism he was getting and I was sorry that he was receiving such criticism, and he was so very nice about it. He said, "You know," he says, "I don't give a damn about the criticism. I did it because it was right. That's the way he is."

'Resignation Worse Than Death?'

Q. And, did you, in a sense, feel that resignation was worse than death?

In some ways. I had nothing more to contribute to the causes I so deeply believed in. And also, I felt that resignation meant that I would be in a position of, of not having really anything to live for. I mean, you see, people, the average person, and I understand this, I do not consider myself to be other than an average person, and none of us should really. We all think we're a little smarter than we are, but you feel that, "Well, gee isn't it just great to, you know, to have enough money to afford to live in a very nice house and to be able to play golf and to have nice parties, and to wear good clothes, and shoes, and suits, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, or travel if you want to."

They don't know life, because what makes life mean something is purpose; a goal; the battle; the struggle; even if you don't win it.

I can only say, that no one in the world, and no one in our history could know how I felt. No one can know how it feels to resign the Presidency of the United States. Is that Punishment enough? Oh, probably not. But, whether it is or isn't, as I have said earlier in our interview, we have to live with not only the past, but for the future, and I don't know what the future brings, but whatever it brings, I'll still be fighting.

'I felt that resignation meant that I would be in a position of not having really anything to live for.'