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PRESS CONFERENCE CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA, MAY 29, 1974

Q - Mr. Vice President-----
Isn't all of this resistance going to further enhance chances that the House is going to vote impeachment?

A - Well, I've said that it could be harmful in that it would present an institutional issue rather than a factual issue. Let me just take for a moment if I might the problem that the Committee has vis-a-vis the White House. It seems to me that the House Committee on the Judiciary would be well advised to proceed on the 19 tapes that they have and the transcripts of some 20 of the other tapes, and in addition, and I think this is vitally important, there are individuals who can contribute significantly by testimony before the Committee on the Judiciary. John Dean - he ought to be there to be interrogated by not only the Committee but by Mr. St. Clair. There are other potential witnesses that ought to be there for the purpose of being interrogated. It seems to me that that is the proper procedure. They use all the evidence they have plus the witnesses that are available and if they then need somemore and they can tie it down to something relevant to the definition of impeachment in the Constitution, I would hope there could be some compromise.

Q - Mr. Vice President, when you were here May 1, you suggested that the House Judiciary had as much information as they needed at that time. Since then lately you have indicated though that perhaps there could be a compromise and have said that you have even suggested that to the President. How do you explain that apparent change in your position as far as the importance of the unreleased tapes?

A - I don't think there is any change in my position. I have said, I think from the very outset, that the 19 tapes plus the transcripts of 23 more, was enough evidence for the Committee to proceed on and get moving on. They are to some extent doing that. But until they are all through with the tapes and the transcripts and the witnesses that I've suggested, I don't think there ought to be any further delivery because it's possible they'll have all the evidence when they get through with what they have.

Q - Mr. Vice President, as you may be aware, Rev. Graham issued a statement yesterday saying that he could not but deplore the moral tone implied by the transcripts. He was profoundly disappointed and he thought that America had lost its moral compass. Could I ask you two questions. One - You have said that the transcripts don't confer sainthood on anyone. Could you go beyond that in what you feel about the moral tone and secondly, Rev. Graham saying this, what does that tell you about what Americans in general are getting out of the transcripts or what they've done to public support for the President?

A - I think my comment that the transcripts do not confer sainthood on anybody is about as illustrative of my view concerning the transcripts and I see no need to go beyond that statement which is pretty broad in its inference and implication. I don't think that the country has lost its sense of morality. I think we're going through a very difficult period in Washington, I have indicated that before, but it's my judgment that we're very fortunate that the institutions we have both in the Courts and the Congress are strong enough to take care of any of the problems that have arisen and I have great faith in the basic morality of the American public.

Q - Mr. Vice President, politically with this coming from Billy Graham, doesn't this really erode some of the remaining support, some of the strong remaining support that the President has?

A - I have no way of interpreting what Dr. Graham's comments will have on the Members of the House. That's an individual decision. I think we will have to wait and see and maybe you can interrogate the individual members of the House to get their reaction. I'm no longer there and I can't vote so what I say really is an inappropriate way for me to pass judgment.

Q - Well, on that line sir, you did play gold yesterday with Tip O'Neill. Over that 18 holes, did you talk at all say about a head count in the House or did he give you any thoughts about sentiment for impeachment in the House?

A - We were both so preoccupied with our problems on the golf course that neither one of us spent any time talking about legislation or -

Q - Mr. Vice President, what is the message from Senator Fulbright's loss in the primary yesterday?

A - It appears to me that the Governor was a very, very popular man, an attractive candidate and Senator Fulbright, after a period of 30 years lost contact perhaps with many of the voters, and when you have that kind of situation, it seems to me that the results are almost inevitable.

Q - Does this indicate to you that there is a sentiment around the country to through all the incumbents out?

A - Well, I thought that might be the net result of whats happened in Washington, but there have been some other illustrations where incumbents, both Democrats and Republicans, have survived their primaries and so I don't think you can come to that conclusion just based on the Bumpers-Fulbright result in Arkansas.

Q - Mr. Vice President, Senator Goldwater says it is becoming tougher to defend the President. Do you feel the same way about it?

A - Not at all. I have repeatedly said and I will repeat again, I think the President is innocent of any involvement of the actual break in of the Democratic National Headquarters. I think the preponderance of the evidence, the overwhelming _____ of the evidence indicates that the President is innocent of any coverup involvement and therefore I find no difficulty at all in supporting the President. I think on legislative matters and foreign policy issues, certainly on foreign policy, the President has done a superb job and I think any member of Congress, Democratic or Republican would have to agree with that. On domestic issues, I have said and I'll repeat that he has more pluses than minuses. I have great faith in the President.

Q - -----
Do you have any specific suggestions to make to do something about inflation?

A - I think we're getting a handle on inflation. The last report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that the increase on inflation on a national basis had dropped about 50 percent from the previous month and we had a report yesterday

in the Cabinet meeting from the Secretary of Agriculture which was optimistic concerning food costs to the American housewife, and I think the problems of energy are being worked out and energy has contributed significantly to the cost of living increases. And now that the greater supply of crude oil and some of the other things that are being done in the energy field, I think inflation-wise, we're going to do better.

Q - Do you think that will be an issue in the campaign this fall?

A - Oh, I'm sure it will be an issue because anytime you get over 3% or 4% increase in the cost of living, you're bound to have that an issue. But, I think also - and I think this is a fair statement - the Congress to a substantial degree is also responsible for the increases in the cost of living -- by their policy of deficit spending, forcing the President to spend more money than he had ask for; so both Congress and the White House have to share responsibility in this area.

Q - Mr. Vice President, in about six months, I think you have traveled about 75,000 miles. What is the purpose of all the traveling?

A - My purpose in a lot of travel is - No. 1, to try and partially satisfy the requests. We get about 500 invitations a week to speak various places and I think its the function also of the Vice President to get out and speak up on behalf of the President, the Administration. I think its my function, like other Vice Presidents, to try to help the political party, the Republican party in my case. So I have no personal motive except that I think this is part of the job.

Q - We're apparently near a settlement now in the Middle East. But this is a direct turnabout from a couple of days ago when they seemed to be on the verge of breaking down. Do you know what issues changed the tide?

A - I think I know what issues have been settled. I think the line has been decided on. I think all but one issue have been settled. That one issue is a tough one, but I'm not at liberty to give you the details about that. I'm always an optimist and I think having achieved probably 90 some percent of the differences, I convinced that the goodwill of both the Israelis and the Syrains will prevail and hopefully there will be a settlement.

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