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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

## GRANTING PARDON TO RICHARD NIXON

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## A PROCLAMATION

Richard Nixon became the thirty-seventh President of the United States on January 20, 1969 and was reelected in 1972 for a second term by the electors of forty-nine of the fifty states. His term in office continued until his resignation on August 9, 1974.

Pursuant to resolutions of the House of Representatives, its Committee on the Judiciary conducted an inquiry and investigation on the impeachment of the President extending over more than eight months. The hearings of the Committee and its deliberations, which received wide national publicity over television, radio, and in printed media, resulted in votes adverse to Richard Nixon on recommended Articles of Impeachment.

As a result of certain acts or omissions occurring before his resignation from the Office of President, Richard Nixon has become liable to possible indictment and trial for offenses against the United States. Whether or not he shall be so prosecuted depends on findings of the appropriate grand jury and on the discretion of the authorized prosecutor. Should an indictment ensue, the accused shall then be entitled to a fair trial by an impartial jury, as guaranteed to every individual by the Constitution.

It is believed that a trial of Richard Nixon, if it became necessary, could not fairly begin until a year or more has elapsed. In the meantime, the tranquility to which this nation has been restored by the events of recent weeks could be irreparably lost by the prospects of bringing to trial a former President of the United States. The prospects of such trial will cause prolonged and divisive debate over the propriety of exposing to further punishment and degradation a man who has already paid the unprecedented penalty of relinquishing the highest elective office in the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE, I Gerald R. Ford, President of the United States, pursuant to the pardon power conferred upon me by Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution, have granted and by these presents do grant a full, free, and absolute pardon unto Richard Nixon for all offenses against the United States which he, Richard Nixon, has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 20, 1969 through August 9, 1974.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 8th day of September in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-ninth.

GERALD R. FORD



5. All resolutions of inquiry addressed to the heads of executive departments shall be reported to the House within one week after presentation.

§ 255. Resolutions of inquiry.

The House has exercised the right, from its earliest days, to call on the President and heads of departments for information. The first rule on the subject was adopted in 1820 for the purpose of securing greater care and deliberation in the making of requests. The present form of rule, in its essential features, dates from 1879 (III, 1856).

Resolutions of inquiry are usually simple rather than concurrent in form (III, 1875), and are never joint resolutions (III, 1860). A resolution authorizing a committee to request information has been treated as a resolution of inquiry (III, 1860). It has been considered proper to use the word "request" in asking for information from the President and "direct" in addressing the heads of departments (III, 1856, footnote, 1895). It is usual for the House in calling on the President for information, especially with relation to foreign affairs, to use the equal-

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#### RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Rule XXII.

§§ 257, 258.

ying clause "if not incompatible with the public interest" (II, 1547; III, 1896-1901; V, 5759; VI, 436). But in some instances the House has made its inquiries of the President without condition, and has even made the inquiry imperative (III, 1896-1901). Resolutions of inquiry are delivered under direction of the Clerk (III, 1879) and are answered by subordinate officers of the Government either directly or through the President (III, 1908-1910).

The practice of the House gives to resolutions of inquiry a privileged status. Thus, they are privileged for report and consideration at any time after their reference to a committee (III, 1870; VI, 413, 414), but not before (III, 1857), and are in order for consideration only on motion directed to be made by the committee reporting the same (VI, 413; VIII, 2310). They are privileged for consideration on "Suspension days" and take precedence of the Consent Calendar (VI, 409), but are not in order on Calendar Wednesday (VII, 896-898). And only resolutions addressed to the President and the heads of the executive departments have the privilege (III, 1861-1864; VI, 406). To enjoy the privilege a resolution should call for facts rather than opinions (III, 1872, 1873; VI, 413, 418-432), should not require investigations (III, 1872-1874; VI, 422, 427, 429, 432), and should not present a preamble (III, 1877, 1878; VI, 422, 427); but if a resolution on its face calls for facts, the Chair will not investigate the probability of the existence of the facts called for (VI, 422). However, a resolution inquiring for such facts as would inevitably require the statement of an opinion to answer such inquiry is not privileged (Speaker Longworth, Feb. 11, 1926, p. 3805).

Questions of privilege (as distinguished from privileged questions) have sometimes arisen in cases wherein the head of a department has declined to respond to an inquiry and the House has desired to demand a further answer (III, 1891; VI, 435); but a demand for a more complete reply (III, 1892) or a proposition to investigate as to whether or not there has been a failure or refusal to respond may not be presented as involving the privileges of the House (III, 1893).

Committees are required to report resolutions of inquiry back to the House within one week of the reference, and this week's time is construed to be seven legislative days (VIII, 3368; Speaker Rayburn Feb. 9, 1950, p. 1755) exclusive of either the first or last day (III, 1858, 1859). If a committee refuses or neglects to report the resolution back, the House may reach the resolution only by a motion to discharge the committee (III, 1865). The ordinary motion to discharge a committee is not privileged (VIII, 2316); but the practice

§ 253. Discharge of a committee from a resolution of inquiry.



RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

§ 550-551.

Rule XXIII.

of the House has given privilege to the motion in cases of resolutions of inquiry (III, 1866-1870). And this motion to discharge is privileged at the end of the week, even though the resolution may have been delayed in reaching the committee (III, 1871). The motion to discharge is not debatable (III, 1868; VI, 415). However, if the motion is agreed to, the resolution is debatable under the hour rule unless the previous question is ordered (VI, 416, 417).

The President having failed to respond to a resolution of inquiry, the House respectfully reminded him of the fact (III, 1890). In 1796 the House declared that its constitutional requests of the Executive for information need not be accompanied by a statement of purposes (II, 1509). As to the kind of information which may be required, especially as to the papers that may be demanded, there has been much discussion (III, 1700, 1738, 1888, 1902, 1903; VI, 402, 435). There have been several conflicts with the Executive (II, 1534, 1561; III, 1884, 1885-1889, 1894) over demands for papers and information, especially when the resolutions have called for papers relating to foreign affairs (II, 1509-1513, 1518, 1519).

6. When a bill, resolution, or memorial is introduced "by request," these words shall be entered upon the Journal and printed in the Record.

§ 550. Introduction of bills, resolutions, or memorials by request.

This rule was adopted in 1888 (IV, 3366).

It has never been the practice of the House to permit the names of the persons requesting the introduction of the bill to be printed in the Record.





HEARINGS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION,  
UNITED STATES SENATE, NINETY-THIRD CONGRESS - November 5, 1973

THE CHAIRMAN. Do you believe that a President can legally prevent, or terminate any criminal investigation or prosecution involving the President?

MR. FORD. I do not think he should, and as I think I said in response to Senator Byrd's question, when we got into executive privilege, that where you are talking about documents and data involving criminality and executive privilege, certainly the strong, strong, strong, presumption is that those documents should be made available to the prosecution, And I cannot imagine a President -- I hope that there will never be a President who will take such action.

THE CHAIRMAN. If a President resigned his office before his term expired, would his successor have the power to prevent or to terminate any investigation or criminal prosecution charges against the former President?

MR. FORD. Would he have the authority?

THE CHAIRMAN. Yes, would he have the power?

MR. FORD. I do not think the public would stand for it. I think -- and whether he has the technical authority or not, I cannot give you a categorical answer.

The Attorney General, in my opinion, with the help and support of the American people, would be the controlling factor.

THE CHAIRMAN. Do you believe that any President or Vice President of the United States should claim absolute immunity from prosecution while in office?

MR. FORD. Well, as I said a moment ago, as I understand the Constitution, a President has to be impeached and convicted before he can be prosecuted. But once he has been impeached and convicted by the Congress, then he is not immune under any circumstances to criminal prosecution. I think the same would apply as far as the Vice President is concerned.



AUGUST 1974

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
			31 JULY 1974 5:00 A.M. Return from Nevada P.M.: Golf Worcester, Mass.
4 A.M. Golf P.M. Congressman Treen Dinner  Remain overnight	5 9:00 A.M. DAV Conf. 3:00 P.M. Arrive EOB Office Staff and Scheduled Meetings P.M. Richard Nixon tape statement	6 11:00 A.M. Cabinet Meeting  P.M. Staff and Scheduled Meetings	7 Staff and Scheduled Meetings
11	12	13	14
18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28 2:30 P.M. President Ford News Conference

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8 9:00 A.M. Gen. Haig 12:30 P.M. Cong. visits. 3:30 P.M. Gen. Haig 5:00 P.M. CNO Qtrs. 8:00 P.M. Dinner - Grabers	9 8:30 A.M. James St. Clair 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Staff and Scheduled Meetings  8:00 P.M. Dinner hosted by Dave Kennerly	10 8:00 A.M. Depart for Starkville, Miss. 11:00 A.M. Jackson, Miss. 2:15 P.M. Hattiesburg, Miss. 4:30 P.M. New Orleans 5:15 Press Conference Remain overnight
15 10:00 A.M. Posthumous Medals 11:00 A.M. Meeting with President Nixon  9:00 P.M. Richard Nixon announces resignation	16 12:00 P.M. President Ford assumes office  Richard Nixon leaves office	17
22	23	24
29	30	31

# September 1974

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 LABOR DAY	3	4	5	6	7
8 11:00 a.m. Former President Nixon pardoned.	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 8:00 p.m. Press Conference	17 ROSH HASHANA	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 YOM KIPPUR	27	28
29	30					



NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF VICE PRESIDENT FORD'S SCHEDULE  
31 JULY 1974 THROUGH 8 AUGUST 1974

Wednesday, 31 July 1974

You returned from Nevada at approximately 5:00 a. m. and attended the Chowder and Marching breakfast at the Capitol Hill Club. On your return to the office you participated in the retirement ceremony of General John C. Meyer and departed shortly thereafter for a Pro-Am golf tournament at Worcester, Massachusetts with House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill. You arrived back in Washington approximately 11:00 p. m.

Thursday, August 1, 1974

Your schedule began with a 30 minute Intelligence briefing by Dave Peterson of CIA. You then met with General Haig from 9:05 until 9:50 a. m. Robert Hartmann was present during this meeting. This was followed by scheduled staff visits and appointments including congressional visits on the Hill from 12:30 to 1:30 p. m. You met with General Haig from 3:30 to 4:20 p. m. At approximately 5:00 p. m. you met with Mrs. Ford at the CNO residence for a briefing of progress and a tour of the house. You returned to the office for a short period and that evening attended a private dinner hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Graber.

Friday, August 2, 1974

You met with Mr. St. Clair at approximately 8:30 a. m. which was followed by a staff action meeting and a briefing by General Scowcroft. Following that was a Congressional briefing by Bill Timmons after which you departed for Capitol Hill for congressional visits, meeting with Senator Hugh Scott at 1:00 p. m. You had a 2:30 p. m. interview with Mr. James Reston of the New York Times and finished the day attending to regularly scheduled appointments. That evening you and Mrs. Ford attended a dinner hosted by Mr. Dave Kennerly at the Old Angler Inn Restaurant.

Saturday, August 3, 1974

You departed Andrews at 8:00 a. m. for Starkville, Mississippi to attend a rally for Congressman Hillman. You then proceeded to Jackson, Mississippi for Congressman Cochran's rally, and then on to Hattiesburg, Mississippi for a mid-afternoon rally for Congressman Lott and a 3:00 p. m. press conference. You then departed for New Orleans, Louisiana for a 5:15 press conference and an evening reception for Congressman Treen. You remained overnight in New Orleans.

Sunday, August 4, 1974

You played golf in the morning, toured the Crippled Children's Hospital in the late afternoon and then attended a private dinner with Congressman Treen that evening. You remained overnight in New Orleans.

Monday, August 5, 1974

You addressed the Disabled American Veterans Conference in the morning and then departed New Orleans arriving at your office at approximately 3:10 p. m. You spent the afternoon meeting with members of your staff and had an hour meeting with Mr. Roy Ash from 4:00 to 5:00 p. m. There was nothing on your schedule for the evening of 5 August.

Tuesday, August 6, 1974

You had breakfast on Capitol Hill hosted by Congressman Clarence Brown. At 11:00 a. m. you attended a Cabinet meeting during which the President discussed the economy and other issues, but did not discuss his intentions regarding resignation. In the afternoon you completed your scheduled appointments, including interviews with Mr. Royster of the Wall Street Journal and Betty Beale of the Star News. You met with Chairman Bush for approximately 15 minutes late in the afternoon and had nothing on your schedule for the evening.

Wednesday, August 7, 1974

You did not attend the Chowder and Marching breakfast scheduled for 8:00 a. m. but spent your morning meeting with various members of your staff. At 11:15 a. m. you departed for Capitol Hill for congressional visits and an interview with Marjorie Hunter of the New York Times. Upon returning to your Executive Office Building office you were interviewed by Mr. Paul Martin, U.S. News & World Report, for one hour and 30 minutes and spent the rest of the afternoon completing your scheduled appointments until approximately 6:00 p. m. Your schedule was running late that day and an interview with Mr. Allen Otten of the Wall Street Journal, a scheduling meeting, and a Staff Action Meeting were cancelled.

Thursday, August 8, 1974

You met with White House Interns for a photo session at 8:30 a. m. and at 10:00 a. m. you went to Blair House where you awarded Posthumous Medals of Honor. Your noon departure for Los Angeles, California was cancelled, and you met with President Nixon at 11:00 a. m.



THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Wednesday, July 31, 1974

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8:00 am	OPTIONAL: C&M Breakfast Capitol Hill Club
10:00 am	Retirement Ceremony General John C. Meyer
11:00 am	Depart Andrews AFB enroute Worcester, Mass.
1:30-6:30 pm	GOLF: Pro-Am Tournament
7:15 pm	Dinner; Country Club
10:00 pm	Arrive Andrews AFB

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Thursday, August 8, 1974

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8:30 am (10 minutes)	PHOTO: White House Interns
8:45 am	Mr. Miltich
9:00 am	Mr. Hartmann
9:50 am	Posthumous Medals of Honor
11:00 am	Meeting with President Nixon

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Thursday, August 1, 1974

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8:20 am (25 minutes)	Dave Peterson (CIA)
9:00 am (50 minutes)	General Haig and Mr. Hartmann
10:00 am (50 minutes)	Mr. Kenneth Rush
11:30 am (45 minutes)	Ambassador Dinitz and Foreign Minister Alon (Israel)
12:30 pm (1 hour)	Congressional Visits/Capitol Hill
2:15 pm (30 minutes)	Paul McKraken and Mr. Seidman
2:45 pm (25 minutes)	Milton Hoffman
3:30 pm (50 minutes)	General Haig
5:00 pm (60 minutes)	CNO Quarters
8:00 pm	Private Dinner hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Graber

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Friday, August 2, 1974

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8:10 am (15 minutes)	Dave Peterson (CIA)
8:30 am (30 minutes)	Mr. James St. Clair
9:15 am (45 minutes)	Staff Action Group Meeting
10:00 am (50 minutes)	General Scowcroft
11:10 am (20 minutes)	Congressional Briefing by Bill Timmons
11:30 am (2 hours)	Personal Time (Congressional Visits)/Capitol Hill
2:30 pm (50 minutes)	Mr. James Reston
3:40 pm (10 minutes)	Dr. Roger Shields, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
4:00 pm (15 minutes)	National League of Families
4:30 pm	Secretary William Simon
5:00 pm	Mr. Hartmann
8:00 pm	Informal Dinner hosted by Mr. Dave Kennerly

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Saturday, August 3, 1974

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8:00 am	Depart Andrews AFB enroute Starkville, Miss.
10:00 am	Cong. Hilbun Rally
11:05 am	Arrive Jackson, Miss.
11:25 am	Cochran Rally VIP Reception and Luncheon
1:40 pm	Depart Jackson enroute Hattiesburg, Miss.
2:15 pm	Arrive Hattiesburg, Miss.
2:22 pm	Rally for Cong. Lott
3:02 pm (20 minutes)	Press Conference
3:45 pm	Depart Hattiesburg enroute New Orleans, La.
4:25 pm	Arrive New Orleans, La.
5:15 pm (20 minutes)	Press Conference
6:55 pm (3 hours)	Reception w/Local Officials VIP Reception for Cong. Treen Dinner for Cong. Treen
10:00 pm	Arrive Suite

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Sunday, August 4, 1974

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8:00 am  
(5 hours)

Golf

4:00 pm  
(1 hour)

Tour of Crippled Childrens Hospital

7:13 pm  
(2 hours,  
15 minutes)

Private Dinner w/Cong. Treen

9:38 pm

Arrive Suite

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Monday, August 5, 1974

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9:15 am (30 minutes)	Disabled American Veterans Conference
10:40 am	Depart New Orleans enroute Andrews AFB
2:50 pm	Arrive Andrews AFB
3:15 pm (45 minutes)	Mr. Hartmann and Mr. Marsh
4:00 pm (1 hour, 15 minutes)	Mr. Roy Ash
5:50 pm	Mr. Hartmann
6:00 pm	Personal Time

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Tuesday, August 6, 1974

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9:15 am (1 hour, 45 minutes)	Personal Time
11:00 am	Cabinet Meeting
1:45 pm (15 minutes)	Meeting with National Association of Homebuilders
3:00 pm	Japanese Legislators
3:30 pm (30 minutes)	INTERVIEW: Mr. Vermont Royster Wall Street Journal
4:00 pm (15 minutes)	Ms. Betty Beale Washington Star-News
4:30 pm	Chairman Bush

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE  
Wednesday, August 7, 1974

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9:10 am (10 minutes)	Dave Peterson (CIA)
9:20 am (50 minutes)	Mr. Hartmann and Mr. Marsh
10:10 am (35 minutes)	Mr. Hartmann
11:30 am (2 hours)	Congressional Visits / Capitol Hill
2:00 pm (1 hour, 25 minutes)	INTERVIEW: Mr. Paul Martin U.S. News & World Report
3:25 pm	General Scowcroft
4:00 pm (20 minutes)	Secretary Mittendorf and Admiral Holloway
4:20 pm (30 minutes)	Mr. Hartmann
5:00 pm (15 minutes)	Mr. Fred Malek
5:15 pm (30 minutes)	Mr. Hartmann and Mr. Marsh
5:45 pm	Personal Time



August 6, 1974

AM	(Incoming)	Walter Judd
PM	(Incoming) (Outgoing)	Sen. Curtis Mrs. Ford

August 7, 1974

AM	(Outgoing) (Incoming) (Outgoing)	Cong. Dillenback Walter Mote Sec. Schlesinger Mrs. Ford
PM	(Incoming) (Incoming) (Incoming) (Incoming) (Incoming) (Outgoing) (Outgoing)	Phillip Buchen Walter Judd Sen. Curtis Milton Hoffman Sen. Griffin Mrs. Ford Cong. Gilman

August 8, 1974

AM	(Incoming) (Incoming)	Sec. Morton Sen. Griffin
PM	(Outgoing) (Incoming)  (Outgoing) (Outgoing)  (Incoming) (Outgoing) (Outgoing) (Outgoing) (Outgoing) (Incoming) (Incoming)	Mrs. Ford Jack Ford Speaker Albert Sen. Mansfield Chief Justice Burger Cong. John Rhodes Justin Dart Sen. Hugh Scott Cong. Thomas O'Neill Sen. Griffin Cong. Arends Arthur Burns General Haig

PHONE CALLS

July 31, 1974

AM		Mrs. Ford Chairman Bush Cong. John Rhodes
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August 1, 1974

AM	(Outgoing) (Incoming)	Mrs. Ford Bill Whyte
PM	(Outgoing)	Mrs. Ford

August 2, 1974

AM		Cong. Gilman James St. Clair
PM	(Incoming) (Incoming) (Incoming)	Sen. Griffin Mrs. Ford General Haig Gov. Rockefeller

August 3-4, 1974

MISSISSIPPI and LOUISIANA

August 5, 1974

AM		Sec. Kissinger
PM		General Haig Cong. Arends Sen. Griffin



# Release of Additional Transcripts of Presidential Conversations

*Statement by the President. August 5, 1974*

I have today instructed my attorneys to make available to the House Judiciary Committee, and I am making

public, the transcripts of three conversations with H. R. Haldeman on June 23, 1972. I have also turned over the tapes of these conversations to Judge Sirica, as part of the process of my compliance with the Supreme Court ruling.

On April 29, in announcing my decision to make public the original set of White House transcripts, I stated that "as far as what the President personally knew and did with regard to Watergate and the coverup is concerned, these materials—together with those already made available—will tell it all."

Shortly after that, in May, I made a preliminary review of some of the 64 taped conversations subpoenaed by the Special Prosecutor.

Among the conversations I listened to at that time were two of those of June 23. Although I recognized that these presented potential problems, I did not inform my staff or my Counsel of it, or those arguing my case, nor did I amend my submission to the Judiciary Committee in order to include and reflect it. At the time, I did not realize the extent of the implications which these conversations might now appear to have. As a result, those arguing my case, as well as those passing judgment on the case, did so with information that was incomplete and in some respects erroneous. This was a serious act of omission for which I take full responsibility and which I deeply regret.

Since the Supreme Court's decision 12 days ago, I have ordered my Counsel to analyze the 64 tapes, and I have listened to a number of them myself. This process has made it clear that portions of the tapes of these June 23 conversations are at variance with certain of my previous statements. Therefore, I have ordered the transcripts made available immediately to the Judiciary Committee so that they can be reflected in the Committee's report and included in the record to be considered by the House and Senate.

In a formal written statement on May 22 of last year, I said that shortly after the Watergate break-in I became concerned about the possibility that the FBI investigation might lead to the exposure either of unrelated covert activities of the CIA or of sensitive national security matters that the so-called "plumbers" unit at the White House had been working on, because of the CIA and plumbers connections of some of those involved. I said that I therefore gave instructions that the FBI should be alerted to coordinate with the CIA and to ensure that the investigation not expose these sensitive national security matters.

That statement was based on my recollection at the time—some 11 months later—plus documentary materials and relevant public testimony of those involved.

The June 23 tapes clearly show, however, that at the time I gave those instructions I also discussed the political aspects of the situation, and that I was aware of the advantages this course of action would have with respect to



limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the re-election committee.

My review of the additional tapes has, so far, shown no other major inconsistencies with what I have previously submitted. While I have no way at this stage of being certain that there will not be others, I have no reason to believe that there will be. In any case, the tapes in their entirety are now in the process of being furnished to Judge Sirica. He has begun what may be a rather lengthy process of reviewing the tapes, passing on specific claims of executive privilege on portions of them, and forwarding to the Special Prosecutor those tapes or those portions that are relevant to the Watergate investigation.

It is highly unlikely that this review will be completed in time for the House debate. It appears at this stage, however, that a House vote of impeachment is, as a practical matter, virtually a foregone conclusion, and that the issue will therefore go to trial in the Senate. In order to ensure that no other significant relevant materials are withheld, I shall voluntarily furnish to the Senate everything from these tapes that Judge Sirica rules should go to the Special Prosecutor.

I recognize that this additional material I am now furnishing may further damage my case, especially because attention will be drawn separately to it rather than to the evidence in its entirety. In considering its implications, therefore, I urge that two points be borne in mind.

The first of these points is to remember what actually happened as a result of the instructions I gave on June 23. Acting Director Gray of the FBI did coordinate with Director Helms and Deputy Director Walters of the CIA. The CIA did undertake an extensive check to see whether any of its covert activities would be compromised by a full FBI investigation of Watergate. Deputy Director Walters then reported back to Mr. Gray that they would not be compromised. On July 6, when I called Mr. Gray, and when he expressed concern about improper attempts to limit his investigation, as the record shows, I told him to press ahead vigorously with his investigation—which he did.

The second point I would urge is that the evidence be looked at in its entirety and the events be looked at in perspective. Whatever mistakes I made in the handling of Watergate, the basic truth remains that when all the facts were brought to my attention I insisted on a full investigation and prosecution of those guilty. I am firmly convinced that the record, in its entirety, does not justify the extreme step of impeachment and removal of a President. I trust that as the constitutional process goes forward, this perspective will prevail.

NOTE: Copies of the transcripts of the three conversations were made available with the statement by the White House Press Office.





PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD'S NEWS CONFERENCE #1

Held in the East Room  
At the White House  
Washington, D.C.

August 28, 1974  
At 2:30 P.M. EDT (Wednesday)

QUESTION: Mr. President, aside from the Special Prosecutor's role, do you agree with the Bar Association that the law applies equally to all men, or do you agree with Governor Rockefeller that former President Nixon should have immunity from prosecution, and specifically, would you use your pardon authority, if necessary?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say at the outset that I made a statement in this room in the few moments after the swearing-in, and on that occasion I said the following: That I had hoped that our former President, who brought peace to millions, would find it for himself.

Now, the expression made by Governor Rockefeller, I think, coincides with the general view and the point of view of the American people. I subscribe to that point of view. But let me add, in the last ten days or two weeks I have asked for prayers for guidance on this very important point.

In this situation, I am the final authority. There have been no charges made, there has been no action by the courts, there has been no action by any jury and, until any legal process has been undertaken, I think it is unwise and untimely for me to make any commitment.

QUESTION: Mr. President, may I just follow up on Helen's question: Are you saying, sir, that the option of a pardon for former President Nixon is still an option that you will consider, depending on what the courts will do?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, I make the final decision. And until it gets to me, I make no commitment one way or another. But I do have the right as President of the United States to make that decision.

QUESTION: And you are not ruling it out?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not ruling it out. It is an option and a proper option for any President.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you feel the Special Prosecutor can in good conscience pursue cases against former top Nixon aides as long as there is the possibility that the former President may not also be pursued in the courts?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Special Prosecutor, Mr. Jaworski, has an obligation to take whatever action he sees fit in conformity with his oath of office, and that should include any and all individuals.

QUESTION: Mr. President, to further pursue Helen's inquiry, have there been any communications between the Special Prosecutor's office and anyone on your staff regarding President Nixon?

THE PRESIDENT: Not to my knowledge.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you have emphasized here your option of granting a pardon to the former President.

THE PRESIDENT: I intend to.

QUESTION: You intend to have that option. If an indictment is brought, would you grant a pardon before any trial took place, or are you in this position in the case?

THE PRESIDENT: I said at the outset that, until the matter reaches me, I am not going to make any comment during the process of whatever charges are made.



This Copy For \_\_\_\_\_

PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD'S NEWS CONFERENCE #2

Held in the East Room  
At the White House  
Washington, D.C.

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Official White House Transcript

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THE PRESIDENT: Please sit down.

Ladies and gentlemen, this press conference is being held at a time when many Americans are observing the Jewish religious new year. It begins a period of self-examination and reconciliation. In opening this press conference, I am mindful that the spirit of this holy day has a meaning for all Americans.

In examining one's deeds of the last year and in assuming responsibility for past actions and personal decisions, one can reach a point of growth and change. The purpose of looking back is to go forward with a new and enlightened dedication to our highest values.

The record of the past year does not have to be endlessly relived, but can be transformed by commitment to new insights and new actions in the year to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am ready for your questions.

Mr. Cormier.

QUESTION: Mr. President, some Congressional Republicans who have talked to you have hinted that you may have had a secret reason for granting President Nixon a pardon sooner than you indicated you would at the last news conference, and I wonder if you could tell us what that reason was.



THE PRESIDENT: At the outset, let me say I had no secret reason, and I don't recall telling any Republican that I had such a reason. Let me review quickly, if I might, the things that transpired following the last news conference.

As many of you know, I answered two, maybe three questions concerning a pardon at that time. On return to the office, I felt that I had to have my counsel undertake a thorough examination as to what my right of pardon was under the Constitution. I also felt that it was very important that I find out what legal actions, if any, were contemplated by the Special Prosecutor.

That information was found out, and it was indicated to me that the possibility exists, the very real possibility that the President would be charged with obstructing justice and ten other possible criminal actions.

In addition, I asked my general counsel to find out, if he could, how long such criminal proceedings would take, from the indictment, the carrying on of the trial, et cetera, and I was informed that this would take a year, maybe somewhat longer, for the whole process to go through.

I also asked my counsel to find out whether or not under decisions of the judicial system a fair trial would be given to the former President.

After I got that information, which took two or three days, I then began to evaluate, in my own mind, whether or not I should take the action, which I subsequently did.

Miss Thomas.

QUESTION: Throughout your Vice Presidency, you said that you didn't believe that former President Nixon had ever committed an impeachable offense. Is that still your belief or do you believe that his acceptance of a pardon implies his guilt, or is an admission of guilt?

THE PRESIDENT: The fact that 38 Members of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Democrat and Republican, have unanimously agreed in the report that was filed that the former President was guilty of an impeachable offense, I think is very persuasive evidence.

And the second question, I don't recall --

QUESTION: An admission of guilt?

THE PRESIDENT: Was the acceptance of the pardon by the President an admission of guilt? The acceptance of a pardon, I think, can be construed by many, if not all, as an admission of guilt.

Yes, Mr. Nessen.

QUESTION: What reports have you received on Mr. Nixon's health, and what effect, if any, did this have on your decision to pardon him now?

THE PRESIDENT: I have asked Dr. Lukash, who is the head physician in the White House, to keep me posted in proper channels as to the former President's health. I have been informed on a routine day-to-day basis, but I don't think I am at liberty to give any information as to those reports that I have received.

You also asked what impact did the President's health have on my decision. I think it is well known that just before I gave my statement at the time that I gave the pardon I personally wrote in a phrase "the threat to the President's health."

The main concern that I had at the time I made the decision was to heal the wounds throughout the United States. For a period of 18 months or longer, we had had turmoil and divisiveness in the American society. At the same time, the United States had major problems both at home and abroad that needed the maximum personal attention of the President and many others in the Government.

It seemed to me that as long as this divisive-ness continued, this turmoil existed, caused by the charges and counter charges, the responsible people in the Government could not give their total attention to the problems that we had to solve at home and abroad.

And the net result was that I was more anxious to heal the Nation. That was the top priority. I felt then, and I feel now, that the action I took will do that. I couldn't be oblivious, however, to news accounts that I had concerning the President's health, but the major reason for the action I took related to the effort to reconcile divisions in our country and to heal the wounds that had festered far too long.

QUESTION: Mr. President, after you had told us that you were going to allow the legal process to go on before you decided whether to pardon him, why did you decide on Sunday morning, abruptly, to pardon President Nixon?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't decide abruptly. I explained a moment ago the process that I went through subsequent to the last press conference. When I had assembled all of that information that came to me through my counsel, I then most carefully analyzed the situation in the country and I decided that we could not afford in America an extended period of continued turmoil and the fact that the trial, and all of the parts thereof, would have lasted a year -- perhaps more -- with the continuation of the divisions in America, I felt that I should take the action that I did, promptly and effectively.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to ask you a question about the decision relating to custody of the Nixon tapes and documents. Considering the enormous interest that the Special Prosecutor's office had in those documents for further investigation, I am wondering why the negotiations with Mr. Nixon's representatives were conducted strictly between the counsel in your office without bringing in discussions with either Mr. Jaworski's representatives or those from the Justice Department.

THE PRESIDENT: In the first place, I did receive a memorandum, or legal opinion, from the Department of Justice which indicated that, in the opinion of the Department of Justice, the documents, tapes, the ownership of them were in the hands of the former President. Historically, that has been the case for all Presidents.

Now, the negotiations for the handling of the tapes and documents were undertaken and consummated by my staff and the staff of the former President. I believe that they have been properly preserved and they will be available under subpoena for any criminal proceeding. Now, the Special Prosecutor's staff has indicated some concern. I am saying tonight that my staff is working with the Special Prosecutor's staff to try and alleviate any concerns that they have. I hope a satisfactory arrangement can be worked out.

QUESTION: Mr. President, during your confirmation hearings as Vice President, you said that you did not think that the country would stand for a President to pardon his predecessor. Has your mind been changed about such public opinion?

THE PRESIDENT: In those hearings before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, I was asked a hypothetical question, and in answer to that hypothetical question, I responded by saying that I did not think the American people would stand for such an action.

Now that I am in the White House and don't have to answer hypothetical questions but have to deal with reality, it was my judgment, after analyzing all of the facts, that it was in the best interest of the United States for me to take the action that I did.

I think if you will reread what I said in answer to that hypothetical question, I did not say I wouldn't. I simply said that under the way the question was phrased, the American people would object.

But I am absolutely convinced when dealing with reality in this very, very difficult situation, that I made the right decision in an effort, an honest, conscientious effort, to end the divisions and the turmoil in the United States.

Mr. Lisagor.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is there any safeguard in the tapes agreement that was made with Mr. Nixon, first, with their destruction in the event anything happens to him, because under the agreement they will be destroyed; and secondly, should not the tapes be kept in the White House until the Special Prosecutor has finished dealing with them?

THE PRESIDENT: The tapes and the documents are still in our possession and we are, as I said a moment ago, working with the Special Prosecutor's office, to alleviate any concerns they have as to their disposition and their availability.

The agreement as to destruction is quite clear-cut. As long as Mr. Nixon is alive and during the period of time that is set forth, they are available for subpoena by a court involving any criminal proceedings. I think this is a necessary requirement for the protection of evidence for any such action.

QUESTION: Mr. President, recent Congressional testimony has indicated that the CIA, under the direction of a committee headed by Dr. Kissinger, attempted to destabilize the Government of Chile under former President Allende.

Is it the policy of your Administration to attempt to destabilize the governments of other democracies?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer in general. I think this is a very important question.

Our Government, like other governments, does take certain actions in the intelligence field to help implement foreign policy and protect national security. I am informed reliably that Communist nations spend vastly more money than we do for the same kind of purposes.

Now, in this particular case, as I understand it, and there is no doubt in my mind, our Government had no involvement whatsoever in the Allende coup. To my knowledge, nobody has charged that. The facts are we had no involvement in any way whatsoever in the coup itself.

In a period of time, three or four years ago, there was an effort being made by the Allende government to destroy opposition news media, both the writing press as well as the electronic press, and to destroy opposition political parties.

The effort that was made in this case was to help and assist the preservation of opposition newspapers and electronic media and to preserve opposition political parties.

I think this is in the best interest of the people in Chile, and certainly in our best interest.

Now, may I add one further comment.

The 40 committee was established in 1948. It has been in existence under Presidents since that time. That committee reviews every covert operation undertaken by our Government, and that information is relayed to the responsible Congressional committees where it is reviewed by House and Senate committees.

It seems to me that the 40 committee should continue in existence, and I am going to meet with the responsible Congressional committees to see whether or not they want any changes in the review process so that the Congress, as well as the President, are fully informed and are fully included in the operations for any such action.

QUESTION: In view of public reaction, do you think the Nixon pardon really served to bind up the Nation's wounds? I wonder if you would assess public reaction to that move.

THE PRESIDENT: I must say that the decision has created more antagonism than I anticipated. But as I look over the long haul with a trial or several trials of a former President, criminal trials, the possibility of a former President being in the dock so to speak, and the divisions that would have existed not just for a limited period of time, but for a long period of time, it seems to me that when I had the choice between that possibility and the possibility of taking direct action hoping to conclude it, I am still convinced, despite the public reaction so far, that the decision I made was the right one.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in regard to the pardon, you talk about the realities of the situation. Now those realities rightly or wrongly included a good many people who speculate about whether or not there is some sort of arrangement -- even some of them call a deal -- between you and the former President or between your staff and his staff, resignation in exchange for a full pardon.

The question is: Is there or was there, to your knowledge, any kind of understanding about this?

THE PRESIDENT: There was no understanding, no deal between me and the former President, nor between my staff and the staff of the former President, none whatsoever.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there is a bill that the Treasury Department has put forward, I think it is about 38 pages. Under this bill, which deals with getting hold of the returns, Internal Revenue returns of the citizens of the country, you could take action to get those returns whenever you wanted to.

I wonder if you are aware of this, and if you feel that you need to get those returns of citizens.

THE PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that a President has, by tradition and practice, and by law, the right to have access to income tax returns. I personally think that is something that should be kept very closely held. A person's income tax return is a very precious thing to that individual and, therefore, I am about to issue an Executive Order that makes it even more restrictive as to how those returns can be handled and I do think that a proposed piece of legislation that is coming to me and subsequently will be submitted, as I recollect, to the Congress would also greatly tighten up the availability or accessibility of income tax returns. I think they should be closely held, and I can assure you that they will be most judiciously handled as far as I am concerned.

Yes.

QUESTION: Mr. President, looking beyond the Nixon papers and in view of some criticism in Congress, do you believe we may have now reached the point where Presidential White House papers should remain in the Government's hands as the property of the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as I am personally concerned, I can see a legitimate reason for Presidential papers remaining the property of the Government. In my own case, I made a decision some years ago to turn over all of my Congressional papers, all of my Vice Presidential papers to the University of Michigan archives.

As far as I am concerned, whether they go to the archives for use or whether they stay the possession of the Government, I don't think it makes too much difference.

I have no desire, personally, to retain whatever papers come out of my Administration.

Mr. Mollenhoff.

QUESTION: Mr. President, at the last press conference you said, "The code of ethics that will be followed will be the example that I set." Do you find any conflicts of interest in the decision to grant a sweeping pardon to your lifelong friend and your financial benefactor with no consultation for advice and judgment for the legal fallout?

THE PRESIDENT: The decision to grant a pardon to Mr. Nixon was made primarily, as I have expressed, for the purpose of trying to heal the wounds throughout the country between Americans on one side of the issue or the other. Mr. Nixon nominated me for the office of Vice President. I was confirmed overwhelmingly in the House as well as in the Senate. Every action I have taken, Mr. Mollenhoff, is predicated on my conscience without any concern or consideration as to favor as far as I am concerned.

Yes.

QUESTION: If your intention was to heal the wounds of the Nation, sir, why did you grant only a conditional amnesty to the Vietnam war veterans while granting a full pardon to President Nixon?

THE PRESIDENT: The only connection between those two cases is the effort that I made in the one to heal the wounds involving the charges against Mr. Nixon and my honest and conscientious effort to heal the wounds for those who had deserted military service or dodged the draft. That is the only connection between the two.

In one case, you have a President who was forced to resign because of circumstances involving his Administration, and he has been shamed and disgraced by that resignation. In the case of the draft dodgers and Army and military deserters, we are trying to heal the wounds by the action that I took with the signing of the Proclamation this morning.

QUESTION: Mr. President, another concern that has been voiced around the country since the pardon is that the judicial process as it finally unwinds may not write the definitive chapter on Watergate and perhaps with particular regard to Mr. Nixon's particular involvement, however total, however it may have been in truth. My question is, would you consider appointing a special commission with extraordinary powers to look into all of the evidentiary material and to write that chapter and not leave it to later history?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it seems to me as I look at what has been done, I think you find a mass of evidence that has been accumulated. In the first instance, you have the very intensive investigation conducted by the House Committee on the Judiciary. It was a very well-conducted investigation. It came up with volumes of information.

In addition, the Special Prosecutor's office under Mr. Jaworski has conducted an intensive investigation and the Special Prosecutor's office will issue a report at the conclusion of their responsibilities that I think will probably make additional information available to the American people.

And thirdly, as the various criminal trials proceed in the months ahead, there obviously will be additional information made available to the American people. So, when you see what has been done and what undoubtedly will be done, I think the full story will be made available to the American people.

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you give us an idea who would succeed General Haig, and how are you coming on your search for a Press Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: Do I have a lot of candidates here? (Laughter) No shows. (Laughter)

I have several people in mind to replace General Haig, but I have made no decision on that. It was just announced today that the NATO countries have accepted him as the officer handling those responsibilities.

I think he is to take office succeeding General Goodpaster on December 15. He assumes his responsibilities as the head of U.S. military forces November 1. In the next few days undoubtedly I will make the decision as to the individual to succeed him.

So far as the Press Secretary is concerned, we are actively working on that, and we hope to have an announcement in a relatively short period of time.

QUESTION: Mr. President, prior to your deciding to pardon Mr. Nixon, did you have, apart from those reports, any information either from associations of the President or from his family or from any other source about his health, about his medical condition?

THE PRESIDENT: Prior to the decision that I made granting a pardon to Mr. Nixon, I had no other specific information concerning his health other than what I had read in the news media or heard in the news media. I had not gotten any information from any of the Nixon family. The sole source was what I had read in the news media plus one other fact.

On Saturday before the Sunday, a member of my staff was working with me on the several decisions I had to make. He was, from my staff, the one who had been in negotiations on Friday with the President and his staff.

At the conclusion of decisions that were made, I asked him, how did the President look, and he reported to me his observations.

But other than what I had read or heard and this particular incident, I had no precise information concerning the President's health.

QUESTION: Mr. President, your own economic advisers are suggesting that to save the economy, which is very bad and very pessimistic, we are hearing the word "depression" used now. I wonder how you feel about whether we are heading for a depression?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say very strongly that the United States is not going to have a depression. The overall economy of the United States is strong. Employment is still high. We do have the problem of inflation. We do have related problems, and we are going to come up with some answers that I hope will solve those problems.

We are not going to have a depression. We are going to work to make sure that our economy improves in the months ahead.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the face of massive food shortages and the prospects of significant starvation, will the United States be able to significantly increase its food aid to foreign countries, and what is our position going to be at the Rome conference on participation in the world grain reserves?

THE PRESIDENT: Within the next few days a very major decision in this area will be made. I am not at liberty to tell you what the answer will be because it has not been decided.

But it is my hope that the United States for humanitarian purposes will be able to increase its contribution to those nations that have suffered because of drought or any of the other problems related to human needs.

QUESTION: Back to the CIA, under what international law do we have a right to attempt to destabilize the constitutionally-elected government of another country, and does the Soviet Union have a similar right to try to destabilize the Government of Canada, for example, or the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to pass judgment on whether it is permitted or authorized under international law. It is a recognized fact that historically, as well as presently, such actions are taken in the best interest of the countries involved.

QUESTION: Mr. President, last month when you assumed the Presidency, you pledged openness and candor. Last week you decided on the ex-President's pardon in virtually total secrecy. Despite all you have said tonight, there would still seem to be some confusion, some contradiction.

My question is this: Are the watchwords of your Administration still openness and candor?

THE PRESIDENT: Without any question, without any reservation. And I think in the one instance that you cite, it was a sole decision, and believe me, it wasn't easy, and since I was the only one who could make that decision, I thought I had to search my own soul after consulting with a limited number of people, and I did it, and I think in the longrun it was the right decision.

MR. CORMIER: (AP) Thank you, Mr. President.

END (AT 8:30 P.M. EDT)