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PRESS CONFERENCE
FORD HOME
July 27, 1974

Q --- How much contact did you have with the Republicans on the Committee and what did you tell them to help persuade them to agree with your view?

A --- I don't think I in anyway whatsoever urged any member of that Committee on the Republican side to vote one way or another. I did not hesitate in their presence or otherwise, however, at meetings where you or other members of the press were present to express my view, at least in my judgment, that the evidence was inadequate. It was insufficient to charge the President with an impeachable offense.

Q --- You said the margin in the House has narrowed you think. Do you think it will narrow even more now that this article has been voted up by the Judiciary Committee?

A --- It's possible, but as I said earlier, by having every Democrat on the Committee vote for the impeachment, it tends to make it a partisan issue.

Q --- ~~Did~~ Even if one-third of the Republicans voted for it?

A --- Well, the fact that every one of the Democrats voted for it lends credence to the partisan issue even though some Republicans -----

Q --- Have you talked to the President since the vote?

A --- No, I have not.

Q --- You said--You've had some harsh things to say about the Committee in just the past couple of days. One of them was that this was largely, I think you said, trying to overturn the results of 1972. Now that it's been done, do you think that was the main motive of the Committee?

A --- Since we've chatted earlier in one of our press conferences in the last several, I've looked at the voting record in my own case and I think 7 or 8 of the Democrats on that Committee voted against me. I don't think they voted against me because of any charges of any unethical or illegal facts, if they did, they never expressed it. The only reason they voted against me was for partisan reasons or for philosophical differences. I think this had an impact in the vote against the President. They were voting on a partisan or political philosophical reasons, at least the ones who voted against me because they know I share the political philosophy of the President both in achieving peace and attempting to achieve the right balance in our society domestically.

Q --- Another thing you said about the Committee was the President deserved better. Now that the vote has been taken do you feel the President was unfairly treated by the Committee?

A --- I think the Committee made a serious mistake in not making an honest attempt to specify, to be definitive in the charges against the President. The 38 members of the Committee who have had the benefit of the long hearings and the evidence presented to them ought to after that laborously experience they've gone through should have presented in detail to the other 400+ members ~~who~~ of the House, the reasons in some degree of definitiveness, the particular charges that they were talking about. But they would never define them. They would never be specific. They would never define them so that anybody who would be dependent would have the benefit of what they should respond to. And as one of the members said a jaywalker has the benefit of being specific, time, place and otherwise. I think the President ought to have the same consideration.

Q --- Sir, you said tonight and you said on several recent occasions you think the gap is narrower in the House now. If there is a gap it has to be in favor or against. Which way do you see it? How many votes?

A --- I'll leave the gap definit-----

Q --- Well, is the President ahead or behind in the size of the gap?

A --- I think it's pretty close to being even-----

Q --- Will you be surprised if the full House votes impeachment?

A --- On the facts, yes. Cause I don't think the facts justify the impeachment.

Q --- How about the realities?

A --- Well, I'm talking about the facts. Since every Democrat on the Committee voted to impeach and since the Democrats tend to have a majority in the House, I suspect that the circumstances are very difficult. I hope it's not a partisan affair. I hope it is predicated on the facts but we have to be realistic and we'll have to wait and see.

Q --- May I ask you this sir. There's a story in Washington tonight that Congressman Rhodes, who's a good friend of yours (Very good friend). Well, perhaps, have you talked to him tonight since the vote?

A --- I have just finished dinner with my family and I couldn't wait to get out to talk to all of you (laughter) I hurried and I made it and I haven't had a chance to talk with anybody.

Q --- The story in Washington is that Hohn Rhodes is now beginning to think that perhaps there is evidence to impeach the President and he's beginning to think that he doesn't want to be the leader of the President's defense in the House.

A --- John Rhodes is the Republican leader in the House, he was duly elected by the Republicans and he'll have to make the decision in this instance.

Q --- Have you heard that story and do you know if there's any substance to it?

A --- I haven't heard the story. I'm not at all informed of it.

Q --- WOULD you be surprised if he decided (interruption by newsmen)

A --- I will not pass judgment on Mr. Rhodes. He is the Republican elected leader and he in the capacity has to make the judgment.

Q --- (Several ~~xxx~~ newsmen asking questions at same time concerning mr. rhodes)

A --- I'm not going to Speculate to the third degree Mr. Rhodes will make that decision. He is a very ~~capable~~ capable and articulate person. He's the ~~ix~~ elected Republican leader and Mr. Rhodes will made-----

Q --- What do you feel President Nixon should do now to avoid impeachment?

A --- I think Mr. Nixon should do as he has done indicate as clearly as he can that he is innocent and that he's going to carry the case to the ultimate authority-----

Q --- What do you expect the move to be in the Congress once it gets there. You know these people. How do you expect it all to go?

A --- I really can't tell you. It'll be a very hard decision to make.

Q --- Mr. Vice President -----you are a heartbeat away from the Presidency. Do you feel any closer to the presidency?

A --- No, I still have the I've had before
I will continue
to Do the best job I can as Vice President, at least that is the position
I think I will hold until January 1976.

Q --- Mr. Ziegler indicated today that there was a certain amount of anxiety on the President's part . You say you haven't talked to him yet. Are you ~~not~~ planning on calling him and giving him your support?

A --- I don't think there is any doubt about my faith in the innocence in the President. Frankly, I just finished dinner with my family for the first time in ~~two~~ two or three or four nights. I came out here to be cooperative with all of you with the press. I really haven't had time to think about it