

## President Nixon's News Conference of July 30

*Following are excerpts from the transcript of a news conference held by President Nixon at Los Angeles, Calif., on July 30.*

*The President:* . . . This press conference is one that is being held for the first time, while I have been President, outside of Washington. We want to welcome all of the members of the California press who are here. We will follow the usual format of the White House press conference, with the first two questions going to the wire services, and then we will try to cover as many others as we can.

*Mr. Cormier [Frank Cormier, Associated Press]?*

*Q. Mr. President, could you give us an update on the very fast-moving developments in the Middle East; particularly, have we heard from Israel in response to your peace initiatives?*

*The President:* We have not yet heard from Israel on our peace initiatives. As you know, we have heard from the Jordanians and the U.A.R., and the Israelis have been considering the matter in Cabinet sessions. We are hopeful that Israel will join the U.A.R. and Jordan on the peace initiative.

Some concern has been expressed by Israeli Government officials that if they agree to a cease-fire they run the risk of having a military buildup occur during the cease-fire. We and others have attempted to assure them that that would not be the case. If there is a cease-fire, a natural proposition connected with that, a condition with that, is that there will be a military standstill during that period.

As far as Israel's position is concerned, I indicated on July 1 in a television broadcast with network commentators from Los Angeles the position of this Government insofar as Israel's

security is concerned and our commitment to maintaining the balance of power in the Mideast.<sup>1</sup> Seventy-one Senators have endorsed that proposition in a letter to me which I received today.

In view of that position, which was stated then and which I will not go into now, I believe that Israel can agree to the cease-fire and can agree to negotiations without fear that by her negotiations her position may be compromised or jeopardized in that period.

*Q. Mr. President, Ambassador Bruce takes over on Saturday in Paris. Do you feel that conditions for a negotiated peace have improved or worsened since we invaded Cambodia?*

*The President:* I believe that the prospects for a negotiated peace should be better now than they were before the Cambodian operation. I do not say this because of any intelligence with regard to enemy activities or enemy attitudes. But I say it because, as a result of our Cambodian operation, the enemy position is weaker than it was before we went into Cambodia.

Their timetable has been set back. Time is no longer on their side. Now, whether they will be convinced by this that their best interest would be served by negotiations rather than by attempting to win a military victory on the battlefield, that remains to be seen.

But we have sent a senior negotiator, Mr. Bruce, to Paris with wide latitude in negotiation, and we hope that they will reciprocate by negotiating in good faith and try to bring the war to an early conclusion, as it could be by negotiation, rather than letting it

<sup>1</sup> For transcript of the interview, see BULLETIN of July 27, 1970, p. 101.

draw to a conclusion through the longer path of Vietnamization, which we are prepared to do also.

*Q. Does President Thieu of South Viet-Nam hold any positions that would take away some of Ambassador Bruce's flexibility?*

*The President:* No, he does not. President Thieu's position with regard to negotiation is on all fours with ours. We have consulted with him, and he with us, before any negotiating positions have been presented. Also, you will note that Ambassador Bruce went to South Viet-Nam and met with President Thieu and with Ambassador Bunker to be sure that there was no disagreement on our negotiating position.

*Q. Mr. President, last Sunday the Russian naval commander engaged in a bit of saber rattling directed at us. And I recall that Admiral Hyman Rickover and General Thomas Power of SAC in the last year warned that we are falling behind in the armaments race and they warned of nuclear blackmail if the Russians get ahead. Now, with that in mind, do you think we can afford to disarm at this point, or what is your feeling in that regard?*

*The President:* We have certainly no intention of disarming. What we are talking about in the SALT [strategic arms limitation talks] negotiations is not disarmament but a limitation of arms, where we limit what we do and they limit what they do. The very thing that you refer to makes it very important for us to pursue those negotiations, because the Soviet Union, since 1967, for example, when we stopped any deployment of land-based missiles—since that time, has deployed 724 ICBM's [intercontinental ballistic missiles], either SS-9's or SS-13's.

Since that time, when we launched our last nuclear submarine with missile-carrying capabilities, the Soviet Union has deployed 13 more. And by 1975, assuming they continue their present building pace, they will catch up with us in nuclear submarines.

We can either continue this race in which they continue their offensive missiles and we go forward with our defensive missiles, or we can reach an agreement. That is why at this point

we have hopes of attempting to find, either on a comprehensive basis, and lacking a comprehensive basis, a selective basis, the first steps toward which the superpowers will limit the development of, and particularly the deployment of, more instruments of destruction when both have enough to destroy each other many times over.

Miss Thomas [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

*Q. Mr. President, you said that we are in accord with President Thieu on peace initiatives. Does that mean that we agree with him that no candidate who would support a coalition government and no Communist could run in elections that would try to settle the war?*

*The President:* Miss Thomas, the position of President Thieu there with regard to a Communist not being on the ballot is purely a matter of semantics. Under the South Vietnamese Constitution, a Communist cannot run for office.

On the other hand, President Thieu has specifically agreed that those who are members of the NLF [National Liberation Front], who of course represent the Communists in South Viet-Nam, could run as members of the NLF on the ballot.

Now, as far as President Thieu's attitude on coalition government is concerned, it is the same as ours. A coalition government should not be imposed upon the people of South Viet-Nam without their consent. If the people of South Viet-Nam, by election, elect people who then choose to form a coalition government, that is a matter, of course, that we will accept.

*Q. To pursue the question of our military preparedness a bit further, twice within the past week statements have been made by high-ranking naval officers, Admiral Rickover and Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp, to the effect that our military preparedness is suspect. They went further. Each gentleman said that in his opinion it is doubtful that we could win a war with the Soviet Union. Given the eminence of these gentlemen, as Commander in Chief how do you regard the validity of those statements?*

*The President:* Well, I would first react by saying that if there is a war between the Soviet

Union and the United States, there will be no winners; there will be only losers. The Soviet Union knows that, and we know that.

That is the reason why it is vitally important that in areas like the Mideast we attempt to avoid, to the greatest extent possible, being dragged into a confrontation by smaller powers, even though our interests in the area are very, very great. That is why it is very much in our interests in the SALT talks to work out an arrangement if we can, one which will provide for the interests of both and yet not be in derogation of the necessity of our having sufficiency and their having sufficiency.

One other point I would make briefly is this: What the Soviet Union needs in terms of military preparedness is different from what we need. They are a land power primarily, with a great potential enemy on the east. We are primarily, of course, a sea power, and our needs, therefore, are different. But what is important now is to find a way to stop this escalation of arms on both sides, and that is why we have hopes in the SALT talks, which, I emphasize again, do not involve disarmament for the United States or the Soviet Union, but do involve a limitation and then eventually a mutual reduction.

*Q. Mr. President, the open hostilities in Korea ended 17 years ago this week. And a week ago Senator George Murphy said that he believed there are still American prisoners of war held from that conflict.*

*Lt. Everett Alvarez will have been a prisoner 6 years next Wednesday. Did Ambassador Bruce get any special briefing about the hundreds of men held in North Viet-Nam?*

*The President:* The problem of those who are held prisoner in North Viet-Nam is one of enormous concern to us. It was discussed not only when Ambassador Bruce was in Viet-Nam but also when he met with us in Washington, with Secretary Rogers, Dr. Kissinger [Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs], and others, and got his new instructions.

I can assure you that it will be very high on

his agenda when he goes to Paris. I cannot promise and I would not want to hold out any false hope to those who are the dependents and those who are the wives and children of those who are prisoners, but we certainly are going to keep this very much high on the agenda and work toward a solution of it in any peace settlement, if we can get one.

*Q. How do you reconcile the position of the United States that we are not bent on a military victory in Indochina with the statement that was made yesterday by President Nguyen Van Thieu that he is looking for a military victory within the next 3 years, and also he says that he is against a coalition government in Viet-Nam whether that is imposed or negotiated? In other words, to what extent are we the independent authors of American foreign policy and to what extent are we subservient to President Thieu?*

*The President:* We are opposed to a coalition government, negotiated or imposed. We are for a government which is consented to by the people of South Viet-Nam. If that government happens to be one that has Communists in it and it is their choice, we do not have objection; and neither does President Thieu, as I understand it.

Now, as far as President Thieu is concerned, when he speaks of victory for his government and the people of South Viet-Nam, he is referring, of course, to what will happen in Viet-Nam over the long haul, assuming there is not a negotiated settlement.

As far as we are concerned, we have a program of Vietnamization. We are withdrawing our forces. Just as soon as the South Vietnamese are able to defend the country without our assistance, we will be gone.

But then if at that time the South Vietnamese still have not worked out a negotiated settlement with their enemy, then it is certainly up to the South Vietnamese to determine whether they are going to negotiate with the enemy or seek a victory; that would be President Thieu's decision.

## Under Secretary Johnson Interviewed for Voice of America

*Following is the transcript of an interview with U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, for the Voice of America's "Press Conference USA," which was recorded at Washington July 15 for broadcasts by the Voice of America beginning 6 p.m. July 17. Interviewing Ambassador Johnson were Ian McDonald of the Times of London, Herman Nickel of Time magazine, and George Sherman of the Washington Evening Star. Norman Geron of the Voice of America acted as moderator.*

*Mr. Sherman: Mr. Secretary, the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives has just reported out a trade bill which sets up import quotas for textiles and shoes, and it is generally a restrictive trade bill seeming to reverse the trend in free trade that has been followed since the war. Could you assess for us the impact this will have on administration policy, what steps the administration policy will take to try to reverse this?*

*Ambassador Johnson: As you know, Mr. Sherman, we tried very hard over a period of a year and a half to arrive at an agreement with the exporting countries that would voluntarily restrict their exports of wool and manmade fibers to this country. Our hope was that through this means we would be able to deal with this problem of the growing textile imports into this country.*

Unfortunately, we were not able to arrive at an agreement on this, and as Secretary [of Commerce Maurice H.] Stans said the other day before the committee, we very reluctantly understood the reasons that Congress was introducing this legislation.

We are reluctant to see it because we do not

want to get involved in a trade war. President Nixon and this administration do stand for freer trade, and I grant that this is a step in another direction, and I hope that it can be confined to this one range of products.

*Mr. Sherman: Do you see the bill as a possible further negotiating weapon with the exporting countries in trying to get them to reach agreement with us on voluntary controls of their exports to the United States?*

*Ambassador Johnson: Yes. The terms of the bill, as I understand it—I haven't seen the final version that came out yesterday—but the terms of the bill provide that its provisions do not apply in the event agreement is reached on the voluntary controls, and we would still hope to negotiate voluntary controls.*

*Mr. McDonald: Mr. Under Secretary, I saw recently an estimate that before the end of the century the Japanese gross national product may well pass that of the United States, and I was wondering, with your long years of experience in Japan, could you explain the secret for its great success and say whether it has any lessons for other developing nations in Asia?*

*Ambassador Johnson: Well, to correct you slightly, Mr. McDonald, I think the figures that you saw indicated not that its gross total national product would surpass that of the United States, but that in per capita terms its product might be greater than that of the United States. I have seen figures to that effect.*

However, putting that aside, the fact is that Japan has made a spectacular growth, and many people speculate on the reasons for this.

In my own view, one of them is that from its early days Japan laid a great emphasis upon