CARTER PRESIDENCY PROJECT

FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY CARTER

November 29, 1982
Plains, Georgia

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YOUNG: We'll follow our usual format and identify some of the topics of particular interest—to us and to the President. I think the President would like to start out with a few words and then we can proceed to the questions. I've also indicated that if the President has some subject he thinks is particularly important for us to pursue, that he should feel free to bring it forward. We don't have a rigid agenda.

We have talked about four general topics of interest to us. The first two have to do with the Washington side of the Presidency from campaigning into office; they concern the evolution of the office and the congressional aspect of the Presidency's problems and opportunities. There are then some specific questions about policies, some of which may be substantive, some of which may be somewhat oriented to process because we have seen different patterns. And finally, there are some questions about this particular, distinct Presidency in its time and some large questions of the sort that historians have usually taken away from political scientists but we would like to recover. We welcome you, Mr. President, to our group and we appreciate this opportunity.

CARTER: Well, first of all, I want to say that I'm grateful that you all have taken an interest in the administration. I've had a chance to talk to a good number of those who have already been interviewed by you. They made unanimously favorable recommendations to me to participate freely and without restraint. I think they all enjoyed it. I'm eager to cooperate as much as possible today. I don't have any restraints at all to express to you. If there is a problem with any of the other participants, I still have some influence and I'll be glad to help these procrastinators expedite any decisions.

Also, if you have follow-up questions to any of us, I know we would be glad to have them. If you identify additional persons that might be possible candidates for interviews, Jim mentioned [Charles] Kirbo and Bob Strauss, for instance, I'll be glad to make a phone call and suggest that they participate, if you want them to. It's very encouraging to me to know that there will be an objective and fairly definitive analysis of what did occur. I didn't have a chance to talk to many of these people after I left the White House and before I wrote my book. The book, as you know if any of you have read it, is a highly personal thing.

YOUNG: We've all read it, carefully.

CARTER: So you've paid your dues. And I think it will be interesting, certainly

interesting for me, to know about your own scholarly, objective analysis of what did and did not occur, and some of the achievements and mistakes and failures that we had. And any inconsistencies among people. There was often a great storehouse of knowledge and experience and activity that took place in the West Wing and the Executive Office Building about which I was not at all aware. In particular, the kind of things that Stu [Eizenstat] or Hamilton [Jordan] or Jody [Powell], Al McDonald and others would spend days pursuing, might very well come to me in the form of a half-page memorandum where I just had to say OK or no. So it will be interesting to me also to see what went on in my administration about which I was not aware.

I'm eager to participate and cooperate fully. I don't have any hesitancy about putting myself in your hands and I presume the best way to go about it, Jim, will be just for you all to ask questions because you know the gaps and what you want. I do hope that we can work out some way of having the record available in the presidential library that we will build. I think that should be a very beneficial addition to the library. Many of the people who have served in the administration have agreed to put their own personal papers in the library, even all the hostage families are putting their personal letters and so forth in the Carter Presidential Library, just so they'll be preserved and made available later on for historians and students.

YOUNG: We want very much to do this and to see that done.

CARTER: If there are problems about accessibility, or constraints that your other interviewees have prescribed, then we'll certainly work out a way that is responsible for honoring those. The best thing, I think, would be to have questions, Jim, and I'll try to answer them.

YOUNG: I'll start off with a large one. People who study presidencies and who study campaigns note that there's quite a disparity between the world as it seems on the campaign trail and the world that one finds in Washington. There is a whole set of questions I think we would like to ask you about how you organized your administration, particularly your staff, or that transition as it may have evolved over time. Also we would like to know about some of the things that you felt you had particularly to address in establishing your Presidency in the Washington environment. My first question is a very general one. Can you give us your thoughts on what you anticipated, not so much in terms of what problems were yet on your agenda, but what you anticipated when you came to Washington? Did you foresee what you would have to do and what demands would be made on you in your relations with that governmental establishment? Then we can pick up some particular questions on that.

CARTER: I'll probably ramble in my answer because the question rambles. I began considering a nationwide race in 1971 when I had only been in the Governor's office a few months, not distinguishing at that time between the Vice-Presidency, and the possibility of being on someone else's ticket, and being President. It was really only after that time, during 1972, that I decided to run for the Presidency itself. But throughout my Governor's term, at least, I was preoccupied with how the Presidency and the Federal

Government should react to problems and issues that I had to face as a Governor. I was very active in the southeastern region dealing with all the agencies of the Federal Government as they dealt with education, transportation, public welfare systems, those kinds of things.

In the reorganization of the Georgia state government, we also sought advice from other Governors and administrations around the country. Although I was primarily concerned with my duties as Governor, it was always a constant factor in my mind, how would this relate to the Presidency itself? Shortly after the Democratic convention in '72, when I endorsed and in fact made the major nominating speech for Scoop [Henry] Jackson, we began to make plans for my candidacy for the Presidency itself. That accentuated my interest, and I began to make an agenda of what I thought the Presidency should encompass.

With personal experience on domestic issues and some defense issues, and with just a modicum of opportunities in the foreign field, I joined the Trilateral Commission and took a lot of trips to other nations to learn as much as I could about international affairs. But I can't say that I accomplished very much with the trips, except that they were primarily trade trips for Georgia. One of the things that I did was to study the relationships between our country and the Japanese and Chinese, and another one was to go to the Mid East and spend about a week traveling around the important places in Israel, the Golan Heights, and along the Jordan River and so forth. So from the early stages of my gubernatorial experience, I was in effect preparing and assessing issues and questions that I thought might be addressed from the White House, and after the first year, from the Presidency itself.

I thought I would be running against [Edward M.] Kennedy and [George] Wallace and I didn't think many Democrats would have the temerity to do the same thing on a serious basis. Although Wallace stayed in the race, Kennedy withdrew and when Kennedy withdrew, there were ten or so very well-known and formidable Democratic opponents who came forth to challenge me, which was disconcerting.

When we began the direct campaign, just driving around first of all with Jody and me all by ourselves, I had a chance to learn even more about domestic issues from a broader perspective in Iowa and California, Texas, New Hampshire and so forth. Small groups, sometimes not any larger than this, were either curious about me as one of the potential candidates, or quite often younger people who were newcomers to politics actively wanted to support me. I listened to their problems and their concerns, their suggestions about agricultural policy and defense matters, what they were concerned about in SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty] and non-proliferation. So I began to expand my mind a little bit further than I had, during that campaign itself.

Later, as I got to be well known, and had some success in the early Florida straw ballot and the Iowa caucus and so forth, then I became one of the focal points for the press and had to prepare myself much better to answer questions that were much more probing and that were engendered within the national press in Washington where they were much

more knowledgeable about past history or current events than was I. I turned to people in whom I had confidence to help me. These included people in foreign/defense fields that I had known, primarily in the Trilateral Commission and many of whom later became members of my administration, such as Harold Brown, Dr. [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, Jerry Smith, Cy Vance and others. It was an educational program on a crash basis.

By the time I won the nomination (as you know I didn't have any remaining opposition by the first of June so it was obvious that I had the nomination won), I didn't have to horse trade or negotiate with other leading candidates either for the Vice-Presidency or any positions on the Cabinet. I was quite free to make these decisions over a period of time as I chose. The one I had to make before the convention obviously was the choice of the Vice President. And after that we had a strong lead in the public opinion polls. It was distorted greatly by the conflict between [Ronald] Reagan and [Gerald] Ford where neither one of their supporters would agree in interviews to support the other. It gave us a highly distorted position as a favorite before both conventions. But that went away fairly rapidly and as you know the Ford/Carter race was decided on a very narrow basis.

But in spite of that, between the conventions and the initiation of a general election campaign, I had a chance to have extended and definitive meetings down here in Plains at the Pond House where my mother now lives. We would carefully prepare the agendas and spend all day, or sometimes two days, with distinguished Americans who were the most knowledgeable, Democratically-oriented political leaders that we could identify on every conceivable domestic, foreign, and defense issue. At the conclusion of those long sessions that were organized by people like Stu Eizenstat or Dr. Brzezinski or sometimes Charlie Schultze or Juanita Kreps, we put together a growing understanding of what issues I would have to face when I was elected.

After the election, of course, my primary responsibility was to put together a Cabinet and further to define a specific agenda for the initial weeks of the administration. I also had to try to get acquainted with the members of the Congress with whom I would be working. I turned over to Jack Watson and to my son Chip and a few others the responsibility for the transition period and the actual arrangement for the taking over of the government, and they did a good job of that. But I wasn't very deeply involved in that respect.

In that process, a number of potential workers in the administration, I would say mostly at the sub-Cabinet level, were identified because of the good work that they did in the transition months. I've covered in the book in some degree, and Hamilton would probably be better qualified than I to discuss this, the process that we used to screen candidates—and I think this is where Charlie Kirbo could be very helpful to you. Charlie went to Washington on several occasions and he would, in his own inimitable way, talk to distinguished lawyers in Washington, the heads of some of the lobbying groups, that would be a minimal factor, and also to the people in the Congress that we knew, such as Ed Muskie and others. He would then say, who do you think would be the best person to be the Secretary of State, or Secretary of Defense, or head of HEW [Health, Education and Welfare], and so forth. We narrowed those down.

In those processes, we began to learn more about the agenda that ought to be mine when I became President. As I interviewed these people—on an average I interviewed from three to six candidates for a Cabinet post personally—I would ask for their ideas. When I talked to Harold Brown or Charlie Duncan, for instance, I would ask them what they thought ought to be done in the Department of Defense to make it more efficient, to eliminate waste and to have a more orderly and methodical procedure for establishing defense priorities and so forth. It was the same thing with HEW, same thing with Transportation, so as I interviewed people who might be Cabinet officers, I extracted from them their ideas on the top priorities in their mind in their own departments.

At the same time, I was meeting with congressional leaders, who were fairly deferential to my ideas during the transition phase. They came down to Plains; we met at Herman Talmadge's farm; I went to Washington. I met with every chairman of every major committee in the House or Senate. I had an all-day session at the Smithsonian with both Democratic and Republican leaders and all my Cabinet officers who were involved in important defense matters, just to talk about the agenda for defense and foreign policy.

It was there I decided to move aggressively on Camp David, which was the Mid East and to move aggressively on normalization relations with China, on the Panama Canal treaty, on SALT II and so forth. Those kinds of decisions were made during that time. Fritz [Walter] Mondale worked very closely with me in trying to decide which ones of those items we could pursue the first year, which ones should be left until later, which ones were potentially incompatible, which ones would overbook the agenda.

As I said in my book, I still have mixed emotions about this. There's a general consensus, which I presume you all have encountered, that we tried to do too much too fast, and I think as far as creating an image of consistency, achievement, or authority is concerned, this is right. But whether we could have actually accomplished more by having a more limited agenda, I have my doubts. As Bob Strauss said, and I put this in the book: if we had got eighty-five percent of what we wanted, it seemed that the public impression was that we had lost fifteen percent, which is probably inevitable. But we did accumulate over a period of time an image of not getting what we wanted. I think in general we had a fairly good success rate.

I was experienced as a Governor. I think I did a good job as Governor. I did a lot of innovative things, all of which have stood the test of time. So I took that experience to Washington, but there were at least two remarkable differences. One was just that the Washington environment was much more of a major factor than was the Atlanta environment on a comparative basis. I could ignore the people in Atlanta who were the social, business, and media leaders, if I so chose, with relative impunity and deal primarily with the members of the legislature. There was a much more isolated relationship between the legislative and executive branch on the one hand, and the general public and the news media on the other, than was the case in Washington where the lobbyists and the law firms and the news media leaders, in particular the columnists and others, were such an important element of government in Washington. And I underestimated that. I don't think there's any doubt about it.

It didn't take us long to realize that the underestimation existed, but by that time, we were not able to repair that mistake. I'm not trying to rationalize too much, but in retrospect, as I wrote the book and thought about it a lot and got probed on every side from Steve and from my editors and Jody and Hamilton and Zbig and others who read it over before it was published, I'm just not sure that there was not an inherent incompatibility there. Whether I could have overcome it by having a series of private luncheons or suppers at the White House for the news media in the first few weeks, I have my doubts. But I'm willing to grant that that's a possibility.

Later we did, as you know. I invited to the White House every executive officer or news commentator or notable columnist or reporter who I thought shaped events in the nation, probably a hundred, all of the ones that we thought were the most important. Jody and Jerry Rafshoon and a few of the friends that we had in the press helped us make out the list and I would spend several hours with them at night answering their questions, talking to them about major issues, but I'm not sure how much good it did.

I had a different way of governing, I think, than had been the case with my predecessors, and the public and the press were still in somewhat of a quandary about how we managed the affairs of the White House. I was a southerner, a born-again Christian, a Baptist, a newcomer. I didn't have any obligations to the people in Washington for my election. Very few of the members of Congress, or members of the major lobbying groups, or the distinguished former Democratic leaders, had played much of a role in my election. There wasn't that tie of campaign interrelationship that ordinarily would have occurred had I not been able to win the nomination by myself. I just didn't have that sort of potential tie to them, and I think they felt that they were kind of on the outside.

YOUNG: Could I just interrupt a moment? During the transition you noticed that the congressional leaders were very deferential to you, at that time, and so you were in for a rude shock later on. After the transition—Bert Lance has talked a little bit to us about this but not much—did it come as a shock to you to see this developing declaration of war on you by Washington? I wonder if during all of this intensive work that was being done preparing for the standard transitional matters and agendas and programs and recruitment to the departments and screening, you were being fully informed about what kinds of problems you might expect down that road with what we call "Washington" or the Congress in particular? The Congress wasn't telling you; congressmen you were seeing were not telling you, "you're going to have a big problem with Congress," I presume, at that point. Was this a source of concern in your transition teams, or did it more or less catch you by surprise?

CARTER: I don't think it was a source of concern that I recall. Obviously, we had seen the problems that [Richard] Nixon and Ford had had with Congress, but it was a Democratic Congress. I expected when I went into the White House to have a much more harmonious relationship with the Democratic Congress than did occur. There's no question about that. The basic agenda that we presented to the Congress at that time was carried out. It was supported and evolved between me, Bob Byrd, Tip O'Neill and the

other Democratic leaders. There was a similar economic circumstance then to what we have now: high unemployment, a long period of stable oil prices, the inflation rate being fairly low, extraordinary deficits for those times—sixty-six billion dollars, I think, was Ford's last deficit that I inherited—and the main program that we had was to stimulate the economy and to create jobs. There was no incompatibility between me and the Democratic leaders on those basic issues.

That was a major thrust, along with the energy package, which passed the House as you know by August and then took us three more years to pass the Senate. I think the first example of congressional incompatibility was what I described in the book with the reorganization bill and with Jack Brooks' opposition. I found very quickly then that there was no Democratic discipline and there was no inherent loyalty to me. I had to get the votes individually from Democrats or Republicans wherever I could get them. It didn't take me long to learn that my original transition expectations were not going to be realized. That misapprehension didn't extend for months and months after I was inaugurated. I was disabused of those dreams within the first few days.

YOUNG: On the White House staff, you obviously had some fairly clear-cut notions about how you wished the staff to be organized to serve you best and it's clear that you did not follow certain models. I wonder if you would talk about what your main thoughts and objectives were? I think we will probably have much different advice about how you ought to have organized the staff and I'm sure you've heard the case for chief of staff. We gather that you did not feel that that was suitable for your purposes. Could you talk a little bit about the setting up of the staff system?

CARTER: I read a lot of books about it, Dr. Neustadt's book and others by Steven Hess, and just analyzed how presidential power is exerted and utilized in the organization of that staff. I think I took to the White House the same basic philosophy that I had as Governor and the same one that I used in my private affairs even on a submarine when I was younger. I was trained by [Hyman G.] Rickover, I'm an engineer at heart, and I like to understand details of things that are directly my responsibility. I like to delegate administration to others.

If Hamilton Jordan had been willing to be a chief of staff, I would have had no objection to that. Hamilton did not want to be chief of staff. There was no other person who could have taken his place. He was a natural leader among the staff members. Jody and Frank Moore and Stu Eizenstat and even Jack Watson, who hadn't been part of our Governor's administration, all looked upon Hamilton as a natural leader. He was quiet, he was not forceful, he was not proud, he didn't put himself in a superior position to other people, but folks trusted his judgment. But Hamilton was adamantly opposed to being chief of staff and it would have been, I say improper, it would have been inconsistent to bring an outsider in as a leader of all of these people who had been with me since I was a young politician on the one hand and none of those who had been with me for a long time would have felt at ease being Hamilton's boss.

In effect, Hamilton served as a chief of staff, but I have never wanted a person under me

to whom all of my chief advisors had to report and then have that one person report to me. Even now it would be absolutely incompatible with my concept of governing. I wanted Stu Eizenstat to be able to come into the Oval Office any time and say, "Mr. President, I've got a serious problem here," or "This is a bill that I think ought to be done, this is an amendment that we're going to pursue." It was the same way with Jack Watson and others—I would say seven or eight, I don't know the exact number, you can probably go down the list and find out. I wanted but seven or eight of my staff members to have unimpeded, direct access to me and not feel that they ever had to go through a chief of staff. I didn't want a Sherman Adams in my office.

YOUNG: Dick, do you have some questions you'd like to ask on this staff business?

NEUSTADT: Let me try to link that up with something else you'd said about Washington beyond Congress as a problem. Part of the problem, as I perceived it, was not that you didn't have a chief of staff but that your staff was as new to Washington as you were. They couldn't do any of the buttering up of the media; they didn't know those people. It wasn't native to them. The only person who seems to have taken to that like a duck to water was Bert Lance. You mentioned in your book that he was great in his relations with Congress. My perception was that he was great in his relations with media moguls, and all those sorts of people.

CARTER: For about five months he was, I agree. Stu Eizenstat was another one who came from Georgia, and of course Bob Strauss. But you're talking about just staff. I thought about all this at the time.

NEUSTADT: Well, that's what I'm wondering, when did you begin to think of bringing in a Bob Strauss and his kind of position?

CARTER: Well, Bob came in from the very beginning, as you know, as Special Trade Representative who is, in effect, an aide of the President, he does not sit at the Cabinet table. We had long discussions about this, Hamilton and I, and Kirbo in particular; later Fritz Mondale. There were two factors that ought to be remembered: one was that Fritz Mondale's staff was an integral part of the White House, of the Oval Office, of the West Wing, and Dick Moe and Jim Johnson and Mike Berman and Fritz were just like part of my own staff. We felt that Fritz's long experience in Washington and the fact that for the first time he was being integrated into the Presidency itself was a compensating factor for the ignorance among the Georgia group concerning Washington.

The second thing was that the Cabinet members were so broadly representative of Washington experience. You know the Cy Vances, Harold Browns, Jim Schlesingers, and others, almost the whole group with very few exceptions had been part of Washington, had served in previous Democratic administrations, were familiar with the press and familiar with the Congress and so forth. I saw the need, and I spent a good bit of time writing about this in the book, for an immediate core of people around me that had been tested in the crucible of election and gubernatorial service, who knew each other's strengths and weaknesses and had learned to accommodate them, who were

compatible with each other and who were loyal to me.

I didn't fear the disloyalty of members of the Cabinet, but I wasn't sure about it. It wasn't a concern to me, to be perfectly honest, but within the White House itself, there was a problem in my mind about loyalty. I wrote about a thousand pages, typed by myself for the book as Steve knows, and we wound up with about six hundred pages. A portion of what I wrote that wasn't included in the end was about some experiences during the campaign when we would bring people into our bosom that we trusted who betrayed us, who came there as spies or who were just incompatible and went out and called a press conference and said, "This is a bunch of bums who are lying to the American people and they are not worthy of our votes." We didn't want that to happen in the White House.

I think this same thing has been the case with Kennedy and others who won an election on their own to want people that they trusted and with whom they were compatible in the inner confines of the White House or the Oval Office and even those who inherited the Presidency, like Johnson and Truman. When they had their first opportunity, they brought their own people in. So I don't have any apology to make about that. But I wasn't trying to have my whole dependence upon a group of Georgians like me who didn't understand Washington. I thought that Mondale and the breadth of the Cabinet was an adequate compensation for it.

NEUSTADT: I got the impression at the time and from the book that Bert Lance served a special role because he was loyal, he was at a different age level, a different level of relationship. You talked about this a little bit in the book. He makes his forced departure, not that you forced it on him but Washington forced him, which was a real blow to your conception of how you operated. Just in terms of what you just said, that was a very important conception because you had this loyal circle, but you had one member of it who had all these antennae outwards and who was in a different level relationship with you than the young people. He goes. Did you think about replacing him, or whether it was possible to replace him in that special role?

CARTER: Yes, I did. I don't know even now who could have replaced Bert in that particular role. When I was Governor, Bert was director of the transportation department. When I reorganized the Georgia government, which was hell with the Georgia legislature. Bert was my key man. He was strong and affable, I think as I've mentioned in the book, I can't recall. He could deal with blacks and labor and the Atlanta power structure and make them all feel that they had a genuine friend in Bert Lance. It wasn't an accident that I put him in charge of OMB [Office of Management and Budget] because I recognized that there his tentacles would go out not only to all the other Cabinet officers in the preparation of the budget, but also to the key members of the Congress and in some unpredictable way even to the news media.

It would be hard to overestimate that blow to us when Bert was attacked and, among many people, discredited. This was a shock in that it was a surprise. It was also a shock to the structure that we had erected, which I thought was well-balanced and which was functioning very thoroughly until then. I don't know of anyone who could have gone into

the OMB position that would have had that kind of powerful presence and the intimacy with me and the ability to manage the affairs of OMB and prepare the budget. I chose Jim McIntyre, Bert's deputy, who had the intimacy with me, he had the same job when I was Governor, and who had the technical ability even more than Bert to run OMB.

But he didn't have that—it wasn't effusive, exactly—outgoing personality. He didn't have that ability to deal with top Cabinet officers on an equal or even a superior basis, which Bert did, without aggravating folks. So Bert was irreplaceable in that respect. That was a very serious blow to us.

It also was a symbol of a relationship with the press that we were never able to overcome. There was a strong adversarial relationship that's probably inherent which, if I were God, I don't think I would want to change particularly, but which was unpleasant. I think since Kennedy, there probably hasn't been any President who's had a good relationship with the press, I mean a constructive relationship with the press. I think this includes Johnson, as you know Nixon, and even Ford, who was stigmatized by the press as a fumbling incompetent, whereas he's probably the best athlete that ever lived in the White House and I think he was in the top third of his law class at Yale or wherever he went. But even he was stigmatized in that way.

I think that this was the first realization that our relationship with the press was not going to be harmonious, even though we thought our motives were pure. We thought our agenda was proper. We thought we were all honest and serving in a pleasant attitude, but in a self-sacrificial way in that we were dedicated to what we were doing. We were idealistic, maybe to a fault. Some have said pious and so forth to a fault. But the fact that we were distrusted was revealed in the Bert Lance episode. I think it was an attitude of the press, maybe in the aftermath of Watergate and so forth, and because I was an alien in Washington, it was inevitable.

TRUMAN: Mr. President, were there other aspects of the departure of Bert Lance, other than the relations with the media, that you found particularly difficult? I'm sure there were purely personal losses because obviously you two were close in a very special way. But in your functioning as President, were there aspects other than the press relations kinds of things where you found his departure particularly difficult, where it left a large hole? You've hinted at this and I'd love to hear you enlarge a little bit on it.

CARTER: I don't think so. I'd like to say yes, Bert did leave a hole, there's no doubt about that. But I think that the main, permanent effect of it was a certain disillusionment and maybe an element of forcing us to be cautious, more withdrawn, and more secretive in our inner relationships, more reluctant to expose our true feelings, more inclined to conceal our doubts. We were just put on the defensive by the press. I think it was a psychological thing. I think Jim McIntyre was technically better qualified to run the Office of Management and Budget and prepare the budget in its detail than Bert was. In fact, I would surmise that Jim McIntyre did that while Bert was head of OMB.

YOUNG: Our data confirm that.

CARTER: That was not a problem.

TRUMAN: Lance also made some confessions on his part about that.

CARTER: He wouldn't deny that. But I think it kind of changed all of us. It created a confrontational attitude. We thought that the press had improperly damaged us, and I still think so. We were less trustful and less willing to put our views where they could be scrutinized by the press. We became a more close-knit group.

NEUSTADT: I had an impression, which I got I think from Charlie Schultze, and this is going to another piece of damage, but you tell me that. It isn't damage if you didn't feel it. We're talking about what you saw.

CARTER: I think I know what you're going to say.

NEUSTADT: Bert Lance's personality, had he been able to stay a while, would have provided a focus for the so-called economic policy group. You would have had less babble, more coherence among your economists.

CARTER: That's possible.

NEUSTADT: Now that's a hole that I have always thought I saw. You tell me if I'm wrong about it.

CARTER: Well, we had a problem with that. Bert, Mike Blumenthal, and I were more conservative than anybody else among my advisors. We were more conservative than Charlie Schultze or Stu Eizenstat, more conservative by far than Fritz Mondale. The test came with the fifty dollar tax rebate. When we went into office, there was a unanimous commitment to an immediate creation of jobs, and we had anticipated that the fifty dollar tax rebate could be implemented by April. We were going to pass it in February and March and it was going to be an immediate thing. Well it didn't happen that way. It went through the House quickly without any delay. It got to the Senate, and a lot of opposition was being aroused to it because the economy seemed to be stimulated more than we anticipated on its own. Bert and Mike Blumenthal and I felt that the fifty dollar tax rebate should not be implemented and we had a squabble among our economic advisors, an inevitable squabble, but not anything ugly. We finally prevailed, and we just aborted it.

In that respect, Mike and Bert were acting in harmony. But Mike always saw himself as the leader of the entire economic advisory group. Bert, however, who didn't understand perhaps as well as Mike the theory of economics, was much closer to me and I think it was obvious to everyone that if they wanted to get to me with an economic message that Bert was the avenue to follow. Bert's departure removed that competition between OMB and Treasury, which Mike was never able to consolidate even after Bert's departure. The reason I'm hesitating about answering your question is that I don't know what would have happened had Bert stayed because I think the competition between Bert and Mike

would have become more acute with the passage of time. It's just hard to say what would have happened if he had stayed on. [Interruption]

Eventually Mike left because of his inability to consolidate his security position, which is I think naturally the purview of the Secretary of Treasury. There was also Mike's incompatibility with the White House staff and with Stu and Charlie and Jody and Ham. It's no reflection on Mike, but that's ultimately what happened. I think it probably would have happened also if Bert had stayed.

THOMPSON: Mr. President, I wondered whether if you had it to do over again in identifying this other sector of your administration, namely the people who did have reputations in Washington, you would have checked a little more carefully or your staff would have to be more specific about the antagonist-adversary-advocate reputation of some of those people? You mentioned Blumenthal. I have a good deal of experience in the difference between making presentations at the Rockefeller Foundation to Bob Lovett, to Douglas Dillon, to, although he was President, Dean Rusk and all the others, and the kind of antagonist relationship you had with Mike Blumenthal and some others who came into the administration. I wondered if in this trust relationship thing the relationships with Cabinet members and with outsiders would have been any different if you had had this other type, or if you somehow could have identified the 1970 Robert Lovetts or the people who were accommodators and adjustors rather than antagonists in their powers?

NEUSTADT: George Shultz-type of human being.

CARTER: Well, I had some of the George Shultz-types. I don't think you could say that Harold Brown was antagonistic. Cy Vance and others weren't that way. I have nothing but good feelings toward Mike Blumenthal. I think Mike did an excellent job. Mike is naturally feisty and he protects his turf, maybe to excess. But I thought he was superb and I still think he's a good guy. When I asked Cy Vance to serve as Secretary of State, the first man he wanted to be his deputy was Mike Blumenthal and that's how I first got to know Mike. In interviewing Mike and in talking to others about Mike for the Deputy Secretary of State job, I decided he would be best placed in the Secretary of the Treasury's job. Later we got Warren Christopher, really as a second choice, but he turned out to be exemplary.

The only Cabinet officer that I felt was excessively independent was Joe Califano. Joe was operating his own shop. He would make major decisions concerning controversial matters and announce them publicly and never inform me. Joe was an integral part of the *Washington Post* cocktail party circuit. But at the same time, as long as Joe served, he and I got along well. I would call him in and chastise him on occasion for making an announcement without letting me know ahead of time, but in general the announcement he made was compatible with my basic policy. So in all the changes that we'd made in the Cabinet, the only one that still leaves a slightly bitter taste in my mouth is Joe Califano. The rest of them I think were fine and they served well.

As you know, we didn't make a change at all for thirty months. It's probably an unprecedented thing. When they left, it was relatively pleasant. Jim Schlesinger wanted to leave earlier, as I mentioned in the book. As soon as the first energy package was passed, he sincerely wanted to leave after he got the Energy Department partially established. It wasn't completely established. Later, I think about six or eight months later, he came back and again wanted to leave and I urged him to stay. I don't have any feeling of disappointment or a sense that I didn't do a good job in choosing the Cabinet, even including Califano, who I think did a good job while he was there .

NEUSTADT: I told these fellows—I asked their permission to ask you this question.

CARTER: You can ask anything you wish.

NEUSTADT: Well, I read Joe Califano's book and I said to myself, *Why didn't President Carter fire him sooner?* I said this to Joe and he did not speak to me for quite some time after that. If one reads it as an outside observer, you see time after time where you are quite gently and politely suggesting something, or saying something, or inferring something, or there's noise coming from the White House, all of which is just disregarded by Califano. From this, I induce that to get his attention you have to hit him over the head. My impression is you didn't hit him on the head for quite a long while. Maybe Joe was used to having lived with Lyndon Johnson, who did hit him on the head quite often. Give me comment.

THOMPSON: Could I just have one sentence? We had a long interview with Steve's former boss, Dumas Malone, that's going to go out on television and the fellow kept pressing him about what was it that was unique about the whole Jefferson culture and he said "politeness." Is there anything in southern tradition that made it difficult to deal with Califano?

CARTER: That's a good point. I didn't read all of Joe Califano's book but I read parts of it. My impression is that in writing his book, Joe described a lot of things as being unilateral decisions or accomplishments on his part when I and everyone else played a significant role. There was great consultation. A lot of the ideas that Joe eventually implemented came from Stu Eizenstat or on occasion from me and others. Joe took credit for all of them as though he was a lot more independent than he was. He was more independent than my staff members including Stu and others wanted him to be. But he didn't particularly displease me. And it was really approximately the time I went to Camp David and had people come and advise that I think unanimously folks said, "Mr. President, you've got someone in your Cabinet that's not loyal to you and he's running his own shop and his comments in private and in public are not favorable to you." And they asked the same question that you said, "Why don't you fire this guy?"

At first, I was not inclined to do it. Later, I became convinced that Joe ought to go. I called Joe and I said, "Joe, I've been pleased with what you've done. In general, the accomplishments of HEW have been gratifying to me, but there's such a severe incompatibility between you and my White House staff and other Cabinet officers that I

think it would be best for you to step down." There was no argument about it. I said I'd like to make the transition as pleasant as possible. I even invited Joe and his family to use Camp David if he wanted to spend a few days to talk to his children and so forth and even for me and Rosalynn to be there that weekend. He finally decided he would go up to Maine or somewhere; they have a vacation spot. So there was not an unpleasant confrontation between me and Joe Califano. As I said, it wasn't up until he was actually fired that I felt at all inclined to fire him.

THOMPSON: Could I follow up?

CARTER: Please do, because I don't think I've answered your question adequately.

THOMPSON: This seems to stand in such dramatic contrast to your proper moral indignation about Ambassador [William H.] Sullivan and your words about firing him immediately.

CARTER: I should have fired him. Should have fired him and I should have fired [Al] Haig. Those are the only two that I think back on that I should have discharged. I expressed my desire to discharge both men, but I listened to the advice of Vance and Brown in both cases. Both men were very strongly opposed to my discharging Haig and later Sullivan, so I didn't do it. But in retrospect, I should have fired them. In fact I instructed Cy Vance to bring Sullivan out of Iran. And Cy delayed it and he came back again and again as was his manner and tried to convince me that we should send a deputy secretary of state in there to run things, assistant secretary of state, I think, and to ease Sullivan out after the crisis had passed. And I finally deferred to that. Brown and Cy both were convinced that if I brought Haig out of Europe at that time, it would disrupt matters in Europe with the nuclear weapons question and others. I don't remember exactly what issues were involved. So I deferred on both of those decisions. But in retrospect, I wish I had gone ahead and done it.

NEUSTADT: Both of these are cases of clear insubordination and not following instructions in policy.

CARTER: Yes. Sullivan was specifically insubordinate, and Haig was obviously running for President. Every time somebody would go to Europe to talk to Haig about our relationship with the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies and so forth, Haig would use that forum—whether it was Ed Muskie or visiting Republican Senators or a congressional delegation or even sometimes members of my own Cabinet—and would denigrate what I was doing and what the Democrats in general were doing and promote himself as a potential candidate. One of the problems I had with Haig was his repeated concern expressed to others that I had moved [Rolland W.] Heiser out of Europe into Iran. [redacted] But I don't have any hard feelings toward either man. I haven't really talked to them much since I went out of

office, but those are the only ones that I remember that I should have fired earlier than I did.

YOUNG: So it was really for reasons of state and loss of effectiveness that you feel were the main objectives of the Califano removal?

CARTER: Yes. The other Cabinet officers and the staff members almost unanimously said that Joe was just promoting himself, not cooperating with them, and was basically disloyal. I never did detect that disloyalty to me, but I think knowing Joe's temperament, he's aggressive, he felt that he had been there with Johnson, he knew the social programs better than anyone else including the White House, and when something was done in a collegial way, as far as Joe was concerned, it was his program. But that's just his character and his nature and I should have understood it and did understand it.

HARGROVE: A little while ago Jim started to ask you about your theory of administration. You used two words. You said details and delegation.

CARTER: Yes.

HARGROVE: That goes way back. I wonder if you'd talk a little bit about whether the gubernatorial experience was useful to you in learning how to use staff and particularly staff in relation to the line, and how you set up your staff and what you expected them to do for you, and in relation to Cabinet officers, following up a little bit your notion of giving a policy development role to lead agencies and Cabinet officers?

CARTER: I'll try. You can interrupt me if I get sidetracked. The Georgia governorship is one of the most powerful in the nation. And I enjoyed being Governor. That was one of the most pleasant four years of my life. In the Georgia government, however, there are a number of constitutional officers who are elected independently of the Governor, who appoints them only in a tangential way. My training as Governor was not to become involved in the administration of departments and agencies, but to let other trusted people perform these roles, and to keep informed about what they were doing and try to have some consistency and basic policy.

At the same time, I tried to distinguish between what I, as President, ought to know on the one hand, and to spend whatever hours were necessary to learn as a student, and the things that I didn't need to know and to ignore them or let a Vance or Ray Marshall take care of them. I never did feel that I had to know the details of how the work training programs were administered. I trusted Ray Marshall to do it. There were some details about agriculture that I wanted to understand if they were likely to come up in a press conference or in a session in Kansas City with the grain farmers, but in general I wanted Bob Bergland to run it. I didn't interfere in his department. And I think all of those, Cecil Andrus, Juanita Kreps, or Neil Goldschmidt, I think everyone will tell you—I don't think you talked to the Cabinet officers, but I think that all the Cabinet officers will tell you that I never interfered or particularly cared about the administration of their departments.

However, if an issue was mine, I wanted to understand it. And so I spent hour after hour after hour studying the structure of the Federal Government in preparation of the budgets and really did a lot of detailed work on the budgets because I felt that this was one of the managerial weapons or tools that I had to exert my influence in a definitive way. And my budgets came through the Congress relatively intact. Even the Defense budgets were very seldom modified after I submitted them because I worked them out in detail with Harold Brown under the Joint Chiefs of Staff and unanimously, I think, the latter supported the final version of the budgets. Sometimes, the Congress would resurrect an ancient battleship or have a nuclear carrier instead of a conventional propulsion carrier, but that was a rare exception.

But if something was of importance to me, like the energy legislation, which was comprised of thousands of meticulous details, I took the time to learn them. When the congressional committees or subcommittees would be called in to the Cabinet room, or the House and Senate conferees would be called into the Cabinet room to resolve a particular detail that meant the passage or failure of the entire bill, I wanted to understand what I was talking about as well as the chairman of a Senate subcommittee. And I did. I devoted the time to it. I never did regret it. It was not an onerous chore for me; it was kind of an interesting thing for me to do. At the Camp David discussions with [Menachem] Begin and [Anwar] Sadat I didn't have-to turn around to Vance or to [William] Quandt or Harold Saunders and say, "Would you explain to me the history of this particular issue," or "Will you show me on the map where the lines run or where is this town located," because I knew it. And I could negotiate for hours with the subordinates of Begin and Sadat, which I did, with Aharon Barak and with Osama El-Baz.

I knew personally what the issues were because I felt like that was a presidential responsibility. When I went to a press conference, I didn't spend more than a couple of hours going over the briefing books, sometimes three hours if they were complicated matters. It wasn't a last minute, crash course for me to get ready for the press conferences that we tried to have every two weeks. I knew the major issues. The distinction that I tried to draw was, once I evolved policy, to let the Cabinet officers and others carry it out without interference from me. I wanted them to keep me informed about basic issues, and in something that I felt was a direct responsibility of mine, I wanted to know the details about it. It seems to be an inconsistency to others, but to me it seems clear.

HARGROVE: Could I follow up a little bit?

CARTER: Please do, because this is an important point, I think.

HARGROVE: I have the impression in the first instance that you had the notion that, let's say Stu Eizenstat and DPS [Domestic Policy Staff], for example, were not authorized to develop policy so much as to oversee and advise you. The lead would be given to a Cabinet officer, such as Califano on welfare reform or Mrs. [Patricia] Harris on the urban package. In time, there was a discovery that Cabinet departments had difficulty coordinating with each other and you gave increasing authority to Stuart to play that

coordinating role. Was there a gradual development and awareness that you needed your own staffs to screen, sort out, coordinate, make options more coherent?

CARTER: I don't believe so, although if there's an inconsistency between what I'm going to say and what Stu Eizenstat told you, I would trust Stu Eizenstat better than I would me because he was involved in the heart of it. When we evolved a new welfare program or an urban policy, I let Stu and Jack Watson, sometimes Frank Moore (if particular Congress members were interested at the early stages), evolve their concept of what the new urban policy would be. Jack Watson would have hearings around the country with mayors and Governors and so forth. Then he and Stu would come and present to me a voluminous, sometimes fifty or sixty pages of options about what we might agree would be part of the ultimate urban package. I would require them to put on each item, sometimes thirty items, how much it would cost the Federal Government, how much it would cost or save the state and local governments, and if I agreed with it, I would just put a check mark on a memorandum which they had prepared. If there were options, then I would indicate my choice among the options.

If I had further questions, then I would call Stu and/or Jack in and say, "I don't understand this, will you explain it to me," and "I believe it's going to cost more than this, why do you think it would cost so little?" Once I signed off on that option paper—I'm taking one of the most voluminous ones I can recall—then Stu would be responsible for the drafting of the proposed legislation. Stu would be responsible also for talking to the subcommittee chairmen who were involved. Frank Moore's staff would get involved at a later stage . So that's basically how we did it from the very beginning.

On occasion, the initiative would come from a department. For instance, on labor matters it would ordinarily be at least two departments, certainly HEW and Labor, or sometimes it would spill over into another one like Commerce or Agriculture. I didn't ever get involved at that stage. Either Jack Watson, or Stu, or most of the time both, would work out a composite proposal. It may be that the Secretary of HEW would strongly disagree with the Secretary of Labor or Housing and Urban Development. If so, and they couldn't resolve the differences with Jack Watson mediating, then I would let both of them come in and talk to me in the Oval Office or the Cabinet room and present their opposing views. I would either make a decision at that point, still in the Cabinet room, or the following day I would let them know what my decision was. It was a complicated system, but I don't know of any alternative, at least in my way of governing.

HARGROVE: I didn't mean to suggest that you delegated authority to Stuart to resolve things, but I do have the impression that you gave him gradually more authority to coordinate and try to make the options coherent, particularly in welfare reform and certainly in the urban factors.

CARTER: Yes, I certainly agree with that. Yes. As I became more familiar with the overall operation of government, and as we built up a base of generic policy that could be used as a guide for more specific policy evolution, then I trusted Stu and his staff to do much more than we did at first. Stu was one of those who didn't work for me in the state

government. He evolved policy ideas even when I was a candidate for Governor in '70, and then he was the one who did the issue analysis and worked up domestic policy proposals when I was running for President, so I knew him and I trusted him. But he didn't really have those four years of experience and training within the state government to know exactly how I did things.

That didn't take long . I couldn't put a number of months on it, but I would say after the first rash of major proposals that went to the Congress, from then on we had our basic policies understood among each other and Stu had much more authority from then on than originally in making proposals on his own.

HARGROVE: Was there an analogue to Eizenstat in economic policy?

CARTER: It would be hard to separate Stu from the economic policy.

HARGROVE: Ok. That's right. Because you really gave him the charter, at least in one of micro-areas, didn't you?

CARTER: Yes. Not just micro, macro also. For instance, when we devised a second-phase energy legislation, I would say that Stu played as large a role as Jim Schlesinger did. Stu had a large and very competent staff, as you probably know. Jack Watson had a tiny staff, always needed more, but I never did give them to him. He had a very small staff. I think Stu had more knowledge, intelligence, and resources on the Domestic Policy Staff to play that larger role. This is not taking anything away from Jack's native intelligence and ability, but Stu had the resources to do all these complicated things. Much more so than say Frank Moore or Jack Watson.

HARGROVE: Did you really feel well served by the EPG [Economic Policy Group] mechanism or was there something that frustrated you about it?

CARTER: I never did feel well served by it.

HARGROVE: Could you spin that out, because I sensed that and I'd like to hear you talk about that.

CARTER: Well, the only reason I hesitate to answer is because I don't want to cast any further aspersions on Mike Blumenthal. But that was the crux of it. [redacted] There was a constant friction there, and I don't like (I think like all other Presidents) to deal with friction. You like to have things come to you in a harmonious fashion. You haven't got time to be a referee. And so that was a very serious problem for

me.
Charlie Schultze, on the other hand, would attend the same meetings. Schultze would brief me once or twice a week, and Schultze has an ability, which you probably noticed, to explain complicated things in a clear and enjoyable fashion. He's as good at that as Brzezinski is at international affairs. I really enjoyed Mr. Brzezinski explaining to me because he made it interesting, and so did the Cabinet officers. Well, Mike wasn't that way. I think it was Mike's lack of natural leadership capability over that independent and disparate group that made the EPG ineffective for me.

HARGROVE: Did it change when [William] Miller came along?

CARTER: Yes.

HARGROVE: For the better?

CARTER: For the better. Yes. Miller was the boss of that group, but he didn't aggravate anybody. It changed a lot.

FENNO: Before you talked about Mike Blumenthal and Joe Califano, I wanted to read an old saw that comes, I think, from Charles Dawes, who was Calvin Coolidge's Vice President. He said that "Cabinet members are the natural enemies of the President." I think you may have answered that.

CARTER: I never did feel that way, really. I felt at ease with my Cabinet members and even when Mike was having the problems that I've just described to you, I had more of a feeling of sympathy for him because, you know, I understood Mike's character. I know about his past history as a child and how he fought his way to one of the top positions in the corporate world. I know his assets and his capabilities and his intelligence and his courage. I admire all those things about him. That one element, though, was a problem. Mike and I have the finest relationship now. When I was in Detroit recently, I went out there, he just donated a very fine Burroughs computer to the Carter Library and recently, when I was in New York, I spent the night with Cy Vance. I have a good relationship with all those former Cabinet members. So I didn't look upon them as challenges or natural enemies. I looked on them as adequately supportive and as friends.

FENNO: So you are saying that even though you didn't check for loyalty at the time you appointed them, you weren't terribly concerned with loyalty because they were, in fact, loyal to you?

CARTER: Yes. They were. And I think even Califano in his own way was loyal. That's just his character. I think he saw himself as being much more knowledgeable about domestic affairs than anyone in the White House or the rest of the Cabinet, having helped Lyndon Johnson evolve many of the Great Society programs.

THOMPSON: Mr. President, is there one other aspect of this apart from loyalty? We've had Phil Klutznick and a variety of other people, not in this project, come to the Miller

Center, and their regret seems to have been that with staffs of forty thousand people in the case of Commerce and large groups in other areas, they felt not you but the White House staff kept them from providing information which might have helped you in some of your major tasks. In that sense, is there any truth at all to this "natural enemy" business? Is there any inherent and inescapable tension between having a group which is totally loyal, always available, ready to give you information, that you have to have to fulfill your personal tasks, and the operations of these separate departments?

CARTER: From the perspective of Califano, Klutznick, Ray Marshall, or others, there may be justification in their claim that the staff prevented easy access to me which they would have preferred. I didn't see it that way. So far as I know, I never delayed a Cabinet officer in seeing me if I knew about their desire. I would stay late that afternoon to see anybody that said, "I need to see you, Mr. President, today." But I would presume that from their perspective to come directly to me with a request was a little of an imposition and they saw, for instance in domestic policy, the Stu Eizenstat staff as an obstacle to reach me. But it didn't create for me any discomfort or any problem.

YOUNG: This is a variant of Erwin Hargrove's question. There is a view expressed among some people who work on the staffs, and not specifically on yours, that for the professional work of policy development and such there are professionals available. The big need they have is for the President to do the political work. You undoubtedly encountered this view before, the ego massaging and the politics of it. I don't detect in your response to Erwin's question that's your view of what a President's job is. But it's a way of asking a question about this whole area of the President's relationship to the political process of policy making and so on, which we'll want to talk about.

CARTER: There again it's hard for me to put into perspective my own experience compared to that of other Presidents. In my book, I tried to be accurate and fair and not overly self-congratulatory. But I think that the fact is that the agenda that we presented to the Congress was extraordinarily difficult and potentially unpopular. Still, our rate of acceptance or level of achievement was very good. If you look at the thing in statistical terms, we had a good relationship with the Congress, in spite of the fact that we had some very controversial matters that had to be addressed.

YOUNG: Good in terms of productivity?

CARTER: Yes, in terms of productivity. But it never has been my nature to be a hail fellow well met, or to be a part of a societal, cocktail party circuit. I don't have any aversion to other people doing it, it's just not me. If I lived another life in politics, I don't believe I'd be particularly different. There were some members of the Congress with whom I had a very easy, natural, good relationship. Jack Brooks, after this first encounter for instance, or Howard Baker, a very fine relationship, easy-going. Tip O'Neill. There were many members of the Congress that I could call on the phone and play tennis with and ask them to go out of their way to help me with a particular issue, which I did frequently.

I would guess, as Anne Wexler has undoubtedly pointed out to you, that we made a tremendous effort to woo the Congress. Many nights when I was tired and would like to have relaxed, we had a supper for maybe a hundred members of the House and I would spend two hours in the East Room in a town meeting forum describing different elements of either domestic or foreign defense policy, answering their questions and either having Harold Brown or Brzezinski or Vance there with me, if there was defense or foreign policy. In a way, I enjoyed these things, but after you do it time after time after time, it gets tiresome.

When we had the Panama Canal legislation, which was the most unpleasant of all, we had to woo particularly the House members. The Senators I dealt with individually, but as for the House members, we had them over there in groups of thirty or forty ad nauseum . I mean, it was horrible. Night after night after night after night going through the same basic questions when I was absolutely convinced that the House members knew they ought to support the legislation. But it was politically damaging for them to do it, and they were tortured. Well, these kinds of efforts that I made, some pleasant some unpleasant, I think eventually paid dividends and that was part of being a political leader. But it was more tedious work rather than having to be a great communicator. I don't claim to be a great communicator.

One of the things that we had to do was to change public opinion. I think in the case of, say, the Mid East or China, Panama, we were quite successful. In the case of energy, I was unsuccessful. I never was able to convince the American people that the passing of the energy legislation was important to our country and the Congress, that's why it took so long. So sometimes we did well, sometimes we did poorly. I might add one other thing. I realized through all that period of time that it was my responsibility as President to do that political work in convincing either the public and/or the Congress of the efficacy of what we proposed.

JONES: Mr. President, one thing that confuses me, and the record was good in relationship to Congress and in regard to some tough issues, is how do you explain the image that it wasn't? And indeed, as you pointed out, and lots of people we've talked to pointed out, you had lots of people at the White House, you did the lobbying when people asked you to, how do you explain that? Why wasn't the image good?

CARTER: Let's assume for a minute that I'm accurate in saying that it was good. I don't think that's just a subjective opinion, but it might be. I think it was good. I labored over that part of the book I wrote. One thing was that we proposed a very heavy agenda, some of which was not put into law. Notable examples were the tax reform, welfare reform, hospital-cost containment. We didn't expend much political capital on welfare reform and tax reform. We spent an enormous amount of political capital on hospital-cost containment. We almost got it, but not quite. Those squabbles, though, were highly publicized and we failed.

We prevented maybe some worse moves on tax reform. We prevented the kind of bill that finally passed in 1981, which I think is devastating to our country economically

because it was a Christmas tree of every possible selfish, special interest desire to have accumulated over the last two decades. And it was all crammed into that bill and it all passed. Our country is suffering from it, I think. But we did fail on some notable examples. That's one reason that we had the image of failure, because we did fail on some notable things.

Another reason is a frustrating delay in passing the energy bill and the amount of effort we put in. I put in more time on energy by far than any other issue that I addressed while I was President, domestic or foreign. The headlines and the awareness in my own mind were the times when the Congress was deadlocked. Every now and then, you'd finally get a bill passed, would sign into law and it would get a brief mention in the news and a brief time of celebration for us. But then there you'd have twenty other bills for consideration in the Congress and the energy legislation was just despairing and tedious, like chewing on a rock that lasted the whole four years. I think that depressed people.

That was one of the reasons that we went into the Camp David seclusion period in '79, because of the hopelessness of that entire effort in our own minds and the rejection of the premises in the minds of the public. They were aggravated every time I went on TV. They weren't interested. It turned them against the energy policy when I spoke to them instead of attracting them to it. That was another reason for the image—the long, detailed, frustrating process even when we did have substantial achievement.

I think the last thing is what I've mentioned already a couple of times, and that is the multiplicity of issues that we put to the Congress simultaneously. There were always twelve or fifteen bills that we were trying to get through the Congress at any one time when Congress was in session rather than having done it as Reagan did, I think wisely, in 1981 with a major premise and deliberately excluding other conflicting or confusing issues. It was a single-minded purpose described by the White House, and Congress knew it, the public knew it, the press knew it and it gave the image, I don't say inaccurate image, of strong leadership and an ultimate achievement. We didn't do that. I think those were the reasons that we were looked upon as not being as effective as I think the statistics show.

JONES: You mention in the book that Congressmen seemed to want to be consulted a lot.

TRUMAN: The President said insatiable.

CARTER: That's true. They claimed to be. When you set up a way for them to be briefed, sometimes they don't come.

JONES: But you were criticized on the energy program, in particular, for not consulting enough in advance. Do you think that's a legitimate criticism?

CARTER: I don't think so. We started working on the energy thing early on, in the first sessions we ever had down here in Plains. We worked on it during the interim period.

Shortly after the Congress convened, we announced that we would have a bill to the Congress in ninety days. During that ninety-day period, Jim Schlesinger and Stu Eizenstat and others, I think, worked as closely as they could with congressional leaders who were interested in energy, putting together the basic package we proposed. As you know, the Congress was consulted on energy legislation for the next three and a half years. There was an inclination to postpone addressing that question.

Our country is unique, I think, in the world being the largest consumer of energy. We're also one of the largest producers of energy, and if you line up the conflicting interest groups, oil and gas and coal producers on the one hand, and basically consumers on the other hand, it's just about a fifty-fifty deal. The members of Congress in the middle who had the swing votes didn't want to be involved in it. We had to force it. There was no groundswell of support for it.

There was no groundswell of support, as you well know, for the Panama Canal treaty. And there was no groundswell of support for the normalization of relations with China. Those were the things that were potentially most controversial. I don't have any alternative except to be measured by results. But the image was one of inadequacy, and the failures are inherently the most highly-publicized elements of a congressional confrontation. The debate, the differences, the adverse votes are much more likely to receive headlines and to remain in the public's consciousness than is a harmonious achievement.

FENNO: Mr. President, I just wanted to follow up one question about the energy preparation. In your book you note that when you came to present the energy package, you were shocked, I think the word was shocked, by finding out how many committees and subcommittees this package would have to go through.

CARTER: Yes.

FENNO: I guess my question is in the preparation that you went through, didn't Congressmen tell you what you were going to find? Why were you shocked?

CARTER: Well, I don't know if I expressed it accurately in the book. I don't think it was just one moment when all of a sudden somebody came in the Oval Office and said there was more than one committee in the Congress that has got to deal with energy. I had better sense than to labor under that misapprehension. But I think when Tip O'Neill and I sat down to go over the energy package route through the House, I think Jim Wright was there also, there were seventeen committee or subcommittee chairmen with whom we would have to deal. That was a surprise to me, maybe shock is too strong a word. But in that session or immediately after that, Tip agreed as you know to put together an ad hoc committee, an omnibus committee, and to let [Thomas Ludlow] Ashley do the work.

That, in effect, short-circuited all those fragmented committees. The understanding was, after the committee chairmen objected, that when the conglomerate committee did its work, then the bill would have to be resubmitted, I believe to five different, major

committees. There were some tight restraints on what they could do in the way of amendment. So that process was completed as you know between April and August, an unbelievable legislative achievement.

In the Senate though, there were two major committees and there had to be five different bills and unfortunately, Scoop Jackson was on one side and Russell Long was on the other. They were personally incompatible with each other and they had a different perspective as well. Scoop had been in the forefront of those who were for environmental quality and that sort of thing, and Russell represented the oil interest. That was one of the things that caused us a problem. But we were never able to overcome the complexities in the Senate. In the House, we did short circuit the process. I never realized before I got to Washington, to add one more sentence, how fragmented the Congress was and how little discipline there was, and how little loyalty there would be to an incumbent Democratic President. All three of those things were a surprise to me.

TRUMAN: Were those in sharp contrast to the experience in the Georgia legislature?

CARTER: Well, there's no Democratic-Republican alignment of the Georgia legislature. It's all Democrats, and therefore, there is no party loyalty. You had to deal with individual members. The Governor is really much more powerful in Georgia than the President is in the United States. As Georgia Governor, I had line-item veto, for instance, in the appropriations bills. And, as you also know, in Georgia and in Washington, most of the major initiatives come from the executive branch. There's very seldom a major piece of legislation that ever originates in the legislature. I think that there is a parallel relationship between the independent legislature confronting an independent Governor or the independent Congress confronting an independent President. At the state level, the Governor, at least in Georgia, is much more powerful than the President in Washington.

NEUSTADT: Did you have the same kind of subcommittee structure?

CARTER: No. It's not nearly so complicated.

NEUSTADT: That helps you too.

CARTER: The seniority and the guarding of turf and so forth is not nearly so much of a pork barrel arrangement in the state legislature. Also, the Georgia legislature only serves forty days a year. They come and do their work in a hurry, and then they go home.

TRUMAN: A simple legislature doesn't have much staff either.

CARTER: They are growing rapidly in staff, but nothing like the Congress. And you don't have the insidious, legal bribery in the Georgia legislature that is so pervasive in the Congress. That's a problem that's becoming much more serious and I don't believe that it's going to be corrected until we have a major, national scandal in the Congress. I think it's much worse than most people realize.

JONES: Campaign finance sort of thing?

CARTER: Well, yes, call it campaign finance, but the ones that get the biggest campaign contributions are the ones that don't have any opposition. It really depends on what your position is. A committee chairman can get a forty thousand dollar contribution from a lobbying group and the chances are that he has no opposition because he's been there a long time. He has the seniority, he has a safe district, and he puts the money in his pocket. This is providing he's subservient to the lobbying group's interest.

JONES: You make the point in the book about the lack of party loyalty and you've reiterated it here, particularly on complicated or controversial issues. Could you say more about that and how you and your staff or congressional liaison people and perhaps Anne Wexler's operation handled that?

CARTER: I'm not sure I would want to change it and go back to the old system where a few Democrats, including primarily the Speaker, could require loyalty by controlling appointments to positions. I don't think I would want to change it. But the only alternative is that you deal with individual members of Congress by themselves. You've just got to go by each vote being separate. The loyalty that existed in many issues when I was President was Republican loyalty to voting opposition. An easy way for the minority leader in the House to prevail is for all the Republicans, I'd say ninety-five percent of the Republicans, to vote against a position.

This, obviously, is not helpful. On some conservative matters, like welfare reform or reorganization, they contribute to efficiency or to a conservative approach on economics. I found that Republicans were a great resource for votes. And I would still deal with them on an individual basis. I guess as has long been the case in the Senate, where they pride themselves on being autonomous and answerable only to their own states, that same view prevails in the House where the members of the Congress and House of Representatives also consider themselves autonomous, responsible only to their own district, and the President just has to woo them as individuals, not through Democratic leaders.

JONES: Was this a problem that was frequently a matter of discussion with the congressional leaders as you met with them?

CARTER: Not too much. It was so generally recognized, there was not anything to discuss. The fact that there was no party discipline, the fact that the Speaker couldn't deliver votes, the fact that the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee couldn't decide how the bill was going to come out in his committee was just assumed. There were a few, Jack Brooks was one of the exceptions to the rule. He had very good control over his Government Operations Committee, particularly in an obstructionist way.

This is important because there is a very powerful weapon in the hands of committee chairmen in preventing unwanted bills from passing. We monitored all the bills that were evolved within the Congress and we had a list of bills to be killed, either by veto or in the subcommittee/committee level. The best thing for us to do was for me to call the

chairman of a committee and say, "This bill is very bad and we hope you'll help us kill it in committee." Well, those committee members can do away with bills before they get out of committee, but they can't pass a bill. A committee chairman can sit on a bill and it's very difficult for the Congress to extract a bill from a committee. At times, that's a very valuable asset to have among the Democratic leaders.

FENNO: I just wondered if you could tell us a little bit about how you go about wooing members one on one? If party loyalty is not available, is it usually a matter of appealing to their self interest? Can you appeal to them on the grounds of the national interest? You gave some examples on the Panama Canal treaty. What do you have at your disposal in terms of arguments?

CARTER: I think the national interest is the best thing. I've served in the legislature, not in the national Congress, and I know the multiplicity of issues that affect a member of the Congress. One of the things that surprised me was quite often I would have dealt with a bill for several months in its evolutionary phases, drafting it, consulting with mayors and Governors and whatever, and finally get it introduced in the Congress. It would sit there for three or four months and I would have occasion to talk to the subcommittee or committee chairman responsible for that bill and they wouldn't have the slightest idea in God's world what was in the bill. It was just one of a large number of things that they had to deal with. And I would be surprised to realize that the members of the Congress hadn't really paid attention to the bill.

If you can talk to that committee chairman and get him or her interested in it or the subcommittee chairman, then that's a very important thing. If they make a commitment to you, "Mr. President, this sounds good," or "I think it will be good for the nation and I'll help you," then ordinarily they would follow through.

Often, our records would show how we would invite an entire committee in to talk to them about a controversial issue. The Congress would say, "This sounds good, Mr. President, but my folks at home don't like it worth a damn." And so we would send the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary of Agriculture, or Fritz Mondale, or sometimes me, or Rosalynn, into that area if it was an important vote, to make a speech and to have a public forum on the advisability of that legislation passing.

This went on on a lower scale every day. It was a constant, never-ending, complicated, and fragmented process to get all the legislation to pass through every subcommittee, every committee in the House, every subcommittee, every committee in the Senate, then to the conference committees, then the vote from the House, the vote on the Senate, and then the reconciliations and so forth. It was really, if you look at three hundred sixty-five days in the year when you probably only worked one hundred and eighty days at the most and divide it up into how many subcommittee and committee and floor votes you had, you can see that every day you had a number of them.

I tried to illustrate the process with the Panama Canal vote which was, I think, the most traumatic. But if Bob Byrd would say, "I think this is a good bill, Mr. President, but the

folks in West Virginia are not for it," then Bob Byrd would give me a list of the two hundred people in West Virginia that he thought were most influential—the owners and the publishers and editors of every newspaper, the executive or directors of every TV and important radio station, the commander of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the West Virginia Education Association, the Jaycees—and we would extend an invitation to that whole group to come to the White House. We'd serve them cheese and wine or whatever they wanted, and I would go in and meet with them along with Ambler Moss, who was the ambassador to Panama, plus Dennis McAuliffe, who was the commanding general of the Panama Canal forces, plus either Harold Brown and Cy Vance and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to have a uniform there.

Dr. Brzezinski and we would give them a whole day of instruction on the advisability of the Panama Canal treaty being passed and all the consequences if it failed. Then I would close out by spending an hour-and-a-half or two hours with that two hundred people and I would convince them. At the end of the day, they would be convinced of the need for the treaty because logic was on our side. I would then ask them as a President, using all the authority that I could and all the persuasiveness that I could, to go back to West Virginia and convince the people of the need for this bill. Only in that way were we able to slowly get people like Bob Byrd and others to come forward and vote for the bill.

JONES: Getting support for them back home.

CARTER: Yes, getting support and making it politically acceptable for them to vote on something that seemed to be unpopular. That's what we did, the same thing, on a lesser scale. Anne Wexler was in charge of this on many other items.

NEUSTADT: You pioneered this on Panama, didn't you? That had never been done systematically before.

CARTER: No, not that systematically. I think we would have passed SALT II using the same process. We had really developed our procedure. But on a smaller scale, we did this earlier and later, trying to find out what was the obstacle in a specific Congressman's mind against supporting specific legislation and trying to resolve a specific problem. Sometimes, it was a matter of confrontation with special interest groups either in the press conferences or in other forums. I would point out the damage the special interest groups were doing to the general public in opposing a particular feature, say, of energy legislature.

JONES: Was that the case in hospital-cost containment, where it was so wrapped up with so many different interests?

CARTER: That was strictly a financial payoff deal where the American Medical Association and hospital groups were able to buy enough votes to prevail. We had enough votes to win. A group of my former and present friends in Illinois, in effect, betrayed us in the last few days. We had the votes when the thing came to the floor and three or four Illinois Congressmen voted the other way and got enormous contributions

for the primary from the American Medical Association and, to a lesser degree, from the Hospital Association. In the book, I quote some statistics that Joe Califano put together at the time showing how much money was paid, given, and contributed by American Medical Association alone to Congressmen who voted against the hospital-cost containment. And there was more money than that given by the American Hospital people, but we didn't have those statistics.

But that's an insidious sort of thing with which you just have to deal, you have to recognize and accept. It was gratifying when we won, and that memory faded away pretty fast. It was very aggravating when we lost; those memories stick with you.

TRUMAN: Granted, the Panama Canal thing was special and SALT II was developing in somewhat the same fashion. I must say the Panama Canal story that you give in the book is an utterly fascinating story and I think, as Dick says, unprecedented. I wanted simply to ask whether there was a series of others of lesser scale that showed there was a consistent kind of institutionalized process. You've already indicated the answer on that.

CARTER: I don't want to mislead you. There were times when the Congressmen would come to the Oval Office, or the Senator, and I would find out what I could do to help them. There may be a particular bill that they wanted to get passed or a particular city whose mayor wanted to come and talk to Jack Watson about a UDAG [Urban Development Action Grant] grant or something like that, and I wouldn't hesitate to arrange those kind of encounters if they were proper in order to induce that Congressman to help me on legislation. It was a give-and-take proposition.

JONES: What happens when they betray you?

CARTER: Well, one of those who betrayed me was of Polish extraction and I refused to let him go to the investiture of a new Pope until the last few hours when my Christian motivation prevailed and I finally let him go. Another one I refused to let come into the Oval Office for I guess eighteen months. I wouldn't talk to him. I wouldn't deal with him. It was just a straight betrayal. But now both of those men are friends of mine. [redacted] That's a rare occasion. In most instances, when a political figure gives you his word on something, it is a very strong bind. It's a rare occasion to have somebody deliberately do that. Very, very rare.

Sometimes, folks would come and talk to me and say, "Mr. President, I promised you this but circumstances have changed," or "I've got a problem in my district that I didn't

understand, and I can't do what I promised." And I never did have any hard feelings about that, and I would release them immediately from their commitment if they asked me to. But you know, we went into the committee and the floor vote counting on those commitments and we lost the bill.

JONES: Surprises are not in order.

CARTER: That's right. To us that was important. For some reason, hospital-cost containment just became very important to our administration.

THOMPSON: Is there anything a President can do for a legislator who sticks out his neck and loses? In other words, goes all the way with you and then is defeated on that issue? Several of our congressional specialists have some specific examples.

CARTER: There are a few things, but really not many. There are some jobs in the Federal Government that you can set aside or give to former members of the Congress who were defeated because they voted against their own political interest for the national welfare. There are some ambassadorships that can be given. There are a few federal judgeships, but that was an almost nonexistent factor in my own administration. Rarely did any of those former members of the Congress come forward and say, "I need help," or "I need a job." Quite often, as you know, former members can get jobs with lobbying groups and with interests that they represented when they were committee members that are more attractive than a federal job. But that's always a possibility. I never had an occasion in all my term in office that one would say, "If I'm defeated because of this vote, would you provide me a job or something?" That never occurred. Did I answer your question?

THOMPSON: Yes.

FENNO: That was my question too, Mr. President.

CARTER: They just had to take their own chances. I will always believe that the vote on the Panama Canal treaties was the most courageous act that the Senate as a body has ever taken. I've studied history, and I've read *Profiles in Courage* and so forth, but that was an extremely sacrificial vote. They knew it was right, but they knew the adverse political consequences. I've forgotten the statistics now, but something like two-thirds of the senators who voted for the Panama Canal treaty who were up for reelection in 1978 did not return to the Senate. Some of them just didn't try and I think about a third of them were defeated.

FENNO: You may not want to discuss this, but I did have an example in mind.

CARTER: I don't mind. Finish it, go ahead.

FENNO: That was Robert Morgan. I campaigned with him in North Carolina in 1980 and he was constantly criticized for that vote.

CARTER: I know. I have a great admiration for Bob Morgan too. But you know he went out of office the same time I did so there was no opportunity, even if he had requested it to come back. I did support a judge that Bob Morgan recommended. It was kind of a distasteful thing at the end, as you remember, where Bob was trying to hold up the entire judgeship nomination list in order to get his judge through. But his fellow Senator was the one that was the obstacle, it was not I. The only thing that Bob has the self-satisfaction of knowing is that he did what was right and he has a friend who is a former President who knows that he was both right and courageous. Fine man. As you know, Bob went out of office the same day I did.

NEUSTADT: I'm going to substitute two minor observations and not ask a question. One is, you voiced what is now, I think, rather generally accepted that Reagan's been very successful in capturing media, congressional attention, focusing and so forth in his first year. It is true also though, let it be stated at least by me for the record that there was a hole at the bottom of the policy. It was just terrible policy.

CARTER: I know. I agree.

NEUSTADT: I think it's characteristic of the media situation that everybody forgets that one. Second, sitting here thinking, it seems to me what you really needed in 1977 was a repeal of the twentieth amendment. If Congress had just gone out of town the day before, they couldn't come back for nine months unless you called them, you would have been in fine shape. The founding fathers were right.

CARTER: And that would have been great.

AFTERNOON SESSION

TRUMAN: You said in your book that the Friday morning foreign policy breakfast was your favorite meeting of the week. Do you want to tell us a little bit about why?

CARTER: For one thing, it was uninterrupted unless it was an extreme emergency, and it was an informal group restricted in attendance. We discussed issues that were of utmost importance in a very frank way. It was a compatible group with me, Cy, Zbig, Harold, and sometimes others. It was a meeting above all else where I could make a final decision and ordinarily, the decision would be implemented. We would go through a list of agenda items. We didn't have a prepared agenda ahead of time, but Vance, Brown, Brzezinski, and I would have the agenda items. I would ordinarily cover almost all of the issues myself and then I would ask them for additional ones. I would see them crossing off their lists the things that I had already brought up. At the conclusion of it, Brzezinski would read the decisions that we had made or things that were postponed. That was an hour-and-a-half. We had a nice breakfast. It was early in the morning. All those factors put together, and I think primarily the fact that we could actually make some decisions there, was what made it attractive.

TRUMAN: I had a feeling that was going to be your answer, but I'd rather hear it from you.

NEUSTADT: I've got a more than one part question. Let me get into it this way. I want to start with the Vance-Zbig thing. You have a comment in the book where you were talking about the neutron bomb at the point where Helmut Schmidt had gone to his parliament for a vote, and you said that you went to call in Zbig and Cy Vance and it was clear that they had disregarded your warnings the previous summer and gotten you committed awfully far. Well, that suggests what it suggests, and there are several other times in the course of the book where comparable things seemed to have happened to you. But that's the one I notice most sharply.

CARTER: Either that's not exactly an accurate memory of yours or I confused it in the book.

NEUSTADT: I've got the page. I don't want to misread you here or certainly not misquote you. But let me get exactly what it was that caught my eye.

CARTER: Well, the primary commitment had been made on the neutron weapon through the military commanders. They were always much more eager to reach agreement among themselves. Any kind of new weapon was not difficult to sell to the military leaders who were the defense ministers of the countries and who spoke with great authority. But then came the time when the political leaders, Helmut Schmidt and I, and Prime Ministers of the other countries had to implement.

There was not a vacuum between those military leaders' meetings in Brussels and the nations' capitals around the Atlantic alliance. But there was not necessarily compatibility between the two. And I was down somewhere in Georgia and all of a sudden got either a daily report from Cy or a weekly report from Zbig and realized how far we had gone at the military level in committing ourselves to the neutron weapon without any commitment at all from a single European country that they would deploy or accept it. And that's when I went back to Washington and raised the roof.

NEUSTADT: What it says here is you met with the Vice President, and Secretaries Vance, Brown, and Brzezinski "to express my concern about the issue." Then you quote from your diary, "They—" I took the ' they' to be those people "—had generated a lot of momentum including an immediate agreement for me to produce these neutron weapons. My cautionary words to them since last summer have pretty well been ignored and I was aggravated."

CARTER: Right.

NEUSTADT: Well, it's a terrible problem for a President. I mean, I've seen it happen before. What I got out of this was that you had said, "Don't get me ahead of the Europeans," or words to that effect. Cautionary words last summer, don't get us over-committed, and the bureaucracy had churned away and these fellows hadn't stopped the

bureaucracy and now you were faced with this thing. That's what I get out of it.

CARTER: Your basic premise is substantially correct. I think the nuance that I didn't adequately describe is in the word "they." The primary commitment was made on a military level by Brown and to a much lesser degree Brzezinski. I think that Vance was playing a secondary role completely and probably Fritz was removed from it altogether. That would be my basic memory.

The cautionary comments that had been made both in marginal jottings on routine memoranda and so forth, or the thrust of those cautionary comments, was that we don't want to commit ourselves to develop another new weapon unless we're sure that somebody's going to deploy it. As the issue became known to the public in Europe—it wasn't a particularly important issue over here—there were enormous political opposition efforts made to abort the neutron weapon. Helmut had himself committed to deploy the weapon, but under pressure he backed off. First, he told me he would only deploy the weapon if another European nation agreed to do so. The British immediately informed me when interrogated they would deploy them. Then Helmut came back and said only another continental European nation would suffice his requirement and there never was another European nation who was willing to deploy the neutron weapon. But I think your question related more to the process than it did to the facts. Is that right, Dick?

NEUSTADT: Yes. What I wanted to get at was, if this is right, you felt that your flank had not been guarded?

CARTER: That's correct. There was a justification for it in that habitually, historically might be a better word, the NATO alliance had worked on a premise that the military leaders would decide on a new weapon or a new strategy. The United States would take the public onus for their proposal and would, in effect, go ahead with enough momentum so that some of the weaker European countries could do it ostensibly with reluctance, but under pressure from the United States. I thought that was ill-advised. I think that, to be perfectly honest to my associates there, I hadn't expressed my concern or my change in policy well enough or clear enough to them. I didn't want the United States to develop a weapon and then force it on the Europeans. I thought that time had passed. This happened to be the first test case when it did come up.

NEUSTADT: Well, of course the gossip around Washington was that you had changed your mind.

CARTER: Yes, it wasn't the gossip. This was what Helmut Schmidt was preaching to anyone who would listen, that we had misled him and so forth.

NEUSTADT: Right. This says differently.

CARTER: It is different.

NEUSTADT: The question then is, who was supposed to guard your flank? The big

criticism of Zbig is that he was supposed to guard you.

CARTER: Oh, I think Vance, Brown.

NEUSTADT: Zbig was supposed to guard your flanks and he often left them unguarded. That's the general criticism.

CARTER: I would say the main ones that were responsible for guarding my flanks were Brown and Vance. Brown was the one in Europe. Zbig never went to a NATO meeting in Europe. Vance was there with the foreign ministers. Zbig never went to a meeting with the foreign ministers. Zbig was in the White House with me and obviously was supposed to give me information and relay my desires and my policies to Vance and Brown. On this particular case though, I would say that Harold and Cy were more culpable, second only to me, for not making my policies clear, than was Brzezinski.

NEUSTADT: OK. I just want to be sure that I understand how it looks to you. It could be argued that Brzezinski should have run the intelligence system on what Brown and Vance and their people were doing, and given you early warning. That's one of the traditional functions of the National Security Advisor.

CARTER: Yes.

NEUSTADT: And this didn't happen. But you're not alleging that he should have been doing that. You see his role a little differently than that. I want to hear how you see his role.

CARTER: Let me say this. In order to answer your question definitively, I would like to research all the memoranda that came to me from Brzezinski, Brown, or Vance on the neutron weapon way back. I think the culpable person is I because what I decided at the time was a departure, to repeat myself, from previous policy. My judgment is that Brown and Vance and Brzezinski were assuming at that point that in the showdown I would go ahead and build a neutron weapon, expecting the Europeans to deploy it, which is what Reagan I think has mistakenly finally done.

We were talking about two or three billion dollars and we were talking about an enormous investment in tritium and a complete redesign of some of our tactical nuclear weapons. We were talking about an enormous amount of money. I think that if there is a prime culpability, it would be my own in not making it clearer to Brown and Vance early, "I'm not going to do this any more." I think that both Brown and Vance, and I would include Brzezinski, were very sensitive to my desires and my policy. Even at this moment, I cannot think of a time when Brown ever circumvented what he thought I wanted. There were a couple of times when Vance did, which I mentioned in the book. For instance, once when he went to Europe, to Russia, after we had already concluded the SALT II talks and so forth. But I think that the culpability in this case among my own staff is with me.

NEUSTADT: Let me ask you just one more.

CARTER: Please, this is interesting to me to talk about.

NEUSTADT: Regarding the admission of the Shah, you make it very clear that you kept asking these same people in the spring, "So what do we do if we let them in and they seize our embassy," or words to that effect. Then in the fall comes the illness of the Shah, and the Rockefeller-Kissinger line about . . . . Well, Zbig's been at you all along as a matter of national honor.

CARTER: That's right. Yes.

NEUSTADT: It's this damn Rockefeller doctor and the State Department medical director. See, professionally, I'm a President protector. Well, I have a professional bias that you shouldn't have to say, "Get me another opinion," or two other opinions, or "Can't they take the medicine that the doctors prescribe?" It ought to be done for you. It ought to be done by the national security organization. But you've got every right to bat President protectors down. You've obviously done a good deal of it. But that's another instance where it looks to me as though the staff work is awfully thin and you're awfully vulnerable when it comes right to the crunch.

CARTER: That may be true. I don't quite agree with you again.

NEUSTADT: OK. It's you we want to hear from.

CARTER: This had been a bone of contention for nine months approximately, I hadn't counted the months, whether or not to let the Shah come to the United States. From the very time when he decided not to come here originally but to go to Egypt and then Morocco, this debate had gone on among us. It was one of those things that we discussed at our nice Friday morning breakfast almost every week, with John McCloy, Kissinger, David Rockefeller, Howard Baker and Brzezinski. We were joined on occasion by Gerald Ford and others that they could recruit to call me on the phone to let the Shah in. [Harold] Brown, so far as I remember, stayed neutral on it. I don't remember his ever expressing a strong view one way or the other. Fritz was inclined to bring the Shah in. I think Brzezinski would work on Fritz privately and then sometimes Fritz would agree with him in a session. But Vance and I were very strongly opposed to it.

After the animosity was aroused against our country, and you have to remember from roughly March until through October of '79 we had increasingly good relationships with Iran, even including [Ruhollah] Khomeini, who was sending emissaries over to talk directly to Vance and say, "You support the revolution, don't try to overthrow our government," and "We want to increase trade," and so forth. And they were quite friendly. In fact, they made some beautiful speeches about the importance of repairing relations with the United States.

Then when Algeria celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary of independence, Zbig went

to Algeria. Very, very shrewd. The Algerians asked Zbig what he wanted to do in his extra day over there. He said, "All I want to do is to see the little secluded, or hidden, headquarters where the Algerian independence was planned and where the mimeographed propaganda sheets were printed and where the ammunition was hidden." Well, there's not one American in a hundred thousand that had ever heard of a place like that, but Zbig was a hero in Algeria because he went. And when he got there, of course, he made the a good impression and [Mehdi] Bazargan shook hands with Zbig. It was a highly publicized event. And that's one of the reasons that they became suspect when he got back.

I'm going around the bush to point out to you that even in those good days in our relationship with Iran, I thought it was a serious mistake to disrupt that progress and to arouse animosity against our people in Iran because we brought the Shah in. I very seldom use expletives in public but there was one time when I shouted, blank the Shah. He's just as well off playing tennis in Acapulco as he is in California . And I would ask them every now and then, "What would we do if they took one of our Marines out?" They've taken a Marine once you know, and particularly when they took over our satellite observation post, they had taken some American hostages and then released them. "What are we going to do if they take twenty of our Marines and kill one of them every morning at sunrise?" You know, are we going to go to war with Iran? That's the kind of thing we have to avoid.

We also had the problem at the beginning having forty thousand Americans in Iran. We had very surreptitiously extracted all these Americans with enormous difficulty out of Iran, because for weeks at a time there would be no commercial planes going in or out of Tehran during the revolution, and thousands of people were being killed in Iran. We didn't lose any Americans because we very quietly got them out, either to military bases and extracted them in C-130s or otherwise. The final case was that we had fairly good relations with Bazargan and [Mehdi Hairi-] Yazdi. Our embassy was down to about seventy people versus eleven hundred. It was the largest embassy on earth when the Shah was in power. We had refurbished its security features and put in a heavier Marine detachment and had firm commitments from Bazargan and Yazdi to protect it.

Then the plot was changed. I recognized it at the time as a partial ploy by the Shah's advocates to bring him in that he was desperately ill. Cy and I discussed this several times in confidence because we were the undeviating hold-outs against the Shah coming in. Finally, Cy had his senior medical doctors consult with the ones in New York. They examined the Shah and certified to Vance that he was both terminally ill and also that New York was the only place, in their opinion, he could get adequate diagnosis and possible treatment to extend his life. Cy left the United States and went to a foreign ministers' meeting, I think in Ecuador, I'm not sure. But he left a memorandum with Warren Christopher that under those circumstances he recommended that the Shah be admitted, and that we first notify Bazargan and Yazdi and see if in effect they approved.

I was at Camp David that weekend and Brzezinski forwarded Warren's memorandum to me, expressing Cy's views that we ought to let him in. I didn't hesitate two minutes to

say let him come on in under those circumstances. The only thing that Zbig and I changed was we didn't in effect let Bazargan and Yazdi have a veto power, but we did agree to notify Bazargan and Yazdi through our Chargé, Bruce Langdon, that the Shah was going to come to the United States and that he would not be engaged in political activities. He would be here only for medical treatment and they reconfirmed their commitment to guard our embassy. Rosalynn was there when I got the phone call from Brzezinski, or when I read the memorandum, rather. I didn't hesitate, although I had been the last hold-out. At that time, I was convinced that we ought to do it regardless of the consequences and second, that there would be no adverse consequences, that Bazargan and Yazdi would indeed protect our embassy.

Another factor—I'm repeating myself and probably answering your question too long—I guess for six hundred years of recorded history as far as I know a host government has never endorsed or condoned the abuse or attack or kidnapping of a nation's emissaries and diplomats. This was a departure from all historical precedent. And that was not a major consideration because I didn't think it was going to happen. I thought they might have abused or gone into the embassy or something, but I never dreamed that the government would not eventually, maybe over a period of hours, come on in there. So that was why. And once Vance, to stretch the meaning of the word, capitulated on the issue, I went along with his recommendations because I had the same evidence he did and I believed it as he did. I didn't disagree.

NEUSTADT: Ok. That means that one's moot then. You talked in the book about how part of what got Brzezinski and Vance publicly tangled with each other was Cy Vance's aversion to public speaking and the need to have it done.

CARTER: I'd say advocacy would be a better word than speaking.

NEUSTADT: Well, that's what I mean. A public advocate, other than yourself; there has to be such a person and Vance did not do it and did not like it and did not want to do it. Somebody had to do it. Brzezinski did it. Then what I infer you to be saying or implying is that the moment Zbig did it, the media picked it up as a contest.

CARTER: That's right.

NEUSTADT: Now, one or two other places you say Zbig was a bit too competitive.

CARTER: Yes.

NEUSTADT: Once it became a contest, he entered in. Several of us know Zbig and we understand that quality. Did you monitor this?

CARTER: Yes.

NEUSTADT: Bother you?

CARTER: No. I monitored it. It didn't bother me.

NEUSTADT: OK.

CARTER: I put a lot of time in on this part of the book, and although I abbreviated it in the final version, I think I got the essence of it. Zbig, like Mike Blumenthal, was feisty and provocative and he had one difference: he didn't have to protect his turf. I don't think Zbig ever felt in four years that he was on shaky ground. I don't think he ever felt that Vance or Brown were coming between me and Zbig. Zbig and I had a relationship not nearly as close as Jody and I, but we joked with each other, we argued about issues, we were together four or five times every day. I started off my days meeting with Zbig. I was a student in many ways of Zbig's as far as the inner makeup of the Soviet Union and different ethnic groups and the history of Eastern Europe. I was an eager student of Zbig's and I enjoyed being around him.

Long before I ever was elected President I recognized Zbig's strengths and some of his possible weaknesses. Zbig put together a constant barrage of new ideas and suggestions and plans, and ninety percent of them in that totality would have to be rejected. Sometimes maybe fifty percent of them, I'm just estimating, would have some essence or benefit that if modified were good and some of them had to be rejected outright.

Zbig was not responsible for carrying out the policies that he advocated . He didn't have a bureaucracy to carry it out. The State Department was that bureaucracy that had to implement foreign policy. Zbig and I had a very close, easy, friendly relationship. We played tennis against each other. I went out to his house every now and then to eat with him, and his daughter and Amy were the same age. We had a good relationship. Also Zbig had an early record of being my supporter. He was my primary foreign policy advisor all the time I was running for President. He met me in San Francisco when I debated Ford in the second debate on foreign policy and defense. Zbig and I had breakfast that morning and Zbig cross examined me on foreign policy issues just before I went into the debate with Jerry Ford. We were that close together.

So I think through all that period, there was no doubt in Zbig's mind that he had a permanent, solid relationship with me. If I didn't like it, I told him in no uncertain terms. If Zbig said, "I'd like to go to Taiwan" or China or Germany, which he did a couple of times a week, I'd say, "Hell no, you're not going, you're going to stay here." He was always wanting to go somewhere as an emissary and very seldom did I let him do it. But when he went, he did a good job .

Now, Cy was not a shrinking violet or anything, but when we had a controversial policy to be presented to the public, Cy didn't want to do it. There were times when I didn't want his press secretary, Hodding Carter, to do it. I thought it ought to come from me or him. And if I wanted Cy to sit down with four or five of the top columnists, Scotty [James] Reston, Joseph Kraft, and others, he wouldn't do it. And sometimes I would urge him three or four times, "Cy, this statement on Cuba—" or this statement on the Soviet Union, this statement on SALT or something "—needs to be promulgated to the public

and I don't think I ought to be calling press conferences two or three times a week." He would say, "I'll take care of it, Mr. President." First thing I knew Hodding Carter would have mentioned that issue in a daily briefing.

So this was a constant. I'm not saying this in criticism of Cy, it was just the way he was. Brzezinski, on the other hand, was always eager to be the spokesman and he liked to be on *Meet the Press*, or brief the White House press corps on a non-attributable basis. So there were many times when I told Zbig to go ahead and do it. I never, with one or two exceptions, knew Zbig to promulgate an issue that was contrary to my basic policy.

There was a time when his rhetoric went too far, for instance, once concerning the Soviet Union and China as related to Vietnam and the invasion of Afghanistan and so forth. But in general, almost invariably, Zbig put forward ideas that were completely compatible with my own because he and I had spent hours or days or sometimes weeks discussing that subject. He knew my position as well as Jody did. When Zbig would say something, though, because of his appearance, because of his attitude, his statement which Cy could have made in a non-provocative way became provocative. The press not only assumed that this was a contest between Cy and Zbig and that Zbig had won, but also that Zbig was speaking contrary to my desires and, in effect, betraying me. I recognized that then and I recognize it now.

Cy was extremely valuable in his own way. His orthodox, careful, evolutionary plotting attitude and demeanor was compatible with what the State Department was. Zbig's more provocative attitude was compatible with what I thought the National Security Advisor ought to do, giving me a whole range of new ideas and letting me sift through them to see if they were good or bad. But in spite of all I've said, in almost every instance, Cy and Zbig were compatible. And at these Friday morning breakfasts, every now and then they had a difference, as would Vance and Brown or Fritz and I. But there was no incompatibility there.

JONES: And Vance seemed to appreciate the way in which you used Zbig?

CARTER: No. Whenever Zbig went anywhere or said anything, it created tremors in the State Department. Vance was extremely protective of the State Department. When some of his subordinates—I don't mean Deputy Secretary, I don't mean Assistant Secretary, I'm talking about the Deputy to the Assistant Secretary—when someone one that level would come to Vance and express to him their displeasure, Cy would immediately leave whatever he was doing and come to the White House and tell me about it. Cy was very, very sensitive about any reflection on the State Department or any usurpation of its authority or vestige of influence, to a fault.

I understood that, I recognized that, I accepted it as Vance's natural temperament. I used the State Department as kind of an anchor or screen to hold us back from doing things that were ill-advised, to point out all the reasons why something wouldn't work, and to make sure that we didn't take any radical steps. It was kind of a stabilizing factor.

JONES: Well, if Vance was not going to assume the role of public spokesman, in a way, he was almost put in the position of having to accept the fact.

CARTER: That's right, but he didn't accept it willingly. That's right. I'm talking about it a lot more today than the subject warrants. But I think he was the origin of a lot of misapprehension. From my perspective, this was about two percent of the foreign policy procedure. But for the press, it was about seventy-five percent of it. Therefore, it was a problem.

HARGROVE: I think what you just said is really the underlying truth. Do you think the balance that you structured of different kinds of knowledge was a good one?

CARTER: Yes, I do.

HARGROVE: And that you kept it under control?

CARTER: From my perspective, it was no problem. For speculative press, and therefore the public, whatever problem there was was magnified a hundredfold.

HARGROVE: But they deal in personalities. They don't look at these institutional realities.

CARTER: That's true. Not only did we have our Friday morning breakfast when all of us were right together and when I made the decisions and Zbig recorded and read back to the group what the decisions were. But they also had a weekly meeting of just the three of them, Vance, Brzezinski, and Brown, to work out any possible differences among their agencies that didn't have to be addressed personally by me. This dealt with personal matters and how the assistant secretaries related to one another and so forth. It was a good relationship. But there was that personality conflict or difference that was exaggerated and it intrigued the press I think more than any other single element of government.

STRONG: I have a related question and it follows up something that Chuck Jones was asking this morning. Why didn't your administration get a better reputation for the many things it did well and for the few dramatic successes it had? It's also related to what you were just saying about the press. Is there something we should know about what's defective about the media beyond things we commonly read? For one thing, there is the suspicion of Presidents after Vietnam and Watergate. The other half of the question is should there have been more of an effort on the part of the White House to cultivate an image apart from making sure that there was good policy?

CARTER: I don't really think I can answer either one of your questions, although they're excellent questions. I wrote a chapter in my book about the press, none of which was published.

NEUSTADT: That's a shame, but I understand.

CARTER: But I enjoyed writing it. I got a lot of it out of my system and when I read it over, a lot of it was somewhat childish. Jody and Steve and others prevailed upon me not to put it in the book. I just had a whole series of things where I knew the facts and the press had reported them erroneously. But you know, it wasn't necessary to dredge up all that stuff. Jody is writing a book of his own using a few major examples of what went on in the White House and what the press reported. I don't know how it's going to come out. I hope he's not seduced by being a member of the press too much.

I don't know how to answer your question. I told Bill Moyers as I put in the book, the greatest disappointments of mine in Washington were lethargy, inertia of the Congress, and irresponsibility of the press. That is a very serious problem. How to address it, I do not know. There's an inherent problem in the brevity of the press reporting which is read by the general public or watched by the general public, with thirty-two seconds on the evening news being about the most you can expect to get on a major issue.

With news columns, it's the headline quite often that sticks in your mind no matter what's in the column. Obviously, a few periodicals like the *New York Times* and the *L.A. Times* write more definitive analyses. But the number of people who read those are not very great. I don't know how to resolve that question. It's something for the press to address. I never knew of any time when there was an investigative reporter, and there are some excellent ones, who tried to get the truth about an issue where the truth would be nonscandalous or nonprovocative.

When Rosalynn and I were accused of illegally washing bank loan funds through my warehouse and spending them in the campaign, never did a reporter come to me and say, "Mr. President, is this true? Did you cheat or use this money illegally?" There was nobody on the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times* who tried to investigate the allegations and discern if they were true. Their presumption was that an investigative reporter was supposed to prove that we had violated the law or had done something improper. The same thing applied to Billy [Carter] and the same thing applied to Hamilton and the same thing applied others in the administration.

That's a part of the press that possibly can be corrected. If Columbia and that great journalism school and so forth would do some things, that's a possibility. They need to have investigative reporters on both sides, because the thing that I tried to point out in the book without belaboring the point is that once an accusation is made against somebody in the public arena, you cannot answer it. You can't prove that you're innocent unless you have a forum. And there's no element in the press inclined to prove the facts. Are you guilty or not? The presumption and the thrust is to prove that you're guilty.

Ultimately, the only place that you can go is to something like a Senate investigative committee. Eventually, Billy had to do that, Bert Lance had to do that, and I had to do it in writing concerning the Billy-Libya case. There was an investigation by Paul Curran in New York about the warehouse allegations. Eventually, after an enormous expenditure of time and actually private money, not public money, we were able to prove that we were

basically innocent. But that adversarial relationship where the press presumes that you are guilty is another defect that I don't think is going to be resolved easily.

Finally, there's a conviction in the press, at least there was when I was in office, that since Nixon and Johnson had lied or misled the public concerning Vietnam and the bombing of Cambodia and Watergate and so forth, surely we must be doing the same thing. If they investigate it long enough, they would discover these skeletons in our closet. We recognized it, and we had to deal with it. If there is an article in the paper, and particularly a paper like the *Washington Post*, which is remarkably irresponsible at times, for a President to respond to, it just makes a molehill into a mountain. Quite often, I had to look the other way.

A couple of things have happened since we've been out of office where I really got whizzed off and tried to answer them. One was that the *Washington Post* reported, as you know, that I had tapped Reagan's telephone when he was living at Blair House. It was a horrible thing to contemplate that an incumbent President would tap his successor's telephone. Then we had to spend a great deal of money, which we really didn't have, in finally forcing the *Washington Post* editors to the wall. In lieu of a libel suit, which they certainly would have lost, they finally apologized and withdrew. But Ben Bradlee did not. Ben Bradlee has never admitted that he was wrong. It was only Kay Graham and others who finally admitted it.

This is the kind of thing that is there. I don't know how to correct it. The press is culpable, but I have to say to you again, I don't know if I would change it. I don't think that the press ought to be subservient to a President. I think the adversarial relationship is good, the investigative tendency is beneficial for our country, and in balance, I don't think I suffered any more or as much as say Johnson, or Nixon, or possibly even Jerry Ford. It's just a part of our system. I guess that's part of democracy and it's unpleasant at times, but in balance, good.

YOUNG: Let's come back to the SALT question.

CARTER: I don't think I answered your question.

MCCLESKEY: I wanted to explore your relationship with the Democratic party. Not the party in Congress, but the party outside of Congress. I was wondering how you visualized that relationship? How you approached it, how you dealt with the party as an organization?

CARTER: I didn't deal with it adequately. When I was a candidate in '76, almost all the leaders of the Democratic party from Bob Strauss on down were committed to other candidates. If not openly, in violation of their supposed impartiality, privately they were. Either to Scoop Jackson or Hubert Humphrey or to Mo Udall. So I got the nomination without the help or support of the Democratic National Committee members or executive officers. And I won the nomination on that basis by taking my case directly to the people and running to some degree as an outsider, not only from the Congress in Washington,

but also from the Democratic National Committee.

The biggest handicap I had politically speaking after the convention was to have to absorb the Democratic party responsibilities. Instead of going into Ohio or Illinois or other states as a lonely candidate reaching out my hand to a voter and saying, "I need your help," I was immediately saddled with all the gubernatorial candidates, the congressional candidate, and the local candidates of the Democratic party. I didn't particularly object to that, but it was a dramatic reversal in my image from a lonely peanut farmer looking for votes to an establishment figure who was wrapped up in the Democratic party.

I think it pulled us down a good bit in the polls because it was a reversal in my basic character as presented to the American people. After I was elected, the party was loyal to me. We had about a nine million dollar debt left over from the '68 campaign that we finally were able to pay off. But that was a great burden for us. It's hard for Democrats to raise money under the best of conditions. We put in some reforms. The chairmen that I had, Ken Curtis and John White, were very fine, very good friends of mine and very loyal. On occasion, they would help with legislation and with the education of people concerning issues like the Panama Canal. But I didn't take on as a major project the change in the Democratic structure that I think now was needed.

I think in retrospect it was needed. There are some inherent carry-over elements in the Democratic party that are contrary to the best interests of a President or, I think, the party. In fact, the bitterest political opponent that I had in Georgia was our National Democratic Committee woman, Marge Thurman. She had been put into office by my predecessor in the Governor's office, Carl Sanders, the man that I ran against and beat for Governor. She served two years after I went into office and, in effect, was reelected without even a President being able to kick her out. So there's a carry over momentum there that's impervious to the influence of a President over a first four-year term.

I think that the latest changes that have been made in the Democratic party under Jim Hunt are probably going to be good for the nominee of the party. It's going to make it much more difficult for anybody like me to come out of nowhere and be nominated. But once the nominee is chosen in a Democratic convention, I think it's going to be beneficial. Ever since '68, and including '68, the aftermath of the Democratic National Convention has been a handicap rather than an asset to the nominee. Humphrey would probably have been elected in '68 had it not been for the '68 convention. And I wasn't helped either in '76 or in 1984 by the convention itself. I think the '72 convention, I don't know if anything could have happened for [George] McGovern, obviously didn't help.

So many interest groups go there. All are well-meaning and attractive in their own way. But what the press plays up at a convention is issues like abortion and gun control and homosexual rights and things like that. That's the impression and that's the public's awareness, and the element of harmony or common purpose is lost in the impressions that people carry away from the convention site. I think now with an increased attendance of mayors and Governors and members of Congress and so forth who have an investment in

the Democratic party, we will have a better aftermath of the national conventions. I didn't change that beneficially, although I put in motion what has occurred and will take place in 1984. My relationship with the Democratic party was not particularly good and I could have done more had I made it a higher priority. It was not a burning commitment or interest of mine, and I think in the long run it was costly.

HARGROVE: Could I follow that up? If we broaden the term to, say, Democratic coalition, that includes a lot of groups like the teachers and the labor unions and the women with whom you were the nominal political leader, and yet you were a more conservative President than they wanted, most of them.

CARTER: Yes. On economic matters.

HARGROVE: On economic matters, particularly on fiscal matters. That presented problems for you when it came to social policy, welfare reform at no increased cost, and over and over again, if I read the record right, on a lot of substantive issues like minimum wage, and so on. Would you talk a little bit about how you dealt with that? These were unrelenting demands, all the time. How does a President deal with this, particularly in his own camp?

CARTER: I had the same problem that Truman had. My main handicap for re-election came from the liberal wing of the Democratic party. Some of that support was mine naturally and unshakably. The most vivid example is the blacks. The blacks supported me with some trepidation in '76, but strong enough and staunchly all the way through 1980 and today. I have absolute confidence that the black people of this country have confidence in me in return. As for environmentalists, I think my relationship with them grew as we went through all the tests and passed them, as we got the Alaska lands bill and so forth. I think the environmentalists were basically supportive because they weren't adversely affected by fiscal constraints. The blacks possibly were, but I never did anything to hurt the blacks.

But the labor unions, their support of me was tentative at best, and reluctant. They were looking for someone else to support. [Edward] Kennedy was the repository of their support. I think that if you look at the record, if you let Ray Marshall explain to you what our record was over the four-year period relating to trade unions, it was exemplary. But I never had their confidence, I never had their support because I was known to be a conservative on fiscal and budgetary matters.

And I don't know how to describe my relationship with the women's groups. The NOW organization under Eleanor Smeal I think her name was, announced in early 1976 that they would support anyone for President except me. I appointed, I think, five or six times more women judges than all the Presidents in two hundred years and really worked hard to establish women's rights. But for some reason I never was quite compatible with the NOW organization, which was one of the major ones. The others worked with me fairly well. But the support was equivocal, at best. Mayors and Governors I think I had a very good relationship with them.

There was this schism in the party that was exemplified by the Kennedy-Carter primary contest. Kennedy was a formidable opponent. I think I got about two-thirds of the votes and two-thirds of the delegates during the 1984 primary season, which was good enough. I was never in doubt that I would win the nomination from the very first days when I carried Iowa. I don't know how many counties Iowa has, about ninety I think. I carried eighty-nine of them, all but one, in spite of the fact we had the grain embargo. From then on, we never were in doubt about getting a strong majority of the delegates. But still Kennedy sapped away our strength among the labor unions. I don't even know if I got a majority of the labor support against Reagan. I was close, maybe fifty percent. In the Jewish vote, I lost a substantial portion because of controversies that surrounded the Mid East questions. Labor, the Jews, women, farm groups—but I don't think you could ever assume that the farmers in the Midwest are loyal to a Democratic President.

TRUMAN: Or any President.

CARTER: Or any President, yes. They supported ones who had overwhelming majorities, like Johnson in his re-election campaign and [Franklin] Roosevelt when he won almost all the states. But that's not something a Democrat can count on. I had mixed votes. In the Democratic party, though, I did well against Kennedy. But that divided Democratic party was never healed by us before November '80.

HARGROVE: Did you have in mind a long-term strategy of broadening that New Deal coalition appealing to a lot of people that voted for you in '76 who were maybe not traditional Democrats, middle class folks, white collar folks?

CARTER: Yes. I thought that was the general philosophy that we put together, although I'll use the words loosely because I'm cautious about labels. I think that my conservative approach to fiscal/monetary/ budget affairs would increase my base of support beyond what was habitually Democratic. The deregulation of major industries where we had notable success, one of the best success stories—airlines and railroads and trucking, communications, banks and finance, oil and gas prices; things that had been attempted ever since Truman was President. We did all those. I thought that would attract more of, at least, the small business or the business community.

And a strong defense. I think that our record on defense expenditures, a steady increase following eight years of deep cutting, maybe would be beneficial. There were some poll results, I don't remember if I mentioned that in my book, that showed that for the first time in many years that the public looked upon the Democratic party as more fiscally responsible than the Republican party. It was quite a reversal of what it had been previously. I won't belabor it any more, but those conservative issues I thought would pick up additional votes.

At the same time, I looked on myself as being quite liberal on civil rights and human rights on a broad basis, on pursuing peace and nuclear arms control, on social

programs, jobs, appointments of minorities and the increased involvement of minorities and women in government. I thought that on environmental quality and those kinds of things that we would retain a basic, Democratic constituency. So I had hopes of building upon the old Democratic coalition and broadening it somewhat. Of course, my hopes weren't realized.

HARGROVE: Well, they may be yet in the future. You don't know.

CARTER: It's hard to say. I haven't seen any evidence in the Mondale-Kennedy confrontation so far that they are building on what I've just described to you. They seem to be going back towards Hubert Humphrey.

HARGROVE: Would it be fair to say that when you were thinking and talking about welfare reform, national health insurance, whatever, you had this larger question in your mind? I don't want to impose ideas on you.

CARTER: Not particularly.

HARGROVE: Not particularly.

CARTER: No, I was trying to carry out campaign commitments. And I thought, as a Governor working with Jack Watson and others in Georgia, I had seen some basic defects in the welfare program. There was no incentive there to go to work if you had an opportunity for a job. The basic welfare structure was to design an income and tax relationship so that it was always beneficial to a welfare recipient if they had a job offer to take it. A salary and the remaining welfare benefits would be more than just the welfare benefits themselves. It took a heck of a lot of negotiating and I put such severe restraints on Califano and Ray Marshall not to have a costly program. But in doing that, the more liberal groups, particularly labor, denounced the program because it wasn't generous enough and of course, the right wing is not for any sort of welfare reform either. So we didn't ever get that off the ground.

HARGROVE: So that there may not have been a larger political motive there, but that illustrates the problems of such a strategy.

CARTER: It does. The groups that are most effective are the radical groups on the right and left. The general moderate ones, the ones who comprise a majority, don't have any motivation. If you ask them, are you for or against gun control, they'll say, we're for gun control. But you could have ninety percent of the people for gun control and ten percent of the National Rifle Association would prevail, because they'll get out and work and, in fact, they'll sell their farms.

JONES: Somebody once called that a silent majority, but sort of ruined the term.

CARTER: That's right. They stay silent.

NEUSTADT: I've always understood that the role that Watson assumed which you then got [Gene] Eidenberg to help with was not only working with the Cabinet, but also working with Governors and mayors. That was your idea. At least, my informants gave you credit for it.

CARTER: Yes .

NEUSTADT: OK. Four years later, three years later, it has worked well enough so that they can produce the Governors' endorsement for your nomination despite Ted Kennedy's challenge. Now, did the idea in 1976-77 have any relation to that result or was that result just a good happenstance?

CARTER: I think it was a good happenstance. I'm trying to be honest with you.

NEUSTADT: There wasn't political strategy involved?

CARTER: I don't think there was. Not that early. I don't think we were thinking about the 1980 election at that time. Jack and I had labored. Jack was the chairman of our Human Resources Board in Georgia. He was responsible for welfare, all medical-mental health, the aged, unemployment compensation. He was responsible for all that conglomerate social services group. He and I had suffered because there was no relationship between the states at that time and the Nixon White House. When I went up and made my first speech to the Washington National Press Club, I tried to get an appointment with John Ehrlichman's assistant and I couldn't do it. I'm not exaggerating. I couldn't even dream of seeing the President. But I couldn't even come close to getting an appointment with John Ehrlichman and I finally tried to get an appointment with his assistant. When I got to the White House, I got an appointment with his assistant's assistant. This is an actual fact. And I was Governor.

We deplored that breakdown in the system of federalism very much, and Jack and I spent a lot of time working on how we could tie them together. And the best way I could see it was for one man to relate to all the Cabinet officers who were responsible for domestic policy and also for that same person to relate to all the Governors and mayors and let them know that anytime they called day or night they could reach Jack Watson, and anytime they wanted to they could reach me. When we evolved an urban policy, it was put together primarily by the mayors and Governors. Jack refereed and told them that I wouldn't spend a lot of money and so forth, but they put together urban policy. The UDAG [Urban Development Action Grants] program, which was one of the most remarkable successes, was put together on that basis.

NEUSTADT: Well, the whole thing was a remarkable success.

CARTER: Yes, it was. It paid rich dividends.

FENNO: I have a slightly different twist, I think, Mr. President. I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about the problem of support generally and the places where you

might have gotten support. Not exactly the party, but perhaps in pushing forward your views. One question has to do with the Georgia delegation in Congress. Other Presidents have sometimes found it useful to use the members of their delegation, particularly the House and maybe the Senate, to deal with congressional issues—eyes and ears, and lieutenants and so forth. I wonder if you could say something about your relations with your Georgia delegation as a set of supporters or potential supporters?

CARTER: I had several meetings with the Georgia delegation, either private breakfasts at the White House or even before I went to the inauguration. We had a tacit understanding that if I really needed them on an issue of importance that I would let them know directly and they would make every effort to support me even though it was damaging for them at home. But if I didn't really need them, they would vote in accordance with what they thought was best for them and their own constituents. I think we worked it that way all the way through my four years. I didn't have anybody on the Georgia delegation, maybe to answer your question more specifically, who was my spokesman in the House or Senate.

On defense matters, Sam Nunn is almost pre-eminent and was when I was there. Although he's a junior Senator, in matters that really require knowledge and study, Sam Nunn even then was pre-eminent. Senator [John] Stennis would tell you the same thing. If he didn't understand something, he would go to see Sam and say, "Explain to me how this works or what's going on." Sam was a staunch supporter there. On agriculture matters, of course, Herman Talmadge was. And Herman and I have known each other for a long time. I was never a Talmadge supporter, although my father was. But I never did support Talmadge when he ran for the Senate. When I got to be President, the first thing I did was to have a meeting at Herman's home in Lovejoy with the congressional leadership and whenever I asked Herman on a difficult issue for support, he gave it to me. He was not a forceful leader.

I depended on Bob Byrd in the Senate and I depended on Tip O'Neill and Jim Wright primarily in the House. As you know, we had our leadership breakfasts. But the Georgia delegation was not senior enough to have committee chairmanships except for Senator Talmadge. The senior member of the Georgia delegation in the House was a Congressman who was elected when I withdrew from the congressional race in 1966 to run for Governor. Jack Brinkley has now resigned. So they didn't have the seniority positions to make them important. And I don't think that if I had asked one of them to be my spokesman it would have been particularly fruitful for me. The closest one to me there was probably Wyche Fowler from Atlanta, and on occasion I would depend on him to help.

FENNO: But he didn't have much seniority?

CARTER: No. None of the House members had much seniority. None of them had a committee chairmanship or even a subcommittee chairmanship. Herman was the only one who had a committee chairmanship. But they came through. I don't have any complaints

about them. The most crucial test was on the Panama Canal treaty. Herman [Talmadge] and Sam [Nunn] were strongly opposed to the Panama Canal treaty at the beginning. In fact, Talmadge had signed a resolution in the fall of 1976 against any change in the Panama Canal treaty. I think there were 44 Senators who signed that resolution and Herman was one of them. But eventually, they both voted for the Panama Canal treaty.

YOUNG: Was that one of the occasions when you called upon them?

CARTER: Yes, that was one of the occasions. I put my whole life on the line on the Panama Canal treaty. And the House members supported me on that too. It was very difficult. The thing that people have forgotten is that after the treaty was ratified, we still had that legislation to get through the House. It was a horrible experience. But on those crucial issues where life or death was at stake, Frank Moore would go to them and say, "This is something that the President really needs, can you do it?" If they said no, then I would call them on the phone and try to add my voice to Frank's to let them know that I really needed them. And I'd say their support was adequate or even better.

FENNO: You mention Frank Moore and that really leads me to my second question, which is the kind of support you get from your congressional relations staff. I have two questions. One is a follow-up of something that Bob said about the press. In talking to the congressional liaison people, you mentioned this in your book about Frank Moore. They had the sense that people in Washington came very early in the game to an opinion that they were not as competent or as savvy as they might be. I wondered if this is an example? Does that seem correct to you that here's the place where the press came very early to an opinion that despite the fact that the operation improved steadily, they never changed their mind? That somehow or other they got a view and never changed it?

CARTER: Yes, that's a good example. There's a bad example but it's an accurate example. Frank is not perfect and neither am I. But Frank has one attribute that was very valuable. He never did hesitate to hire someone to work under him whose credentials might be better than his. He never felt challenged by his subordinates. If you look down the list of the people that worked for Frank and talk to the Speaker or talk to Bob Byrd about them, Bob Byrd would be inclined to be quite critical. But I think they would agree that there has never been any group that was any better qualified than they were. They were really a great group. And Frank gave them credit. When I would meet with Frank on a matter of great interest, he would bring Dan Tate, or Bob Beckel, or Bob Thomson, or the rest of them in with him, not because he was inadequate, but he wanted them to be directly able to meet with the President himself. It was a good organization and the results were good, I think.

In '76, Frank was assigned by me just to go to Washington on occasion and to touch base with a few of the congressional leaders. This was after I got the first couple of victories in the primaries. Frank had seven states to organize from our presidential campaign in the South. As you know, we carried all the southern states except for Virginia. He did an outstanding job. But since Frank was the only guy I had that went to Washington, they thought that they could reach me through Frank. He would get an average of 125 to 150

telephone calls a day in Washington and he was in Louisiana or Alabama or Mississippi trying to win the campaign. But he got the image from the press and the Congress that he wouldn't return phone calls because he was incompetent. There again, this was a case when my subordinates suffered because of decisions that I made. I was the one that told Frank what to do. Frank was conscientious and also competent. Frank's a good, solid, professional man.

FENNO: Just one other question. If you accept the notion that your congressional relations were described as somewhat rocky or felt to be somewhat rocky, then I wonder did you ever lose anything that was important to you because of rocky congressional relations? It's sort of what good is good congressional relations?

CARTER: I don't really know. I can't think of any specific instance. The one that keeps sticking in my mind is hospital-cost containment. By the time that final vote came in, we'd lost. The issue had come out of the congressional liaison group and into any own hands. It was down to the point where I was the one getting the commitments from those Congressmen because so much pressure was being put on them by the medical profession. And of course we prevailed in the Panama Canal vote and most of the energy votes. It's hard for me to say. [redacted] That's quite often an excuse. I'm sure there are more issues that we lost because of failures in the liaison group, but I can't put my finger on one right now.

YOUNG: I don't know whether it was Frank or somebody whom we talked to and we asked a question like that, what is good congressional relations, and he said, "I suppose good congressional relations is when you've got very bad relations, because that means you're getting something done." Which is another way of dealing with the question.

JONES: I'm very interested in this matter of what a crisis does to some of the rest of the government and your position in regard to the rest of the government. I suppose the hostage crisis was the principal case, but there might be some others too. Is it so totally preoccupying that all other problems slip away? Does it become possibly an advantage in the sense of leverage, not the crisis itself obviously, but in building support, or can it not be used in that way?

CARTER: With the one exception of the Camp David thirteen days, I don't recall any time when I didn't have a multiplicity of conflicting responsibilities on my desk or in my mind. I never could deal unilaterally with any issue because of always these different things. I don't know if any of you have ever been in financial trouble, but there were a couple of years when I first came home when I thought I was going to have to go into bankruptcy and be embarrassed and go back in the Navy or the Electric Boat Company or somewhere and get me a job. And no matter what happened, if it was a beautiful day or if my older son made all A's on his report card or if Rosalynn was especially nice to me or something, underneath it was gnawing away because I owed twelve thousand dollars and didn't know how I was going to pay it. If I couldn't collect my bills that month, I couldn't

pay for the fertilizer I'd already sold. It was a gnawing away at your guts no matter what good, other things were going on.

Well, that's the way the hostage thing was for me for fourteen months. No matter what else happened, it was always there. It was painful because I was failing to accomplish what seemed to be a simple task to get those hostages home, and the personal responsibility I felt for them was there. But I couldn't ignore them and didn't ignore all the other routine jobs of the presidency. So there was no way to separate the two. It was just an overlaying of feeling, distraught, or ill at ease, or uncomfortable. Even when we'd go to Camp David and I had a fairly relaxed weekend, I was always thinking about the hostages and getting them home.

That kind of a chronic crisis was uncomfortable, but it never did interfere with energy legislation and that sort of thing. We were fortunate in not having any serious, acute crisis like a war, or a matter where I thought my nation's security was in danger, or an embarrassment, or the revelation that was true. I didn't have any acute crisis that really pressed on my mind.

JONES: You describe very well in the book, in one section on page 105, this matter of thought. You explained at the time you're talking about, the energy program was being developed, but then you go on to say, bear in mind this, this, this, this, and this. These things were also going on. Now is there any place other than in your office where that gets coordinated? How is that managed?

CARTER: That diversity of responsibility?

JONES: Yes, just the amount of noise.

CARTER: Well, it's hard for me to say. I would say that under Stu Eizenstat, all the domestic issues were addressed simultaneously and with a relative degree of importance or priority. In Frank Moore's congressional liaison group, all the issues that were related to the Congress were addressed simultaneously. Obviously, in the State Department all the foreign policy issues were addressed simultaneously. But there was never a focal point anywhere except in the Oval Office for the totality of defense, foreign, and domestic issues. In my first draft of the book, and in several other places, I had a paragraph like that where I had a chapter on the Panama Canal treaty or whatever it was. And then it seemed as though that was the only thing I was worrying about and I would just put a paragraph to show all the things that I had to be concerned about that day or that week, just to illustrate the point. But the editors convinced me that I had too many occasions like that and so I cut it down some. In every day that I was dealing with the Panama Canal treaty or the China normalization or SALT or energy, all those other things were going on simultaneously.

JONES: For a detail man, how do you handle the anxieties associated with dependency?

CARTER: Dependency on others?

JONES: Yes.

CARTER: That didn't bother me at all. Once I've got or get confidence in somebody else, I don't mind loading them up with as much as I think they can bear and then I forget about it. And I never lost sleep, I'm not that kind of person. I feel at ease and secure. I feel self-confident. I don't anguish over things. I make decisions without delay. When I delegate authority, I don't look over somebody's shoulder. When any of my subordinates are criticized, I defend them. They know it. I don't permit them to squabble among themselves. The worst thing they can do in my eyes is to criticize one another. I don't even let Rosalynn criticize my staff. That's the quickest way she can aggravate me, to point out something about Steve Hochman or Jody. If Rosalynn said something about my private secretary or about Stu or Jody or Ham if they made a mistake, it really aggravated me.

I had that kind of a relationship that made it, it's just my character, easy for me to deal with the multitude of minor crises that I faced. Even after the hostage mission failed, I went back and got a couple of hours' sleep. That's all the time I had, but I went right to sleep. And I woke up and then I had to reveal to the American people that we had failed. I was at ease with the problems. And in a way, I really relished it. I always looked forward to getting over to the Oval Office, even when I knew the day was going to be dismal and we were going to lose an important vote in the Congress, when I might be embarrassed by something, I still was eager to get over there. I just liked the administrative work.

TRUMAN: I want to get in one question that goes back to the congressional relations thing. I'm not sure you didn't answer this this morning, but I'm not certain that you did. You say in your book when you're talking about the fifty dollar tax rebate, as it was developing in the spring of '77, you had made the decision to drop it or to abort it. And you say that you notified the key members of the leadership in Congress of the decision that had been taken. Was there consultation with them on the pending cancellation? Were they in your counsels about the possibility that that was going to get withdrawn before Christmas?

CARTER: Some of them were. I almost lost a friend in that episode with Ed Muskie, who was the chairman of the Budget Committee. And although I had consulted with Bob Byrd and with some of the others about it, I didn't consult with Ed Muskie before he got the word. He was very aggravated about it because he was still fighting to line up votes to pass the fifty dollar tax rebate when I decided that it was better for us not to have it at all. I have a tendency like every other human being to rationalize what I did. If we could have gotten the fifty dollar tax rebate and implemented it early, which was our original commitment, I would have gone ahead with it. But by then I think it was May, was it that late?

NEUSTADT: April, way into April.

CARTER: We thought we were going to implement it by April, put it right into effect like that and stimulate the economy and get some jobs going. We didn't get it. There was some doubt at the time I cancelled it that we could get the votes in the Senate. It wasn't a sure thing at all. More and more members of the Senate were coming to me and saying, "Mr. President, this is late, I'm not sure we can get the thing through. The best thing to do is not to put forward this fifty dollar tax rebate because the economy is already recovering and the job programs are going over well. Let's just drop the thing." But I think that uniquely in our administrative circles among the leadership was Lance and me and Blumenthal and when I finally said, "Well, we'll take the political consequences of reversing our position," at that time, a lot of the members of Congress were eager for me to do so. But a few of them didn't get notified on time.

Another problem that you have when you make a decision like that is that you can't have simultaneity of notification. Some people just get the word before others do. Some of the key members of Congress might be at home on the ranch in Wyoming or up in Maine fishing or something and then you try to put into operation calling two hundred people as rapidly as you possible can. Invariably, you'll miss two or three of them. And they'll forget that they were out on a fishing boat. All they'll know is that their subcommittee chairman knew we were going to do it and they didn't. That's one of the most difficult problems you have. In this case, the answer was we notified them as soon as I made a decision. We missed Ed Muskie for some reason, but many of his fellow Senators were eager for me to cancel that proposal.

THOMPSON: I really think, Mr. President, that for our sake if not for yours, we need another session on the foreign policy because we have half to three quarters of an hour left and we've really not talked about any of the issues that constitute four fifths of the book that deal with these central foreign policy issues. I hope it won't offend you, but I think that the crux of the problem for me is best illustrated in a statement that a preeminent figure in international politics made in the midst of your administration. He said never in his lifetime had he observed a President with whose objectives he more totally agreed but about whose capacities to achieve those objectives he had more doubts. And I think that the one time that we did get into it, we were touching on a dimension of it, in Dick's phrase.

I have kind of a three-part question, heading up into SALT as Jim said. One is, is there any way that the President can be freed from carrying all the burdens that his advisors bring to their appointments? I was thinking as we were talking about Zbig, and all of us have our little episodes in our past intellectual and professional lives that we could cite to you about Zbig. If one of us had been involved, it would have been the same burden. For instance, I've got a book in February dedicated to the number one defender and the number one critic of Vietnam, both objects of great criticism from various sides, Dean Rusk and Hans Morgenthau, who probably were closer to me than any two people. Well, I bear some of that burden in the same way that Zbig bears other burdens. Is there a way that a President can divide up some of these crucial tasks?

[James] Forrestal saw the NSC [National Security Council] as a means of buckling

together the various aspects of foreign policy made up in NSC, but it was to be as [Brent] Scowcroft and others used it. It was a kind of information source, as well as providing somebody to talk to and help hone one's thoughts. The third aspect, I suppose, is some way to get help from other distinguished people that will speak when the President doesn't speak. [Arthur Hendrick] Vandenberg did that for Truman. But I keep wondering whether there is any way to separate some of these things so that you don't carry all the burden?

The second question very quickly is the one we talked about at lunch. Is there any way that any administration coming into power can gear up quickly enough to know whether something like the Vance proposal in March was the best possible proposal to make to the Russians? When you come in all of a sudden, the enemy, as Rusk and others have said, is the Foreign Service for many incoming administrations, maybe not yours. At the very least, you can't use them in their entirety. And then the last question is, I was thinking of the man who had made this statement.

CARTER: Who was that, Kissinger?

THOMPSON: Hans Morgenthau.

CARTER: Oh, Morgenthau, I didn't remember that quote.

THOMPSON: If he were to read the Camp David chapter or some of the other chapters I wondered (a) if it would change his mind, but (b) if it would make any difference. Because if one goes down the line—Roosevelt at Yalta, Truman at Korea, [Dwight] Eisenhower and some of the things he did, unleashing Chiang Kai-Shek, LBJ and Vietnam—foreign policy never seems to be a plus in the end for a President. Jerry Ford in the debate with you slipped. I made a talk recently and one or two electoral process people said, oh, that wasn't that important. And three Polish fellows came up after the thing and they said, those electoral process people don't know what they're talking about. Every Polish friend of ours voted for Jimmy Carter. So those are three, but there are a dozen more if we could ever get into them, that it seems to me are so tantalizing. The true story is so important.

CARTER: It's hard to say about the first. Unless you want to include SALT II as having been voted on, we never lost a vote on a single foreign policy issue while I was President. That's one area we never lost. And we had some very difficult issues on which to vote, including the F15's to Saudi Arabia and that sort of thing. The difference between domestic and foreign policy is that the President has so much greater influence in foreign policy.

In domestic affairs, yours is just one of a large number of voices and not often the strongest voice. On economic policy, who's to say whether the chairman of the Federal Reserve or the members of Congress, the Ways and Means Committee, the Finance Committee chairman have the most influence. I would guess that the President would not have the most influence. Though on foreign policy, you do. With the exception of this

session, almost invariably in a press conference, even in my recent trips around the country to promote my book, almost invariably eighty-five percent of the questions would be on foreign policy. And I've forgotten what portion of the book did you figure was foreign policy Steve?

HOCHMAN: It's roughly seventy percent.

CARTER: So thirty percent of the book was devoted to domestic. But anyway, that's beside the point. At least three-fourths, around three-fourths is about foreign policy. I never did try to delegate that authority very much. I think that again Brzezinski and Vance and Brown would tell you that every major decision concerning foreign policy or defense matters was made by me. It was what I wanted. That's why the NSC was strengthened while I was there. And at the same time there was very rarely an incompatibility between me and Vance. We consulted. I made the decisions after listening to Vance's advice and he carried out my decisions loyally. The only exception was when he resigned.

On the preparing or the transition period, we had our foreign policy agenda fairly well in place on the major issues by the time I was inaugurated. By April of that year, we had our foreign policy down in writing in a book that thick of all the things that we wanted to do in dealing not only with issues like should we or shouldn't we normalize relations with China, should we proceed with the Panama Canal treaty, should we invest a lot of our time in nuclear arms control and how should we have a nonproliferation policy, should I or should I not take the leadership role in the world on Mid East peace. Those were major issues, but there were also detailed relationships with the important countries in the world, all the way from Iran to Indonesia. We had all that set down in writing. It was a very definitive policy analysis, done primarily by the National Security staff. It was gone over by Vance and some of his advisors in State.

When I sent Vance to Moscow in March, I was aware by then after four or five exchanges of personal letters with [Leonid Ilyich] Brezhnev of the disinclination of the Soviet system to accommodate rapid change. Brezhnev's position then and I'm sure [Yuri Vladimirovich] Andropov's position now and their successor's position in the future will likely be that evolutionary developments are permissible, but as for revolutionary ideas, our system just cannot assimilate them. So that's why when Vance went to Moscow we had the two options. One was to build on the Vladivostok proposal, where cruise missiles and the backfire bombers had just been put on the shelf. The other one was a much more rapid reduction in nuclear weapons than had previously been considered by U.S. and Soviet leaders. We decided to take both options over there, to see if Brezhnev was willing to consider a more drastic reduction or whether he wanted to continue, in effect on the evolutionary Vladivostok path. Obviously, he decided the second one.

Now the Soviets are coming back, by the way, with the more drastic reduction in these proposals to Reagan's negotiators in Europe. In some cases, these are almost verbatim with a few notable exceptions. But anyway, that proposal that he took to Moscow, I

wouldn't have done it any differently. The only mistake that I made was in underestimating the Soviets' displeasure in three things. One was our human rights policy. Second was the somewhat radical change from the Vladivostok proposal. And the third one was my inclination to make public the American position on the SALT discussions.

As you know, with SALT I—I think Mr. Strong is an expert on SALT I— Kissinger in effect pulled the proposals out of his hip pocket and a lot of those discussion points were secret even from Gerry [Gerard] Smith, our chief negotiator, and the joint Chiefs of Staff, and certainly, from the American public. I was inclined as an incoming President to make some of these issues public so the American people could understand what was going on. I think the Soviets looked upon my making these issues public as a propaganda effort which was contrary to sincere negotiating efforts. They misjudged me. I was sincere in my proposals to them. They looked upon it as a propaganda move on my part. I think those were the three factors that made them reject the proposals so preemptively and harshly. Had I known then what I know now about the Soviet Union, I would have approached it differently, in a little bit slower fashion and with more preparation before Vance's mission was publicized.

THOMPSON: That's another issue if we could ever talk about that that has intrigued a lot of us. You did talk, maybe in reaction against Kissinger, about the need for more public diplomacy. And yet the great triumph of your administration was one where you shut out even Jody Powell at one point, and you talked about that in the book. Harold Nicholson would have approved of that. But there did seem to be a shift in that regard.

CARTER: You mean in China?

THOMPSON: The time you went to Camp David and China, but especially Camp David.

CARTER: Camp David, I think, proved a negotiating technique that's almost obvious in that if your participants every day have to explain their negotiating position to the press and to the people back home, the flexibility is removed and they lose face if they subsequently change their positions. I think that was maybe a new experience, but it was obvious. But I wasn't just reacting against Kissinger. My natural inclination was to make things public. We had a very open administration, as you know. It's being closed up again now to some extent.

NEUSTADT: I wanted to ask about that first approach on SALT. What you don't mention in your book, this is sort of a footnote to what you've just said, among other things is trying to bring Scoop Jackson on board with the reduction approach of what's called SALT III or START now. Was that accidental or irrelevant?

CARTER: When I met with Scoop to describe what we were doing, he brought me a voluminous document, I think about sixty pages, that he and Richard Perle had prepared. Scoop brought it to the White House. I went over it in detail. I understood it thoroughly.

It was obvious to me then that Scoop's proposal would never be acceptable to the Soviets. I'm not trying to advocate the Soviets' position, but I never did reach a point in my administration where I thought that any proposals that had the slightest chance in God's world of being accepted by the Soviets would also be accepted by Scoop and Richard Perle. But now some of Scoop's ideas were good ones. And Scoop's admonitions were obviously of great importance to me.

NEUSTADT: Right. But you understood from the beginning that in the end, no matter what you came out with, Scoop would be against it?

CARTER: Yes. Scoop would be against it. And he never misled me about it. He never encouraged me that he would be for something unless the Soviets unilaterally dismantled their three hundred and eight heavy missiles. Of course, that was a horse trade that has since been made as you know for compensatory forward base systems in Europe.

THOMPSON: Were you ever concerned about Sam Huntington and others who seemed to be trying to open up that channel in their contacts with [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan and Scoop Jackson and others?

CARTER: No. I didn't object to that at all. And I didn't ever try to put anything over on Scoop and them, although they disagreed with what I was trying to do. We kept them informed. We never deprived any of them of a briefing on the SALT terms. In fact, a lot of the potential and ultimate opponents of SALT II went to Europe and participated in our negotiating sessions . I thought it was best to lay it all on the line.

One thing I didn't dwell on in the book that I thought was very significant was when I was approaching the end of the Panama Canal vote and treaties, the Republican leaders were telling me very frankly that they would never support SALT II, no matter what was in it. I was told this by Ford, Kissinger, and Howard Baker. They said that they had gone as far as they could as a Republican party in supporting my basic positions, as they endorsed Panama. They weren't going to support SALT II. I listened to them and I believed what they said at the time. My hope, and I have to admit my expectation then, was that I could so thoroughly convince the public about the advisability of the SALT II treaty that the Republicans would change their mind and support SALT II in their own best political interest, and that I could get them out of the role of obstructing the ratification of SALT II. That was my hope.

THOMPSON: Would it have been better to reverse the order, Panama and SALT?

CARTER: Well, the Soviets wouldn't let me follow that procedure. When they rejected our effort in Moscow in March of '77, for a long time they wouldn't even agree to meet again and it was only, I think, in May of '77 before [Andrei Andreyevich] Gromyko would even meet with Vance to discuss the SALT issues again. They were very reluctant to move forward on SALT. Also, I'd like to say, I wanted to get Panama out of the way as early as possible because there was no doubt about how unpopular Panama was. I think it was Gallup, polling for the American Foreign Policy Institute or something like

that, and only seven or eight percent of the people in the polls favored Panama Canal treaties of any kind among the American public. Seventy something percent disapproved any treaty. So we had that to overcome. I thought the best thing to do was to get that most unpopular issue out of the way as early as we could. So I never did consider putting SALT first and Panama last .

THOMPSON: Before we leave this whole thing, and this is again something that would take days I know, is there any chance that in some of your very first statements you overreacted on Afghanistan?

CARTER: By first statements you mean in Christmas of '79 after they went in?

THOMPSON: Yes .

CARTER: I don't think so. We had been belaboring the Soviet Union about their intrusion into Afghanistan since long before I met with Brezhnev in June of '79. And I warned him about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan at Vienna. He made some very disparaging remarks about extending the frontiers of the United States over to the Soviet borders or something like that. I've forgotten exactly what he said, but I thought it was very serious. I thought then and think now it was a very serious threat to our country's security and to international stability for the Soviets to invade Afghanistan.

At that time, we presumed that the Soviets might very well be successful and quickly consolidate their hold on Afghanistan and use Afghanistan as a launching pad to go directly to the Persian Gulf through Iran, which was almost a nonexistent government then, and perhaps even through Pakistan, which was vulnerable. So I reacted strongly because I wanted Brezhnev to know that if they did thrust toward the Persian Gulf, it would be the same as an attack on our country. I think it could have changed the entire world political /economic relationship had the Soviets been able to consolidate their hold on Afghanistan and then move toward the Persian Gulf.

TRUMAN: I'm getting off the lofty levels of the foreign policy to the gutty levels of politics. One thing that you don't mention in the book, although you talked about the 1980 campaign and leading up to it, is the problem, if it was a problem, that you faced for the first time in your career running as an incumbent. You'd always run from the outside looking in. But this time you were running as an incumbent. Did that present any special problems to you? Were you consciously aware that this was a different role and perhaps there was conflict with at least your past or practices that was implicit in this?

CARTER: Yes, we discussed that several times, the exceptional difficulty of having to defend not only all of your policies that had been put forward among consumers with deregulation of oil and gas, for instance, and the responsibility for the hostages not being released. I think incumbency was inherently a restraining factor on me and on our campaign organization. I hadn't run that way before. I was in the Senate and was reelected, but I didn't have any opposition for reelection to the Senate, the Georgia Senate. I think as far as Presidents go, it is a deleterious factor to be in office.

As far as a Congressman is concerned, it is an advantageous factor because you have so many goodies to hand out to your constituency in the form of letters returned, attendance at weddings and funerals and bar mitzvahs, checking on social security, and sending out mailgrams and letters. You have a great opportunity as an incumbent Congressman to campaign for two years at public expense. A President has just the opposite. He's responsible for everything that aggravates people. So it was a new experience for us and we did consider that several times.

TRUMAN: Did you make any special concessions to that or rather make any special allowances for that difference?

CARTER: I tried to. We thought we were going to have the economy in very good shape in October. I remember back in March and April, I was getting projections from Charlie Schultze and Bill Miller that the inflation rate would be down to five or six percent by October. Of course, the unemployment rate was down too. We underestimated the impact of the oil price increase that later just ran over the whole world and boosted inflation and interest rates. As I pointed out in the book, that was one of the major factors that resulted in our defeat. The other one was a schism in the Democratic party, and I will always believe that the hostages being held, and a sense of impotence and incompetence that was generated from those hostages not being released, those were the three factors.

TRUMAN: It sure was no help, there's no doubt about that.

CARTER: No.

TRUMAN: Was this concern about the awkwardness of running as an incumbent one of the reasons you made the decision in January not to withdraw from the debate out in Iowa?

CARTER: No. That wasn't the reason. I had decided even with the hostages held to go to Iowa, as you probably know. When the Soviets went into Afghanistan, that further aggravated the situation and I had a plateful of congressional responsibilities too. My final decision was a close call. My final decision was, I may not have put it in the book, that I would go to Iowa as a President, and I would come back as a candidate.

TRUMAN: Yes, that was the sentence that I read and that's the reason I hooked it into this problem of running as an incumbent. I was struck by that sentence.

CARTER: I thought in dealing with the Soviets in Afghanistan, with the grain embargo, with a possible boycott of the Olympics, with secret aid that we were giving to the Afghan rebels, with the hostage situation, that I would be best served as a candidate and also our nation would be best served if I didn't become an active campaigner that early. Once I got into a political debate which would obviously be nationwide television and absorb the consciousness of all political scientists and others interested in government, with Jerry Brown and Kennedy, I could never go back then to the role of being the

President instead of the candidate for reelection.

TRUMAN: I'm puzzled by that frankly, because it's always seemed to me to a degree, obviously not an extreme degree but to a degree, one of the curious inescapabilities of the American presidency is that the President, except in his final term, in a sense has always got to be a candidate. The American people tend to understand and, if it's the right word, forgive the candidate because he's the President.

CARTER: That may be true. I looked on it the other way, as more of an onus than an asset. But I can't sit here today and tell you that I made the right political judgment during 1980 by holding myself aloof from the primaries. I didn't do that at all after the convention. I was a full-fledged campaigner after I got the nomination and I won the nomination, as I say, with about a two-to-one margin over a formidable opponent during the primary session. So I'm not sure that the political judgment was ill-founded.

But I think that if I had been more free in going around the country, not particularly campaigning but explaining my policies to the public in town meetings and local TV interviews and that sort of thing, I would have been better off than to be stigmatized by the so-called Rose Garden isolation allegations. I think in balance that I would probably have been better off politically to have been more free with my movements and my travel and my talks.

JONES: But you had no idea that it was going to go on that long. . . .

CARTER: No. And every week we thought the next week the hostages were going to be home.

TRUMAN: It was a nightmare. On that same line, one of the things that has interested me is why, unless I'm misperceiving what happened, you had your press conferences with a decreasing frequency? You said this morning that it was no great chore for you to get up for a press conference because you were on top of these things more or less anyhow and you didn't have to go through days of briefing in order to be able to face the press. One, am I right that you did diminish the number or the frequency of those conferences and if so, by hindsight could one say that was an unfortunate?

As a persuader, I always felt you were in your absolute best in a press conference. I've never seen anyone, well, since they were heavily televised certainly, ever handle a press conference as skillfully as you did. That was my impression. I was regretful that these came with less frequency as the demands for you to project were increasing because it seemed to me that that was your natural forte, whereas you always found it somewhat inconvenient or awkward to give the set speech which was not your choice.

CARTER: That's exactly right. There were two things that I enjoyed and they are very similar. One was the town meetings where I had twelve hundred people to ask me any questions and I could respond.

TRUMAN: That was sort of like a press conference but better because you didn't have this quasi-professional acting background.

CARTER: That's right. The other was the press conference. I looked forward to them and whenever we had a press conference, I would look forward to the next one. If Jody was delayed in putting it on my calendar, I would always be the one to say, "Jody, schedule a press conference." I looked forward to it and I enjoyed it. We continued those press conferences roughly once every two weeks until we came back from Tokyo and went to Camp David for that ten days or whatever it was of discussions. There was a fairly unanimous belief, which may or may not have been erroneous, that we were coming out poorly in my dealings with the press under any circumstances, even including the press conferences. People like Clark Clifford and Lane Kirkland and Charlie Kirbo and others felt very strongly that I was having too much exposure to the press, and that I ought to cut down those press conferences and only have them when there was some significant event to be reported. I took their advice. I'm not sure it was sound advice, but I took their advice.

The other thing was that not too long after that, in November after the hostages were taken, there was a need that I felt to circumscribe my appearances and my vulnerability to cross-examination. We had so many multiple avenues of effort trying to go to Khomeini to get our hostages released that I didn't want to have to either mislead the American people or say, "I can't answer the question," or be obviously devious. If I was questioned about [Muammar] Gaddafi or [Yasser] Arafat, we were also working with them trying to get them to get our hostages out. And then not only those semi-disreputable people, but also there were people who were helping us that would have been injured had their efforts been revealed. The Algerians, and in some cases, a lot of the Iranian leaders were educated in France. A lot of them were educated in Germany. We were unsuccessful during the first six months in working through our so-called French Connections. Eventually, it was the German connection, strangely enough, that let us get to the Iranians and eventually through the Algerians to get the hostage released. In the hostage era, which seemed never to end, I just didn't want to be constantly exposing myself to repetitive cross-examinations by very knowledgeable news reporters.

We also had six hostages in the Canadian embassy. Some of the American press knew about it. We had to go to them and encourage them not to report their existence because their lives might have been lost. So there was a few sensitive things, and I can't recall all of them now, that made me want to be a little bit more reticent about going to the press in an open and unstructured way. If a reporter had said, ah, "There are six American hostages or diplomats in the Canadian embassy," what would I have done?

JONES: Mr. President, all that followed Camp David and I guess I don't quite understand the argument at Camp David. Was it, the people you mentioned, was that a Washington-based analysis of your performance or was it an analysis based on public opinion polls?

CARTER: It was a fairly unanimous recommendation. Jody could answer this question

better, but you know I had a group of Governors there, Governors that were closest to me, Jim Hunt, Dick Riley. They, plus the so-called political wisemen that I just mentioned, two or three of them, there was an agreement among them that I was being overexposed to the press and to the public. And it's hard for you or me to go back to the feeling we had in the summer of '79, of being belabored by or in contravention to the press. We had been through a whole series of events, first Bert Lance and then Hamilton and then the warehouse, Peter Bourne, all that kind of stuff, we were kind of...

JONES: There was a sensitivity there.

CARTER: It was a sensitivity, but I still relished and looked forward to the press conferences because I thought that was one avenue that I had to reach the American people directly without my comments being screened through the press. But our afternoon press conferences didn't help. I could understand that because by the time the evening news came on they didn't show the reporter asking the question and me answering it. They showed the reporter asking the question and they would have a picture of me up there on the screen with my mouth moving. A reporter, Sam Donaldson or Judy Woodruff or somebody, would be telling the American public what I claimed to be saying or what they thought I should have been saying or something. It was really a frustrating sort of thing. We had a few press conferences at night to reach the studio audience directly. But the networks were very reluctant to do that.

JONES: Was there any substitution recommended by these people?

CARTER: No. The general recommendation, I think, was all-pervasive. You're over-exposed, Mr. President. You're having too much access to the press. You're talking about things that sometimes are inconsequential. You need to just address the public directly or through the press when something of major importance is there. Part of this argument was derived from the fact that I had made, I think, five nationwide speeches on energy and the reason I cancelled that energy speech was because the public had turned themselves off.

Pat Caddell's definitive poll, he ran one of the most definitive polls I guess anybody has ever done, showed that instead of convincing the American people that the energy crisis was real and that Congress should act on it, I had been to the public so many times it was like the guy crying wolf. They didn't believe it anymore. Not only did they not believe it, they had gone past the point of ignoring it, and they were actually aggravated by it. So we were losing ground by my going back with this fairly unpopular harangue, we've got to do something about the energy situation. That was part of the reason for their argument, that I was over-exposed.

JONES: But that leaves the President, doesn't it, I mean where is the President to go at that point if one cuts back on press conferences, and the speeches and the repetition are not getting through?

CARTER: Well, the outcome of that week was this speech that the press called

erroneously the "malaise" speech. I never used that phrase. It was a press thing that came out. It was the most successful speech I ever made. It had the largest viewing audience and the highest approbation of any speech I've ever made in my life. Immediately following that, I made two other speeches, one on putting forward our energy policy and then I went to I think a CWA [Communications Workers of America] convention or UAW [United Auto Workers] convention, I've forgotten which, in Detroit and had a town hall meeting and every question was about energy, something they never would have mentioned. Shortly after that, the Congress finally passed the bill. But it was a successful effort.

I still felt free to call a press conference any time I chose. But instead of doing it on a disciplined basis, it was kind of a hit-or-miss basis. Jody's natural inclination was to procrastinate on everything. The incentive for having the press conferences on a disciplined, every two week basis was gone. I don't think now that it was a good decision. But it was a decision that we reached almost with unanimity.

THOMPSON: We've been asking everyone about the so-called "malaise" speech and among ourselves there seems to be a divided jury as to whether it was the right speech or the best speech. Some of us think that it's a speech that we'll go back to again and again in the future because of the enduring truths that it stated. But did you make that decision despite some counter advice, and if that is the case, were you reinforced in a major way by the advice of this outside group that you brought in?

CARTER: The decision not to make the original, scheduled energy speech was made by me and Rosalynn. I don't think we had any support for that decision at the beginning except Pat Caddell, who was convinced that it was counter-productive. Jody was aggravated about it, Stu Eizenstat was aggravated, Fritz almost went into a tizzy. Fritz almost lost control of himself about it. But after I went through the days of relaxation and consultation at Camp David, I felt better and better and I felt at ease. I think it changed my outlook. I spent an enormous amount of time writing that speech and I enjoyed it. I would meet with Governors and economists and mayors and representatives of minority groups and the members of Congress and distinguished energy chief executive officers in government.

THOMPSON: Even at least one clergyman.

CARTER: Yes, a group of clergymen. I had about fifteen clergymen, the top ones that I could identify in the nation, and everybody came, nobody refused to come. It was an interesting experience. Somebody could write a whole book just about that week. It was really remarkable.

YOUNG: Including the economists.

CARTER: The economists were kind of dry, I guess. Very little help. No help. But anyway at the end of that experience, we had put together what I thought was a good speech. When I go back and read that speech, I did it when I was writing the book, I still

think it's one of the best speeches in its text that I've ever given. I delivered it well. My heart was in it. I had written a lot of the phrases and knew them almost by heart and the response was good. It was a speech that needed to be made.

Shortly after that by the way, Giscard d'Estang in France made a similar speech about the deleterious effect of loss of confidence of people in government and how there ought to be a major national commitment to a specific issue to prove the efficacy of government and the strength of one's nation. That was the basic thrust of my speech. I thought it was a good speech. And I believe that it paid dividends. This was quickly frittered away by me in the way I discharged Mike Blumenthal and Califano; I handled that very poorly. And it came immediately after that. But that was one of the results of the Camp David discussions, that those two Cabinet officers ought to be replaced.

HARGROVE: I'd like to ask you to speak to a puzzle that's in the transcripts, evidence that's incomplete that you were interested in microeconomic questions when they were brought to you, but less interested in macro. I'm interested in your comment about the economists that you brought to Camp David. Were you frustrated? Did you find the material less interesting? Did you find the plausibility of the recommendations less interesting? Was there something about macro problems that was frustrating and difficult to get into whereas your mind seemed to get hold of the micro problem quickly, easily. Can you speak to that?

CARTER: Well, if Charlie Schultze said that, I would not dispute him because Charlie would probably have a good way of assessing my inclinations objectively more than I would. If somebody else said it, I would doubt it. The problem was, and this is so patently well-known it is almost stupid to say it, you could talk to five economists about macroeconomic policy and they'd all give you a different version. Then you got down and said, well, OK, what are we going to do about it? Should we raise or lower taxes, should we stimulate the economy or cool down the economy, should we emphasize inflation or should we emphasize jobs? To me, that's what I had to deal with. I wasn't a theoretician sitting in an ivory tower just being absorbed with the excitement of discussing economics. I think as far as that goes, your premise is correct. When people talk to me like that, I will say, "OK, what do you recommend that we do about it?"

HARGROVE: Well, that's right. In fact, the studies that I've done with past chairmen of the Economic Advisors Council say you can't bring a President a theoretical problem. You have to bring some choices.

CARTER: You do. But I enjoyed Charlie Schultze. Charlie Schultze is one of those guys I really enjoyed listening to. Charlie would come to see me at least once a week and we'd have a leisurely talk. We'd have a cup of coffee together and he would bring his charts and he would show me the macroeconomic trends, not only in Federal Government, but how total world debt was shifting, how much it was increasing, how much of it was borne by Federal Government, how much by local government and state governments, how much by the private sector, how this affected the future of our own nation, how the trends and budgeting techniques had changed. He compared the budgets of 1925 with the ones

of 1945 and ’65 and ’75 to show trends. I really was intrigued with that. I guess that would be macroeconomic to some extent. But then in dealing with issues and making decisions other than just having a casual professor-student educational hour, I wanted to know what the hell do you recommend that we do.

HARGROVE: You recognized pretty early, I think, that inflation was going to be a problem for you.

CARTER: Yes, very early.

HARGROVE: Did you ever feel you had enough leverage to get at the problem?

CARTER: No.

HARGROVE: Could you spin that out a little?

CARTER: I think we would have gotten at the inflation problem had it not been for the uncontrollable oil price question. As I said earlier just in passing, the situation in the fall of ’76 or January of ’77 was very similar to what it is now. The world-wide inflation rates were relatively low, just because oil prices hadn’t increased in three or four years. We had an increase in ’73 and ’74, no increases at the last half of ’74 all the way through ’75, no increases in ’76, relatively low increases in ’77. So inflation really wasn’t stimulated by a world-wide oil price increase.

But the world was in a recession, deficits were very high, just like now. We had about a seven-and-a-half percent unemployment rate during ’76 when I was running. Now it’s ten-and-a-half. But at that time, I never had a question, I don’t believe, in the entire campaign for President about inflation. When I met with individual groups or college professors or anybody else, nobody ever brought up the question of inflation. It was not a burning issue. The only thing was, what are we going to do about jobs. When I met with the congressional leaders at the Pond House immediately after the election and when we met at Herman Talmadge’s farm, the only thing we discussed economically was jobs. How were we going to put our people back to work. So that was the main thrust.

After we put into effect, with relatively no opposition in early ’77, our entire jobs program, it was not even remarked by the press because there was no contention and it just went into effect. It was very beneficial. As soon as that happened, I think inevitably the cycle had already started in the other direction. Inflation was obviously becoming more and more of a problem, and by the time we terminated the fifty dollar tax rebate, at least Blumenthal and Lance and I and some members of Congress were convinced we had to devote more time to inflation. Arthur Burns was also adding his voice on our monthly meetings with him for lunch.

HARGROVE: Does this then go back to what you and I were talking about earlier, the problems of leading a Democratic coalition being more difficult for a Democratic President?

CARTER: Yes it is. I wish some of you could have sat in on some of our leadership meetings and just seen the stricken expression on the faces of those Democratic leaders when I was talking about balancing the budget. John Brademas and Shirley Chisholm and Tip O'Neill, even Jim Wright. I mean it was an anathema to them to be talking about balancing the budget. That wasn't something a Democratic President was supposed to do. So even in that early phase, I'm talking about the spring of '77, I was already getting strong opposition from my Democratic leadership in dealing with economics. All they knew about it was stimulus and Great Society programs, new social opportunities. Some of those I espoused. On anything relating to education, for example, I was almost always in the forefront.

HARGROVE: You put money into education?

CARTER: Enormous amounts.

MCCLESKEY: I'd like to come back to something you said this morning almost at the beginning when you were talking about first going to Washington. You used the term "a different way of governing." You followed that almost immediately with some description of your Southern background, the fact that you were a newcomer and so on, and if that's all you meant, then I'm clear on it. But I wonder if you were thinking as well of something more than just the fact that you were different from other Presidents in terms of background? Were you really trying to come at it, did you see that you were coming at it, the governing process in a fundamentally different way?

CARTER: I'm not a good enough historian to answer that question adequately, but I never have known a Democratic President and I guess I've studied the Truman Administration more than any other because he's the one I admire most. He had a lot of issues that came up during his term that were directly affecting my own Administration. I ran as an outsider. I had studied the techniques of governing of the other Presidents, and I knew that my arrangement of staff was different from some of those others.

Also, the reason that I was elected was because I was the epitome of an adverse reaction to secrecy and misleading statements and sometimes betrayal of the public by the President, since Watergate and Vietnam and the CIA and so forth. I wanted to have an open administration. As an engineer and as a Governor I was much more inclined to move rapidly and without equivocation and without the long, interminable consultations and so forth that are inherent, I think, in someone who has a more legislative attitude, or psyche, or training, or experience. So for all those reasons, I think there was a different tone to our Administration.

I had adopted, I'll use the word pious again, I think an attitude of piety that aggravated some people, but also was the root of my political success in 1976. People wanted someone who wasn't going to tell another lie, who was not going to mislead the public and who was going to try to reestablish, in my judgment, ethics and morality in international affairs. That's what I offered, and that's what I tried to carry out. I was

obsessed, maybe to excess, with the need to carry out all my campaign promises. We kept a record of every campaign promise that I made. We even published it, as you know. Stu Eizenstat was the one who evolved our campaign policy and he kept a record of everything I promised and when we'd been in office a few weeks, we published the darn thing, which was probably naive in a way, but it was restraining on me. I would go over with Stu Eizenstat or with Jack Watson, Ham every now and then, a list of the things that we had promised and when we thought we could fit them into our agenda to get them accomplished.

We had a very heavy agenda of items that I thought would be beneficial for our country. I can tell you with complete candor that we didn't assess the adverse political consequences of pursuing those goals. I didn't think it was particularly foolhardy. I thought eventually our good efforts would be recognized and our achievements would be adequate to justify my reelection. But I was not under any misapprehension about the adverse consequences of things like China normalization or moving into Africa or getting involved with the Mid East when everybody else had had little success, or moving toward the Panama Canal treaties and so forth. We had a complete agenda and we just tried to fit it all in together.

I tried to draw a distinction too between the use of the Cabinet as a nationwide group of distinguished and experienced statesmen who, in effect, ran the departments without interference from me and a small loyal staff that would extract from them advice and counsel. A lot of that, as Dr. Neustadt would know, is not innovative. It's not a major change in what some other Presidents have done, but the conglomerate totality of it was different compared to other Presidencies.

And we were in a different time. The press was inquisitive, there was this sense of distrust, and confidence in government was shaken. I felt a particular need to reassure people that we were honest and benevolent and moral. The human rights policy was one way to epitomize this new attitude. I'm not claiming that all those attributes were well-advised or right, but that's the way we looked at our responsibilities. And we tried never to deviate from it. A lot of my advisors, including Rosalynn, used to argue with me about my decision to move ahead with a project when it was obviously not going to be politically advantageous, or to encourage me to postpone it until a possible second term and so forth . It was just contrary to my nature. I felt like I was .... I just couldn't do it.

TRUMAN: Were there any major issues that came at you, I don't mean issues such as the ones that were in your campaign promises, but issues that came at you during the first couple of years that would have involved legislative action that you did deliberately postpone, or put off to a second term, or put off indefinitely?

CARTER: No, not to a second term. There were a few cases where we couldn't interfere with the congressional consideration of the Panama Canal treaties, for instance. One notable example that I mention in the book is normalization with China. I did not want to have changing the Taiwan relationship and changing the Panama relationship in the Congress at the same time. I still believe that they would have both been defeated. So we

did on occasion modify our lists of current agenda items so there wouldn't be that conflict. I can't recall a single issue on which we made a decision that we would wait until a second term or postpone it completely because it was politically damaging or potentially damaging.

YOUNG: I'm struck by the number of occasions that major accomplishments and major events in your administration occurred where you did things yourself or almost all alone without some kind of help, where you took charge of carrying something through. And a prime example of that of course is with Begin and Sadat and the Mid East Accords. But there are a number of occasions, as the book indicated, and one of those is the Camp David reassessment where not many of your staff was for it and it was something you felt you had to do and you characterize that as a very intense and also productive time.

I'm not sure what my question is here but it has to do with something you suggested earlier today, which is, "On my issues," I believe you said, "I felt I ought to know something about the details," and so forth and so on. I guess I'm asking more than just in problematic terms what were those kinds of issues that you defined as yours, that you had to know those details about, and those that weren't yours?

CARTER: Well, one obvious example is the kind of questions that were multidepartmental in nature, where no single Cabinet officer could have assumed the responsibility. Others would be ones that required the direct influence of a President to prevail. I think that Panama and Camp David would be two obvious examples. Whether we could have gotten the Panama Canal treaties ratified if Vance and/or Harold Brown had done all the briefings of Senate members or their constituents back home, I don't know. But I think it would have been very difficult to get the 200 West Virginia leaders to come to the Pentagon to hear Harold Brown make a presentation. They would come to the White House if I invited them.

In that respect, since I thought then and think now that the Panama Canal treaties made a difference between war and peace, I thought it was worth my while to know what was in those treaties. I was also concerned about the fairness of the agreement, not only to the Panamanians, but to our own country. That's an example that I thought was important.

As far as direct negotiations are concerned, there were very minor negotiations, as you know, between me and Brezhnev. But there were fairly substantial negotiations between me and Gromyko. I had to—I say "I had to" when I'm talking because that's accurate as far as my own personality is concerned—I had to understand what was in the SALT II treaty in order to decide what to do. I had a more difficult time convincing the joint Chiefs of Staff, for instance, of the advisability of the SALT II terms than I did some of the Soviet leaders, because I didn't want to repeat the problem that had arisen between Schlesinger and Kissinger, when there was an incompatibility there, and Kissinger finally negotiated the SALT I treaty in secrecy. I think the SALT I treaty turned out OK, but I felt like I needed to understand that. Those are a few examples of the kinds of things that I thought were important.

YOUNG: At some point, there was an effort to make a Geneva conference on the Middle East thing with the Soviet Union involved, and then it moved into another arena and obviously became yours. Something that you would undertake against much advice. I noticed a sentence in your book that said you became hardened against that advice and "as stubborn as I can ever remember" in going ahead with it. I wonder how that shift occurred from the Geneva context into your personal responsibility with your own briefings and everything, your own learning in preparation for that experience?

CARTER: Well, even after Sadat went to Jerusalem, the presumption was that he was laying the groundwork for a Geneva conference to be chaired by me and Brezhnev. It was long after that that I decided that we would never have a Geneva conference. We had no hopes of putting one together. Only then did I come to realize in that early spring of '78 that the entire Mid East peace process was going to fail. I couldn't see any alternative to bringing Sadat and Begin together. And once I came to that conclusion, then I had two options. One was to abandon the Mid East peace process altogether and admit failure on a major project that I had undertaken, or to jump into it with both feet of my own. I didn't have too much of an argument with my advisors about bringing Sadat and Begin to Camp David.

The biggest argument I had with my advisors, it got kind of ugly, was almost a year later when I decided to go to Jerusalem and Cairo, because that made me so vulnerable. You know, here was a President traveling halfway across the world and failure was much more politically damaging and embarrassing to our country than going to Camp David and having those other two leaders come in and fail. I don't know how to express it exactly, but I was out on a limb literally, and figuratively, I was way out on a limb. That was a major argument.

But again, I thought that we had reached a point of extremism where it was either do that or fail. I think that Jody and Ham—Jody was the most strongly adverse to my taking chances like that, although I think Jody's inherently bolder than Hamilton. But Hamilton was much more amenable to things of that sort than was Jody. Once I made a decision I was awfully stubborn about it. I think if I could have one political attribute as the cause of my success, to begin with, it would be tenacity. Once I get set on something, I'm awfully hard to change. And that may also be a cause of some of my political failures. I just can't say for sure. Stubbornness is not always an attractive attribute.

TRUMAN: When it succeeds it's called courage .

THOMPSON: Jim will you read your other quote. It seems to me so much of a better way of saying your view on morality in politics than the moralistic thing that sometimes you're tagged with. The one about at Camp David and going out to think.

YOUNG: Oh yes. "I craved intense exercise and lonely places where I could think and sometimes pray." That is a fascinating experience to read about. It is unique in history.

CARTER: I can't imagine a similar event occurring in history.

TRUMAN: Not very many cases where a President of the United States has himself sat down with the old pen and drafted a peace treaty.

CARTER: I don't know what Theodore Roosevelt did when he negotiated some sort of settlement between Japan and Russia. I don't know if he met with the leaders or what.

TRUMAN: He did.

NEUSTADT: Well he didn't meet with the leaders.

TRUMAN: No he met with their ambassadors. But he negotiated. I don't think he wrote it out in longhand.

CARTER: No, I'm sure he didn't.

NEUSTADT: He didn't have nearly as much trouble.

CARTER: No. They weren't as intransigent then as they are now.

TRUMAN: In that case it was easy; they both wanted out.

CARTER: But it was an exciting event. It could have gone either way. And I'm not sure where it's going now. It's a basis for peace if they all ever want it badly enough. I'm afraid that Begin has decided that he's going to ignore the Camp David commitments and just confiscate the property in the West Bank. If that's his presumption, which I suspect, then it's going to be very difficult to make any progress. My judgment is that some of the Arabs are ready to negotiate, but they've got to have some indication that the Israelis will do so in good faith.

STRONG: We political scientists, probably too much of the time, studying presidential personality and character, focus on the question, how does someone's personality and character affect their four years in office? It occurred to me that maybe we make the mistake by never asking that question the other way around, which is what I want to do now. How does the experience of the Presidency really affect you personally? Does it isolate you or does it educate you in some special way, does it exhaust you or exhilarate you, or does it change you?

CARTER: While you are there?

STRONG: While you are there and now that you're looking back on it.

CARTER: Well, obviously, it's the most intensive, educational process imaginable. You have such a large number of things to learn about simultaneously, you can either avoid the learning process, or you can jump into it with enthusiasm. I did the latter. I was eager

to know about the matters that were my responsibility. I was exhilarated by it and gratified by it, even in retrospect since I didn't have two terms and was defeated. I still look on it as one of the most pleasant and gratifying experiences of my life. There was never a time that I was there that I was in despair or felt hopeless, frustrated, or, I have to say with an element of humility, that I felt inadequate. I never felt that somebody else could be doing a better job at particular times than I was. And I always did my best.

I had a few principles that guided me. One of them was not to duck an issue that I thought was important to my country for my own political benefit. I possibly carried that to excess. But I think I grew in the job and I obviously learned a lot about my country and about the world.
I learned a lot about human nature, my own and otherwise. It brought my family closer together than we'd ever been before. We shared the criticisms, the achievements, and the successes and failures. It was like a team. Even Amy was part of it. The whole family level of awareness and breadth of our experience and the multiplicity of new friendships and relationships with human beings was very large. In every way, I think it was a wonderful experience.

Now I'm perfectly at ease with myself. I don't have any regrets. I wish I had been re-elected, but that aside—it's a pretty good aside—but with that exception, I feel completely happy with the whole situation. I'm grateful that I had a chance to serve. As far as I was concerned, it didn't hurt me. I don't think it made me age, although at the end of my term, I was so exhausted from the negotiations I just hadn't had any sleep or rest at all for three or four days. I was just like any other human being would be—exhausted. But I don't think I suffered any adverse consequences. This week I ran 30 miles. Still in good shape.

YOUNG: If you had been re-elected, do you think—this is very iffy, but why not—do you think that if this conversation were being held four years hence instead of today, that we would be seeing a very different kind of administration, a different kind of Presidency in terms of its way of working?

CARTER: From Reagan's?

YOUNG: No. From yours, from your early one. I'm sure on the latter.

CARTER: I think so.

YOUNG: You think it would have been different? The second term would have been substantially different?

CARTER: I believe so. It would have been much more devoted to consolidating the changes that we made, of implementing environmental decisions and educational decisions or deregulation decisions, accommodating some of the economic matters that had evolved, taking advantage of the new energy laws. I think we would have consummated the SALT process and moved on to the next phase. I think that we would

have had success in the Middle East because I was aware and was deeply committed to it and I wouldn't have had the political constraints on me of a first term President in these areas.

I think I could have done a lot more with a statesman-like aura rather than an aura of a political opportunist or one who was running for an election. I think it would have been a much more sedate administration with not so much innovation and not so heavy an agenda. By the time we went out of office, we had already put forward our proposals on the major issues that were before us. I would have understood the Congress better. I think I would have had a better relationship with the press the last four years by not being a candidate for reelection. But I've often mentioned to Rosalynn when we're walking in the woods or something now that we would have had our share of economic and other problems, we would have had our share of confrontations and failures with the Congress, and many people would be saying, gee, if Ronald Reagan had just been elected, we would have had zero unemployment and the inflation rate would be down and so forth.

So you know I'm not misleading myself about the easy days of a second term. I think the sense of crisis and the sense of urgency and the sense of pressing on multiple issues would have been removed from me and the possibility of being a political candidate would have also been removed. But I read, I think in Truman's biography, that the last seven years that Roosevelt was in office, he never got any legislation through the Congress of any consequence. We might have been frustrated too in dealing with the Congress on a second term. I can't say. But I would have enjoyed another four years. There were some things that I would like very much to have completed, like SALT and the Mid East and energy.

YOUNG: It must be quite a frustration.

CARTER: It is. Part of life.

YOUNG: I think we've come to the end of our time.

CARTER: I figured you'd run out of questions eventually.

YOUNG: I'm sure we've learned much and still need to learn more, but our time is up, it's been a long day, and a most enlightening one for us. Mr. President, I deeply appreciate the generous time you've given to us, and the thoughtful, conscientious way you have responded to our questions and concerns as scholars in search of understanding about the Presidency in your time and ours.