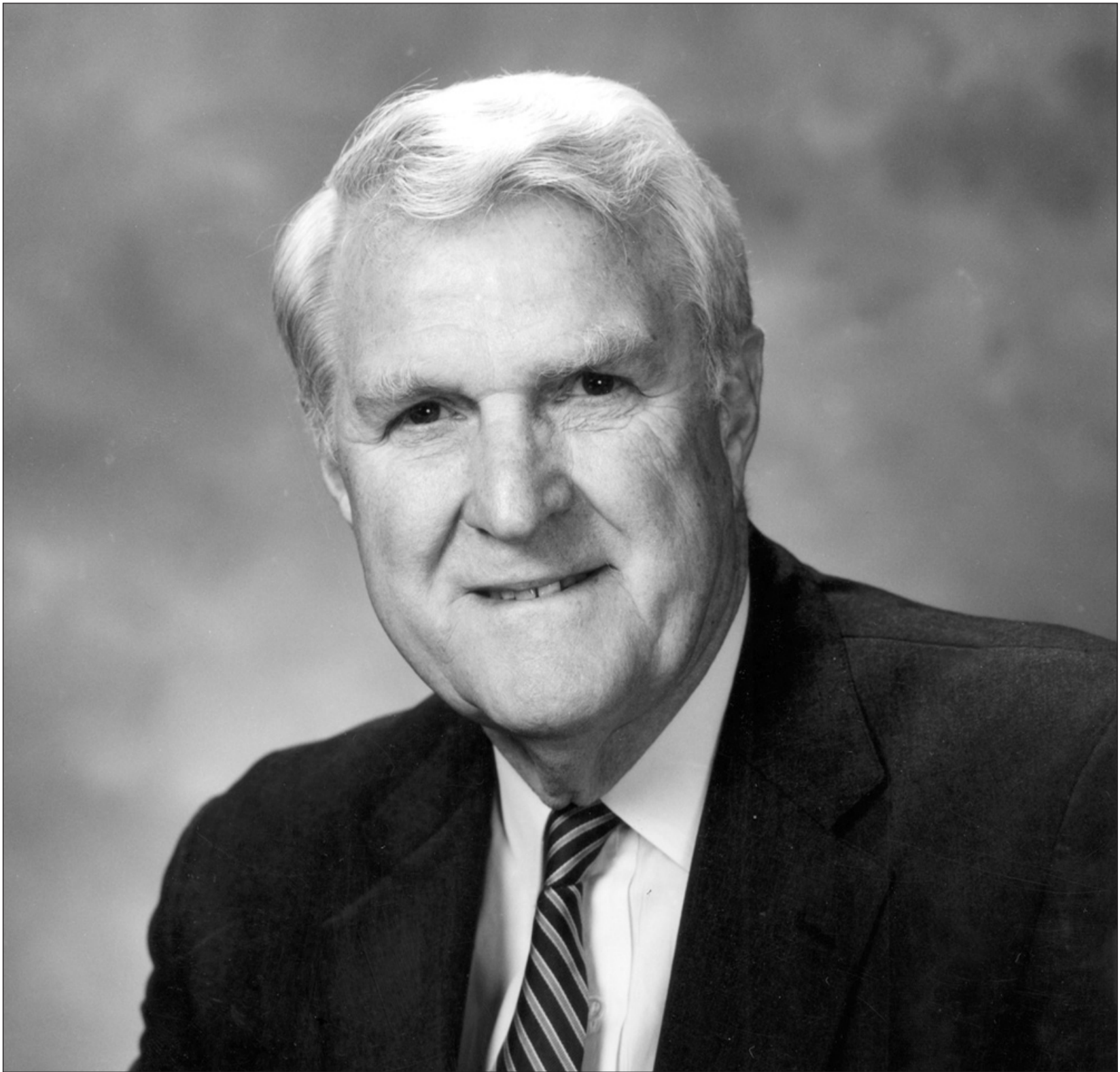




Politics and beyond



Shafer, Nixon butt heads over marijuana policy

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

After finishing his term of governor of Pennsylvania, Raymond P. Shafer didn't retire and rest on his laurels.

He stayed involved in trying to make the world a better place to live.

He completed his governorship in January 1971 and was appointed by President Richard Nixon as chairman of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse.

The commission, set up by Congress, was to investigate all forms of drug abuse and recommend new laws as needed.

Public hearings were held in Washington, D.C., Chicago and San Francisco within the first several months.

By mid-July of that year, Shafer had visited Holland, Belgium and Britain to talk with officials about drug problems. He said the biggest obstacle to overcoming drug abuse is the fact that many countries didn't look on it as a problem.

"Unless we have some kind of cooperation, we shall never be able to solve the problem," he said that year.

He said the commission wanted to gain experience learned in other countries and draw a blueprint "of a kind to benefit

from not only the U.S. but human beings everywhere."

In July 1971, Shafer advocated a "more tolerant attitude taken in America toward marijuana use." In a news conference in London, he said he "wants to see a less emotional approach taken toward mere possession of the drug, as opposed to selling it."

In July 1972, Shafer told an audience at Chautauqua, N.Y., that "it's time for those concerned about drug abuse to redefine the goals and refine the issues."

The Shafer Commission, as it was known, in 1972 recommended that the state and federal governments decriminal-

ize the personal use of marijuana but continue to declare it an illegal substance.

"We unanimously agree that marijuana use is not a desirable behavior, and we agree that society should discourage its use," Shafer said in announcing the panel's results. "Nevertheless, we feel that placed in proper perspective with other social problems, citizens should not be criminalized or jailed merely for private possession or use."

Nixon, who appointed nine of the 13 commission members, rejected the report, saying he wouldn't follow any recommendation to legalize marijuana.

New international focus leads to calls for U.S. to embrace China

By Jane Smith
MEADVILLE TRIBUNE

While Raymond P. Shafer was active in local, state and national politics, he also ventured into the international world of politics after leaving the position of Pennsylvania governor.

He saw the need for establishing good relations with other countries, specifically China.

He served as chairman of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations from 1982 to 1992, resigning as chairman after 10 years but remaining on the committee.

At the time of his resignation, he was named chairman emeritus. "We will be working closely to continue to build relations between the two peoples. We feel very strong it's important that Americans know more about China and Chinese know more

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RAYMOND P. SHAFER

about America," he said at that time.

During his tenure as chairman, he start-

ed specific programs designed to open lines of communication between the two countries.

One was the U.S.-China Dialogue, a program he described in 1992 as a "high level, off-the-record conference between American and Chinese leaders to discuss issues affecting bilateral relations as well as affected situations in the world."

Issues discussed included economics, government and problems involving technology transfer. "It is good to be able to have individuals discuss these things in an off-the-record forum. I feel very strongly that the most advanced nation in the world, the United States, and the largest nation in the world, China, keep their lines of communication between each other open. You don't solve disputes by just keeping away from each other," he said in

that same interview.

In 1994, Shafer praised the work of former President Richard Nixon for improving relations with China and the former Soviet Union.

Shafer called himself a "student of China," rather than an expert.

In addition to this work with the National Committee, Shafer spent several years working with the Atlantic Council and was part of the council that drew up a list of recommendations for the U.S. government to consider in its relations with China.

Stressed was the importance of expanding the basis of the relationship to rest on economic, scientific and cultural ties, on shared efforts to maintain stability in Asia and on Chinese involvement in the search for solutions that transcend national boundaries — such as arms limitations and international economic issues.