

PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 4, 1966

PRESIDENT JOHNSON: GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I'LL BE GLAD TO TAKE ANY QUESTIONS.

QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, IN VIEW OF THE REPORT YOU GAVE US ON YOUR HEALTH YESTERDAY, CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER YOUR DOCTORS AT ANY POINT ADVISED YOU NOT TO GO ON YOUR ASIAN TRIP OR TO CUT DOWN ON YOUR RATHER STRENOUS PACE ~~WEEK~~ WHILE YOU WERE OVER THERE?

PRESIDENT: NO, THEY NEVER AT ANY TIME CONSIDERED DOING IT. I THINK THE BEST INDICATION OF MY GENERAL PHYSICAL CONDITION IS THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE MINOR PROBLEMS THAT I HAVE WITH MY THROAT AND WITH THE LITTLE STITCHING THEY NEED TO DO, THE REPAIR WORK, IS THAT EVEN THO I HAD BOTH OF THOSE PROBLEMS, I DID MAKE THE ASIAN TRIP, I DIDNT GET WEARY, I DIDNT STAY TIRED, AND I GOT PLENTY OF REST THRUOUT. ~~SEE~~ I HAVE THE ADVANTAGE THAT SOME OF THOSE THAT ACCOMPANIED ME DID NOT HAVE...FOR INSTANCE, FROM KOREA TO ALAKSA I COULD SLEEP SIX HOURS...THE BED WAS AS COMFORTABLE AS A HOTEL ROOM. FROM ALASKA TO WASHINGTON I COULD REST FIVE OR SIX HOURS EVEN IF I HAD TO SIT UP IN CHAIR. AND MOST OF THIS WEARINESS ~~W~~ I THINK WAS SOME OF YOU ENGAGING IN INTROSPECTION AFTER YOU GOT ~~SEE~~ HOME.

QUESTION: ~~INX~~ MR. PRESIDENT, IN YOUR ESTIMATION WILL THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON COMMUNIST WILLINGNESS OR ATTITUDE TOWARD CONTINUING THE WAR IN VIETNAM?

PRESIDENT: I AM NOT A GOOD JUDGE OF JUST WHAT THE COMMUNIST REACTION WILL BE. I THINK IN THE PAST THAT SOME FOREIGN NATIONS HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD THE AMERICAN SYSTEM. I HOPE THEYLL BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE ANY MISTAKES OF JUDGEMENT ABOUT THIS ELECTION. I SEE NO RASON WHY THE ELECTION SHOULD GREATLY AFFECT ANY DECISION THEY MIGHT MAKE. THE PRESIDENT IS NOT A CANDIDATE IN THIS ELECTION. I CANNOT CONCEIVE IF THE PEOPLE GO OUT AND VOTE THAT THE DECISION IN THE ELECTION COULD IN ANY WAY CHANGE THE GOVERNMENTS POLICY. THERES NO ONE THAT I KNOW OF THAT THINKS THERES GOING TO BE ANY GREAT CHANGE IN THE SENATE. AND ALTHO MY DELIGHTFUL FRIEND SEN.

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DIRKSEN, OPTIMISTIC AS HE IS, FEELS THAT THERE MAYBE A GAIN OF 75, I NOTICE THE CHRONIC CAMPAIGNERS LIKE SEN. NIXON HAVE BEGUN TO HEDGE AND PUT IN THEIR HORNS AND I WOULD DOUBT THAT THERES GOING TO BE ANY SUBSTNAITAL CHANGE THAT I COULD POINT OUT WITH THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES....ITS NOW 295 TO 140, THERE COULD BE A CHANGE OF 40 OR 50 AS THERE HAS BEEN ON THE AVERAGE SINCE 1890 AND NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, AND I DONT THINK ITS GOING TO AFFECT THE VIETNAM SITUATION IN ANY EVENT. THEY MAY TALK AND ARGUE AND CRITICIZE AND PLAY POLITICS FROM TIME TO TIME BUT ~~IN~~ WHEN THEY CALL THE VOTE ON SUPPORTING THE DEFENSE BILL IN THE SENATE IT'LL BE 83 TO 2 AND IN THE HOUSE IT'LL BE 410 TO 5, AND EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS THAT.] NEXT QUESTION...

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE SIGNIFICATN OUTCOME OF YOUR FAR EAST TRIP?

PRESIDENT: I THINK IT SERVES SEVERAL PURPOSES. FIRST, I THINK IT WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL,...I THINK IT DEMONSTRATED TO ALL THE WORLD THAT THE SEVEN PARTICIPATING NATIONS WERE UNITED...UNITED IN THEIR DETERMINATIONS TO SUPPORT THE MEN ON THE FIGHTING FRONT...UNITED IN THEIR DETERMINATION TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES; UNITED IN THEIR DETERINATION ~~EX~~ TO DEVELOP A NEW ASIA WITH PROSPERITY AND PLENTY; UNITED IN THEIR DETERMINATION TO WALK THE LAST MILE...TO GO TO ANY CORNER, ANY TIME, MEETING WITH ANY GOVERNMENT TO TRY TO FURTHER THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. SEVERAL NATIONS ON THEIR OWN HAVE ALREADY COMMUNICATED THE COMMUNIQUE ~~IN~~ THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE TO OTHER NONALIGNED NEUTRAL NATIONS. MR. HARRIMAN, MY REPRESENTATYVE HAS ~~EX~~ LISTED SEVERAL IMPORTANT CAPITALS. MR. BUNDY IS PRESENTLY LISITNG IMPORTANT CAPITALS. MR. EUGENE BLACK IS FOLLOWING OUR TRACKS THRU ASIA AND FOLLOWING UP ~~SN~~ SOME OF THE ECONOMIC PROGRAMS. I THINK THAT IT PUTS A STOPLIGHT TO THE WORLD ON A VERY NEGLECTED PART OF THE WORLD. I THINK THAT WE REALIZE THAT TWO OUT OF EVERY THREE PEOPLE LIVING TODAY LIVE IN THAT AREA... AND THE PROBLEMS ARE THERE...AND....WE FACED UP TO THOSE PROBLEMS AND WE STUDIED

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LBJ: WE HAVE UH, THE CORPORATION BILLS BEING EVALUATED AT THE MOMENT...THEY'VE ARE TWELVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SEPARATE APPROPRIATIONS..AND THEY WILL COVER TWENTY FIVE HUNDRED UH, VARIOUS.. UH ITEMS...FIELDS..WE'RE GOING TO WITHHOLD AS MANY OF THOSE APPROPRIATIONS AS WE FEEL THAT WE CAN IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST...WE HOPE TO ANNOUNCE THOSE SOMETIMES BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE MONTH..OR THE EARLY PART OF NEXT MONTH.....DURING THAT SAME TIME MR. McNAMARA IS..GOT HIS FINE TOOTH COMB AND REVIEWING EVERY REQUEST FOR MILITARY TO SEE HOW MUCH WE CAN FOREGO OF THE REQUEST THEY'VE MADE.....X WHEN WE GET THAT REQUEST..AND WE HOPE TO BEFORE THE CONGRESS GETS BACK HERE...WE WILL THEN LOOK AT THE REVENUE PICTURE...AND THEY'RE INDICATIONS NOW THAT WE'VE HAD A GREAT INCREASE IN REVENUE...AND IF WE DID NOT HAVE TO HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL SUPPLEMENT WE I THINK WE WILL HAVE TO HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL SUPPLEMENT..I DON'T THINK WE NEED ANY TAX INCREASE AT ALL...BUT A TAX INCREASE WILL BE DETERMINED LARGELY BY HOW MUCH I CAN CUT...OUT OF THE APPROPRIATIONS THE CONGRESS MADE...AND HOW MUCH UH, OUR MEN AT THE FIGHTING FRONT WILL REQUIRE IN THE WAY OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT UH, FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR..I WILL KNOW THAT IN UH, SOMETIME THE EARLY PART OF NEXT MONTH...AND AS AS SOON AS I KNOW IT I WILL MAKE APPROPRIATE STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS..THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE CONGRESS WHEN THEY COME BACK...  
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QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT

LBJ: UH, MR. ROBERTS...

QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT..SINCE THE MANILA MEETING THERE'S BEEN SOME UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW TO INTERPRET THE WITHDRAWAL TERMS THAT WERE INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNIQUE...YESTERDAY FOR EXAMPLE MR. NIXON SAID THAT IT APPEARED THAT YOU HAD PROPOSED ..THE SEVEN POWERS HAD PROPOSED GETTING OUT IN A WAY THAT WOULD LEAD SOUTH VIETNAM AT THE MERCY OF THE VIET CONG...EX WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THAT

LBJ: I WOULD BE GLAD TO COMMENT ON THE COMMUNIQUE..I DO NOT WANT TO GET IN A DEBATE ON A FOREIGN POLICY MEETING IN MANILA...WITH A CHRONIC CAMPAIGNER LIKE MR. NIXON..HE ..HE ITS HIS PROBLEM TO FIND FAULT WITH HIS COUNTRY AND WITH HIS GOVERNMENT DURING A PERIOD OF

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LBJ: OCTOBER EVERY TWO YEARS....

(LAUGHTER)

LBJ: AND IF YOU WILL LOOK BACK OVER HIS RECORD YOU WILL FIND THAT TRUE..HE NEVER DID REALLY RECOGNIZE OR REALIZE THAT WHAT WAS GOING ON WHEN HE HAD AN OFFICIAL POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT

(LAUGHTER)

LBJ: IF YOU REMEMBER WHAT PRESIDENT EISENHOWER...THAT HE PICKED..IF YOU'D ASKE...IF YOU GIVE HIM A WEEK OR SO HE'D FIGURE OUT WHAT X HE WAS DOING...

(LAUGHTER)

LBJ: NOW SINCE THEN...HE HAS MADE A TEMPORARY STAND IN CALIFORNIA...AND YOU SAW WHAT THE PEOPLE..WHAT ACTION THEY TOOK OUT THERE....THEN HE CROSSED THE COUNTRY TO NEW YORK...THEN HE WENT BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO..UH, HOPING THAT HE WOULD BE IN THE WINGS..AVAILABLE IF X UH, GOLDWATER STUMBLED..BUT GOLDWATER DIDN'T STUMBLE...AND NOW HE'S OUT TALKING ABOUT A CONFERENCE THAT OBVIOUSLY HE IS NOT WELL ~~BE~~ PREPARED ON OR INFORMED ABOUT... YOU CAN READ THE E COMMUNIQUE AND I THINK ITS VERY CLEAR THAT THE SEVEN PARTICIPANTS IN THAT CONGRESS...UH, CONF..CONFERENCE. KR FELT THAT THEY WANTED THE ENTIRE WORLD TO KNOW...THAT IF UH, INFILTRATION WOULD CEASE... IF THE ~~KER~~ AGGRESSION WOULD CEASE...IF THE VIOLENCE WOULD CEASE...AND FROM THE STANDPOINT OF OUR ADVERSARY..THAT THE ALLIES WOULD GLADLY RECIPROCATE...BY WITHDRAWING THEIR TROOPS AND THAT THEY WOULD WITHDRAW THEM...KNE IN A PERIOD OF NOT X TO EXCEED SIX MONTHS...NOW MOST OF THE NATIONS IF NOT SOME OF OUR OWN CITIZENS..MOST OF THE COUNTRIES KNOW THAT WE DO NOT PLAN TO OCCUPY VIETNAM OR DOMINATE IT OR TRY TO DETERMINE ITS UH, UH, OFFICIAL LIFE ONCE THE AGGRESSION AND THE INFILTRATION AND THE ~~THE~~ VIOLENCE THERE CEASES..BUT SOME OF THEM CAN'T UNDERSTAND BECAUSE I GUESS THEY WOULDN'T MAKE FUTURE INVESTMENTS AND WALK OFF AND LEAVE THEM HOW WE COULD DO THAT....WELL WE HAVE EXPLAINED THAT WE WILL PULL OUT JUST AS SOON AS THE INFILTRATIONS, THE AGGRESSION AND THE VILENCE CEASES..AND WE MADE THAT STATEMENT AND WE SET A TIME LIMIT ON IT..UH, WHY WOULD WE WANT TO STAY THERE IF THERE WAS NOT AGGRESSION..IF THERE'S NO INFILTRATION AND THE VIOLENCE CEASES...WE WOULDN'T WANT TO STAY THERE AS TOURISTS..WE

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LBJ: WOULDN'T WANT TO KEEP FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN THERE JUST TO UH, UH, UH, MARCH UP AND DOWN THE RUNWAYS AT CAM RANH BAY...BUT WE FELT THAT IF WE STATED A BROAD PLAN AND EACH OF US SUBSCRIBED TO IT...INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM THAT THEY WOULD ASK US AND ASK ALL THE OTHER ALLIES TO WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES IF THE OTHER SIDE WITHDREW THEM...AND IF THE INFILTRATION CEASED AND IF THE VIOLENCE CEASED THAT UH, IT WOULD PROBABLY CLARIFY OUR POSITION...NOW WE THINK WE DID THAT...UNTIL SOME OF THE POLITICIANS GOT MIXED UP IN IT...AND START...NOT TRYING TO CLARIFY IT BUT TO CONFUSE IT...AND IT SHOULDN'T BE CONFUSED...EVERY PARTICIPANT IN THAT CONFERENCE ACTING ON GOOD FAITH WITH THE BEST OF MOTIVES..WANTED TO SAY TO NORTH VIETNAM AND EVERY OTHER NATION IN THE WORLD...THAT WE INTEND TO STAY THERE ONLY SO LONG AS OUR PRESENCE IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE ~~VIETNAM~~ TERRITRIAL INTEGRITY OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND TO SEE THAT THE VIOLENCE THERE CEASES....AND THE INFILTRATION ..AND THE AGGRESSION CEASES...NOW THEY KNOW THAT AND WE OUGHTN'T TRY TO CONFUSE IT HERE AND WE OUGHTN'T TRY TO GET MIXED UP IN A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN HERE BECAUSE ATTEMPTS TO DO THAT ARE GONNA CAUSE PEOPLE TO USE VOTES INSTEAD OF GAIN THEM..AND WE OUGHTN'T TO HAVE MEN KILLED BECAUSE WE TRY TO FUZZ UP OUR POSITION IS CLEAR..WE DON'T WANT TO OCCUPY THAT COUNTRY...WE DIDN'T WANT TO OCCUPY THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC..WE WENT IN THERE..BECAUSE OUR PEOPLE WERE BEING SHOT AT... BECAUSE AGGRESSIVE FORCES WANTED TO ESTABLISH A FORM OF A GOVERNMENT...UH, THAT WAS NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY...AND ONCE WE WERE ABLE TO LET THE PEOPLE HAVE A FREE ELECTION...SUPERVISED ELECTION...I LET THE MAJORITY SPEAK ITS WILL.. WE PULLED OUR TROOPS OUT AND CAME HOME...THATS WHAT WE WILL DO IN SOUTH VIETNAM...THE AGGRESSION..THE INFILTRATION THE VIOLENCE CEASES NOT A NATION THERE WANTS TO KEEP OCCUPYING TROOPS IN SOUTH VIETNAM..AND MR. NIXON DOESN'T ~~SE~~ SERVE HIS COUNTRY WELL BY TRYING TO LEAVE THAT KIND OF IMPRESSION IN THE HOPE THAT HE CAN PICK UP A ~~SE~~ PRECINCT OR TWO OR A WARD OR TWO.....MR. DAVIS...

QUESTION: IN THAT CONNECTION PRESIDENT MARCOS OF THE PHILIPPINES HAS CALLED FOR AN ALL ASIAN CONFERENCE...DO YOU SEE THAT THIS MIGHT CARRY ON THE WORK BEGUN AT MANILA....

LBJ: WELL I THINK THE ASIANS..WHO HAVE THE SAME INTERESTS..THE SAME PROBLEM..UH, NOT ONLY X