

**The original documents are located in Box 131, folder “Apr. 30, 1974 - Press Conference re: President and Tapes” of the Gerald R. Ford Vice Presidential Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.



PRESS CONFERENCE 4-30-74

Q - Mr. Vice President, do you think the action the President took last night goes far enough?

A - Yes, I do. I would hope that now that the President has made some 1000 or more pages of transcripts available and that he has agreed to permit the Chairman and the ranking Republican of that Committee to listen to the tapes and to compare the tapes with the transcripts and to further permit himself to answer interrogatories and to answer questions from the Chairman and the ranking Republican. I think that is a full disclosure.

Q - But the Committee had subpoenaed the tapes themselves?

A - Yes, but in effect the President has given the tapes to the Committee, 1200 pages of transcripts that took, as I understand it, about a month to actually transcribe. There is the evidence. He has made it available and if they want verification of it they have the right through the Chairman and through the ranking Republican member.

Q - Mr. Ford, do you really think this will quell the clamor among some of the more liberal Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee for impeachment?

A - I don't think you could satisfy some members of the committee by any action of the White House. I don't think it would change their view in some instances; they have already publicly said they were for impeachment. Obviously they are not interested in the evidence and the facts; they have already made up their mind.

Q - Don't you think, though, the President may still by defying the limitations himself of the Judiciary Committee's investigation because it was the White House that edited those transcripts?

A - As I said a moment ago, the President has made the tapes available to Chairman Rodino and to Congressman Hutchinson. They can sit and listen to the tapes with a copy of the transcript right before them. They can read the transcript as they listen to the tapes. I can't imagine a more accurate way of verifying the validity of the tapes.

Q - Sir, do you think this is the beginning of a counter-offensive by the President to take his case to the public?

A - I think it is a very proper method by which the President can make the facts available to the ultimate authority which is the American people. It is my understanding that all of these transcriptions will be made available to the public in general. I am told that copies will be made available in total to the press so that they can read for themselves and not get portions or part relayed to them by the staff or by members of the Committee. I think it is very wholesome thing that the President has made all of this material available to the American people and to the news media, to members of Congress as a whole. With that information, I think the Committee ought to proceed

to try and bring this matter to a conclusion one way or the other as soon as possible.

Q - Wouldn't it have been helpful if the President had done this a year ago?

A - I won't argue that. As I think many of you know, I have been urging that maximum effort be made in getting as much evidence, as much material out as possible. I think it would have been better sooner, but the facts are here in all of the documentation. And it is documentation which can be verified. And I come to the conclusion after reading a number of summaries and after talking to people who have had the full opportunity to listen to the tapes and read the transcripts that the President in my opinion is completely innocent and any fair appraisal of the documentation will show that he should be exonerated.

Q - Is it the President's hope, sir, and yours, that the public now will bring pressure on their Congressmen to vote in favor of the President on the impeachment proposal?

A - I think what the President was trying to do was to make sure that the American people know that the evidence has been laid before the Committee and now the American people will expect their Members of the House and maybe at a later date the members of the Senate, they'll have the information there, and they should judge the case on the facts and not on partisanship and not on any other emotional issue.

Q - Mr. Vice President, Speaker Albert said today that we operate on the basis of the best evidence, and by best evidence, his implication was the tapes. Would you say that the President is giving the best evidence?

A - He is, through the verification process. The verification process being the opportunity of Chairman Rodino, a Democrat, and the ranking Republican, Mr. Hutchinson, the opportunity to sit and listen to the tapes and have a transcript right before them. They can verify whether the language in the tapes coincides with the language in the transcript. I can't imagine a better and quicker way for this whole matter to be resolved.

Q - Mr. Vice President, do you have any indication yet in any way of what reaction the public is to the President's speech?

A - I haven't had an opportunity to get any reading from the public as a whole. But it would be my impression that when a person opens up the book and puts all of the evidence before the people as well as the Congress as well as the news media, that then the American people will believe that the matter ought to be decided on the facts and not on any peripheral issue.



- Q - Mr. Vice President, is there a chance that the President's releasing of the tapes will hurt him as much as anything else? I mean, it is a gamble he took. Might it not backfire? He himself said they could prove embarrassing.
- A - Well, there might be certain limited portions that would raise a question or two. But when you look at the categorical instances where Mr. Dean testified before the Ervin Committee on one point or another or another and then see what the facts are when he is actually discussing matters with the President, it proves beyond a doubt that Mr. Dean is again telling less than the truth as he apparently did in the Stans and Mitchell case.
- Q - What about the particular point where the President said in his conversation with Mr. Dean, "Well, that would be wrong!"? I have seen that and that could be read both ways. Saying that could be wrong only with regard to clemency or with regard to the whole coverup.
- A - But the main point throughout his almost inevitably or invariably I should say, Mr. Dean is contradicted, or contradicts himself, based on the testimony that he gave before the Ervin Committee. There are many, many instances where Mr. Dean was either telling less than the truth before the Ervin Committee when you compare what his discussion was with the President on the several dates in the White House.
- Q - Mr. Vice President, do you think the President's speech last night will make this a strictly partisan issue? There is speculation that it will.
- A - I would hope not and I do have faith in the Members of the House whether they are Democrats or Republicans now that they have the facts. That they will judge the case on the basis of the facts, on the basis of the evidence. I would hope that there would be no partisanship and I have enough trust in my former colleagues in the House and I think the overwhelming majority of them will act as a jury and a jury looks at the facts and makes a decision and in this case if they do look at the facts, the President is innocent and ought to be exonerated.
- Q - Mr. Vice President, you state you have read summaries of the . Have you read these transcripts or do you plan to read these transcripts?
- A - Now that they are in the public domain, it is my intention to read them. I have read the summaries, but I haven't had an opportunity to read 1100 pages since last night.



Q - By summary, do you mean the summary prepared by Mr. St. Clair and the others?

A - That's correct. The material prepared by Mr. St. Clair. And he prepared it, of course, on the basis of the tapes and the transcriptions and that material is very helpful in that it proves beyond any doubt whatsoever that Mr. Dean was telling far, far less than the truth when he testified before the Ervin Committee.

Q - But Vice President, you sound as if this material that has been turned over today is the only material the President will supply. But the Judiciary Committee has ask for tapes of more conversations. Will the President supply any more material, or is this it?

A - The President in his speech last night did not comment on that question. I can't tell you what the decision will be, but the President made no reference to the other some 150 tapes which is obviously a fishing expedition, but the decision on that will be made subsequently by the President.

Q - Mr. Vice President, do you have any thoughts on the propriety of the President's taping the conversations in the first place?

A - That's a very interesting question and I don't think it has been discussed enough. I, of course, knew nothing about the taping process. But I did know and everybody else who ever was at a meeting at the White House with the President during this span of time knew that somebody was sitting in the room, they were obvious, they were writing verbatim notes. So that everybody who was at such a meeting knew that somebody on the President's staff was making an item by item note on what was being said by various people. So in my opinion, it really didn't make any difference whether conversations were taped or not because all of us knew that the conversations were being recorded by somebody who was taping the actual notes and that person was in my sight and in the sight of other people.

Q - Mr. Vice President, that doesn't take care of the telephone calls, does it?

A - No, not the telephone calls. But I think I was referring to the instances where I was present, be it at meetings and in most of the cases, I think the meetings were the important matter.

Q - Still, doesn't the President have the obligation to inform these people that these tape recordings are being made?

A - Well, I suppose if you argue that, then Mr. Johnson should have had the same view and Mr. Kennedy should have had the same view and as far as I know neither Mr. Kennedy or Mr. Johnson ever informed anybody when they were taping.



Q - Mr. Vice President, if the Judiciary Committee finds the President's response insufficient in as much as he hasn't replied to the subpoena or hasn't supplied all of the tapes, has the President played his last card?

A - I am not going to speculate on that. Here is the evidence, 1100 pages of it. I think the committee has some obligation before they go on any fishing expedition to take the time to read those transcripts. It is my understanding that the President spent some 40 hours in the last several weeks going over these himself. And, I would think any Member of the House who took an oath of office ought to have the same obligation if he is going to vote yes or no on an impeachment which is a very serious matter.

