

43 Remarks to Reporters at a Briefing on the Foreign Policy Report to the Congress. February 18, 1970

Ladies and gentlemen:

As you know, this is a briefing on the message that will be sent to the Congress on Wednesday. And the message is entitled "Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace." Is that the last title we agreed on?

DR. KISSINGER. Yes.

THE PRESIDENT. The title always comes last. But in any event, I wanted to take this opportunity to refer briefly to the report, and then to turn the meeting over to Dr. Kissinger, who will have the primary responsibility for the briefing, and questions may of course be directed to Under Secretary [of State] Richardson or to Mr. Packard [Deputy Secretary of Defense] in their particular areas, if you so desire to do.

This report is, as you know, the first of its kind ever made by a President to the Congress. It is a very long report. We tried to shrink it some, but we finally came up with 40,000 words, which I understand is the longest report made to the Congress, except for a budget message. That does not particularly recommend itself to you in itself, but it does indicate the great amount of work which went into the report from the various departments concerned, and by the National Security Council staff, and also some work in my

case as well.

I particularly want to give credit to those who have done this, what I think is a monumental task. It is, in my view, the most comprehensive statement on foreign and defense policy ever made in this country. This is no reflection on previous administrations. It just happens it is the first time it has all been pulled together in one place because of our National Security Council system.

It also is historic because it, in effect, marks a watershed, a watershed in American foreign policy.

Secretary Laird and I are going to have to leave here for another meeting where he is going to report on his trip to Vietnam. But I recall when we were serving in the Congress together many years ago, the period immediately after World War II, the institutions we supported then, the policies we supported then, the world as it was then. And I also recall the policies that we supported during the Eisenhower administration from 1953 to early 1961.

This report, as you will note from reading the introduction particularly and the various passages in it, shows a very significant shift from those policies of the past to the new policies dealing with the world situation as it is today.

And this does not mean that this report

indicates any abandonment, on the part of the United States, of its alliances around the world. On the contrary, peace cannot be built by abandoning allies.

It does mean, on the other hand, that we have reexamined our commitments around the world to see that they are consistent with our interests. We have reexamined our defense policy, and we are trying to present here a policy not just for a year, but a policy for a decade, and even beyond that.

I would say finally that in working on this report, that it not only represents in effect the efforts of a whole year of a very dedicated group of people in the National Security Council staff, in the State Department, and in the Defense Department, a year of their effort, many, many meetings, some on the record, some that were never reported. It also represents, speak-

ing for myself, the experience that I have had, limited as it may be, in the whole field of foreign and defense policies, going back over 22 years, and reflects my best view at this time of where we are and where we ought to go.

What I have said—incidentally, Ron [Ziegler] asked me what the ground rules were, and I want you to know what I have said, for whatever it is worth—is on the record. What Dr. Kissinger and any others who appear on the briefing team may say will be for background purposes.

And I do say that I commend the report to your reading. It is worth reading. I have read it myself.

NOTE: The President spoke in the East Room at the White House on Monday, February 16, 1970, at 5:06 p.m. The transcript of his remarks was released on February 18.