

Hello, and here we are again with another episode of Presidential Archives Uncovered,-- the podcast that brings to you cool clips from the collections of the Presidential Libraries of the U.S. National Archives.

After returning from China in 1972, President Nixon explained to a group of Congressional leaders, in the Cabinet Room of the White House, the importance of restoring communication with China as a way of mitigating suspicion and miscalculation, which could lead to war.

If you would like to learn more about Nixon's trip to China visit the Presidential Timeline, www.presidentialtimeline.org.

What follows are two excerpts, approximately a minute and a half each, from a conversation on February 29, 1972 with the President, Allen Ellender, Michael Mansfield, J. William Fulbright, and Henry Kissinger.

92-1 Excerpt 1 (1:42)

February 29, 1972

RN, Allen Ellender, Michael Mansfield, J. William Fulbright, Henry Kissinger, et al.

RN: Looking in the future, of course, speaks in terms of our common interests and, uh, normalization of relations, uh, and, uh, our common interests in, uh, starting to build this long process of, of, of better relations between the two countries.

Now, let me get down to some cold turkey. Uh, what brought us together? Uh, some rather naïve, uh, reporters have indicated that uh, observers, have indicated that what brought us together is that, uh, well mainly, both China and the United States, the People's Republic of China and the United States realized that we really didn't have a, uh, that really that despite our philosophies we really weren't all that far apart, and that if we'd just get to know each other better-that, uh, everything would be a lot better with each other. Not true at all. Getting to know each other better will reduce the possibility of miscalculation and that we have established, because we do have an understanding. And I know them, and they know me. And, I hope that would be true of whoever happens to be sitting in this office in the future. That means that there will be talking and rather than having that, that, uh, inevitable road, uh, of suspicion and miscalculation, which could lead to war. A miscalculation which, incidentally, led to their intervention in Korea, which might have been avoided had there been this kind of contact at that time.

92-1 Excerpt 2 (1:35)

February 29, 1972

RN, Allen Ellender, Michael Mansfield, J. William Fulbright, Henry Kissinger, et al.

RN: It was not our common beliefs which brought us together. But our, frankly, our common interests and our common hopes. What are those common interests? One is the interests that both us have in maintaining our integrity and our independence. And second

is the hope that each of us has to try to build a structure of peace in the Pacific, and going beyond that, in the world. And, uh, and on that point that means that despite a total gulf, a gulf that will continue to exist as long as their communist, and as long as we're basically a free country, a total gulf in beliefs that people of different faiths, of different beliefs, have got to find a way to live together in this world. And, to, in the case of the People's Republic of China and the United States of America, the most powerful nation in the world, and the most populous nation in the world, if we, uh, do not find a way to, uh, despite our differences to have discussions, we are on a collision course years ahead, which would be very, very serious. If we do find a way to have discussions as we have started in this instance, there is a better chance that we will not have that collision course years ahead.