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CARTER PRESIDENCY PROJECT

FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH DR. JAMES SCHLESINGER

July 19-20, 1984
Charlottesville, Virginia

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Young: We're very pleased to have this opportunity to have Dr. James Schlesinger with us for, I think, the twenty-second of these sessions in the Carter Presidency Project. The ground rules I won't repeat for the participants because everybody here is familiar with them. Just note that they have been discussed with Dr. Schlesinger. Dr. Schlesinger, I would like to start off giving a broad picture of the Carter administration, or the Carter Presidency, or Carter the President, and then I'll get down to some of the details. He registered the point with me that to understand the energy priority and the energy policy, which is very distinctive of Carter, you really have to understand something about his Presidency and what he brought or didn't bring to Washington, and then, after that—a little while spent filling us in on these perspectives—we'll get down to the energy story in some detail and what it reveals about the White House and Congressional problems or whatever of the administration. Then, maybe later this afternoon, we can come back to some larger questions. So please go ahead.

Schlesinger: Thank you. The Carter Presidency was novel, if not unique, in that it was the first Presidency of an outsider since, at least, Franklin Roosevelt. It was a very personalized approach to the Presidency. He came in on a wave of reform, after the period of Watergate. He had campaigned against Washington, its wicked ways, and he had repeatedly informed the American public that he wanted to make government as good as they were, which he made quite clear that it had not been prior to that point. I need not remind you of all that. Carter then brought in to the Presidency the freshness of his own personality, and the freshness of his views on many public issues.

Other presidents have been in Washington before—[Gerald] Ford is an obvious case in point—they have acquired associations, they have acquired positions before they arrived at the Presidency. Carter, by and large, had not. He was this fresh personality that the American public wanted, as it was in 1976, to bathe away the sins of the Watergate period. And the interesting thing about Carter was that he did not change that much, in the course of his Presidency, even in a period when the American public's taste was changing substantially. Other figures have been more pliable, adaptable, to the changing political market. Not Carter. He was and continued to be what he had been when he came in, and in part that contributed to his defeat. By 1980, the very characteristics that had made him so attractive to the American people in 1976 had become less than virtues in the eyes of the public.

Carter was a man of very strong personal moral conviction, and he did not believe, by and large, in telling the public what it wanted to hear simply because it wanted to hear it. He had to believe it too. All politicians, of course, must adapt their message to the electorate, but Carter did so much less than others—most notably, perhaps, in comparison to his successor, who is a master of adapting his message over time to his market. And there, in talking about Carter, one must appreciate this immensely fresh personality that never changed. It may be that he could not have changed that personality, that public persona, very much.

The great virtue of Jimmy Carter was this freshness that he brought to the office. The great deficiency was innocence and lack of experience that he also brought to the office. These two things went together. In his approach to public policy, the lack of experience and the freshness of the personality contribute in their different ways to reforming his approach in the early years. The freshness was reflected in the way he approached problems, which was to go in and try and find out what the right thing was to do. That does not sound as if it is, what shall I say, particularly novel or commendable, yet it is relatively novel. The average politician first assesses where everybody stands and begins to shape his own position in terms, instinctively, of building a coalition for support. Let me come back to that, incidentally, later on, that issue of coalitions. Carter didn't do it that way. Carter says, "Here is a government, here is a society whose government has not been responding to the American public's needs, here is a government that has not necessarily been acting in the appropriate and moral way. I will find that out and the straightness of my message will carry public policy with it." That's very attractive in many ways, but it is different. And it reflected, it cooperated with the lack of experience, because many of the issues that he came to as a newcomer are issues with a considerable intellectual history.

Young: Could I ask you, when you are referring to the lack of experience, in what sense? As in a lack of Washington experience? A lack of substantive experience with national problems? Or do you include both of these?

Schlesinger: I was including both of those, and each of them is separate. Let me touch on these for a moment. In terms of the lack of Washington experience, Carter approached the issues of dealing with the power centers in Washington as a southerner, as a moralist, and as a winner in a Presidential election—not necessarily in ascending or descending order of importance. He felt that he had been chosen by the American people and that it was not necessary for him to work to formulate alliances, to win the support of the Washington establishment, and the like. I've always thought that on the day that he stood up in front of the group at HUD [Housing and urban Development], if you will recall it, and suddenly announced that, "all of you ought to stop living in sin," was one of the minor turning points, amongst other things, in Washington experience. It was a very interesting remark, because it came straight from the heart. It conveyed his own disapprobation and his own tendencies to be a preacher, and above all, it seemed to me to be a turning point because in some sense the sophisticates of Washington never forgave him for that comment. If you take the *Washington Post*, whose editor was then living with his young lady friend, subsequently married, it's interesting. Hilarious. Shocking. As hilarious, there was Jimmy Carter, imposing, as it was seen, his own moral judgments on Washington. Now that's in response to the lack of feel for this town.

I contrast, for the moment, his successor, who at least nominally takes a much stronger stand in terms of Christian morality as reflected in his various addresses—of a group down in Tampa, and wherever—but he never says things that really hurt; he never says things that are pointed. He is much more the instinctive politician, whereas Jimmy Carter was the instinctive moralist making judgments about Washington. Now those little remarks, and the failure to go to the right dinners without making it very clear that it wasn't simply because he lacked the time to do so, which would have been excusable. Instead, he made it clear that he lacked the inclination to do so.

Young: As he said, "It would not have been in my nature."

Schlesinger: The only other President who made so very clear his own disinclination regarding social activities in Washington was Richard Nixon, who was not, even before the Watergate, universally loved. Now that I mention that, Carter, from a political sense, no matter how highly you regard him in terms of the moral integrity that he represented, personal integrity, made a political blunder in the way that he approached Washington, the other half. Indeed, there was even more innocence about substance than there was about the configuration of power within Washington. Much of this, as I say, reflected that belief that "I have been elected by the American people," and a naïve belief in the simple way in which authority radiated downward. He felt, I think, that he had this relationship with the American public that would transcend the need to get along with the traditional power centers.

On substance he came, by and large, with some very clear moral convictions, and very little understanding of the obstacles represented by the established interests—lethargy, inertia, and the like. This was particularly true in international relations. Carter's greatest weakness as a President was in the field of international relations, which he approached with a degree of missionary zeal and innocence that was in some sense attractive, but was bound to be unsuccessful. On domestic policies, he had a much greater feel, but once again, no depth of substantive interest.

Let me speak for just one moment about my views of these things at the time, because in the first place in that administration for some strange reasons, I was the voice of experience, or the only voice of experience. I'm not sure whether that was a good thing or a bad thing. It was a mixed virtue, because that meant that in some sense I shared the contamination of the past and therefore my views, while they were interesting, and useful, had to be viewed with suspicion because they were views from the pre-1976 past. It was pointed out to Bert [Lance] the difference between an electoral coalition and a governing coalition. I said that this administration must now start to put together a coalition for governing the nation as opposed to getting elected.

Let me say parenthetically that the Carter people were perhaps, at least in my experience, more inclined to focus back on the campaign of 1976, which was the high point of their lives, than any Presidential group that I have seen. They tended to use that campaign of '76, the enemies that they had made, the friends that they had made, the policy commitments that they had made, as a kind of talisman for subsequent governing. As I say, I talked to Bert, the man who was closest in Washington to Jimmy Carter, and a mature figure.

Part of our problem, I think—and this is a subject I would like to come back to in considerable depth later on—part of the problem of the administration was that there was not only a lack of experience, but there was this age gap that developed in the White House, particularly after Bert Lance left. The President was fond of Hamilton [Jordan], fond of Jody Powell, but they were his kids, they were his boys. In some sense they could never come in as Bert Lance could and say, "Jimmy, you are making a fool of yourself." Now Bert would not use those blunt words, but he was in a position to say to Carter, "Don't do it, Jimmy, it's a mistake," in a way that coming from Hamilton, or Jody, who were twenty years his junior—twenty-five years his junior—just didn't carry the same weight. It was for that reason that when Lance ultimately departed the administration it was a tragedy for the administration and the country, although it was inevitable.

I talked to Bert early on about the need to establish a governing coalition; an electoral coalition was fine, but that was altogether different from a governing coalition. I urged that they bring in some voices from the past, as it were, to help in the White House, even on a secondary basis, and I mentioned, amongst others, the figure of Bryce Harlow. Bryce was a former Democrat. He was much more the President's man—any President's man, he was a man of the Presidency—than he was a Republican, which he had become only during the Eisenhower administration as I recall it. I mentioned this because there was a continuing dearth of that kind of experience. Bryce Harlow had said to me once upon a time, "People think that there's something sophisticated about Congressional relations. It's only detailed knowledge. You happen to know when you call a vote that Senator X goes to the bathroom at 9:17 in the morning, and that's when you call the vote, and so on...." Just these enormously detailed bits of information as to the peculiarities. That is something that is not achieved on what I'll call the level of moral political abstraction; it's just detailed knowledge of how the systems work.

Jones: "How many people will be affected by the water projects?"

Schlesinger: Precisely. And Jimmy Carter thought that on the water projects, the morality of his position would sweep all before him, and the people were about to say, "Until this point I have represented my greedy local interests, but now that you have phrased the thing so clearly I can see that I was wrong, and I'm going to turn around my vote." That's part of the innocence.

Now, I've always felt that a Bryce Harlow type figure would have immensely strengthened the workings of the Carter White House, and I use Stu Eizenstat as an illustration. Stu was bright—very bright—thoroughly honest and objective, objective to a degree that from the standpoint of the White House may be painful. He too, like the President, wanted to do the right thing. He came at things more from an academic and analytical direction and less from a moral direction than did the President, but he wanted to do the right things. Now Stu just kept growing in that four years he was in the White House, but he would have grown faster and added another dimension if he had been teamed with somebody like Bryce Harlow who could have said at the start, "We understand how fiscal policy should be constructed, now let me tell you how you work with the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House." One of the things that the administration did early on was to alienate Al Ullman, and that sort of thing could have been avoided if they had been more experienced. I think that as impressive as Eizenstat is, he would have grown far and far more rapidly if this other dimension had been made explicitly clear to

him through the presence of somebody else in the White House like Harlow. I just use him as an illustration, somebody who was experienced.

Young: What was Lance's reaction to this advice?

Schlesinger: Lance's reaction was a Bert Lance kind of reaction which was, "I see your point ... We'd better take that into account...." That sort of thing. He was responsive, but Bert had good judgment in many of these political matters, but a loco ability to articulate analytically, and the concept of electoral coalition vs. a governing coalition was a little too highfalutin I think for Bert. But more importantly, it was not in the style of the Georgians, aside from Bert, to take that advice, because they carried over their periods of exaltation and resentments from the campaign. I had said to Bert on that occasion, "You've go to build your coalition on the basis of the solid people in the Congress." Sam Nunn, who, as some of you may know, going back to early days in Georgia, was ambivalent about the President. I mentioned very forcefully Scoop [Henry] Jackson; a point that had to be understood even more clearly when Carter subsequently made energy so much a center of his domestic program and Scoop was the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Generally speaking, they were people on the Hill who carried weight on the Hill. Russell Long was another Senator that I mentioned at that time.

The inclination of Jimmy Carter and his people was to pick up those on the Hill who were not in positions of power and who carried little influence with their colleagues, partly because they were so junior. For example, [Paul] Tsongas was one of those that the President found very attractive. Quite rightly, Tsongas is an attractive fellow. He thinks less in terms of the interstices of political relationships than he does of finding his way to the morally, if not politically, correct position. He's attractive to Carter simply because Carter saw in him some of the same tendencies. There was little inclination on the part of the Carter people to work with those on the Hill who had political weight, partly because they were going to start horse-trading, and there was a disinclination to do horse-trading.

Now, I mentioned Scoop Jackson because there was a special kind of bitterness towards Jackson that I, at that time, did not understand the full depth of. But that continued, by and large, throughout the administration, and whenever issues would come up, somebody in the Carter entourage would say, "Well, we whipped his ass in Pennsylvania," or the equivalent. Deep suspicion of his motives. Now unquestionably, Jackson had earned some resentment from Pennsylvania, but the art of politics is to overcome past resentment to work with people who will not fully share your moral and political views and judgments, but with whom you can work on specific issues. The Carter people, partly because of this initial approach, did not move in that direction.

Now, Jackson carried our freight, by and large, on the energy bill. He gave it his own twists, dropped an emphasis here, changed the character of something else, but by and large he was the administration's man carrying the bill. As you'll recall, we went right through the House of Representatives in three months, then we ran into special kinds of problems in the Senate that I can come back to later on. But Jackson was carrying all those bits of legislation that had not been put into the Finance Committee and Russell Long. And somewhere in the fall of 1977, just after the Bert Lance affair, which is very important in terms of the effectiveness of the administration,

Hamilton had an interview with somebody in the press, and the fellow in the press—this was, I think, on international affairs—says, "What about Jackson's view?" And Hamilton—this was an off the record interview that came to be published—said, "Well, Jackson, hell, that doesn't matter, we whipped his ass in Pennsylvania." Jackson was carrying it with less enthusiasm after that became public.

Now this is very important with regard to the style of the administration. I want to emphasize both sides of it, that it was enormously attractive to see Jimmy Carter in operation. There was something in that freshness and the willingness to look at things with the eyes of an almost youthful morality—"This is wrong, we shouldn't do it"—combined with all of the costs that go with that youthful moralizing. And that, I think, determined the way in which the administration operated. It was the reason, I think, that the Bert Lance affair was so costly, because the press early on took a dislike to Jimmy Carter. I never understood fully why that was the case, but the fact is, it was the case.

Partly it was because Carter was unlucky. Carter was the last of the Watergate Presidents in the sense that the press, which had gradually become more and more feisty and was engaged in the disciplining of Presidents from the time of Lyndon Johnson and rising to a peak under Nixon and falling away slightly, but only slightly, under Ford, was an instrument for discipline—the self-image of the press as an instrument for Presidents was continued strongly under Jimmy Carter. He was the last. And when the Bert Lance affair occurred, the press just fell on him, beyond the merits of the case. The administration handled it badly. That's something I can come back to later on, but I think that that's very interesting and incidentally, I think that my perspective on that may be somewhat different from some of the other people that you have interviewed.

In closing the initial comments, let me just stress this freshness of approach. It is the reason the American people responded to him clearly in 1976. A man who was inclined to say the right thing right off, without consulting with twenty-two thousand people about how his words would be filtered through to the American public—they wanted that. They didn't want these carefully hedged statements that are the major fruit of Washington politics. There is a reason, though, why Washington politics proceeds in that manner, and that is because that, save in extraordinary periods, is the best way of governing. And as those four years proceeded, and the American public's taste began to revert to normalcy, to borrow our friend [Warren G.] Harding's term, the freshness and innocence of Jimmy Carter lost its appeal to the public.

If you look through the administration, I think that you'll find that much of what the administration did was a reflection of the oddity of the background of the administration. It was an outside administration. It had come in response to Watergate, at least rhetorically engaged in the cleaning up of Washington, not to be too unduly influenced by all of these power groupings of the past. And the policies of the administration from a tax system that was, what was the phrase, "a disgrace to humankind." The Panama Canal, which to Carter was a great political success—but his motivation was not clear, no clear-minded notion in regards to the politics of Central America, but righting a wrong, as he frequently said. The energy policy was clearly along those lines. We will reform the Civil Service—all of these things reflected the freshness of approach of people coming into the Washington institutional morass, looking around and saying, "Many of these institutions are not working very well, but even more importantly, they are not

morally correct." And if you look across the board, you can see this wave of reform that he was inclined to take on.

Young: A lot of this is reminiscent, of course, of when he established his political career and what he did in his approach to Georgia politics. He did not come into the Statehouse, or Washington, full of "corruption." He came in from outside, made his own way as a do-it-yourself Governor and outside the establishment.

Schlesinger: And so there it was. So it winds up, I think having the strengths and the weaknesses of that particular position. I contrast this, for example, well, to a Roosevelt, who comes into office and has a good deal of political rhetoric on this, that, and the other thing. But the only test of what he did politically was pragmatic—the only test. Or contrast [Ronald] Reagan, who in the first year of his Presidency achieved one very legislative accomplishment. Carter's accomplishments were spread all over. Cumulatively they're impressive, his domestic accomplishments. But he took on too many things and scattered his efforts. And that's because he was a reformer, an instinctive reformer, not a calculating reformer.

McCleskey: I know Chuck Jones wants to get on to the energy question, but talking about Carter as a personality, I'd be interested in your first encounters with him and how you got together with him and how you perceived him initially.

Young: This is a question about your introduction to this administration and how you got involved with it. You were meeting with Lance on significant matters in December and January?

Schlesinger: I think that once again I've got to go back for two minutes and paint the larger picture. For whatever reason, there was mutual hostility between Carter and the press, and the picture of Jimmy Carter that you get from the press is just plumb wrong. From my experience, Jimmy Carter was a kind, considerate, warm, attractive man. The picture you get from the press is cold and mean, and just plumb wrong. Now it's partly that those who were close to him were treated more as he felt about them, and that those who were more distant were treated more as he felt about them. He did not feel the need to express continuing admiration for members of the press corps that were doing him in, but a sound politician, or a strategic politician, would have done so. I found him, from the first, a very attractive individual.

I got to know him in 1976. I had made a trip to China and I returned from China in September. During the time I was in China, Mao Zedong had died and I was given the position of being the prominent American representative. We had not normalized our relations with China; we had a liaison office over there but the Chinese were keeping them at arms' length. And because of the disagreements that I had had with [Henry] Kissinger and others during the Ford administration, about the issues of détente, I had been embraced by the Chinese as a policymaker, and I was lifted up by the Chinese. Sometime after my return I had a call from Jimmy Carter asking me to come down to Georgia and speak to him about China and other foreign policy matters.

Young: This was during the campaign?

Schlesinger: This was during the campaign, and indeed I do not recall any conversations with him on the phone. We spent four or five hours talking about the world scene, about which he was not knowledgeable. As some of you may know, I am an old NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] buff, and Carter, along with announcing that we were going to withdraw our forces from Korea, was talking about reducing forces in Europe. I spent a good deal of my time pressing the need for a continued American deployment in Europe, and a gradual improvement of the conventional capabilities of the alliance. About the withdrawal of forces from Korea—well, I did not particularly think that was a good idea, but I was not about to throw myself on my sword. I thought that the future of the United States was critically dependant on the preservation of NATO. It does not depend as critically, to say the least, on Korean issues. We spent about five hours together, and we just hit it off splendidly.

Young: Was a role in his administration on his mind at all? Was he looking at you for that?

Schlesinger: I presume that it occurred somewhere along during that.

Young: Zbig [Zbigniew Brzezinski] was principally his foreign policy person in the campaign, wasn't he?

Schlesinger: Oh yes, well, I don't know that side of things. I don't know how they organized the campaign. And I tried to keep myself—I'd taken the position during the whole campaign, anyone wants to speak to me, I'm happy to do so, on either side. Of course, I'd worked, what shall I say—I had been a strong emotional supporter of Scoop Jackson, with whom I'd worked very closely during the Nixon-Ford years, for the nomination. I'm not sure that the Carter people understood how much of a Jackson booster I had been, because I wasn't involved in Scoop's campaigns. I think that politicians are enormously important in American life, but I am not a politician. Whatever one calls these in-and-outers, government servants or some harsher terms maybe. But I don't regard myself as a politician. Anyhow, that was the meeting with Jimmy Carter.

Thompson: Were any of the outsiders who made the crack—I guess it was Jordan—that the administration would fail if either [Cyrus] Vance or Brzezinski joined involved in your visit at all?

Schlesinger: I didn't meet them. Oh, I'm sorry—Jody Powell was on the plane. Now, the President took me to the airport in his car. It's not a hell of a long ride from his house to the airport. Jody Powell was on the plane, so I got to know him—aside from that, no one was involved.

Thompson: Just to press one more step, do you think because you were a little bit less of a joiner than either Brzezinski or Vance—not a loner, but closer to a loner than they were—that was a bond with Carter?

Schlesinger: Quite possibly. Quite possibly. There was a good deal of feeling that there was a degree of personality affinity—that's different from personal affinity—and that affinity remained, by and large, throughout the administration and subsequent to it.

Jones: But this conversation didn't result in a discussion of a specific spot, even in a general way?

Schlesinger: This was September; the fellow had to win the election. There was a big hullabaloo that started in December that I can get into if you're interested. I'm not sure how much you're interested in the Carter Presidency and how much you're interested in my own personal history.

Young: The two got connected at some point in December.

Schlesinger: The sublime and the ridiculous. In December there was a good deal of fuss about making me Secretary of Defense once again. When he called all these people down to Georgia—it was, I think, in the Governor's Mansion in Atlanta that they had these meetings—and I can't remember whether there was one or two meetings, but there was a good deal of fuss about that. And in view of the fact that I was regarded as a hardliner—Jimmy Carter had a strong personal inclination, *personal*, I repeat, inclination, to make me Secretary of Defense again. He thought that we had this chemical bond between us.

But that was not consistent either with the Democratic platform or the policies that were being espoused by the administration, and least of all with the response of the great bulk of the Democrats who had supported Carter, who rose in anger with press leaks and that sort of thing. There was a great deal of support for me from the [John] Stennises and [John] McClellans and Jacksons and Nunns of this world, and a little bit of liberal support as well. But about the time that he was making up his mind on that there was—I don't know this from the inside; you'd have to talk to somebody else—there was all this talk about what they were going to do with me, and I had been chairman of the attractive thing from the standpoint of the true Carterites, but ultimately I got a call from Carter in December asking me to take over the whole energy portfolio. That's how I got to know Carter.

How did my relations with Carter change, or how did my assessment of Jimmy Carter change? When I had thought of Carter, who was immensely intelligent, a very quick mind—once again not altogether an asset because it encouraged him to believe that simply by sitting down with a pile of books, a pile of briefing papers, a few aides, that he would learn enough about a problem to develop his own personalized solution for that problem. Quickness of mind is not always an asset in the Presidency. It encouraged him to get involved in more activities than he should have. But at that time, in September of 1976, I thought that Jimmy Carter had this immensely quick intelligence, and that he would quickly learn—reasonably quickly learn—what he needed to know for the job, because he seemed to have judgment and quickness of mind. That may have been my own self-flattery because he responded so well to the advice that I tendered. But in any event that was my view early on, and it did not change in the…let's say, for the first six or seven months that I knew him.

After a while it became clear to me, regrettably, that the lack of experience that I had initially undervalued just was very important, and could not be rapidly repaired even in the Presidency. And as the years wound along, I found that this quickness of mind, this ability to put things together very quickly, just wasn't enough. And that, I think, is the chief change in my attitude

towards Jimmy Carter. He remained throughout, in his personal characteristics, remarkably unchanging. After the Lance affair, after a year in the Presidency, he lost his self-confidence, which was an immensely important change, but aside from that his day-to-day operational style did not change that much.

Young: During this period when a charter was being developed, did Charles Kirbo ever talk to you on behalf of the President, or did you have any contact?

Schlesinger: I had vague contacts with Charles Kirbo but he was not—

Young: He was not discussing with you possibilities of employment, things of this kind?

Schlesinger: No, and that's an interesting—well, I'll come back to that later, I want to keep the conversation reasonably—

Jones: I'm anxious to get on to the development of the energy program, the 90 days.

Thompson: I was going to ask one before that.

Jones: Well, go ahead.

Schlesinger: Before you ask, let me make one point clear. My discussions with Carter, curiously enough, in the period I was in the White House, tended to be more on other issues than they were on energy per se. Energy tended to be handled separately, it was reasonably cut-and-dried. I never availed myself of the opportunity to impress on issues outside my own charges, responsibilities to the degree that I could have, partly because I had a good deal on my plate already, and partly because if I had done so I would have stirred up antagonism elsewhere.

Carter, early on, asked me to participate in some group that was evaluating the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. This would have been the first month of the administration when I was sitting in the warehouse. It was chaired by Fritz [Walter] Mondale. I went to a meeting and said in effect, "Don't misunderstand the agency and don't lacerate it." And I, for some reason or other, was never invited back to the meeting, although I suspect that Carter thought I was involved in that review of the agency, because he asked my advice on who was to be made CIA director and the like. In any event, much of my discussion with Jimmy Carter was outside of that area, much less than I could have involved myself in. In energy matters, by and large, he tended to take materials from me, read them, and we'd talk about them for half an hour, and he would always say, "Well, go ahead and do what you want to do"—on substance, not on the general approach.

So I must defer your questions, but I think this is important, once again, to the general style of Jimmy Carter and the Carter administration. That was his desire for comprehensive solutions, which was a reflection, I think, of this freshness, innocence, lack of experience. You don't get a comprehensive solution for the Palestinian problem—you probably don't get a comprehensive energy plan, either. I kept urging him not to fulfill his promise of 90 days for an energy plan, but he said, "I made that commitment," and he wouldn't let the administration or me off the hook. I

thought that was a mistake, because it gave us too little time to polish elements of the program, or to do the necessary stroking of various interest groups. I will come back to that later on, but the point that I want to make now is that he had a proclivity for a comprehensive energy plan, or a comprehensive solution in the Middle East, or comprehensive tax reform.

He was a man who thought that moral insight would sweep away resistance, and therefore he kept too much on his plate. There is only a limited amount of political capital in any administration, and if you want to reform everything from the tax system to energy programs to vast changes in the Middle East, revise our approach to SALT [Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty], you're taking on more than the political capital of any administration can sustain.

Jones: There was one question preliminary to the development of that energy program. I wanted to ask you about the Lance thing. You didn't say directly, but I drew the implication from what you said that the Lance affair affected the White House view of Congress. Now the standard interpretation is that so seriously affected their relationship with the press—the President himself said so in his book, and others, and Jody Powell in his book, and so forth—but did it also harden the picture of Congress that this was some kind of retaliation by people up there or that it was unfair?

Schlesinger: It was fairly simple. In that period, Carter went from something like seventy percent public approval to thirty percent public approval from roughly mid-August to mid-October, late October, and it's a very astonishing descent in terms of public approval, but brought on itself by the administration. Those fellows on Capitol Hill are nothing if they are not alert to the degree of political support that a President has. If the Lance affair had not offered as much resistance—it is only in that sense that changed the President's position. He no longer was able to be the dominant political figure in Washington that he could have been, that he was in the first six months of his Presidency. Only in that sense.

Jones: And so that's a self-confidence comment, too.

Schlesinger: The self-confidence is different. Jimmy Carter, I think, regarded himself as a man of destiny, in that he had been chosen by destiny—or the Almighty—to be President of the United States. He had these responsibilities to take on, of fixing the tax system, fixing the Civil Service, and so forth. He came into Washington immensely confident of his own abilities with the idea that a good mind, a quick mind, and the right moral cast, would sweep all before him. By the fall of 1977 he was in serious political trouble, barely able to keep his nose above water. He was very feisty about that. I remember crossing West Executive Avenue with him one day as members of the press corps were out there shouting to him, "What about Bert Lance? Are you going to accept his resignation?" and things of that sort, and Carter just walked straight ahead, and he turned to me and said, "Vultures." Which reflected his general view toward the press.

Incidentally, a President should like journalists; he may not respect them, but he should like them, it's very helpful to him. Carter did not like them that all. He was in serious political trouble nine months into his Presidency, and by the beginning of his second year, there was a kind of constant drumbeat of criticism. The loss of the initial respect that he had enjoyed on Capitol Hill

had, I think, led to doubts in Jimmy Carter that indeed his initial belief, that he was this man of destiny, was true. He'd lost self-confidence. You could see in his public performance.

Young: Just to push one more step the business of this early relationship, the press at the time said both things: one, that there had been a rapport as you described it; and two, that you were one of the few who had had experience that he had turned to. There was also talk about the fact that, whatever post you occupied, you would have a role in foreign policy; he'd consult you on that. Did he consult you on other things? Was this role fulfilled?

Schlesinger: No, the role was not fulfilled, save in minor respects. We would characteristically meet—I am an early riser and he is an early riser—characteristically I would drop into his office on Saturday morning when he had nothing to do at around seven o'clock in the morning or six thirty. There is not a great deal of competing activity at that hour of the morning, and we would just chat about one thing and another, and you'll remember that early on we took a trip down to the Gulf Coast to visit an energy platform, an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico, and so on. We just continued to have a relationship characterized by a high degree of rapport. But I had decided that this was one of those things an administration tends to advertise, because I had a fair degree of public support, so the President or his people around would say, "Well, we'll turn to Jim Schlesinger," as a way of indicating that he was drawing widely. To some extent, therefore, it was a PR phenomenon. To some extent, as I indicated, however, it was also a real phenomenon. And early in the administration, you will recall, somebody must have told you about how we had these soirees in the family theater there in the White House basement? You know all about that?

Young: We don't know *all* about it—

Schlesinger: You know more than you want to know. Anyway, Rachel [Schlesinger] and I attended a soiree on foreign policy. Mind you, my views on these issues are reasonably conservative, some have said, unreasonably conservative. But Cy Vance talked and the President sat off on the right. It was very much like a Sunday school class. The President was kind of the instructor and Cy was his brightest pupil, and I was simply appalled by the things that were said at that session. I'm going to strike all of this out of these notes later on. I was appalled at what was said, because of the naïveté. I've talked about freshness of approach as an attractive feature, but at this point it simply was naïve about the international scene. And I came out of that meeting, Rachel was with me, there was Pat Caddell, and I said, "Pat, this is an absolute disaster. If the administration approaches foreign policy on the basis roughly of what was said in that room, it is going to have a catastrophe on its hands. I just don't understand anything."

Well, I decided early on that I did not want to get that deeply involved in foreign policy matters. I just had chats with the President, but I wasn't going to get involved in a sense of lobbying one thing or another with him. Jimmy Carter was an immensely naïve man. This goes along with the attractiveness, the moral fervor. That moral fervor was useful on the domestic scene, but in very few respects. I recall when we were flying back from the Gulf Coast, we had a conversation and he turned to me with this enthusiasm, this moral enthusiasm that he had, and he said, "It is my hope that in my administration I will be able to put our relations with the Soviet Union on the same basis as they are with England." He was using the term "England," not "the UK" or "the British," and I was somewhat aghast. I said, "Well, Mr. President, that isn't likely to be possible.

You've got to understand that there are political and cultural things that we share in common with the British and there are ideological rivalries that we have with the Soviet Union. There is just no possibility that you can put our relations with the Russians on the same basis as with the UK." That, I think, in some ways, reflected the worst of the naïveté of Carter's approach to international relations.

We talked that day, incidentally, of his attitudes towards the Horn of Africa. It was very characteristic, reflected later at the time of the Afghan troubles in 1979, that he was—had been—pressed hard by Brzezinski and by others including myself to be aware of the effects of improvement of the Soviet position on the Horn. He said, and this was very characteristic of him, "Of course I would like to help the Somalis and I would be prepared to use force, but what can we do? They were the ones who invaded Ethiopia." Now this is at a different level from what I called the naïveté about putting our relations with the Soviets on the same basis as with the British, but it is a far removal from realpolitik. It is a traditional and [Woodrow] Wilsonian view that there are national frontiers and those who cross those national frontiers are wrong, and they cannot be rewarded, and those who are invaded may have their defects, but in that issue they are right.

Now this came through very strongly in the case of Afghanistan. In the case of Afghanistan, all of the damage to the American position or the Western position had occurred in 1978 when [Mohammad] Daoud was overthrown, and so what occurred in 1979 with the movement of Soviet forces in country merely confirmed a political alteration that had occurred a year earlier. But did we respond in 1978? No. That was the time the damage was done to the American system alliances, the American strategic posture in that region of the world. But we didn't respond to that. No one had crossed a frontier. A year later, there was damn little that we could do, but we made a great fuss because a frontier was crossed. Now this is at a different level of naïveté: this is a traditional American belief that "thou shalt not cross a frontier." I don't think that. I myself don't, as you can see, embrace this set of beliefs as the basis of foreign policy.

Thompson: Could I have one more last follow-up? [Paul] Nitze said when Carter would be asked, "Who are your advisors?" he'd always say, "[Paul] Warnke and Nitze." He bracketed his advisors early on, and I guess the question in trying to understand Carter, the question that I have, is, were you there, and did that limit your role, simply as a political hostage, somebody who established his strength in a certain segment, say, the Jackson segment, or were you there because, as in a way happened after Afghanistan, were you there because of the other side of Carter? In other words, in addition to the statement about the "inordinate feat of Communism" in the Notre Dame speech, did Carter have a kind of instinctive awareness that there was something morally wrong, or fundamentally a threat with the Soviet Union? Did that come through to you?

Schlesinger: I think so. Some of that public discussion of Nitze and Warnke was for show, particularly the Nitze case, and my relations, as you know, deteriorated reasonably rapidly after the administration came into power. Nitze became more and more deeply involved with the Committee on Present Danger, and was reasonably quickly established that he did not have much influence with the President. Warnke much less so in this respect; they continued to regard fairly highly Warnke's views. I was somewhat in that same category, kind of public broadcasting way of generating political support, particularly with the Jackson people, but generally conservative

people throughout the country. But it was something of the latter as well. Jimmy Carter was never, never, a man who would overlook the moral deficiencies or even a clear political threat from the Soviet Union. Many people on the left are inclined to rationalize such things. Carter would not do that. As my account of Jimmy Carter with regard to the Horn of Africa indicates, he somehow knew that what the Soviets were doing there was not going to be useful to the United States.

And one has got to remember that most of Carter's views about the world that he expressed publicly came to him after he left the office of Governor of Georgia. Most of them. He became thus educated on foreign policy problems in the period of the high water mark of the U.S. public reaction against Vietnam, against American involvements overseas, and the like. But, beneath that education of Jimmy Carter at that later date in his life, in his later forties, there was that naval officer somewhere underneath all of that. If you scratched Jimmy Carter, you would, I think, ultimately rip away all of this education in a very bad period of American history, and you would find that naval officer. He was never—one must remember that Jimmy Carter was never an ideologue. He was a moralizer, which is sometimes the same thing, but he was not an ideologue. If the Russians misbehaved, he was prepared to call a spade a spade.

He did not approach politics as some do, say as Paul Warnke does, the most important thing in the world is for the United States to get along with the Soviet Union. These two nuclear powers could come to blows and nuclear war would be utterly devastating, therefore we must move to patch up the relationship, including, because of this dominating role of the nuclear balance and the relationship between the two superpowers, we must overlook lesser things. That is approaching international politics from the standpoint of an ideological element in which you downplay or ignore certain things. Carter was not that way. The Russians mistreated [Natan] Sharansky, he would shout about human rights—to the great regret of those who were on his vessel but who were inclined to be liberal ideologues, in terms of our relations with the Soviet Union.

Young: Shall we talk a little bit about the energy policy development and the establishment of your department?

Schlesinger: Sure.

Jones: Well, I'm very interested in this topic. Here you are, having been appointed a potential Secretary, without a department, under constraints set by the President. I'm interested in some of the nitty-gritty details of how that got determined as a priority in a Presidency who's criticized for not setting priorities; how that got established as a priority—it hadn't been discussed that much in the campaign—how you went about setting up a staff under those circumstances, again under constraints the President had set for the White House staff generally, limiting the number of people, or at least reducing what Ford had had, what Nixon had had; and then the whole matter of the 90 days and the nature of that restriction, the consultation, the so-called secrecy—I'm interested in all those aspects.

Schlesinger: That's a day's discussion in itself. Let me think about that. Well, let me just start, I'll wander around and check off various points that I have not covered. How did this acquire the

degree of prominence that it did? I think that you've got to go back to the kind of man that Jimmy Carter was, again, and this is sort of the background. He was a product—he thinks more than Hyman Rickover thinks of the Rickover system, and he was an engineer. He was an engineer who believed—correctly, of course—that the world would run out of not only crude oil in particular, but all fossil fuels. I can recall one time—this will have anecdotal relevance here—that Carter had said to me that if the world had ten barrels of oil, that is, one tenth of the world's oil availability, that we've already gone through one and a half of those barrels and by 1990 we will have gone through four out of ten of those barrels and so forth—I wish you'd get me some numbers on that, which I then could proceed to work on. I had no objection to that, I found that sort of interesting myself, but it's showing how his mind worked on those things. He had been told some time or other in one of those Rickover lectures that we're running out of oil. Now Rickover used this as a promotional aspect, which was something that did not register on Carter and he—all he knew is we are running out of crude oil, right? And he approached these problems as an engineer.

And also with this thing that I referred to toward the close, of a "comprehensiveness," he had come there to solve problems. Now how did this acquire the prominence that it did? I don't know. There were always people who were working on Carter during the campaign, and more working on Carter about energy issues had gone on in the campaign than was apparent on the surface. For example, Carter had a very high regard for Ralph Nader, and Nader was all over him on energy issues, most importantly on nuclear power. David Freeman had been working on those things. Carter had pulled in a fair amount of business support because of his promise to a number of people in the energy industry, including that fellow from Carolina Power & Light, Shearon Harris, that he was going to solve the energy problems. His approach to these problems didn't make Shearon Harris very happy. But we didn't know that at the time. He had a fair amount of business support in that period. He had made a number of commitments, some general and some specific. He had made, for example, a general commitment that he would never, never abolish price controls on oil, and he had made a very specific commitment to the Governor of Texas and the Governor of Oklahoma that he would get rid of price controls on natural gas, both of which he ultimately changed on.

Carter was an engineer, and he was something of a moralizer in regard to energy. He just thought we were too damn wasteful, and he believed that if you only could explain to people how damn wasteful we were we could half-solve that energy problem. It is only in part an economic or supply consideration, that conservation is the cornerstone of the energy program. It was as much a moral conviction that we should be provident in our use of the resources that have been placed by the Almighty on this earth. Now he didn't go around waving his arms about the concept of stewardship in relation to the energy problem, but I think he felt it quite deeply.

Jones: It was the moral equivalent of war.

Schlesinger: I don't—that's interesting. I went to Harvard myself. I remember William James' phrase and about five or six days before his speech, I was interviewed by—who was that journalist who was so close to—Nancy Dickerson, whatever her subsequent name was [Whitehead]. I was interviewed by her. I used the phrase "moral equivalent of war" and that's kind of a thing that fetched Jimmy Carter, because he just happened to watch the program, and of

course the phrase became abused later on, was misunderstood. This was not war; this was the search for a moral equivalent of the spirit that seizes a public during wartime. And the phrase was misunderstood, and particularly misunderstood by the program's critics. The *Wall Street Journal* referred to it as "MEOW" and that caught on. You're quite right, the fact that that phrase captivated him showed his deepest beliefs. I don't know how the program acquired the prominence that it did. I think it was partly because I seemed to be the one who could get things done in Washington.

As you'll recall, we had the natural gas crisis about one and a half days after the administration started, and we slammed an emergency natural gas bill through the Congress in about three weeks time. And partly because of the natural gas crisis itself, it sort of pulled energy problems to center stage, partly because we'd accomplished something, I think it gradually got elevated to a higher level. It appealed. This was an area in which he was getting some things done and it appealed to his moral sense, it appealed to his sense of history. It appealed to his sense as an engineer. And gradually it floated up to a degree of prominence that would not have gathered in the election itself.

From the first that I talked to Carter, I found there on energy problems a degree of moral enthusiasm that I think transcended some other areas, and I suspect that it was due in part to his background with Rickover.

McCleskey: Let me make sure I'm understanding this correctly.

Schlesinger: Well, I'm not sure that there's anything that clear to understand correctly.

McCleskey: Well, this is a negative. Am I to conclude then that your own effort to educate him and to elevate energy to this level was not responsible—that you were not working with him to bring him to this level?

Schlesinger: No, as a matter of fact, I don't want to overstate this but there was some tendency to try to restrain him. He was that way, by the way. He tended to go into these periods of enthusiasm, even of exaltation, and something, some public policy issue became dominant in his mind. I think that happened for reasons that were partly explainable by his character, partly by the circumstances of the time, and partly fortuitous.

On some things, I was attempting to restrain him. For example, he had been worked on very hard on the issue of breeder reactors, as the epitome of evil in the energy area; and he was being worked on not only by the outsiders, the Ralph Naders and the like, but by people in the NSC [National Security Council], including Zbig Brzezinski, who was simply passing on the judgments of Nancy Kupman Matthews. He just got himself, in my judgment, into a hell of a mess, by reversing policies of the administration. I tried to discourage his movement in that direction. Not that I had any strong feeling favorable to breeder. I had been, during the Nixon years, on both sides of that issue. I had opposed it when I was at the old Bureau of the Budget, and when I became chairman of the AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] I was the program's chief sponsor. But I looked upon the Clinch River breeder reactor as a marginal item. So I wasn't concerned about his decision to attempt to stop the funding for that reactor, as much as his

approach. It should have been stopped on cost-effectiveness grounds, as it ultimately would be. But he tended to see this as the single most important source of nuclear proliferation, and that if he were able to scotch the breeder reactors that somehow or other all of the problems with nuclear proliferation would fall into line.

He was unduly interested, I think, in nuclear power from the perspective of the Presidency. He would talk at some point about this tendency that he had of making himself prominent on issues in a way that earned the enmity of special interest groups. The whole nuclear industry just went on hating Jimmy Carter from 1977 on and it need not have been that way. That is an illustration. Another illustration was the attempt to stretch out that 90-day commitment. I should say in passing that I was not making speeches during this period of, "Oh Mr. President, you're investing too much time in other things," and so forth. It's quite useful, or seemed to be useful, to have the President that interested in my area of responsibility, so that while I was attempting to restrain him on specific matters, the fact that he had increasingly invested this enthusiasm was not something that I had any objection to—save when it caused me problems.

Thompson: Was his substantive knowledge of energy greater than his knowledge of other matters?

Schlesinger: Oh, yes, generally speaking—I might go into some anecdotes here. Let me, if I can break in, since this thing has to have some spontaneity rather than be pre-organized—let me try and deal with these problems of Carter pushing himself to the front, getting himself publicly identified with a decision, and reflecting a very high degree of expertise on his part in many of these domestic areas. I earlier indicated my feeling, never even after three or four years dissipated, that Carter was very naïve about foreign policy, but this didn't apply on domestic. He was sometimes naïve about the political process, but with regard to the substance of domestic policy, I doubt that we have had anybody to compare with him. Nixon, for example, was far better on the political process, but he didn't care a damn about the details of domestic policy, including his own programs.

Carter was just terribly involved, and I was going to tell you this story of going one day to the White House, (I think I had left the White House by that time) and Carter had in the heads of the four American automobile firms on the question of the environment. Now Carter was a convinced environmentalist, and made some errors there that came from his background in Georgia, most particularly because he had worked in a relatively benign environment in Georgia, in which he could get the environmentalists and the industrialists to sit down and work out a compromise with each other. He thought that he could do that on the national scene without understanding the virulence of the argument on the national scene and the virulence of some of the participants. But he was, as I say, a convinced and in many ways an effective supporter of the environment.

He sat down, in the President's chair, and there were the four heads of the industry there, and they had some professor from Michigan who was their source of knowledge on the specifics of automobile pollution, who was sitting off in the corner. And they were all prepared, they thought, to talk to him. Well, Carter knew ten times as much as any one of the four automobile company presidents about the problems represented by the atmospheric pollution by

automobiles. He talked learnedly about the Japanese system for whatever it is, catalytic control, I forget what it is. It was an impressive tour de force. And these four presidents really had nothing that they could say with regard to the subject that he was talking about. So they kept turning to this professor to make the response, in effect, for the automobile industry, because he was the only one there who was on Carter's level of substantive knowledge. I was sitting down that the far end of the table, I was really impressed by the tour de force. At the same time I kept shaking my head. What in God's name is the President of the United States sitting up hour after hour, day after day, reading these briefing papers on various methods to control automobile pollution? It just is not a subject that demands that much Presidential attention.

He should have, as other Presidents would, come in and made a speech, "America wants a clean atmosphere; we are going to give it to them; I want your help and I want your help as quickly as possible. I understand that you have made this decision with regard to pollution control in your industry—other countries have gone another way, Japan has gone a way that I had some attraction to, but that's over and done with. What we want to do is make this thing work. And will you help?" That's what a President says. And that that point he turns to his environmental expert, whoever was the head of the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]—it's gone out of my mind for the moment—and says, "Carry on the conversation from here on," in effect—and not get involved. But Carter must have spent literally months studying up on environmental issues. Now I am an environmentalist and I worked on these issues over the years, but the President of the United States doesn't have time for that.

Jones: Among other effects, it has the effect of putting down the auto presidents as well, because they don't know as much.

Schlesinger: Yes, they were put down on issues that were of great academic interest, but irrelevant. At that stage you couldn't have the industry reverse itself and go over to the Japanese method, whatever it was, of control. Why spend the time harassing these fellows who knew not a damn thing on the subject as to why they had made a decision that was by then irreversible? What I'm trying to do is respond to that question.

Indeed, Carter was immensely knowledgeable about a number of these domestic subjects, and believed that knowledge, specific knowledge, gave him more political authority than was actually the case. It was not only on domestic issues; one was impressed with the degree of command that Carter acquired, for example, about the details of the SALT process. Other Presidents haven't known that much about it. Most of the Presidents have known very little about the details of arms control negotiations. Carter drove himself to this. Now he paid. The good side of it was, he was immensely knowledgeable about many of these things, more knowledgeable than any President we've seen; even in the foreign policy area he gradually acquired substantive knowledge that compensates for his abiding innocence on the motivation of foreign leaders. But he paid a hell of a price for it. The downside is that he wasted a great deal of time mastering briefs that no one else was that interested in. He ignored the political side of the Presidency. And what is the most important task of a President is to be a leader, have the public follow you.

The energy speech that he first gave, I had hoped that we could get him to give a brief but inspiring address. Instead, as you'll recall, the speech—we got down into an immense welter of

details about what he was proposing, which the public really didn't care about. I worked to swing him in that direction, and I discovered something very interesting about Jimmy Carter, which you've probably heard from others, is that he abhorred rhetoric. Whenever we would ask him to inspire the public, he believed that that was in some sense a reprehensible thing to do, and that it was much better to provide the public with the facts, the substance, and that the public, provided with the substance, would swing into the right direction.

He said in that address in 1979 that he was a manager, he wasn't leading, he was managing the government. There's a good deal of truth in that. But there's even more truth in the fact that he was just not a natural leader. He did not like the arts of the leader. He liked having people follow him, but the arts that are employed by political figures to get people to follow them he thought were somehow or other a waste of time at best and corrupting at worst.

Jones: In the development of the energy program, I thought you said earlier that he didn't get so much involved in the details as you were developing it. Could you say something about your meetings with him?

Schlesinger: Oh, I'm sorry. Once again, I may have given a—he did not squabble a great deal about the details, but we would send him briefing books covering ten issues, and he would read them with some care. And he would understand them reasonably well. Jimmy Carter's problem was never understanding specific issues, it was putting a composite together, a mosaic, and that would cost him most, with the greatest force, in the foreign policy area, in which he had no intuitive feel about how other leaders in other nations might react to what he was doing. But in general, he was much more of a detail man. When you sent him briefing books, he would read them, he would sign off on this "JC Approved." So I was not suggesting that he did not go into detail to a much greater degree than Presidents normally do; it was that he did not spend a great deal of time saying, "I don't agree with that, you'll have to convince me," and so on.

Young: May I ask you this question in a different way? Some interpretations of him to the effect that it was very hard for Carter—Carter did not easily delegate authority. Now you were in a relationship, as a senior public person, on a matter that was dear to the President's heart and about which he was very knowledgeable—interested in the details and knowledgeable about the details. In your experience, working with him on this—in an area high on the Presidential priority and also personal enthusiasm, is that the way you would put it? Did he delegate?

Schlesinger: No, he did not delegate well, but I was an exception.

Young: How do you explain this?

Schlesinger: *Sui generis*. I, unlike most of the people in the Cabinet, had a relationship of sorts that went back before, a relationship, in his mind, of some degree of intimacy. We had this rapport that I spoke of earlier. He tended to regard me as a universal authority, he granted me more knowledge and authority on energy matters than was warranted, because I had impressed him very much on policy matters. Once he decided that somebody knew what he was doing, and this was very rare, he tended to give considerable latitude. In general that was not the case. I was a halfway house between a very small group of Georgians and a very large group of outsiders

and others, and that was reflected in my position inside of the White House as opposed to most members of the government, who were off there in the departments and agencies. I was sort of half involved and half not involved. I was half a Presidential assistant dealing with matters other than energy, but I was not a full Presidential assistant.

I caused a great deal of concern both during my stay in the White House and subsequent to it, because of this aberrational position in which I was placed. And after I left the White House, there was some concern, some attention, I should say, in the White House, to the routinization and normalization of Jim Schlesinger, who had been in an unusual position, in order to make me a more normal Cabinet member, which to a large extent occurred as the passage of years took place after I left the White House. Now—

Mrs. Schlesinger: I remember that you insisted as a condition of your appointment that you would be in the White House for that six-month period, and the geographical proximity to the Oval Office was important to the work you had before you—

Schlesinger: I think that's very good and quite important. Real estate and proximity is everything in Washington, and I had agreed—the President had originally said, "Well, we're going to set up a Cabinet department; you'll be responsible for the formation of legislation for the department and can I make you head of the Federal Energy Agency?" I said, "No, I am not going to become head of the Federal Energy Agency; I would be a White House assistant with an office near the White House," and so forth. Since he wanted me in the administration he granted these things. It gave me the proximity that I needed during that period during which we were formulating energy policy, but since we only had 90 days, and even Jimmy Carter was obligated to pay attention to all of the normal routines of the Presidency, he was not in a position to spend an immense amount of time dealing with the energy problem. Therefore, he did much more, really, than he should have done in regard through briefing books and the like.

Young: In what did the delegation consist? You said you were an exception; how did you sense it and in what did it consist? Was it a matter of just leaving the details up to you? Was it a question of deferring to your advice?

Schlesinger: Well, for example, the national energy plan was written by my staff. We sent it over to him, he read it through; think he made a comment or two and that was it. He was just pleased that it was all out of the way in 91 days—he gave me a one-day extension.

Young: But he did not rewrite it?

Schlesinger: He did not rewrite it, no. And I had a degree of intimacy with Carter, as I say, a halfway house. I had some of Bert Lance's capacity to say to him, "No, sir, you shouldn't do that." Not as much, even, as his "boys," Jordan and Powell. But I was much more Jimmy Carter's age, and therefore was more in a position, in some sense, of a peer—in some sense. Even thought he was immensely fond of and close to Hamilton and Jody, in this sense they were not contemporaries.

It was, as I say, a tragedy when Bert was forced to depart—for the country, because then he had no full peer around. Charlie Kirbo simply would not do. He would pop up from Georgia every once in a while and try to familiarize himself with some problem or another, but that just doesn't work. It works no better than the kitchen cabinet in the early years of the Reagan administration.

Young: That's right in terms of fulfilling that function.

Thompson: There's one piece of this that almost no one has talked about, and yet when we visited Plains, we sensed Jimmy Carter's pride in his business. Did you—

Schlesinger: What business?

Thompson: The peanut business—he talked and talked on the way back from lunch. You were an economist and you had stature in economics; was this in any way—maybe keeping the focus more on Carter than on you—was Carter's use of you, was Carter's capacity as President, that all affected by the fact that he had some business sense, or some capacity in economics, or didn't you find that too impressive?

Schlesinger: Well, as I say, he had immense quickness of mind, and he picked up arguments very quickly, impressively quickly—but perhaps too quickly, because as he picked up the arguments and was able to reproduce them, he thought that the ability to reproduce the arguments made him a master of the subject to a degree that was unwarranted. One of these areas was economics and another was arms control. No, I don't—you're quite right about his pride in his business, his pride now in producing furniture. You hear more about the construction of chairs and whatnot from Jimmy Carter than most people really care to hear. But it's part of the enthusiasm of the man, it's part of the great attraction of the man; he interests himself immensely in whatever he's doing.

McCleskey: A follow-up question to the point that you made a minute ago. One of the conditions for your taking the position was the point of Presidential assistant, and the physical location. Were there other conditions, or were there other points that were discussed in regard to your appointment?

Schlesinger: Well, I can't remember any significant things.

McCleskey: What about freedom to appoint your own staff?

Schlesinger: Oh, I had pretty much freedom, not only as to my own staff, but—

Young: Did you have to fight for it?

Schlesinger: Not at the outset. First of all, my staff was my own. I had general carte blanche throughout the energy appointments of the administration; that meant that I made the decisions with regard to the Federal Power Commission, the Atomic Energy Commission, and so on. Now, that got watered down, it got watered down very quickly after one of my recommendations on the Hill because he was too pro-nuclear, and was indiscreetly pro-nuclear. But at the outset,

Carter invested immense confidence in me, and whether that was a mistake or not, others will have to judge. And I had not only total carte blanche with regard to my own energy staff, within reason I had great latitude with all of the energy appointments of the administration.

Jones: Your own staff came mostly from people you knew in the existing agencies?

Schlesinger: People who had worked at the AEC of the FEO [Federal Energy Office], or some people from the Hill—we brought in some people from the Hill who were close, for example, to John Dingell.

Thompson: Could I ask in claiming turf—an interesting point in being close to the President—did you pay a price at all, a [Al] Haig price, if you will, and did that in any way limit your capacity after a time to speak candidly to Carter, in the Bert Lance language, and as a person of his own age tell him to look at the forest rather than the trees? Did you have enemies in the White House who—

Schlesinger: There probably was more of that than I was aware of. I have mentioned there was considerable—no, I've got to say that the Carter White House was, whatever its technical deficiencies, was the most pleasant White House that I have seen to work in, and there was not a great deal of the habitual backstabbing and whatnot that goes on in the throne room, or the fore-room to the throne. There may have been more than that. I am sure there was a good deal of disturbance, as I indicated, in the fact that it was not regularized and that about the time I was leaving the White House, considerable attention was being paid to the regularization of Jim Schlesinger, and they wanted to push it outside the White House, which was right, and to make the Energy Department one of the departments of government out there instead of intimately related to the White House and the President.

No, I had the advantages of Haig as an insider in the Nixon administration as opposed to the disadvantages of Haig as an outsider in the Reagan administration. Once I was outside of the White House, those who had been dubious about—privately dubious—about the influence I carried with the President, were of course eager as White House staffs are to reduce that influence. White House staffs exist, by and large, to reduce the role and authority of Cabinet members. They would not put it that way; they talk about protecting the President's interests and all that; but the effective role that they turn out playing, to a greater or lesser extent, is to reduce the role of the Cabinet members, and that has its advantages and its disadvantages.

Jones: The 90 days—could you say something about that, how that got set, and the effect on you—you were saying something about what it did, just as a management problem, for you, combined with the demand that it be comprehensive (you explained that that was Carter's want, to develop a comprehensive program). But was it altogether compatible for him to do that in 90 days?

Schlesinger: That's right, and that the same time some other things were happening. First I had to put together the staff. Usually you start with a pre-existing institution of some sort and put together an energy policy staff over a period of some weeks, much of it before the opening of the administration. So that consumed some time that otherwise might have been invested in policy

information and selling. Then we had the natural gas crisis, so it wound up being on Capitol Hill for a considerable period through that time and being diverted for some of these 90 days by the simple fact that we were dealing with this energy shortfall.

Jones: Were you the lead person in going to Congress for that?

Schlesinger: I was a lead person in that. It was not all that hard to push it through, but it drew down on time. Thirdly, we put together the plan for the energy department. All in this 90-day period. Now normally, an administration, if it's going to create a department, that's an activity in itself, takes a year or a year-and-a-half to plan. We had considerable work that was already done, because Ford had a plan for an energy department. So we altered that plan in various ways. The most important thing was having the Federal Power Commission inside the Energy Department. But that took some activity. I had a special assistant named Roger McCullough who basically was in charge of putting together the legislation for the creation of the Energy Department. Aside from touching on major issues that interested me, putting the FPC in, I just didn't worry at all about the wording of the legislation. That took some time, and I had to spend some weeks, cumulatively, on that, plus the testimony on the Hill.

The point that I'm making is that as far as I was concerned, that 90 days, in itself, was being eroded to a substantial degree. I would have sessions with the staff on policy, but those were not as long as I would have liked. And even more important, as the legislation was put together, some of it came out in ways that if I had been more attentive or been able to be more attentive, would not have come out that way. For example, the natural gas legislation contained dos and don'ts that reflected the long historic fight on Capitol Hill and particularly on the House side in regard to natural gas. When I sent the legislation to the Hill, I had not examined that legislation.

My view of natural gas is simple: for political reasons we had to continue with price controls. I had done the exploratory fields up there, and I can come back to that—it's one of the more interesting aspects. I was saying to both Scoop Jackson and John Dingell that we wished to decontrol gas, and that was it. They were going to fight us tooth and nail from the first, instead of being basically cooperative, which they were. That was the price that had to be paid in terms of getting the support of the chairmen of the relevant committees. But I took a very simple view: let's have a ceiling price that moves up over time, and get rid of all the complexities. Well, the legislation that we sent to the Hill had in it all of these historic fights that I was not really that interested in, which did not help. It alienated the natural gas industry more than needed to be the case, natural gas producers. I think that we could have sold a cap, a floating cap.

The legislation as it came out of the House, though, turned out to be a lot worse than the legislation that we sent up with regard to natural gas, and it really drove the industry off in the wrong direction. That, I think, was one of the consequences of this 90-day period, from which, in effect, 45 days was subtracted simply in the creation of a staff, the emergency natural gas legislation, natural gas crisis of the winter of '76-'77, the creation of the Department of Energy. I only had half that time; I should have had a hell of a lot longer. It meant that we had inadequate time to consult with Congress, which required a good deal of soft-soaping.

Much of our work with Congress consisted of talking to the committee chairmen. Moreover, we should have paid attention to others more than we did, if we had time. If we had had the time we would have done so. And we should have paid attention to people outside the committee structure, people like Lloyd Bentsen whose views on natural gas should have been taken in. All of that was somewhat costly in failure. The absence of time to work with people, with the industry; to see what the industry was looking for. And the time that we invested in Carter's own constituencies I think was probably excessive.

Young: What do you mean by Carter's own constituencies?

Schlesinger: A significant point that I think I alluded to earlier, Carter's constituencies had been consumers, environmentalists. And when he came to Washington, he created great problems for himself in two ways. First, he ignored the centers of power on Capitol Hill, or half-ignored them. They felt that they were not recorded and consulted enough. The more senior members, the Jacksons and the Longs. This was Carter's personal—in Jackson's case made far stronger by the rivalry that had existed. Let me finish this structure.

At the same time there were people I've mentioned. I think Tsongas was a strong consumer and environmentalist, but very junior. On the House side you had somebody like Toby Moffet, who had worked for Ralph Nader, who had been pushed up in Carter's eyes by Nader, and you have conferences that the White House—the President wasn't bothering with the damn oil industry, which whatever its charitableness in American society has put up a big political wallet. He wasn't bothering about that, didn't have any meeting with the industry, I think, until the Iranian crisis, three years into his Presidency. But he had numerous meetings with consumer groups, environmental groups, and so on. Particularly the consumer groups.

Now that meant that somebody like Toby Moffet, who was fundamentally not a supporter of Jimmy Carter, was pumped up to a degree of prominence such that when the legislation went to the Hill, he turned out to be a critic and a fighter on the other side, and Carter had helped create this very junior member of Congress and to legitimize, as it were, his opposition. He would have done far better to have invested that time in different groups and to have focused on different people. The fact that he was elevating consumerism meant that the rebels in the power structure on Capitol Hill were being elevated. That, I think, was a political mistake.

But let me go back to my initial observations. Jimmy Carter brought strong moral commitments, freshness, when he came to Washington. The fact that a right-thinking man like Toby Moffet or Paul Tsongas had little influence on Capitol Hill and that the Russ Longs of this world carried much weight was not something to which he adjusted but felt that he ought to help overcome, and help the right-thinking members of Congress, as he saw them, gain more influence and diminish the influence of their seniors. Now that last in particular was not the way to win the hearts of the veterans of the Senate. I'm sorry, did I drift off the subject?

Young: No, I wanted that. Somebody was touching base with the power centers and that was you. So, it wasn't a base untouched—

Schlesinger: —but not broadly enough. There was a very important problem: we handled it well, or it was handled well on the House side because [Thomas P.] O'Neill set up the ad hoc committee on energy, and put Lud [Thomas] Ashley in charge of it. Now that creates some problems, but basically it was helpful in solving the problem of oil. It creates some problems because as soon as you set up anything on Capitol Hill you get a lot of jealousies. Ashley was the target of considerable jealousy, very overt resentment and jealousy. But the establishment of that ad hoc committee, pulling everything together on the House side, with the Speaker behind it, worked immensely well on the House side.

On the Senate side it was quite different, because it went through the traditional committees, and that meant that half of it went to Scoop Jackson, in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and half of it, in some ways the more important half, went to the Finance Committee and Russell Long. The material that went to the Energy Committee was fine, up to a point. It was fine in terms of getting congressional support, because I was a very close friend of Scoop's and even though he didn't like a lot of the legislation, he was as supportive as he could be, given his skepticism about some of the substantive elements. And since he was not immensely fond of Jimmy Carter, and in the area of principal concern for Scoop Jackson, which was foreign policy, he didn't like Carter's policies very much that all, it went quite well because of my personal relations with Scoop. We salvaged the natural gas legislation ultimately only because of personal relationships.

With regard to the Finance Committee, however, we got into trouble because—what was in retrospect trouble—because the responsibility for the Finance Committee is historically the responsibility of the Department of the Treasury. And who was that fellow who was the assistant Secretary of the Treasury, the Finance Committee? [Frank D.] Lucas? Yes. He had been close to Russell, and it was believed that he would be able to do the personal cultivation of the Senators on the Finance Committee. Now that division of responsibility, I think, turned out to work badly for a number of reasons, some of which were the fault of Carter and myself. But in any event, pushing the tax legislation through the Finance Committee was taken to be a responsibility of the Treasury Department while I primarily worked the other committee.

That might have worked out very well. I alluded to this earlier, in the summer the Bert Lance affair occurred and the administration handled it appallingly badly. So that by October you had a situation in which the Senators, who had a very elevated view of their own role in Washington, had been freed from the constraints of defying a popular President, and the members of the Finance Committee were, by that time, running free and clear, particularly Russell Long. We should have—I should have, in retrospect, worked much more closely, or the administration should have assigned the Finance Committee to me.

Or, alternatively, and I alluded to the mistake of Carter and myself, there was a good deal of jealousy inside of the administration because of this one-on-one discussion with Carter that I was having, particularly on matters involving tax policies. And the Treasury Department was not in the mood to be particularly helpful. I think that that's the place we were most remiss in failing to engage [W. Michael] Blumenthal and his people earlier, because the energy legislation, in my view—in my biased view—particularly with regard to oil, not natural gas, which we had gotten tied up with a horrid history of 25 years, and the passions of the chairman, particularly, of the

Energy Committee—but the simple elegance with regard to oil, the crude oil equalization tax, which I regard now, as then, as the most elegant device for getting us the hell out of this whole policy of control, and returned things essentially back to the market forces and stop subsidizing the lower cost and so on. But the Treasury, after all of this, came up basically with a non-inventive year and we did not have the energetic work that was required to sell the people on Capitol Hill. We had the Lance affair; that let the members of the Finance Committee in a sense off the hook.

However, there was one other thing that occurred in this period. I spent the summer, partly because of the slew of incomplete activities on which I had to make decisions, all of these decisions of the fourth period delayed by the Congress. ("Six months after the Presidential election of 1976, thou shalt decide.") Because things had gone so well in the House during the summer, I just took off three or four weeks for negotiating the agreement with the Canadians with regard to the pipeline, and that was time that once again, with the wonderful benefit of hindsight, one can say we shouldn't have spent any time on that, we should have been investing in the finance committees. But we were doing splendidly at the time.

It was just at the start of the Lance affair. I did not anticipate how much the decline of the President's popularity would lead to the rise of baronial opposition, in a sense. After we'd moved in the Senate and after the dismal failure to get Russell Long to move—first of all, Russell Long's not moving didn't mean anything for a while, because Russell Long has long had a splendid habit of waiting for everybody else to make his move so that he can then make his judgment as to the most advantageous thing for him and the State of Louisiana, and the interest groups that he's close to, including the oil industry. So Russell Long's initial delay didn't matter that much, didn't seem to be that relevant; he was just behaving like Russell Long.

It was only later on that it became evident that as a result of the President's role and a real lack of rapport between the President and people like Long, and then the decline of his own popularity over the Lance affair, that we were in trouble on that half of the energy package. We were in serious trouble, we were in some trouble even in Scoop Jackson's bailiwick because we couldn't put together a package on natural gas. As you can see at the present time, we have another administration that finds it harder to put together a package on natural gas than to make speeches about the desirability of a package. Natural gas divides: consumer states, producer states, ideologically it divides.

So we had some trouble in the Jackson committee leading up to the Christmas turkey dinner, you'll recall, of 1977, in which we had an unusual play of senatorial rivalries and self-esteem. The package had been put forward by [Kenneth] Johnson, for whom, at that time, Scoop had a lower regard than he should have had. But in any event he was a junior Senator, and that meant that not only did the Republicans go after that package, but Scoop just banged it away and it just died there. And Scoop that that time washed his hands of the whole damn thing. Well, if you didn't have a natural gas package coming out of that committee, you didn't have a hell of a lot.

I was being urged by all parties to abandon natural gas and settle for the three little bills that we had gotten through the committee. As I said earlier, I'm not a politician—I think of myself as a public servant of sorts; I'm not a politician. If I were a politician, I would have run those three

little bills through, advertised them as a great accomplishment, and so on. I didn't. And I didn't help Carter politically by that. I may have helped the country, I may have helped his role in history. But I didn't help him politically, because that meant that we were holding still with the comprehensive package, and that meant that the whole damn thing dragged on until we did extract a natural gas bill and a tax bill from the Congress, and we just hung in there and took punishment.

The press, which had been friendly for the first six months, began to turn skeptical and ultimately more than skeptical, rather hostile, on energy, but we were going to hang in there on the natural gas package until we got something that was workable, and the Christmas turkey bombed out—or was the Thanksgiving turkey? Was it Thanksgiving? Scoop went off on vacation, so I took a plane and just flew out to Palm Springs, where Scoop was, and I argued and begged and groveled, and I helped him with a few things until he agreed to sponsor it. I said that we just needed to have natural gas legislation; the dual system was killing us and would go on killing us.

I brought Charlie Kirbo out there, and he had been Dingell's staff man, quite close to Scoop, and we did, we persuaded Scoop despite the fact that he was not immensely fond of Jimmy Carter, and that he was quite resentful about this whole affair with Kenneth Johnson and the Christmas turkey, to go back to work on the natural gas legislation. As you will recall, it took us another six months to fight that through in the second year of the administration. But if we didn't do that, we just had our little lip service to conservation, we would not have had anything serious to show in the energy area as opposed to claims. Now it would have been better for Carter politically to grab what he could have grabbed and run.

At that time, I despaired of the Treasury doing its historic thing—and [Robert] Woodruff died somewhere in that period, so I took over much of the responsibility of moving Russell Long. And believe it or not, I got Russell to support much of the legislation personally. We had meeting after meeting that the industry and we, including Russell in his own non-provocative way, tried to elicit the support of the industry. We had the support of much of the majors, many of the majors, and we just came a cropper with the holdouts amongst the independents, given their role in the politics in the Southwest. Russell, despite his personal convictions that this might be a wise thing to do. We lost the crude oil equalization tax. We got some damn good tax legislation nonetheless, after banging away for eighteen months, and the natural gas element of the legislation and the tax legislation were the heart of the legislation.

Now, can I just add one thing here, which is enormously important. I've mentioned Jimmy Carter's hopes of comprehensive legislation; he wanted to solve problems. Primarily, putting them up in a nice package and stowing them away. That's not the way you can handle these problems. My view of the energy problem, and this is retrospective (I meant to bring an article...I'll send it to you—a little evaluation of Carter's role in this), my view of it is that it was so tangled up, economic interest groups, regional interests, violent ideological and political groups, that there's no way that you could solve it all at once. I hold that view strongly today. I did not hold it strongly back in 1977; I still thought that we would have difficulty, but I did not regard it as an inherent impossibility.

More today than then, I believe that the way you deal with the energy problem is that you run into a crisis, you get something on the books, it helps; you run into another crisis, you get something more on the books, it helps. You don't have a comprehensive solution. The passage in 1975 of the bill that mandated higher energy efficiency for the auto industry was a great accomplishment. This probably helped us to the tune of a million-and-a-half, two million barrels a day of oil imports. But that was it. Our legislation that we took so long to pass, plus the substantive decontrol of oil in 1979, was another accomplishment as it were; we probably saved through that three- or four-and-a-half million barrels a day of oil consumption, but you're going to get it in little [inaudible]. You get as much, particularly in an atmosphere of crisis, as the public is willing to accept and you don't hope to have a comprehensive energy package that will resolve problems for all time, simply because the currents of political emotions are too strong. End of speech. I'm ready for your question now. I'm sorry I had to go on.

Jones: Well, in that connection, to go back to the initial period, did you ever have a conversation with the President about strategy; that is to say, "We'll put it together in a short time, but we'll do it piecemeal. We'll get something in a 90-day period, that's one possibility, and then get something else." Or then another alternative would be, "Let's do it in 90 days and try to get everything." Was there ever a conversation of that kind of strategy?

Schlesinger: There was not that kind of conversation, and I am trying to think of the reasons for it. One reason was that every time I kind of raised the subject, or began to think my way into the subject—(my views now are in retrospect a hell of a lot clearer than they were that the time) — every time I sort of raised the subject, Carter would go back to his campaign commitment and say, "Hang comprehensive." So in that position you, as a subordinate, you use your position in those areas where you can be effective. Every time we'd hinted at backing off on the comprehensiveness, he just wasn't interested, and he would come back very hard. Normally he wasn't that way.

Young: But it did seem strange that the strategy was sort of left to you.

Schlesinger: Yes. Now, there's another element. As I say, I, who could have anticipated the Bert Lance affair—there's another element that I did not anticipate—let me throw this out off the record—I did not anticipate Jimmy Carter, who was so charming with me and other staff members, being something of a flop in his lobbying with members of Congress. I did not anticipate that. It came as an almost total surprise to me. This, of course, was costly on the Senate side where the egos are larger. On the House side, we had total support for whatever we wanted to do from Tip O'Neill, and by and large there's less desire, less of a concept that one *must* be courted on the House side than on the Senate side.

McCleskey: Why do you think the President was so ineffective?

Schlesinger: As we worked our way into the fall—it's partly rivalries. I had some kind of meeting with Bentsen, for example, with the President. Bentsen seemed to ooze with a personal hardness toward this man who was President of the United States And, of course, Bentsen was one of his rivals for the nomination in 1976. But the relationship between the two during that meeting was one of a supplicant: the President of the United States, and one who was in a

position to dispense favors, and that was a member of the U.S. Senate. Now, I picked that one out, but there were half a dozen meetings that took place, starting in the summer and starting with all these Lance troubles, and they just didn't go well at all. So I, therefore, did much more of that lobbying myself, and called upon him less than one might have expected in such a set of circumstances, because it wasn't helping to get us votes, to say it in the bluntest terms. This came, as I say, as a total surprise to me.

So ultimately we did less well than I would have anticipated at the start. Now this was partly my problem. My mind was formed about many of these public issues during World War II, and I expected the American public to respond to calls like "the moral equivalent of war" and so forth. I was dealing, without realizing it, with an entirely changed world in which the public was going to "take care of its own interest, thank you," and these patriotic calls that in times past drew a great response from the public just didn't work at all. Now I was surprised at that, and indeed I should not have been that surprised, but the notion of the President of the United States saying, "This is an important area, goddammit, let's get this legislation through," and not getting abiding public support, partly because of the Lance affair, and getting all of this flack from Capitol Hill, which was more than one would have expected because of the way in which he became President—that the President was less effective in this lobbying I found, particularly with the Senators, disappointing, and I didn't anticipate it. If I had anticipated all of that, I might well have done more reaching out. I might have pressed very much harder for taking these things in branches. Now, in retrospect, I would take it in projects—three energy packages, this, this, and so on. That would not have been too easy, because everybody on the Hill was demanding a solution of the natural gas problem. Everybody was demanding a solution, and there was only one problem—they didn't agree on what the solution should be.

Jones: Did you essentially coordinate the congressional liaison relationship as part of this, rather than the Frank Moore operation?

Schlesinger: We worked closely, we worked with them. Some of them worked very closely with us, particularly in those areas involved with the partial collapse of the President's prestige in the fall of '77 and the Christmas turkey and all of that. I just had to throw myself full time into congressional relations throughout 1978; for some reason that was very costly. But if we were going to salvage something serious, then that became just a full-time occupation.

Jones: By now the department was getting underway?

Schlesinger: The department's getting underway. I just turned all of this over to—almost all of it, except major decisions—over to the deputy. For about six months I would check back in, see what was happening in the department—which was in retrospect regrettable—the organization of the department could have taken place at a later point. If we had anticipated, once again, that it would be eighteen months in the creation of it, in the getting of energy legislation, of policy legislation, we would have handled the construction of the department differently. We worked quite closely with the people on Frank Moore's staff and particularly in those areas in which the President was especially concerned. For example, Jim Free was a member of the staff who worked endlessly with us. But we worked endlessly, lobbying Congress for an end to the Clinch

River breeder reactor, successfully, and as I indicated that the outset, I thought Carter invested more of his hopes in that, and invested more of his prestige than it was worth.

Now, let me, if I may, change the subject slightly but, as we'll see, it fits in with the rest. When I started to talk to Carter about the Energy Department, December of '76, he had been pressed by Scoop Jackson in this meeting to go along with the Jackson legislation for a Department of Energy and Natural Resources. Whether it was simply that that was Jackson's—part of it was Jackson's legislation—he decided to establish an energy department, to make the Department of the Interior the custodian and spokesman for environmental conservation. And initially when I talked to him about the energy and natural resources department with the White House, he said no.

Jones: Jackson said no, or—?

Schlesinger: No, no, the President-elect said, "No, I want the Energy Department to be spokesman for energy supply, and I want the Department of the Interior to be spokesman for the environment, and when there is a conflict, I want the conflict to be brought to my desk." That, I think, is very important. It is something I intended to say earlier, when we talked about Carter and the four automobile presidents—somehow or another he didn't have any desire to push either the decision or the apparent decision that was bound to be unpopular onto subordinates in his administration. He had created a structure in which any time—those rare times that Jimmy Carter decided against the environment, he was the one making the decision. He couldn't say, "Well, I was so busy in bringing peace to the world," and slough it off to subordinates. It was Jimmy Carter who was turning on the environment. Now Carter was as loyal to the environment as any man could sensibly be, and yet he created a structure in which, whenever he deviated from—the ten per cent of the time he deviated from—environmental interest he wound up being the villain.

Young: He made himself accountable.

Schlesinger: He made himself publicly accountable. Moreover—

Young: And then the press held him accountable.

Schlesinger: And the press held him accountable. He created his own vulnerabilities for the press in many respects; even though the press was in this rather feisty, nasty mood, he helped that process along. And in addition, when he was deciding *against* energy supply as it were, and for the environment, which was the normal case, it was Jimmy Carter who was up there—he had created a structure that brought the problems ostensibly to his desk, in which he was going to be the villain to one interest group or another.

Now that reflects Jimmy Carter's general style, which I have stressed throughout. He wanted to be the manager of the U.S. government. He did not, I think, understand that part of the leadership quality is to disengage from these managerial problems and simply be this fellow saying, "Come on, follow me!" to the public. If you keep alienating bits and pieces of the public, you can't serve as leader. That was, I think, an inherently poor structure, and it was a structure, oddly enough,

that—it is rare that Jimmy Carter has a retrospective revenge on Ronald Reagan. But that's one area in which he did.

Because he had set up the Department of the Interior as the principal spokesman for the environment and conservation, and then in this task Ronald Reagan proceeded to put a man who believed overwhelmingly in development—no longer the mission of that department. The initial attempts of the Reagan administration to downgrade the Energy Department and suggest that it did not have a role of course added to it, because they didn't want [James B.] Edwards out in front on energy supplies, so they turned their defender of the environment saying, "We're going to drill up the wilderness areas. We're going to poke holes in the ground everywhere." Now that, as policy, is perhaps defensible, but coming out of the new concept of the Interior Department as the defender of the environment, it just created substantial political problems for Reagan, which you see in a recrudescent form in just the last couple of weeks. That is a reflection of this structure that Jimmy Carter decided.

Now the way you handle these problems is—suppose you have Reagan's problems—you may not be interested in Reagan's per se, but if he wants his administration to drill up the wilderness, you have a background flag in which the President doesn't get involved—it's the Secretary of Energy defeats the Secretary of the Interior, who reluctantly is forced to allow drilling in the environmental areas. You don't have your secretary for the environment come forward and say, "By God, we re going to despoil the environment in the name of energy supplies," because it just makes his natural constituency mad.

Young: The way you describe the congressional side on energy policy doesn't quite fit with the caricature that I've got then, a caricature of the Carter administration. There were a bunch of Georgians so inexperienced that they came to Washington and developed policy and just dropped it on the head without any preparation, and the left hand never knew quite what the right hand was doing in the White House. You have described some specific failures, problems, and mistakes in that respect, of a rather respectable sort, in the new Administration, but you have not described, at least I have not gotten the picture, of a confirmation of this portrait.

Schlesinger: No, I think that that caricature—

Young: Is it a caricature?

Schlesinger: It is a caricature.

Young: Because the first energy package has often been footnoted as an example of how to do everything wrong. They fell into all of the traps, pitfalls, etc.

Schlesinger: There were some mistakes. But the congressional relations, that's just one of these clichés of the press. The press operates, by and large, on the basis of clichés. Once they've established a cliché for a President, it doesn't matter what he does. Carter, of course, has a hell of a lot more accomplishments with the Congress than Reagan has, but the prevailing cliché is that Reagan is the master of the Congress and Carter was not. Why is that? Because Reagan

essentially has asked the Congress to do but one thing, he has asked them to deal with the budget.

Jones: He doesn't ask for much legislation.

Schlesinger: Whereas Carter, who was asking for legislation here and legislation there, tax legislation, civil service legislation—and yet he gets no credit for it in this caricature. Why is that? Because his batting average was about 300 and Ronald Reagan's batting average is 900.Carter spread himself too thin. The problem is not that there was not preparation, but the immense amount of cultivation of Congress that is now required to move anything that was inconsistent with Carter's desire to move on 32 fronts.

Young: And he also was a disappointment when cast in the role of congressional lobbyist.

Schlesinger: Mm hmm, he was a disappointment at that.

Young: So you can point to specific shortcomings or weaknesses in the Carter—

Schlesinger: And particularly on the Senate side.

Young: Particularly on the Senate side, but—

Schlesinger: And don't forget to include the problems with Bert Lance.

Young: Okay, so, there were a lot of intervening events, but it was not a question of dropping a bill on Capitol Hill and then washing hands of it.

Schlesinger: No. Now, let me deal with some of these things. In the first place, the natural gas issue has been with us, and it was first addressed by Dwight Eisenhower. Dwight Eisenhower was not a man without some public support in this country. Everybody loved Ike. He couldn't do much about it. All Presidents had tried to deal with this natural gas. Jimmy Carter was successful. Partly because he was prepared to hang in there, and just hang in, and finally got legislation that had been a very bitter fight for 25 years, and bitterness that you cannot imagine.

I'll just give you one illustration of that. The Chairman of the full Commerce Committee in the House was Harley Staggers of West Virginia, and he had some very strong convictions about this natural gas business. He had come up to the House, it was his first year, I think it was 1944, he had come up as this young Congressman from West Virginia, and the Speaker of the House was a man named Sam Rayburn, who had some interest in natural gas. Harley Staggers had been favored, as a border state Democrat, by the Speaker, and up came the natural gas legislation. The Speaker said, "I'm counting on your vote," and Staggers said, "Well, you can't have my vote on this issue, Mr. Speaker," and the legislation went to the floor and who turned out to be the most effective speaker against legislation but Sam Rayburn's favorite, Harley Staggers. This was 1955, I think, I forget these things.

From that day forward, Sam Rayburn to the end of his life never gave Harley Staggers the time of day. He did everything he could to deprive him of the benefits of seniority. Now those were the days when Congress was a disciplined organization. Now here we are in 1977, turning to Harley Staggers and saying, "Remember that issue that caused you all that pain for the first 15 years you were in the House? We want you to change your mind on that." Now it's not easy to accomplish that.

If the energy area—given these mistakes we mentioned, the stuff moved right through the House of Representatives, stuff that had not moved for years. In the Senate, the tax legislation moved slowly, but we did get a natural gas bill, simply by hanging in there night after night. I compared it at the time as you know, to the resurrection of Lazarus. The energy bill that died more deaths than a cat, the natural gas bill that died more deaths than a cat. And in terms of getting that through, you just have to look at the record. Twenty-five years of inaction on natural gas and forcing it through the Congress.

Now this may not be ideal legislation, but it's a hell of a lot better than the legislative posture that preceded it, and it required great tenacity on Carter's part to hang in there. He was not getting all of that support for hanging in there from his staff. The way that we did it was something of a legislative miracle. As I say, the press didn't like Jimmy Carter. They saw that he didn't observe Washington norms, he didn't cultivate the press, and so they were prepared to generalize about the administration from his cool relations with Capitol Hill, particularly on the Senate side. I think that it is a press cliché that doesn't reflect either the overall legislative accomplishments of the administration or particularly his role in it.

Young: You haven't mentioned Robert Byrd in all this or is that a whole different kind of thing?

Schlesinger: Generally, generally helpful, but there was not the relationship between Byrd and the President that there was between the Speaker and the President. It was cool. Byrd had to be coaxed to do everything. He liked to handle the Senate himself, so we had less support there. And he had less clout with them. There was a great deal of affection for him amongst the Democrats in the House, but some resentment too. He also was primarily interested in issues that affected West Virginia.

Young: On the executive side, you said you worked closely with the congressional liaison staff.

Schlesinger: When I say I worked closely, I don't want to give the impression that we worked that closely—we had a working relationship, and on those things that interested the President, like Clinch River, they worked especially hard, but they were not generally a strong force at all.

Young: Okay.

Schlesinger: —a hell of a lot better, Bill Cable was a hell of a lot better on the House side, than those fellows on the Senate side.

Young: One of their repeated problems in the early days seems to have been not knowing what's coming down the pike. People didn't get in touch with congressional liaison before getting

something announced; that sort of thing. This is about one of the complaints we had earlier. I'd like to ask about that, whether—

Schlesinger: Well, I don't understand it, but—

Young: They were not in from the beginning on some things and were not familiar with the substance of what was coming out?

Schlesinger: No they were not.

Young: They weren't? So, they were brought in really after the thing had developed. This, they say, gave them a few problems. I'm not speaking about energy, but in general. The other thing is—

Schlesinger: Wait a second.

Young: The other thing is their relationship to the policy development when they first go in. I'm just trying to look at the working relationships on the executive side because we have been talking mostly about the congressional side.

Schlesinger: The question about the congressional staff that I'm not sure I understand—the reason I'm not sure I understand what your question was—in no administration is a congressional liaison engaged in the process of building policy positions.

Young: That would be the wrong implication to draw. It was just the question of forewarning.

Schlesinger: Well, the point that I would make is that you can take the Nixon administration, lobbyists like Bill Timmons and [Thomas] Korologos and so forth, and the administration would give them a task after it has made its decision and say, "Go get 'em" and they would do it. They knew the Harlow technique. The liaison people in Carter's team were much less aware and they didn't have the techniques. The reason I say that is I don't find it surprising that congressional staff are not involved in making policy. Other congressional staffs in the same position were considerably more successful than Carter's staff.

Now with regards to Eizenstat, the President did not involve Stuart, yet if Stuart at that time I think was primarily concerned with matters of—

Young: Human rights, personal energy, and that sort of thing.

Schlesinger: That's right. I was there. I confuse things perhaps by being the Presidential assistant for energy policy.

Jones: Well, I wanted to get from you some analysis of the difference between the development of the '77 program and the '79 program. Can we open that up now, as well as circumstantial changes in the Department of Energy?

You got a shakedown crew as you start to get in place and then you've got Eizenstat as policy advisor. We were confused by your—

Schlesinger: Right, right. I mentioned the regularization of the Energy Department and Jim Schlesinger. It was a matter of interest and concern of the White House staff early on, particularly after I left. The White House said my prior relationship as a Presidential advisor and subsequent closeness to President Carter could not continue, as it was not normal form. Stuart was certainly concerned about that. In addition, up until the end of 1978, until the congressional special session of 1978, we had been fighting to get the crude oil equalization tax. I had been mostly concerned in the fall of 1978 with Iranian issues and attempting to get the White House some prior knowledge of how U.S. handled its affairs.

I spent some desperate and frustrating months in the administration right up into January of 1979. My principal concern in those days had been an attempt to save the Shah or the monarchy. It told you something about the way the President's mind works. When the President's feelings toward that hardened, I devoted countless hours to tell him about the Shah's plight and the impact of potential turmoil in Iran on energy prices. I also spoke with Kirbo, and some to Brzezinski, but not all that much. Mainly I focused on those who were close to the President, and much lobbying went simply on the basis that despite the President's personal unwillingness to get involved with the Shah, the collapse of the Shah could be a catastrophic failure of the administration.

Now this is, as you will see, not a normal mission of the Energy Secretary. It had relevance, needless to say, to energy. Up until early January I spent considerable time in an attempt to salvage America's presence in Iran and monitor the intelligence on internal events. I had known the Shah from the Nixon administration and at the end of October of 1978 or early November I had gone to China after another foreign policy mission of sorts, which we can talk about sometime, if you're interested.

Because of the signing of the energy bills in November of 1978, I had to come back to Washington. But if it had not been for those signing ceremonies at the White House, I would have taken that damn plane and just flown right to Tehran with the intent to buttress the Shah, who was inclined to be a wobbler. He had the reputation of being a domineering authoritarian, but he was a wobbler. And more importantly, he was dubious about what the American government wanted of him and what support he would get. I was prepared, partly because I was more attuned that it might impress him, to fly right to Tehran, but that was not possible. So, I came back to the states and spent a month after that working with Brzezinski for the most part and lobbying the members of the administration on the basis that whatever they might think of the Shah, that the fall of the Shah was going to be a catastrophe, a political catastrophe. On that point, I had the support, of a sort, of Jordan, [Gerald] Rafshoon, and Caddell. I was never able to get Mr. Kirbo engaged with that problem. But the way to deal with that problem, at least by that time, was to talk about political consequences of the Shah's overthrow.

By the end of December, early January, I pretty well had given up. I might say that I had an extended meeting with Carter in that period in which my relations with the President got cold. I don't know whether you want to go into that. But I had given up by that time on the President.

Brzezinski was more tenacious, more romantic. Thus, he began to launch himself into a coup. Once the Shah was out of the country it was gone, the base that you could establish an effective pro-American peace. It was pretty well shot during the fall. Each month the chances of saving the Shah declined substantially.

In September, I was in China when he named the military regime, he had a heart attack, and he worried. Putting in that military regime might have worked. That was no long-term solution. But each week that passed from that time, chances of failing went down so that at the end the chances of saving him were gone.

Anyhow, during that period, after the passage of the energy bills, I had been off in China and then I devoted most of my time to trying to salvage the Shah. Meanwhile, the Department was working on the consequences of all this, and we put together a package that hit Carter's desk around the fifteenth of January.

Now in the old days, what did we call it, Energy One and Energy Two? I would just walk the package through, except there is no longer in the process the elements we discussed earlier. That second package went up to the Hill at the end of March. In the interim we would take steady and unnecessary damage. It was in matters of this sort that a President has to get out in front and show leadership even if his program is less than perfect.

On the second occasion the administration honed and re-honed, re-examined, and counter-proposed and so on and all of this time the Hill was getting angrier and angrier, and I was keenly aware of that because I would go up there every day and I would be beaten around the ears by various people, who said in 1975 there was a requirement that thermostats be turned down to 67. What are you doing with that? And the failure of the administration to move that package to the Hill after three months of arguing was injurious. Now that's the first one.

A second point: one of the things that Jimmy Carter was not. Jimmy Carter was not a fan of the oil industry; that is, Big Oil. A fact of life is he did not like big oil. He was a small town Georgia populist and that meant—as he expressed it at that time—he just didn't trust these big companies and their power. I had a lot of trouble during that time with Jimmy Carter the populist. Carter kept wanting to find the evidence of this conspiracy of artificial shortages. He was not, as portrayed by the right wing, anti-business, but he was a populist and he'd dig. If you want to look around at outfits that are big, you can start with Exxon; that is big. So we had some problems with the administration.

I'll start with the fact that Carter had said that we must never remove controls over crude oil. We had failed on crude oil. So, in January I thought that the window of opportunity had arrived for the decontrol of oil. There arose some talk about a windfall profits tax, which didn't seem appropriate. It did not seem to me appropriate either that the industry had destroyed the crude oil equalization tax to, what shall I say, profit from the gains of its efforts. But the windfall tax was simply designed to relieve political pressure and to capture the gains of this crude oil equalization tax. Ultimately it turned into more of a punitive device. But I thought the window of opportunity had arrived. Indeed, I will explain that.

Until you had the building crisis over oil, which was represented by the cut-off of petroleum production in Iran in December of 1978, nothing provided force. You had no possibility given the political predilection of the administration and its constituencies and of the President's statements early on. Now the President could satisfy his constituencies by backing off from his commitments to the Governor of Texas and Governor of Oklahoma because that didn't offend any of the normal Democratic constituencies, but a personal promise on oil was even more politically volatile. The oil industry was just not prudent. It was opposed by members of the administration.

By this time it seemed the normalization process was done. It was discussed by Carter and reviewed by everybody on his staff. It was opposed vigorously for political reasons. We didn't argue the economics with Fritz Mondale since he was opposing it on other grounds much more. It was opposed vigorously for political reasons. It was opposed by Stuart Eizenstat; he agreed with the intellectuals who worried about the effects of inflation on the constituency groups, although he agreed with the intellectuals who worried about the effects on inflation and on the constituency groups. It was very weakly opposed by Charlie Schultze, who really believed and had desperately wanted it but didn't want it in a way that might bring the rate of inflation back quickly. This is one of those good things that St. Augustine tells us, that he wanted to give up sin but not yet, oh Lord. Well, we wanted to give up sin of oil price control but not yet because of the impact of inflation.

And oddly enough, in view of the earlier history of Energy One, as you described it, I had only one continuing battle, which was with Mike Blumenthal. Blumenthal was particularly helpful to me and he was prepared to schedule decontrol. Mike wanted to go cold turkey and he made me look like a compromising appeaser. Now we were back in the real world of Washington politics.

Jones: May I ask you about the difference between—

Schlesinger: No legislation had been granted the authority and that authority was in force by June 1st of '79; it was the reason why during Energy One that I was much more desperate to pass an imperfect natural gas bill than I was to get what was an intellectually elegant crude oil equalization bill—because we could not do anything without legislation. Once you had a crisis, the political atmosphere changed and legislation was not as important. Now I was fond, as you can see, of the crude oil equalization tax. I worked for it, and as I told the industry later on, I said that this was in the interest of the country. This is not so much the Carter administration as it is world politics. If we had passed the crude oil equalization tax earlier—before the rapid rise of oil prices—that tax would have been put on the books by a different set of interests—namely the Finance Committee. It would thus have been fashioned by the economic conservatives.

It was not. That was because we were fashioning the tax before we decontrolled taxes. Once we got into the spring of 1979, and announced decontrol, then inevitably the tax would be fashioned after decontrol. It meant that the power to fashion the tax would be taken away from the industry's friends, the conservatives and the Finance Committee, and it was going to be driven by public anger over rising oil prices—some, though not all of it, directed at the industry. So the industry had lost its control or its influence on the process by going through this mechanism, what turned out to be the mechanism of decontrol first and impose the taxes later.

It meant, for example, the most dramatic example, Howard Metzenbaum, who was the most vigorous opponent of crude oil equalization tax because it would drive up prices for consumers by raising taxes, changed his position entirely. He became the most forceful proponent of the heaviest possible taxation, of gouging the industry, because once you had decontrol, prices were going to be at the world level inevitably—you could not protect the consumer, and the thing to do was to extract as much from the industry as possible. It changed entirely the politics in Washington. I explained that to the industry, that this was the real dynamics of Washington life. These people were sufficiently engaged in their own position, and the rightness of their own position, that they led themselves ultimately into a tax that will be permanent and which even in the early years imposed on the industry a load three times as heavy as crude oil equalization.

So the industry, in a sense, made a miscalculation, a serious miscalculation. By moving to this decontrol first, calling for a windfall tax, we, I think—I've got to confess to this, that I myself was taken by surprise. It was an opportunity, I recognized, to get decontrol, but I didn't realize that it was a circumscribed opportunity and I did not foresee that it would end that rapidly. By the time we got to the summer prices had run to $18 a barrel ($17 a barrel sounds pretty low at this point).

Young: How did Anne Wexler's operation fit in this? Was she involved in the coalition building process on energy too?

Schlesinger: She did superbly well. She helped on the gas bill in summer of '78 as well. A lot of those things were sort of infinitely—having tried all through gasoline prices; we got gasoline prices, but I stressed all this, it was not altogether a pleasant period.

[BREAK]

Young: Well, back to Jimmy Carter—

Schlesinger: Let me pick up where we were. One of the things that interests me in this question of "Carter the President" was his fundamental disinterest in politics per se. He tended to be somewhere between the preacher and the manager and looked with some degree of disdain and certainly indifference on the political skills. The reason I cite that now is just before lunch, we were talking about oil decontrol. Can you imagine the political benefits that a Lyndon Johnson would have extracted from the oil industry as the price of decontrol? He would have had the political funds flowing for a decade; he would have had them first begging and then eating out of his hand.

Carter gave to the industry something that it had not gotten from Nixon or Ford and yet he got no political benefit out of it, only political costs, curiously enough. The political left was angry, best expressed by [Edward] Kennedy, and it added to his troubles in the 1980 race. Meanwhile, the

oil industry and their supporters didn't give him any credit for it; indeed, the industry just went on hating Jimmy Carter. Now I think it is one of those little examples that show Carter's strengths. He thought it was the right thing to do and he was quite courageous in doing it, and yet he had a total indifference to most of the political aspects of the problem. Lyndon Johnson would have had that industry eating out of his hand—instead that industry, which he had done more for than any other President in recent memory, financed the campaign of Reagan and the Republicans who took over the Senate. It's an interesting vignette.

Strong: I'd like to pick up on something else. You mentioned Carter didn't change; did the White House organization change to take better advantage of these qualities? The Anne Wexler operation, for example, was bringing people in and letting them see his substantive briefings and some of the things he was good at. Did the White House change substantially, and did it get better?

Schlesinger: Yes, it got better in general. The White House staff initially was weak and parochial. Some of the people were not very strong—I don't want to dwell on that, but the biggest problem in the Lance affair was Bob Lipshutz, who just gave Carter a totally wrong legal interpretation, let alone political interpretation. And Jordan and Powell were naturally very intelligent people, but they sure were parochial when they came up there, and they sure did not understand that the American people don't like White House assistants wandering around in dungarees and the like. They don't like Presidents wandering around that way either.

Jody Powell became, I think, more and more knowledgeable. Jordan was the wrong man to be made Chief of Staff. That's despite his considerable abilities. That was a mistake in 1979. The thing about Jordan is that he is not good at checklists, but what he's good at is hound-dogging one issue at a time. I imagine—I was gone by then—by '79 he spent most of his time worrying about the Iranian problem. Now how the hell do you have a Chief of Staff who's supposed to be watching 250 different items from the President's perspective just spending his time on one problem?

But no doubt the White House staff improved substantially, partly because the people in it were growing, and some, like Powell and Eizenstat, I think growing substantially, and partly because it was being buttressed by others, like Anne Wexler. Lloyd Cutler was an enormous improvement. These were people of considerable political skills. Now whether they were augmenting Carter's strengths or compensating for his weaknesses is not clear, but the White House was a better operation in the last couple of years than it had initially been. It was de-parochialized and it was broader.

Strong: Was [Jack H.] Watson an asset in the last stages?

Schlesinger: I don't know about the last stages. He was a likeable figure, but I don't think he was an immensely strong figure. He was not—does not have the makings of a Sherman Adams or a Jim Baker. But one of the great charms of Jimmy Carter was that he was likeable, and that the people around him basically were likeable, reasonably generous and so forth. That is not necessarily best for an administration.

Jones: I want to go back now to the '79 group of energy proposals—you've referred a couple of times to normalization or regularization of the process. Would you describe that? Did that mean that proposals were developed in DOE and then coordinated in some fashion with Eizenstat's? Would you describe that in some detail and then why did it take so long and how did that lead to the frustration—the President's and—

Young: And the frustration of Congress, too. You referred, my notes say, to three months of arguing, and you were sort of beaten up about it, when you go up to Capitol Hill. Debates within the staff, but the question covers more than that: what was the process that was going on?

Schlesinger: Well, I forget what was going on elsewhere in the administration in that time. An administration's got a lot to attend to—SALT II, relations with the allies—but as I indicated, we had that Iran response package by and large to the White House about June 15th, and my recollection is that we never printed it until the end of March some time, and therefore, I was in the position with little things being wrung out of me on Capitol Hill.

Now a President should be making announcements rather than responding belatedly to congressional initiatives. Why? Because the White House did not have, I think, the sense that for Carter's political good they should have gotten a package that did not satisfy them completely. That's, I think, the downside of what I will describe as Eizenstat's intellectual virtues. He was a very intelligent man and he wanted to be sure that we had an intellectually defensible package. That package ultimately was about the same as when we sent it up, but it took him some months to satisfy himself on many of these points.

McCleskey: During that interval, from January to March, when this went through the Anne Wexler operation—that is, she and her groups were not involved in your own formulation—

Schlesinger: That's right.

Young: That would be mostly after it was announced.

Schlesinger: It would be after the announcement.

Young: My understanding of her operation was that it was focused on outside items of legislative interest.

Schlesinger: That's right, getting the interest group support for things that had been sent up.

Young: My impression was that Eizenstat's staff was doing an awful lot of political base touching with some groups during this period, when the energy policy was being held by the White House, (or you were satisfying yourselves or the argument was taking place). I remember I was sort of struck at some of the sessions about this kind of political base touching or coalition building that seemed to be going on around this issue out of Eizenstat's shop. But that's just an impression of mine. Is it something that you saw, was it part of what was going on?

Schlesinger: I think that was part of what was going on. There was an overreaction to the impression of the first couple of years of the administration when it was said that there was insufficient base touching. Now at that time you were delaying things much longer than you should have delayed them in order to go through, I think, the pro forma touching of bases, and there are times when you just can't wait to touch bases. Indeed, we would have been better off if we had, in '77, delayed for base touching, because there was nothing that was compelling the administration to proceed with an energy package other than the President's internal motivations. If that package had come in the summer of '77, we would have been a lot better off.

But in 1979 you had an external event that was driving the public and driving the Congress. You didn't have time for all of this base touching. We had everybody out on the street with his own views of the world from Jerry Brown to Ted Kennedy on one side; the business community was waving its arms; and meanwhile, the President wasn't deciding, as far as they could see.

Jones: You referred to the '79 initiative as a package; in a way it was a separable package.

Schlesinger: There were three packages.

Jones: Yes, you got the decontrol and the windfall profits tax that fit together, which got introduced before the other bundle of, what, the synfuels and the mobilization board.

Schlesinger: There were three packages, in that sense. The first was the emergency package that I've referred to or the Iranian response package. This was demand restraint, fuel switching, and cooperation with the allies. We should have gone immediately with that package. Instead the damn thing sat until March 15th approximately, over in the White House. Meanwhile, of course, since everybody on Capitol Hill knew about it, every subcommittee wanted a piece of my hide. It was the most interesting story in town, and as you know, whenever there's an interesting story, every subcommittee will find some way of exercising jurisdiction. That's one piece. It's a package of emergency measures to deal with Iranian response. Then there was a more fundamental thing.

Jones: And did that require congressional approval, some of this emergency—

Schlesinger: No, by and large, it did not. I think there were a few things that required it. But for the most part it was simply what we were going to do, and this would permit me to go to Capitol Hill and say, "Here are seventeen things that we are doing...." And instead, after a month of being badgered, I would say, "Here are the areas we are considering...." That's not very decisive, as we did not have Presidential approval. Then, there were the longer-run measures, like oil decontrol, which were discussed in the same time frame but were not part of emergency response measures. Shifting to natural gas, refraining from purchases in the spot market, things like that—that was all going on concurrently and that was on a separate track, and it came together more or less simultaneously with these Iranian response measures.

Jones: That's the window of opportunity.

Schlesinger: That's the window of opportunity. Then you charge along for another few months, and you have a lot of pressure with regard to synfuels, and that came along basically in July, with the announcements in the so-called "malaise speech." All of those were put together after the April discussions. Jimmy Carter had been deaf on synfuels programs, synfuels technologies, because of his commitments to environmentalists the first couple of years of the administration. Then he ultimately fell in love with these things to an undue degree. We were still banging them around when we flew to Tokyo in June of 1979 for the energy conference, and he was—

Young: You went with him?

Schlesinger: Yes, I went with him. Blumenthal and I pressed him modestly with regard to getting such a program started. But they were on a different track, and then they got swept up into the gas lines issue, the further increases in OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] prices, the post-Tokyo summit discussions, and all within the period in which there was a great deal of saying, "What the hell is Carter doing?" So this was part of his response to that pressure that came in, as I say, a third package. Now it got swept up into the discussions at Camp David that went far beyond energy.

Jones: But the synfuels and other conservation measures, solar and that sort of thing, had been discussed among the early proposals? I mean those were proposals that DOE was working on, and part of the discussion and the coordination was being done by Eizenstat—it's just that it never did come out as one big bundle—your earlier point—one big package of "here's what the President is going to do"—it was piecemeal.

Schlesinger: It was decided on piecemeal—it wasn't only packaged in a piecemeal way. You have a set of response measures. You have the big issue of decontrol that was left over from '78 because we didn't get the COED [Coal oil energy development]. And you have the general energy problem that was increasingly a political issue after May and June of 1979, but which had not been a political issue in the same sense before then, because you had the gas lines. In April, Jimmy Carter wouldn't have thought that he would ever embrace a program of synfuels.

Jones: But in a way events were starting to take charge, and you were put in the position of having to catch up to events, is that it?

Schlesinger: In different ways. In the case of the first set of events, they got away from us tactically, because we didn't have this Iranian response package on the Hill at the time we should have in order to deal with tactical questions from the Congress. The second issue, we remained reasonably in control of; to wit, the decontrol operations. The timing was reasonably good on that. The third issue got away from us strategically, in a sense. By strategically here, I mean we get the public and press uproar about what are we going to do about the energy problem. In the course of this, Carter, who had previously been deaf on synfuels programs, embraced it as a central feature. You got a tying together after the event of some of these things. So frequently these things get tied together after the event.

But Carter had his famous $88 billion that he was going to devote to synfuels programs, in order to create two-and-a half million barrels a day of oil or its equivalent domestic capacity. And the

$88 billion was a figure that came from nowhere so far as I can see, and against which I argued strenuously. But it was used as a way of dealing with the arguments against the windfall profits tax. Unnecessary counter-argument, by the way, since there was no way that the windfall profits tax wasn't going through. The administration, I think, made a minor mistake in tying the windfall tax to the synfuels programs.

Young: Through this fund, the energy-security fund.

Schlesinger: Right. There was to be $88 billion, ultimately. The fact of the matter is he really didn't want to spend more than $15 or $20 billion on these programs. The administration tied the tax unnecessarily, and also created an impression that synfuels programs were going to be far more costly than was actually the case. And it was this, "Oh, by the way, why don't we use the money from the windfall tax to finance the synfuels?" It was regarded as a way of strengthening the arguments on Capitol Hill. But when you strengthen arguments in that way, you're likely to create other problems for yourself.

Jones: Just one other thing, just for comparing '77 and '79. Correct me if I'm wrong, but—

Schlesinger: Seventy-seven, you'll recall, was self-initiated; '79 was only slightly self-initiated. You had the conclusion of, "What the hell do we do about oil now that we've lost the COED?" In that sense it's almost self-initiated, but for the most part we are responding to events, frequently quite belatedly.

Jones: When you were first coming out on that matter, do you feel that if you'd waited longer on decontrol you would not have been successful? You could have waited until after June 1st, right?

Schlesinger: Well, some time in the summer, as the oil prices kept rising, I think that the political opposition would have been such that Carter would not have gone along. I don't know when the window closed. I'm not even positive that it would have closed. But it's a lot easier to decontrol oil when people have not been bitten by a doubling of gasoline prices at the pump, a fifty percent increase. It's those periods that the public finds it particularly hard, and therefore the reaction of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party would have been much more severe in June and July than it was in April. And by June and July it was that issue, it was that we had acted, the rule makings had been issued.

Jones: My question on '77 and '79 was whether—it just seemed in a sense that you were more comfortable with the process in '77, even though there were all kinds of constraints, than you were in '79 given your new position and such a call for normalization, I just wanted to see if I was correct on that.

Schlesinger: Yes, if you mean the internal executive branch process, I was more comfortable with the situation, the over-all situation, in '79 than in '77. In the sense that I thought that the concerns touched off by the fall of the Shah and the shutdown of production in Iran gave us an opportunity to achieve some endless debate. I was a little uncomfortable, as I think I indicated, with the compression of the process in 1977. However, from the standpoint of the executive branch, the process worked less well, and that is not simply because others had to be consulted

rather than working things out, more or less—there was some executive branch consultation in ’77 but it was at a later stage to the point that the President and the staff and I had kept these things more or less to ourselves. Which may or may not be the right decision, but that’s the way it worked.

Young: Carter wanted it that way, didn’t he? He wanted to have things closely held until he was ready to announce something.

Schlesinger: Carter wanted it that way. And he hated the leaks. Seventy-nine, the problem was that the process didn’t work efficiently. It wasn’t that you had to consult all of these other people, but you were not doing it against deadlines, realistic deadlines, and the clock was running up there on Capitol Hill, and as a result you had steady delays.

For example, one of the issues that caused endless delay was the issue of deferring the reduction in the lead content in gasoline. The EPA people resisted that, vigorously—vigorously!—and not only were vigorous up front, they put down effective rearguard defense, dragging it out, delaying, and so on. Now in retrospect, I’m not sure that Doug Costle wasn’t right and the EPA people weren’t right and we weren’t wrong. As I start with that, we may well have been wrong in saying you should defer this because it’s going to save you whatever it turned out to be, a hundred thousand barrels a day or some such number. But the EPA people did not like that, and they kept fighting it and bringing up additional arguments. That argument should have been terminated eight weeks earlier, right or wrong—if they went with Doug Costle, that would have been fine; if they had done what the Energy Department wanted, that would have been fine, but allowing the argument to continue, they were leaving an administrative public vacuum while the critics of the administration or the interrogations of the administration had center stage.

Now the process, in my judgment, worked badly, and I think I said earlier that one of the downsides of Stu Eizenstat was that he was such a damn fair-minded man that he wanted everybody to have full opportunity to be heard, and that he did not want anybody to think that he was being arbitrary and capricious in terminating a discussion, and that such things lend themselves to exploitation. I’m not criticizing the EPA people, by the way; given their responsibilities, dragging out that process was quite understandable, but it should not be tolerated by the White House, because it was the President of the United States who was paying for all this in slow erosion of the public’s sense that he was on top of things.

Young: And that while these people were trying to get a consensus—

Schlesinger: —and trying to be fair-minded—and Stu Eizenstat’s a very fair-minded man—and he thought that this decision should not be made until all the evidence was on the table and so on. That’s admirable in some sense. But in politics, there is a clock that moves in conditions of emergency to which you’d better damn well pay attention, or you will lose your role as leader.

Jones: Contributes to the indecisiveness.

Young: Or, maybe some people thought this was good insurance for not being taken to task for having poorly thought it out or not doing their political homework. It could have been partly a

reaction to that, don't you think? And they wanted a success; they didn't want to be called another failure or something like that. You spoke a moment ago of perhaps an overcompensation for some of the criticisms received the first time.

Schlesinger: But once again, I don't know what failure and success mean at the level of—you've got a hell of a lot more success in the '77 package, ultimately.

Young: Yes, but I'm just talking about the bad rap that the administration got during that in the press.

Schlesinger: Well, I think it was something else. I think it was the administration worried about its constituencies. Now, every administration has to worry about its constituencies, but the basic question is, "Are we doing enough for this constituency so that they will not turn in anger against us?" And that's an almost technical question, whereas the administration tended to feel, "These are our friends and we shouldn't hurt their feelings." They were very apprehensive about hurting the feelings of people with whom they'd worked closely. Now in the case, they really liked the environmental folks, and they were afraid that they would make them angry.

Young: But at the end didn't they come to a somewhat more hardnosed view?

Schlesinger: Ultimately, but that, you see, is after three years of experience. The Wexler operation helped in that regard, because it turns out, and in particular with the issues of the time when they ultimately moved the synfuels package to the Hill, it was the support of American industry and the opposition of the environmentalists. It had taken them three years to learn that real power on Capitol Hill is held by industry, by all those damned special interests and vested interests that they had objected to, and those whom they had infused with the concept of the public interest, such as the environmentalists, industry regards in a similar way—the administration had not—turned out to have damned little influence. So they understood the terrain a lot better.

Young: Some of the people involved in the Wexler operation and some of those who were responsible for helping it get established often cite the Panama Canal experience as the basic learning experience, the model of where they learned the necessity for not relying on the force of the President's authority, not relying on all these qualities of innocence and freshness and belief that if it's right you can persuade people. Many of the staff will talk about the experience on the Panama Canal as the formative experience in terms of teaching them what was needed. They learned what was needed to get Congress to move, and they saw this essentially as a coalition-building operation that utilized the President's good capacities, strengths, for demonstrating to small groups and in the East Room that he knew the issues and having his Cabinet or the leading officers involved in that issue come in. I'm just thinking of this as possibly a compensation or an attempt to compensate for one of those personal vulnerabilities or weaknesses that you talked about Carter earlier.

Schlesinger: I think that that's right. I think that it's compensation in two ways—Jimmy Carter felt that it was—his heart wasn't in it. He felt himself unclean when he lobbied a Senator, and yet, when he appeared before these constituency groups in the Wexler operation, he could talk

about substance instead of asking for help. He could talk primarily about substance and he could close with, "We need your support," and these people were all flattered to visit with the President of the United States. It was a compensation for his weaknesses in lobbying members of Congress, in which his heart just never was. And in overcoming this freshness, as you said, that the evidence by itself is enough, he had to back it up with some believers that he'd convinced.

The Panama Canal was almost ideal as a lesson maker, because you were dealing with something that was, on a superficial level, very unpopular, and yet most of the elite groups of the society were prepared to say that it should be done. But it was very unpopular with the general public, so it's an area in which you have to mobilize the elites in order to overcome the widespread public reaction to the contrary. Now that was quite good, quite well done. Even then, the lobbying of the Hill was less than perfect. They had a good nose count, and Carter, since he believed so fervently in this, was for that issue a pretty good lobbyist, or a better lobbyist than he normally was because of the conviction and the fervor he conveyed.

But somewhere in that period Scoop Jackson got off the reservation, or he said he wasn't going to vote for it. He lost his temper one day over something or other and he said he was going to vote against the Panama Canal Treaty. Well, alarm bells go off all over the White House, and I am called in by the President and he says, "Would you please get Scoop's vote back?" in effect. So I trotted up to the Hill and Scoop laughed and he says, "Just don't worry too much about it, I'll vote for the Panama Canal Treaty," he said. "This is momentary irritation."

But Bob Strauss used to argue that Jimmy Carter had everybody in some pigeonhole. He was pigeonholed in terms of relations with the business community; I was pigeonholed as a planner. He said, "He doesn't seem to realize that everyone's got multiple assets." He said that it just came as a total surprise to him that day when reminded that I had a personal rapport with Scoop Jackson, that he thought of me in a lobbying role. Most of the time he would think of me in some other role, and it was only the desperation of the moment that turned him in that direction.

Strong: Planner was a good pigeonhole to be in.

Schlesinger: Yes, I found, as I mentioned at lunch, that I particularly, in retrospect, liked being in the Nixon administration pigeonholed in government rather than in politics.

Young: Those pigeonholes were somewhat bigger than I think Carter's were.

Strong: One ether question to complete the '79 energy story. What connection did you have with Camp David, the domestic summit, and the decisions that were going on there with regard to energy or other things? The cancellation of the energy speech, for example. Did you get any forewarning, may I ask, on your trip to Tokyo?

Young: Did he seem fed up entirely at that point?

Schlesinger: No, no he was as affable as he normally was.

Young: He had cancelled his vacation.

Schlesinger: That came in July, though—that was after the Tokyo summit. He was in a good mood in Tokyo and thought that he'd been more persuasive with his fellow heads of state than he had been. It was, once again, Carter's belief that in such matters the power of one's arguments was more important than the power of one's nation. He attempted more to reason with his fellow heads of state. Ronald Reagan doesn't do that. Basically his position is, "I'm head of the United States of America, and that means that I've got veto power in this whole association, so.…" Other people don't think of Ronald Reagan as an expert on substantive detail.

But Carter was in quite a good mood basically over there in Tokyo. Whatever happened, he got a telegram, a cable while he was in Tokyo, from Stuart, which said, "Christ, we're going nuts about the energy issues over here and you've got to do something." But he proceeded in his own systematic way to do something in Tokyo rather than on the domestic scene. Then he came back, and he decided to retire to Camp David to make up an energy speech, as I recall it—but, you know, lots of people are more knowledgeable than I am about this—make up an energy speech, and then this gradually grew, and you had this big fight between Caddell and Mondale, in particular—Mondale, in particular—Mondale just thought that Caddell's notions about malaise and whatnot were crazy—and there was a feeling that the thing was going on too long, that he was too much out of touch. Now there's a general recognition that it pays a President to be a little bit mysterious, and he was creating an aura of mystery and all of that was very helpful, but it probably went on too long.

On the half of the speech that was concerned with malaise and all of that, I had nothing to do. On the half of the speech that was the substantive energy policy, most of the proposals had been ours in one form or another, and the analysis of what ultimately came out was done, again, by the Energy Department. I went up to Camp David, I can't remember now whether it was a day meeting or two days' meetings—a one-day meeting, I think. I may have gone up on two occasions, I just can't remember. I had one meeting with a lot of people from the energy industry, or people interested in energy, and one meeting, essentially, with congressional types and the like, and that was largely talk, with lots of people reiterating positions that they had previously held, business people talking about the need for greater government support, various people pleading for synfuels programs and the like. It was mostly talk and reiteration of positions—quite useful, because a President has to show that he's consulting with various groups. So I was engaged in half of the process, but not the other half of the Camp David process.

Now I had talked to Carter two or three times about leaving, the first time after we got the energy bill in 1978—and some things that I want to talk about that are on the foreign policy scene, I keep making little notes to myself—then in the spring of '78 I urged him to let go, after the squabbles about oil decontrol, because—

Jones: Nineteen seventy-nine.

Schlesinger: I'm sorry, 1979—because I thought that one of the reasons I was willing to stay throughout '78, after '78, was that I felt that we hadn't finished the oil problem, and I wanted to get that done. I was quite prepared, after the energy legislation ended, to stay on. But then when

all of the fights over oil occurred, some time in May/June, I was more insistent with Carter that I leave. And when I was up at Camp David, amongst other things, he said that he was going to accept my resignation. This would have been early July. And then he proceeded to offer me all sorts of other positions, which I proceeded to decline. One of the things that did occur at Camp David, though, was his indicating that I would go.

Then, subsequent to that time, of course, he held this famous Cabinet meeting that kind of blew apart, I thought, whatever good effects he had gotten for himself by the Camp David address. He just demonstrated to those in the public that he wasn't in control of his own administration. But that had not been—I had not foreseen that, needless to say, at the time I was up at Camp David.

Jones: And your agreement between you and the President, that had been finalized, that you were going to resign?

Schlesinger: Yes.

Jones: Do you recall any discussion, were you in on any discussion, or was there reported to you any discussion of the political, strategic implications of, on the one hand, we've got to take charge, the whole crisis of confidence speech, what was included in that speech, on the one hand, and the Cabinet shakeup on the other? Those two events might have some relationship to one another?

Schlesinger: No. I never understood—I've talked to the people involved. That was a reflection of a number of things, none of which fit together very well. The intent was to show the President in charge, but it wound up the wrong way. It showed him not in charge, and part of it was that there was a great deal of hostile feeling about two of the Cabinet members, most particularly about Joe Califano and secondarily, but still substantially, about Mike Blumenthal. And that feeling about Mike Blumenthal was most harbored by, I believe, Hamilton Jordan, tracing back in part to the Lance affair. You go back and you find that that Lance affair is a very critical element in the history of that administration. But there was a great deal of resentment of Blumenthal for not controlling the Comptroller of the Currency better, and they thought that he was not supporting the President, and so on, and Mike's relations with the White House staff and particularly with Hamilton were always touchy. So this became an opportunity for people to pay off scores.

Now there's no reason you can't change your Cabinet members; indeed, there's every reason once in a while to do so. But don't do it wholesale, except as Nixon did at the change of administration—now that is not a particularly clean cut operation either, he appeared too ruthless, but it didn't suggest to anybody that Nixon was not in charge. In Carter's case, it suggested that. It had an adverse reaction overseas. It sounded overseas as if a parliamentary system—that the government has fallen, the whole Cabinet has handed in. Well, immediately, they had to say it doesn't apply to the National Security people, dance around and so on, so they hadn't thought that one out in advance.

I think that Jerry Rafshoon was the principal architect of the public activities, and that was just a mistake. That fed in the antagonism to the Blumenthal thing. Then, Brock Adams came out of the corner with some calculation of his own that I didn't understand, and—

Young: It had to do with the charts of an appointee in his department and the President's right to pass on his nominee.

Schlesinger: You had the President, instead of looking in charge, looking simply beleaguered, and it was a miscalculation on, I think, Rafshoon's part, that this was going to be a good thing.

I think that there was a good deal of Carter emotionalism in that, too, because he was in a very peculiar mood that day in the Cabinet meeting. Remember, he was a very polite man, and always very careful—too polite, as I said earlier. Just too damn polite to Helmut Schmidt—most particularly to Helmut Schmidt—but he was polite under almost all circumstances as a well bred, small-town Georgian should be, and the consequence was that people who should have been brought up short weren't. And in July he lost his temper, and he just lashed out at Andy Young, and by implication at least, Joe Califano, at that meeting, in a way that was not particularly Presidential.

It was in some ways a very funny meeting, I've got to say. I'll have this buried in your transcript, but about halfway through the meeting, Bob Strauss, who always liked to be the center of attention, came in, and Carter had lashed out at Andy Young and lashed out at Califano, and then Vance had made the suggestion that everybody hand in their resignations, and the mood of most of the participants was quite bleak—not mine, because I had already made my prior arrangements with him—so I was almost in the position of an interested bystander.

About this time Bob Strauss comes into the meeting, and he always sits at my right, and he just loved to be the center of attention, he could never come into a room without immediately making some jokes. And he proceeds to make a set of jokes, which in light of the circumstances and history were the most ill-timed set I've ever heard. He looks around the table, he says, "You know, Mr. President, these people aren't doing you a bit of good, what you ought to do is ask for all their resignations." At which point I passed him a note that said, "Bob, shut up. You don't know what's been going on in here, but this is not the time for any further wisecracks." It was really rather humorous in its own strange way.

Young: Didn't produce much laughter, though.

Schlesinger: No, it did not. You know, Bob usually expected to get a lot of rapport from his audience, and was always prepared to go on cracking until he developed that rapport, but you could see that if he continued with this line of humor that the mood of support was going to diminish rather than increase. In any event, Carter just handled that very badly, and whatever benefit he was going to get out of that prior speech just disappeared altogether. Now, I'm inclined to think that Fritz Mondale was right, and that you don't go and talk to the American people about the malaise, particularly if it's true. That's not the way you win plaudits; it may be the way you preach to them, but no, the President may have a bully pulpit there but he'd better be damn sparing when he takes up the role of preacher.

Young: There was a good deal of favorable comment to the speech and that popularity ratings went up, in the short run, whatever. I think you're right, Carter himself says that he certainly handled the Cabinet business badly and dissipated a lot of the—

Schlesinger: It was plain to me as of that day that he was a gone duck as far as Presidency was concerned, I did not see how he was going to come back. Now he had been in enough trouble—just as we were discussing at lunch, about what the effects would be of a renewed wave of layoffs on Reagan. The one area that Carter had to be sure-footed was that when he went up and said I'm going to be a leader and not a manager, that he had to be sure-footed in his leadership ability and not seem to be a beleaguered President who didn't know how to handle his Cabinet.

Young: And whatever negatives developed on that front were certainly worsened by the Iranian hostage situation in which he could not be in charge.

Schlesinger: He could be in charge.

Young: Well, it was a situation that he couldn't control very easily.

Strong: You may want to postpone this subject, but I want to go back to the fall of the Shah and the events leading up to the '79 energy crisis and—

Jones: Let me just get in one question about the Camp David thing before we do that, if I just—

Schlesinger: Let me say something. You're in international relations primarily, aren't you? Because I've got a whole set of things that I wanted to talk about on the international scene, and I should point out that the Department of Energy spends most of its money in the national security area. I've got a whole list of things such as comprehensive test ban, Helmut Schmidt, China, Israel, neutron bomb—

Young: Okay, and you also have some lists from this morning that I've noted. The Lance problem, Kirbo, after Lance left, and then you circled something about coalition building, which you may not have finished with.

Thompson: Do you want to add to the foreign policy list on that the two voices issue? Roosevelt seemed to get away with that, Eleanor Roosevelt's famous story about some man came in and Roosevelt agreed with him and then [Harold, sr.] Ickes came and Roosevelt agreed with him, and Eleanor Roosevelt said, "They said absolutely the opposite things, how can you agree with both of them?" and he said, "I agree with you." So with all this panoply of different voices, Roosevelt made it but Carter seemed almost immediately to become an object of criticism—the Annapolis speech is a big issue. Then, the other thing that we touched on is that we've gotten conflicting views on the Panama Treaty in relation to SALT. [Landon] Butler and the White House people said Panama was running around the track in your sweat suit and then you go on to SALT after you've had that lesson. Other people have said that the administration invested so much time and effort that it was too late for SALT to do anything this administration.

Schlesinger: Mm-hmm. Well, I think the second one—they shot a good deal of their political capital, for example, very clearly when they got Howard Baker—his relationship with Carter was pretty good—to go along with the Panama Canal Treaty. They did him sufficient damage in the state of Tennessee that he had to separate himself from the President on SALT issues. One of the problems you have with Congress in its present mood and the public in its present mood is that you've got a very limited amount of political capital to burn. And they probably could have passed SALT II if they didn't have the Panama Canal Treaty burning up in advance. Anyhow, before we depart from the Department of Energy, I wanted to remind you that the Department had this other side, which in some ways was closer to my heart than was energy.

Jones: May I ask just one last question?

Young: Okay, and then we'll get to—

Schlesinger: I want to talk about the Comprehensive Test Ban in this package, too; you might say it comes right in the midst of SALT and Panama.

Jones: When you met with Carter in regard to your resignation, were critical strategic issues raised by the President, or by yourself, as to say frustration over energy led to Camp David, at least in part, and it might have been the President's reaction, "Gee, this is the wrong time to have my Energy Secretary stepping down, but we've got this package, we've got to do something, and it doesn't look that good to have.…" Was that kind of issue raised?

Schlesinger: No, and I was perfectly prepared to see that package through, if need be. We raised this subject again just before the trip to the Middle East—oh, to Japan; I've got Israel on my mind because that bears very closely on the Carter way of doing business, and I want to come back to that—but we discussed this before we went to Tokyo, and I pointed out that because of the gas lines and so forth, my utility as a lightning rod was diminishing, and that he might very well at this stage be far better off to have somebody else who wouldn't have these scars on him. Then he said, basically, that he'd think about it, and encouraged me not to act precipitately, and all that sort of thing. When we came back from Tokyo, it was evident that we were going to have an energy package, but he was reacting, I think, to what I had previously said to him, and not thinking that a change at that juncture was bad legislatively, however useful it might have been in the area of public opinion. So he had a conflict.

Now, he did cause some confusion in the industry and in the Congress by changing at that time, because after the speech I was lobbying on Capitol Hill for the package, and that went on for about, maybe ten days, and then it became evident on Capitol Hill that I wasn't going to be the Energy Secretary much longer. Indeed my resignation was accepted publicly. And then for another month, roughly, I was still lobbying on Capitol Hill with, to say the least, very much diminished clout. I was no longer—even though the White House said that I was speaking for the President, given the way people are on Capitol Hill, they figured that that probably was an exaggeration at best, and certainly wasn't going to be true very long. So you had that reaction, and you had an unfavorable reaction in the industry, which was prepared to react unfavorably to almost anything Jimmy Carter did. It's a very interesting point, because it underscores how once

you had set something in train the changes in circumstances did not lead you to review that decision.

Strong: Maybe the first question to ask about Iran, which may preclude asking lots of other questions, the United States had it within its power to save the Shah, or was this a circumstance that Carter encountered?

Schlesinger: We don't know the answer to that. And we certainly did not know at the time. The most powerful argument that you can make that the Shah was doomed was based on something that intelligence did not reveal at the time, which was that the Shah was mortally ill. I myself am inclined to feel, and this is a retrospective view, I didn't think it at the time—I thought we should try and save the Shah—but in retrospect, if we'd known that he was mortally ill, we might well have attempted to save the monarchy and have withdrawn, that the act of withdrawal of the Shah for medical reasons might have helped in that transition.

There is in the United States a tendency to see as inevitable political developments that have taken place. In the case of Iran, the Shah was mishandling the public. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, he would authorize the rough handling or the shooting of demonstrators, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, he would have bouts of conscience and apologize about it. He was not giving the impression either of being prepared to make reconciling moves, which would have been better if they'd come before Abidjan, or alternatively, that he was prepared to be a consistent master of force. He did not want to use the mailed fist, as he put it. He did not want to rule as a result of blood. But there was probably no reason for all of that. We should have cut off, one way or another, communications between [Ruhollah] Khomeini and his groups early on—reasonably early on. That would have had an interesting effect inside of Iran. In addition, this is the most significant thing, we knew who the four or five hundred ringleaders were in the country. When you know who the ringleaders are, in a country in which you do not have *habeas corpus*, you don't go around shooting numerous strange demonstrators on the street. You round up the ringleaders.

All those who say the fall of the Shah was inevitable, (e.g. counting public opinion, he was unpopular in the country) do not understand the great resources of power that are available to a government. In 1984, we should understand that very clearly, or far more clearly, because we have seen how effective a [Wojciech] Jaruzelski can be when he decides to have a crackdown; which is, by God, he gets on top of communications, he rounds up the ringleaders, and so on.

Now it would have required measures of that sort, effectively implemented. The Shah's sickness, indeed the Shah's character, raise questions whether it could have been. The important thing for the administration to have done was to have decided where it was going. In that time frame I did not agree at all with George Ball, who had come in as a special advisor, but the important thing to happen at that time was for the President to have acted decisively and say, "We're going with the Ball strategy"—coalition government, and I myself think it was naïve to talk about this council of notables and so on as being able to forestall that. There was only one force in the country, the military, and one institution, and that was the monarchy, and with the Shah's withdrawal, the institution around which the military could rally simply evaporated. The points

that I made to Carter directly in that rather cold testy meeting that we had had in January of '79, when he told me that he was going to send Dutch [Robert] Huyser over there, and—

Strong: Didn't you propose Brzezinski be sent?

Schlesinger: I proposed at that time that Brzezinski be sent. I think I probably said, and I can't remember the conversation that precisely, that Brzezinski or myself or something of that sort. I would have preferred to have said, "Send Kissinger." The fact is, that although the Shah was developing some trust in Brzezinski, he hadn't known Brzezinski from the old days as he had known Kissinger and myself, and he would take a message from one or the other of us much more—embrace a message from one of us to a degree that would not be the case with other people. And I also argued very strongly that this had to be a high-level person, publicly visible, with the full confidence of the President of the United States.

And they wound up with Dutch Huyser, whose merits on substantive issues I don't think it's necessary to go right into now. They were not altogether good, though, because the institution that you wanted in that country to support, rally around, was the army, and the army in Iran had been envious of the air force, because the air force was getting all of the money, and you send in one of the American blue-suiters who is a counterpart of these fellows who are their rivals. If you take an American army general, you would have had a more natural rapport. But more important than that is that Dutch Huyser was plucked out of Europe, he had never, to that point, seen Jimmy Carter, he could not be regarded as a high-level representative of the President of the United States.

Now all of this, as I hinted earlier, occurred belatedly. This should have been done in November, rather than in January. Indeed, it should have been done before November. By the time they sent Huyser I had written off the country. But I don't think that one should judge that it was impossible to save the country. Up until the time of the Abidjan incident, I think that the appropriate moves, mostly concession, but some minimal consistent force could have salvaged the throne. After Abidjan, chances declined significantly. When they put in the military government, it should have been salvaged if you had a forceful enough leader—it could have been salvaged. If you were prepared, if the Shah was prepared to cut off communications from Khomeini.

The French are superb at having accidents with their telephone system. Simply superb! "Monsieur, I do not understand what is going on. We will make every effort to fix it!" And weeks go by and they cannot fix it. They are just splendid. No, you isolate Khomeini, which could have a tremendous impact on the country. You round up the ringleaders, and you don't go around indiscriminately shooting people in the street. And then, if you do shoot them, don't apologize the next day. The Shah was up and down.

Now, the reason he was up and down was partly the sickness, partly the character, and to a large extent the failure of Americans to make clear what they wanted. The Shah kept, in effect, insisting that the Americans tell him what to do, and we kept insisting that, "We are only outsiders. This is your country." We did not want to take the responsibility of telling him to crack down, partly from human rights, so forth. And in those circumstances you're either going

to have—after Abidjan you're either going to have to have a crackdown, the rounding up of all the ringleaders and cowing the opposition—and buying off parts of the opposition. Reverse yourself with regard to the equalization for women; elevate the Muslim clergy, restore their stipends; buy off the clergy, buy off the bazaar, and head off brother Khomeini and the more radical forces. Effectively organize their tremendous instruments of power in the hands of government. We just waffled and wobbled, and the Shah did so even more. So I think that, although the prospects were diminishing, it was still salvageable. Whether there was a thirty percent chance in November, a ten percent chance—I'm not going to say—it was certainly less than fifty percent by November.

Strong: And was the impending crisis brought to the President's attention early enough?

Schlesinger: I do not know the answer to that question because I myself was too much absorbed with the energy legislation. By the time I turned away from domestic issues, as it were, to this international threat, it was very late in the game. I have got to think that it was inadequately done. I remember in March of 1978, I got a letter from a former subordinate of mine in the Pentagon. The letter was basically two lines: "Sir: The Shah is in mortal peril." A lot better than our intelligence, by the way. This was early on. Now, my own judgment, and I don't know the details, you'd have to talk to Brzezinski and others, but my own impression is that because of the President's own ambivalence about the Shah and his role, this was not effectively brought to his attention.

I have a little evidence of that, in that when I made my own rounds in November and December of 1978, the top topics appeared to me to be reasonably novel in the eyes of those to whom I was making the speeches, all of the President's political advisors. So, I would think that it was not in the forefront of things to which he was attending, partly because he had the Panama Canal. You know, when Jimmy Carter gets into something, he gets into it. If Panama was number one, Panama, by God, was number one! You remember that Jimmy Carter got morally involved in questions of Panama, and he went around citing this book, *Land Between the Seas* or *Road Between the Seas* or whatever the hell it was called, talking about the shameful things that we had done in Panama and so forth, and heaping ashes upon the back of the United States. Now I think that that is just plumb wrong. I cite it because it shows how deeply engaged he was emotionally with the Panama issue. It was very hard to get the attention of the White House or the President on issues in which he was not fully engaged.

Strong: Early in the Shah's troubles he has the other Camp David process going, which absorbed him. So, is Iran then not a good case of the Brzezinski-Vance problems?

Schlesinger: Oh, it's a superb case. I'm sorry, did I say something that suggested the contrary?

Strong: No, I made that assumption because it hadn't come to his attention, and it wasn't that he was getting divided advice. It was that the issue came to him perhaps too late, maybe when events were—

Schlesinger: I wish I could say that. I think the issue came to him too late, but he continued to move between the two camps even at that late date. I'll give you an illustration of that. Toward

the end of December, we had a rump NSC meeting in Brzezinski's office. And I said that we ought to move a carrier down to the mouth of the Persian Gulf, that this was not so much an attempt to intimidate the Iranians or intimidate the Russians, but simply to give comfort to the Saudis that the Americans were there and that they had a substantial military force. And Cy Vance went along with a suggestion that we move, I think it was the *Constellation*. We move it out of Subic Bay and we consult the President before it went through the Straits of Malacca. Well, in my view that was a decision to move it to the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, because who would think of turning back a carrier. This was just to gain us a couple of days' time.

Now we were all agreed on that. Something happened. I don't know precisely what happened, and I never really inquired, I was so appalled by the subsequent events. But Cy Vance went up to Camp David sometime after the 25th of December, sometime after Christmas day, and suddenly I hear that the carrier that was down there at the Straits of Malacca had been ordered back to Subic Bay, which was the worst possible outcome: marching up the hill and marching down again. It provided only a display of the indecisiveness of the administration. If I'd ever dreamed that the decision would be reversed, I never would have made the suggestion in the first place. The one thing that you do in that kind of a business is, when you start down some road, don't simply turn back.

Now, George Ball worked very closely with the people in the Department of State, particularly with Henry Precht, as I recall it, and certainly was on the same wavelength as Cy Vance. As I said earlier, I didn't agree with George Ball. But there was a proposal from George Ball, early in December, and the President never really decided which way he was going to do it. I dwell on this because I have always thought that this whole handling of the Middle Eastern situation was the low point of the Carter Presidency. And it never got much better thereafter, in terms of handling the Middle Eastern situation.

I thought, for example, that the shenanigans of [Muammar] Gaddafi after the burning of the embassy in Tripoli was that same kind of thing, that they just didn't have a feel for how to behave—Gaddafi's man in Washington should have been dressed down by an Assistant Secretary of State; instead, all of a sudden he's ushered into the Oval Office. Now, that's not the way you handle these things. Well, have I talked about Iran sufficiently?

Strong: I think so.

Thompson: One of the questions that does come up is, is this a case of two strong groups, each having a particular vision of foreign policy and the relation between force and policy, fighting an unresolved struggle? Or, is it an issue of the President, for whatever reason, failing to do what Eisenhower did with [John Foster] Dulles, and [Harry] Truman did with [Dean] Acheson, actually making a decision that somebody was in charge of diplomatic and political tactics and staying with them?

Schlesinger: I think that it's mostly the latter. Going back, I don't know in retrospect whether the Shah could be saved in view of his illness, which was obviously helping to cripple his will. And at that time, I did not know about the cancer. Indeed, U.S. intelligence did not know about the cancer. It's mostly the latter. But, it also is a change in Carter's views, which he was

unwilling to state to the individuals involved. He gradually began to adopt more of Brzezinski's views, and he separated himself more from Vance's views, but he was unwilling to say to them, "I'm rebalancing within the administration." He just responded, and as Brzezinski's influence rose with Carter, he took more and more advantage of that.

In my judgment, it is mostly the unwillingness of the President to establish clear lines, clear rules in which these different views can be expressed. And not to recognize, as Jimmy Carter would not recognize, the degree to which certain views are irreconcilable with another's views. You cannot embrace the power perspective of Brzezinski and the moral, but mainly, legal perspective of Cy Vance simultaneously. That was Jimmy Carter the Sunday school teacher. He believes, down here in his viscera, that if he can get people of good will together in a room and explain their positions, that ultimately you can have some kind of reconciliation. He is a believer in reconciliation. Indeed, that's why he was able to be effective in the Camp David issue when no one else would possibly have believed that these irreconcilables could be brought together.

But he saw possibilities within his own administration that, in my judgment, ultimately can be said not to exist. The President ought to decide who his principal agent is, and make it clear to everybody who he is. A President can run the foreign policy side in various ways. He can run it as Eisenhower did with Dulles, or Truman with Acheson; he can run it as Nixon did with Kissinger, or Ford did with Kissinger in another role. But he's got to have a principal agent. If he is wise he will have a principal agent. And Carter didn't do that. He started with Vance as his principal agent, and then as he lost confidence in Vance, Brzezinski's role grew, but the nominal authority tended to be in the State Department and it was very unclear. Carter wouldn't decide.

This is, I think, another example of the Carter way of doing things, to which I alluded earlier. He wanted that split between Energy and Interior so that problems would be brought to his desk. That was unwise in those circumstances, but not crippling. In matters of foreign policy, that is not only unwise, it can be crippling. It creates generalized confusion. And where the problems are not brought to his desk you just have the bureaucracies going on contending one with another, more or less endlessly. A lot of that happened in the Iranian case.

Young: But you're suggesting that he knew what he was doing when he set up these—

Schlesinger: No, no I don't think he—no, I draw an analogy—

Young: In the analogy you suggested that it was deliberate.

Schlesinger: I think that it was. In the case of Energy and Interior it was indeed deliberate, thought out, with a substantial understanding of the consequences, that everything was going to wind up on his desk. In the case of the Brzezinski-Vance differences, it was sort of half-deliberate, in the sense that, "Well, I don't mind their coming to me." But he did not understand that they would not necessarily come to him for resolution, given the personalities involved. With Vance being a gentleman inclined to be shy, and Brzezinski not being the least bit shy about being prepared to speak in the President's name. So that you didn't get, given the personalities involved, a resolution, and I don't think he recognized that. He also did not recognize how great the gulf was. In the case of environment/energy, it was pretty obvious that

there are fundamental clashes between energy supply and protecting the environment. It was not clear to him, partly because of his very great limitations in foreign policy and bringing to it a kind of missionary zeal, to what extent in this area men of good will can fundamentally disagree.

Young: Zbig, of course, says that Carter is one of those people who's going to have a dominant National Security Advisor because he himself wishes to be dominant in the policy process. That's his explanation. Zbig also says, picking up on your comment, Carter did not always realize the gulf between these two approaches and the incompatibility between them, or if he did, it didn't bother him.

Schlesinger: The gulf grew.

Young: Zbig says still they were agreed on approaches more of the time than they were disagreed, but it wasn't across the board. You think that's wrong? Give us your views on that.

Schlesinger: This is an *ex post facto* rationalization, it is not the way it started. When it started, the last thing that Carter wanted was a publicly identified National Security Advisor like Henry Kissinger. Vance was very much the dominant figure in Carter's mind, and it was not a question of an internal tension. Vance was too much the gentleman in many ways. Increasingly Carter tended to doubt Vance's judgment on certain things, and he was encouraged in his doubts by Zbig, and that a year and a half or two after all this started, Carter had turned more to Brzezinski. That was not the original division of power, and it was only after all of these events that you get this convenient rationalization that from the first Carter intended to run foreign policy himself through his National Security Advisor. Zbig, if you'll remember, is kind of a genius at articulating theories that at least plausibly are connected to the facts, but also tend to sort of ignore some of the other facts. Carter didn't intend to do things that way.

Young: Also, Carter himself says, I believe, in his memoirs and—some of his disappointments with Vance—

Schlesinger: By that time he was quite angry with Cy Vance, by the time he writes his memoirs. He takes, I think, unkind cuts at Cy that are unnecessary. Partly because Cy is such a blasted gentleman that he doesn't fire back.

Young: And not a figure who apparently is going to take on a public role as some Secretaries of State might, and as some Presidents might wish, in terms of explicator of policy at home.

Schlesinger: But I'm sure that Zbig and the President talked about this in the last year and a half, and that Zbig had this splendid theory to explain not only what Carter wanted to do with his last two years in office, but which explained that this was a consistent theme throughout the four years. And that's a splendid rationalization that just flat doesn't happen to be true.

Strong: I have some arms control questions. Just a preliminary one: were you consulted on the first SALT package that Vance took to Moscow?

Schlesinger: No, I was not. As a matter of fact, I had relatively little to do with the SALT discussions at all, which I preferred in any event; it was not my direct responsibility.

Young: This is just a—almost a housekeeping question: you referred to a rump of the NSC; did you attend regularly the NSC meetings?

Schlesinger: No, I didn't—only sporadically, and when I attended one or two meetings with regard to the neutron bomb, CTB [comprehensive test ban]—full treatment on the CTB—and generally the discussions on Iran, at the least, the excuse was my energy portfolio, but the real reason was that I was a source of support for Brzezinski, who was issuing the invitations. But aside from that, no.

Strong: The description of Carter on Iran sounds like a conventional description of Carter on the neutron bomb—is that correct?

Schlesinger: I'm sorry, I missed that.

Strong: A President caught between Brzezinski and Vance—deciding one way or another—

Schlesinger: No, wrong, absolutely wrong. All of Carter's advisors, uniformly, were opposed to his decision. Carter was not caught between two schools. It was early in the Carter administration, when Carter was, if somewhat disheartened by the Lance episode and all that, still fairly confident that moral decisions were important on matters such as nuclear arms, and he proceeded with his decision against the advice of everybody. Indeed, even Paul Warnke, who one would not have expected to be a proponent, opposed to the way Carter finally came down. That was not Carter wobbling between various factions, that was Carter exercising his moral judgment.

Strong: Why was it reported as Carter wobbling?

Schlesinger: I don't know. I didn't realize it had been reported that way. It was my impression that the press picked up that he had overruled all of his advisors on this issue. You know the story as to why he did all this, do you?

Strong: I don't think so.

Schlesinger: As you know, he was a little bit apprehensive; he was quite ambivalent about nuclear weapons in general. He asked Schmidt to say that he would accept the neutron bomb if it were produced, and got quite insistent on it. Schmidt did his usual run for cover, which was to say, "I can accept this if you get two other countries to go along, and I cannot publicly ask for the neutron bomb." Incidentally, that was quite right, given the German politics, which were very costly to Schmidt. A Carter decision to go with the neutron bomb was virtually cost-free for him, and Carter should have taken responsibility himself, but he didn't. He dug in his feet on this moral issue that here are these characters in Europe, and particularly Helmut Schmidt, saying, "You people go ahead and produce the neutron bomb and then we'll decide, later on, whether we will permit what you've spent your money on to be deployed." So Carter wanted to tie the

deployment decision closely into the production decision; the Europeans, and most notably Schmidt, did not. Carter got on a moral high horse about that.

Carter had gotten a very bad rap, some of it deserved, some of it not deserved, on that. But Schmidt has used this inside of Europe as an indication of Carter's unilaterally making a mess of things. It was not. The responsibility for that mess was as much Helmut Schmidt's as Jimmy Carter's. Schmidt should have handled it quite differently. He should have said, as I hinted before, "Look, Jimmy, you are the great leader of the West. We in Europe in our small- and medium-sized European countries must depend upon you and your wisdom. In many things we will be able to support you and take some political heat off you, but you and I are also politicians, and you know that sometimes you will have to take political heat from me. Think of my situation in Germany, think of my situation in the SPB—Jimmy, this time you're going to have to get out front, I cannot do it." And with a mixture of reason and flattery he could have brought Carter around, but instead Helmut was his vain self and missed that opportunity. Generally speaking, Schmidt had every opportunity to lead Carter along the paths of what he regarded as responsible leadership, and he threw them away, because of irritation, personal vanity, what-have-you. But the outcome was as much Schmidt's responsibility as it was Carter's.

Now Carter handled it very badly, because there had been these steady negotiations between ourselves and the Europeans, which were a consequence of a prior decision to deploy—to produce and to deploy. And Carter just upset the applecart and everybody was rightfully irritated with him for doing so. But it was not the confused Jimmy Carter. It was the self-righteous Jimmy Carter.

Thompson: Could we talk about the comprehensive test ban?

Schlesinger: Well, let me mention an event that occurred in 1979 that I always found to be most revealing about Jimmy Carter's strengths and weaknesses—I shouldn't even say weaknesses in this connection—the strengths and the drawbacks of his strengths.

In 1979, I reminded Carter of this when he was writing his memoirs, I went to him and explained to him that we were about to enter into negotiations with the Israelis to provide Israel with oil in the event of a cut-off of supplies by other suppliers, that this had been agreed to, if you will recall, by Kissinger somewhere in around 1975 and that we were just completing the negotiations of the details. He was having some kind of squabble with the Israelis, and I said, "Well, Mr. President, do you want me to complete the negotiations, or to refrain from completing the negotiations?" I don't remember whether I used these precise words.

And he said, "Why of course, if we made the promise to them, we have to enter an agreement to fulfill another administration." The reason I had gone to the President before proceeding was that that was just the kind of thing Henry Kissinger loved—there was a bit of leverage that could have been employed diplomatically, and have sold the same commitment to them three times. Carter, even when I explained that this could be a piece of leverage for him in whatever difficulties he might have, simply found the whole notion of using a prior promise for subsequent leverage morally repellant. "Of course we have given our word."

Now, as I say, I always found that a very revealing incident about Carter, because it showed the man at his most decent, most moral, perhaps some element of undue innocence. Most people who play in the international game will not refrain, shall I say, from exploiting that potential piece of leverage, but Carter simply said, "Go ahead and complete it." Not even reaching for any gratitude, as it were, from the Israelis for having lived up to a commitment of a prior administration. And he delegated the negotiations to the Energy Department, just back of the hand.

And this is quite similar in some ways to what I said earlier about the decontrol of oil and what Lyndon Johnson would have gotten out of it. Carter should have at least extracted some gratitude, if not something more solid, for being prepared to live up to the commitments of a prior administration. But as I say, I was perfectly relieved not to get into that position of having to hedge to the Israelis about a prior commitment of the U.S. government. I was not prepared to say, "Mr. President, you ought to milk these things for more than you are." And I found it a most intriguing indication of Jimmy Carter at his absolute moral best: none of the somewhat strange and shady dealings that we had had with the Israelis in the earlier period, in which we would make direct promises to them and then we would defer, or even hedge on those commitments.

Jones: And ironically, the way it works out, not even getting gratitude from it, necessarily, and therefore he may be looked at in a lesser light.

Schlesinger: It was a mistake. It was a serious mistake, because Israel's supporters in the United States have never regarded Jimmy Carter as much of a friend, and here was a case in which he did something in a way that was far more beneficial to Israel than any other administration, and for the most part they don't know about Israel's supporters. But as I say, that was not what he was interested in. He was not interested in rhetoric; he was not interested in, for the most part, gratitude.

Young: He apparently did not put, in the normal sense, at least in the way that you expect politically, a high premium on his own popularity. He just did too many things that were incompatible with a person motivated to maintaining popularity. Either he had some kind of enormous self-confidence in his ability to prevail, or some very mistaken notion of the solidity of his public support—which he doesn't communicate. In fact, he told us he probably would have lost the election if it had been held two weeks later, and he challenges the notion that he had a solid base of popular support off of which he could draw.

Schlesinger: I don't think he felt that way in '77. I think that he felt at that time that he was a man of destiny. I think that this is a result of interviewing him in 1982.

Young:—after he had lost an election—

Schlesinger: —and that he had lost a lot more than the election: he had lost his self-confidence over those intervening years. But he would not do anything—I think that in '76-'77, he thought that his popular base was probably, as new politicians will, something that was just there, that could be taken for granted, and he didn't have to indulge in all the tricky little actions that other politicians had to do to sustain that base.

Young: Interestingly enough, he made more public appearances in more meetings around the country and in Washington and to citizen groups by far than any other President.

Schlesinger: That was his style. I myself question whether that's what you want to do.

Young: I gave Jerry Rafshoon the figures and he said, "Yes, by God, we just overexposed ourselves; that's terrible."

Schlesinger: Yes, he definitely did overexpose himself. There has to be a little mystery about the Presidency. Unless, as I said at the outset, that Carter did not change as the public attitudes changed after '76. The public may have wanted to get rid of the mysteries of the imperial Presidency and all of that in 1976, but two years later they wanted the President to do the kinds of things that Reagan does so well—have "Hail to the Chief" playing. Carter just found all of that repellent for reasons not entirely clear to me.

Strong: That nuclear test ban, is that another example of the President looking for comprehensive solutions?

Schlesinger: No, no, that's different, because the CTB antedates Carter, and that's something which its proponents say had been left over since the [John F.] Kennedy partial test ban of 1963. This is just the completion of what is seen to be a prior task. Those who were proponents of it do not realize that there were reasons why in 1963 it was not completed. Now, I was perfectly happy not to have a comprehensive test ban. I was prepared to go along with it in a restricted form, but if I could avoid having a comprehensive test ban in its entirety I was prepared to do that. I think that the people in the administration knew that I was not an unqualified supporter of CTB, to say the least. And I had brought people from the labs with, ultimately—Brzezinski turned around on this issue. When he came into office he had been a vigorous supporter of CTB and two years later we had turned Brzezinski around. We brought in the head of the labs to express some concerns to the President.

It was during the run-up to the SALT negotiations and I did my thing, which was to involve the President's political advisors in something that they would be discouraged most by; that is, the notion that pursuit of the CTB would not be good for him politically. I talked to Jordan, who came around to give very powerful support. The argument with Jordan was as follows—this was after Panama—I said, "You can draw logic, the logic is very simple: a CTB should reflect whatever decisions have been made with regard to strategic forces. In logic a CTB should come after a SALT agreement. That's the logic. That's not necessarily compelling, but that's the logic. A CTB is, in a sense, easier to accomplish; therefore, even if the logic is that it should be derivative from SALT, you may not prefer to proceed that way. But you should understand this: that there is widespread opposition to a CTB; that there is a belief that Carter's proposals will not be in the best interest of the nation's security, a belief that centers in the House Armed Services Committee, but has strong support in the Senate Armed Services Committee; and that if you proceed at this time with the CTB, you get it through, but you will certainly wreck your chances of getting SALT through. Which is more important, both substantively and politically, for the President?"

Well, when we got through with that discussion, Jordan said, "By God, let's defer any further discussion of CTB until after SALT," which ultimately resulted in its not being pushed by the administration. This was much to the disappointment of many of the people in the administration, most of whom were vigorous CTB proponents, and they always wondered what had happened, in fact, to the administration's support for CTB and the President's own personal support. I think that about that time Paul Warnke had taken himself off, and therefore there was nobody who was willing to harass the President steadily with regard to that subject.

Strong: Is that an argument you also took to the President, or was it more effective to take that kind of argument with his advisors?

Schlesinger: Oh, that kind of argument I wouldn't take to the President. I took the substantive argument to the President, but the political argument I would not take to the President. I would take it to his political advisors, who were closer to him, by far, than anybody else. And I was prepared to tell the President—I don't remember whether I did or not—"If you want CTB, you're going to lose SALT."

But you don't take that kind of argument to Jimmy Carter because the reaction will always be, "I'm not here to win elections, I'm here to get certain things done." Now that was partially bravado, but it was bravado that he entirely believed. So Hamilton Jordan was a far better repository of that argument than was the President. In any event the CTB was itself one of these things that Carter had embraced early on without understanding the complexities, and without assessing either the technical or the political aspects. He just decided it was a good thing. His earliest discussions of these things had been with Paul Warnke well before the election and he had this as a sort of a residue, but the political aspects or what developed in the administration in which there got to be—and developed rather rapidly after the neutron bomb fiasco—a suspicion on Capitol Hill that Carter was pretty damned goofy, if not soft, on national security issues. And put together with the technical problems of a CTB, which basically fall under the heading of verification and whether or not one would be prepared to give up entirely the testing of weapons with regard to stockpile reliability. Those are technical questions, but those technical questions acquired greater political force because of the image of Carter as being kind of blind on national security problems.

Thompson: Were you involved in the B-1 bomber decision?

Schlesinger: No, I was not. My involvement with Carter on these things tended to be—I preferred, as I indicated at the outset, since I didn't have a strong affection for his proclivities, to stay out of most detailed discussions. On the neutron bomb business, I basically came in at the close of the original fiasco—which was what, about April '77? April '78?—to clean up the political effects of what had happened. If you looked at the cables from the Department of State, and looked at them carefully, you could see that what the cables were saying was, "We've got this odd fellow as President of the United States and he's just made this decision which doesn't strike us as rational, but he's made it and you've got to tell your European supporters about this." In other words, those cables were not supportive of the decision that he had made, that

equivocation came through loud and clear. And when that occurs, that equivocation is going to be conveyed and amplified throughout the system.

Jordan and Powell were still relatively new at that game. They were totally confused by this disaster that they didn't understand. So I came in and helped clean that out. But more importantly, or more importantly from my standpoint, I began to reverse the substantive effects of that and ultimately, in November of '78, I got Presidential approval—it was announced—of the production of the components of the neutron bomb. But no production, which meant no final assembly of the components.

Now, I should make clear to you that I have been a patron of enhanced radiation warheads since my days at Rand, subsequently my days at the Atomic Energy Commission, and I called for deployment when I was Secretary of Defense, and ultimately produced the components as Secretary of Energy, so I have a consistent, although in the eyes of some, a somewhat checkered career on this subject. I found myself very much disturbed by that decision, whose significance was much greater in the political area than in the military area. And I thought that both could be repaired by moving to the production of the components, but without final assembly. And that means, in fact, that although you don't have a prompt neutron bomb capability, you are six hours away from having neutron bomb capability.

All of these things got unduly magnified because of the European-American relationship, because of the peculiarities of Schmidt's personality, in particular, and because he and Jimmy Carter were the worst possible combination that I can imagine. Schmidt came to Washington for the first time in 1977—the first time in the Carter administration—and it became very clear what the problems were going to be, because you had this brusque, businesslike, impolite, frequently crude Hamburger—a typical north German; and you had this polite, well-mannered, gentlemanly, considerate small-town Georgian—and there was just no—

Young: With a brain, moreover—

Schlesinger: Yes, with a brain.

Young: Which the German didn't care about.

Schlesinger: That's right, there is that element.

Young: He said he was tired of teaching Jimmy Carter.

Schlesinger: It was just the worst possible combination from the standpoint of their chemistry, and I can recall that first day that Schmidt came in to the White House lawn, and the President got up and he said how delighted he was to welcome Helmut Schmidt to the White House, that many people did not know that when he was once a lowly Governor of Georgia he had gone to Germany and the Chancellor himself had been willing to spend some time with him, and he much admired the Chancellor, and how grateful he was, and so forth. All of which was true, and it goes back to what I said earlier, that if Schmidt had played his cards with any understanding he could have had Carter eating out of his hand. But he didn't. Schmidt immediately gets up to the

microphone and brushes past all of this delicate Georgian personal politeness and says, "Well, thank you for those remarks, Mr. President, now what I'm here for—bang, bang, bang." None of the exchange of flattery, compliments, and so forth, the very politeness that he not only didn't have but he didn't understand. That was an inherent part of Carter's make-up. So it was an unusually bad combination.

Now I—after I left the office I gave an interview with *Der Spiegel* in which I pretty much pinioned Schmidt with regard to his personal attacks. Differences about policy are acceptable. And the next question was, "Well, these personal attacks, they come from very low levels." And my response was, "You know well that these comments are not coming from low levels." That's as close as I came to Schmidt, but the Chancellery picked up that thing and they were scared to death.

You've got to understand that if Helmut Schmidt had been whacked hard by Jimmy Carter early on that that relationship would not have developed in the same way. Schmidt was not one to appreciate politeness and forbearance. The German Ambassador, in fact, told me that they were briefing Schmidt on his second or third visit, and Schmidt said, "What do you think Carter's going to ask about?" and the Ambassador, who had this element of mischief, said to him, "Chancellor, I think that he's going to ask you about all of these comments he's been hearing about, your remarks about him." And the Ambassador said the blood drained from Helmut's face. Now he did not want to have a confrontation with the President of the United States. It would not have served his purpose well in Germany. Snipping was fine—it may have served his purposes in Germany, pretty short-run purposes, it satisfied him in some way. But he was unprepared—Jimmy Carter had called him up short—to carry on that game.

Now, Carter just didn't handle Schmidt either in the right way, and it's a tragedy, because neither of these men understood the other. Helmut Schmidt was a hell of a lot better versed in these issues than Jimmy Carter, and if he'd been smart he could have brought Carter along. He could have served the purposes of the Free World, of the United States and his own country far better than by this campaign of snipping.

Thompson: What about other world leaders? You mentioned [Menachem] Begin and [Anwar] Sadat, but how did Carter get along with other world leaders?

Schlesinger: Well, it's a mixed bag. He got along in some ways splendidly with the African leaders. I thought that it was, for my taste, too much hearts and flowers. When [Olusegun] Obasanjo, what's his name, dictator of Nigeria, came to the White House, Carter stood up and talked endlessly about the deep friendship that developed between him and General Obasanjo, and they went on in this flowery manner. He did that with everybody. And it got to be something of a joke. He should have tempered those remarks. But it was part of the Carter desire to personalize almost everything. He was, as I said at the outset, a deeply personal man, who did not draw back from these personal relationships; he overused them.

He got along reasonably well with them. He got along quite well, as he's indicated, with Sadat, who was an African as well as an Arab. He did not get along that well with those who were America's traditional friends. I refer not only to the Shah, but relationships with King [Moulay]

Hassan of Morocco were always very touchy, probably because of a predilection in the administration to side with Algeria rather than to side with Morocco. His relations with the Europeans were not good in general, partly because the Europeans had discovered that they could cuff him around a bit and that gave them considerable pleasure. [Valéry] Giscard [d'Estaing] almost as bad at base as Helmut Schmidt.

His relations with Jim Callahan, though, of the UK, were very good. And his relations with [Masayoshi] Ohira were excellent, he got along quite well with the Japanese. Okay or better than okay with the Chinese. The Chinese were quite confused by Carter because he launched himself, in his first meeting with Deng [Xiaoping], into a disquisition on why China should not punish the North Vietnamese, and then he took Deng aside for a private meeting. If you know the Chinese, you don't waste your time on that, because not only aren't you going to accomplish your objective, they will begin to doubt your strength as well as, possibly, your sanity. They were puzzled by Carter's behavior on that issue, and it marred what should have been a very close relationship. But he did very well with the Japanese, okay or better than okay with the Chinese. Our traditional friends—you take somebody like Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, who prides himself on being articulate and tough, and Carter was just a total puzzle to him.

So Carter's foreign policies tended to be effective in some regions of the world where America's foreign policy had been ineffective, such as sub-Saharan Africa. Carter probably went too far in that regard in repudiating Kissinger and *realpolitik* and so forth, but then his successors came in and they lost the advantages of Carter south of the Sahara, plus Andy Young. I thought Andy Young was mistaken in most of his views, to put it politely, but he was definitely helpful to the United States in sub-Saharan Africa, and there are a lot of countries and a lot of votes in sub-Saharan Africa.

I guess that pretty well covers his relations with foreign leaders, but his biggest problem—well, he had three problems. The first was his alienation of what we refer to as our traditional friends, who tend by and large to be over on the right side of the political spectrum. In Latin America, he alienated most of the major countries down there, in my judgment, to an unnecessary degree, a most unnecessary degree, on the human rights issue. He just threw away some capital. He could have achieved the same position for the United States indicating our support of human rights in these countries without personally alienating the leadership of the country.

In this he was abetted by Rosalynn [Carter], who went down to Brazil and kind of read a riot act down in Brazil to [Ernesto] Geisel, and they, of course, were sufficiently polite because she was a lady, she was the wife of the President of the United States. As the Brazilians will tell you, if any man had come in with that message, he would have been thrown out of the country. But she went in with one of these little green notebooks, if you'll recall, and she turned to the first page and said, "What have you done with the five people in the prison at Belem?" and so forth, and Geisel probably didn't know a damn thing about it in the first place. In the second place, to be grilled in that manner was not something that goes over well amongst Latin American males. So, I think she pushed that unnecessarily far.

The administration asked me, Brzezinski asked me in 1980 to go to Argentina and to persuade the military leadership to go along with our embargo. I said, "I can't go down there with that

assignment. You have got to be prepared to agree to removing the restraints on Argentina and changing the nature of the bilateral relationship with the Argentines, or they will take a particular delight in defying the Americans for political reasons in addition to all the economic benefits that they're going to get from it." I just cite that as one of the costs of an undue alienation of these major powers in Latin America.

Now, it's clear to me that that was wrong in the long run, by the way. Those were immediate short-term costs with the then-existing governments. I suspect that the present government of Argentina looks with considerable affection on Jimmy Carter's efforts on behalf of human rights, irrespective of what their predecessors felt about Jimmy Carter. It's not clear that it was deficient in the long run, but it did result in paying a short-term price and I think probably we could have gotten the same message across with less of a short-term political cost.

Strong: You were just talking about some of the foreign leaders who had trouble understanding Carter, and earlier you mentioned that the press never particularly understood Carter, and I wondered, is there an explanation for that beyond the press being high on Watergate, press practices, and all that went with that?

Schlesinger: It's partly the personality, it's partly that in this respect the Georgians were right that although there was not the conspiracy against the South and the first Southerner elected after the Civil War and so on, that there was such cultural distance. For the most part the press didn't really want to bother to understand Carter and his, to them, idiosyncratic ways, which were more the small-town Georgia and less personal idiosyncrasies than they would recognize. For those in the press who were from small Southern towns—who were a minority, a very distinct minority—most of them had run away from those towns and weren't too interested in defending the mores of those communities. So I think there was something of that, but Jimmy Carter was normally quite considerate and he just rubbed the press the wrong way. And they misjudged their influence and they misjudged the power of the Presidency, a very frequent mistake made by Presidents, by the way, and their advisors overestimating the power of the Presidency.

Thompson: Did he ever court the press? Eisenhower gave stag dinners and things of this kind.

Schlesinger: He did a little of that later on, but I remember being told by one of the people at the *Washington Post* that Carter had this group in and he was explaining in his own way what his position was and why on some issues, and this not getting total support, at which point Rosalynn said something along the lines of, "Oh, you can stop trying, Jimmy—they'ah not tryin' to be helpful at all." And that was an attitude publicly expressed by Rosalynn. But the notion that lay behind it was that press wasn't trying to be helpful and therefore the hell with it, why be helpful to the press. And the answer is, you have to be helpful to the press, and take a great deal of abuse, if you want to get your story across. I think that there were those cultural reasons, personal reasons, the press is also highly susceptible, these days, to comments from Capitol Hill. That was after all the period, the high point of the period of the resurgent, if not imperial, Congress, and all of this snipping from Capitol Hill affected the attitude of the press. And finally the attitude of the Europeans is very influential in the American press corps.

Young: I'm not sure if you look back over history how many times you could give the press very good grades for understanding their subject when their subject is the President and the politics of the Presidency. If you go back to the twenties and read, it's bizarre in terms of the gap between what was seen and what is now seen in the light of history. I mean even the facts of stories are wrong, some of the prohibition stories, for example. What's changed, I think, is that the press is a lot more pretentious in terms of what it proposes as knowledge and it's much more listened to. As everything gets more confused, we depend a great deal more on the press to try to explain why things are happening. They're not trained to explain why things are happening. They make it up. And then they also listen to other sources, and when you have negative vibes in Washington about a President, those are going to get reflected in a lot of the stories, because they are no longer listening just to what the President says, the way they did in Roosevelt's time, as reporters. They had the reporters with them and the publishers against it.

McCleskey: I wanted to ask about this public perception of Carter. I have gone back, looked at the publications and the news reports, but I certainly did not have from the mass media any picture that even remotely resembles the picture of Carter as a person, as a President, that I have gotten out of these sessions. Now it strikes me, assuming I'm correct in thinking that by and large it wasn't there—

Schlesinger: What is the public picture you've gotten?

McCleskey: It's, I think, very consistent with what you've been saying.

Schlesinger: That he was mean and small?

McCleskey: No, no, out of these sessions, I've gotten the picture—but the picture is inconsistent with—

Schlesinger: The press picture was one of his being petty, small, mean—

McCleskey: But certainly not dwelling on the strengths: the quickness of the mind, the intelligence, the capacity for detail, and all of that. Now, one possibility, I say, is that maybe it was there and it somehow didn't register on me. I don't think that's it. But one would expect that somehow, if not the people in the administration, then the people who know the President, would find ways of getting a more accurate picture out into circulation. I'm a little bit perplexed as to why what I now believe to be such a distorted image was circulated and why somehow it seemed to be difficult for him to correct it.

Schlesinger: There was a great deal of antagonism to the press in the administration itself that probably originated with an undue paranoia of the Southern boys about the conspiracy of the rest of them, and they got themselves into a defensive crouch from which they never wholly emerged.

Young: —particularly after the Lance—

Schlesinger: Oh, yes. That was viewed, quite mistakenly viewed, as kind of the press and "them" —whoever it was—harassing "us" for reasons that we really did not understand. Now that was just plumb wrong. The practice continues to this July 19th to be the prevailing view amongst them of the Lance affair. Later on, they began to recognize, I think, the need for greater cultivation of the press, but by that time they had lost their initial opportunity, and in addition they were getting this steady flow from the Hill. There's another important element here that hadn't occurred to me before: the Democrats on Capitol Hill presupposed that they were always going to be in control of the Congress, and therefore the discipline of the Republicans, the willingness of Republican Senators, for example, to support the President, to give the President of the Democratic party the benefit of the doubt, did not exist amongst the Republicans.

Indeed, they tended to find reasons to separate themselves from him and to criticize him. By the time the Carter people got around to counteracting this poor image, it was probably too late. The image of the rubes, the hayseeds, that you saw on the cover of *Time* magazine, the effect of the good ole boys and the network, all of that—by the time they recognized it, it was too late.

And I have found it astonishing the degree to which even today you have people in the press corps who just get aroused at the mention of Carter's name. They don't like him. I don't understand why. I do not fully understand why. Now there was a good deal of special pleading, I think. He could not, even if he had wanted to do so, unleash Charlie Kirbo on the press corps, to turn the press corps around. What you needed to have was people who were widespread—a group of people who were sympathetic to the President, explaining him to the press corps reasonably early on, people who had credibility with the press. This the Georgians did not have. And what little they had had was forfeited by the Lance affair. I don't know whether that answers the question.

McCleskey: So the relationship with the Washington establishment or lack of relationship may have been a critical factor in the creation of his negative image?

Schlesinger: Oh, quite so. That's where the picture was made. Ma'am?

Mrs. Schlesinger: I just pointed out the stylistic, superficial aspect was continually fed by these little, really superficial things all the time. Washington seemed quite sensitive to that. Unfair, silly, as they are. His people could not maintain style, remember, they had people answering the phone every day in the White House saying, "Hold on!" The workers that came up and got jobs, they didn't dress nicely. They took those beautiful guides out.

Schlesinger: They had de-imperialized the Presidency to an undue degree, and—

Young: Only reporters can dress sloppily around the White House.

Schlesinger: That's right. For example, when Jimmy Carter devoted too much of his time to questions of who was to play on the White House tennis courts, who was riding first class on aircraft. Who the hell cares? The President of the United States shouldn't be fiddling with that stuff. But he wanted to make sure that he was getting rid of this undue self-elevation of the bureaucracy, and that was a mistake, a serious mistake.

The Carters had excellent taste with regard to music. The White House entertainments under the Carters were infinitely better, from the standpoint of taste, than anything you had seen before them. It was no longer hits from Broadway shows and the like; you had the 16th century harpsichord. I'm not sure that it was appreciated. But nonetheless the Carters had excellent taste with regard to those entertainments. It was pointed out by the press that indeed they were superior to anything that had gone before, but—

Young: —because they did not fit in with the stereotype.

Schlesinger: Right, the press cannot rise above—

Young: I think there were other things to be said here. The Carter people were not very good at explaining themselves.

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Young: There is some unfinished business—you have some things that I think you haven't checked off.

Schlesinger: Except that I've lost the page.

Young: Well, some of them had to do with the Lance problem before and after. You said that—

Schlesinger: There were a whole set of things. I've got China to finish up—

Young: China to finish up; coalition building, I think there are some questions on that. To get back to your discussion with Bert Lance about governing coalitions and all that.

Schlesinger: Where do you want me to go first of all?

Young: Since we ended sort of on foreign policy matters, let's finish up with that.

Schlesinger: I'm just going through all these things that I made up. I seem to have covered most of what I'd noted down. Well, very briefly, in regard to China, I went out there as a way of strengthening the strategic relationship following on my trip in 1976, and the President happily gave me the assignment of not discussing bilateral relationships between the United States and China, which I found to be very charitable of him, in view of the fact that I myself did not want

to get into the position of, as the saying goes, "selling Taiwan down the river." I had looked over, when I went to China, the transcripts of the discussions between Brzezinski and Deng in the previous spring. But my conversations with the Chinese were primarily in terms of the strategic relationship, the joint concern about the Soviet Union, and in particular at that time, the Soviet threat in the Middle East that was best represented by the wobbly position of the Shah. In addition to that, as you know, we signed the first more or less government-to-government document, even before normalization, with respect to joint activities in the energy area.

I talked also to the Chinese and urged them at that time to husband—I gave them a long speech on limitations of their foreign exchange position, their ability to invest. One of the reasons I had such a good relationship with the Chinese was that I always told them exactly what was right, instead of making flowery speeches that they weren't interested in. I said at that time that they had to husband their limited supply of foreign exchange, that they ought to invest that in areas of high payoff from the standpoint of the People's Republic of China and investing in nuclear plants was not the way to do so, that there were cheaper forms of energy about.

This is kind of relevant, because, as you know, since they did not maintain the relations with us they had entered into contact with Framatome for—oh, not exactly a contract, the possibility of a contract—they had entered into an agreement with the French for two nuclear plants, and of course the Framatome used Westinghouse technology, and in order to sell those plants the French had to get the approval of the United States government, and since the powers of the Atomic Energy Act rested with the Secretary of Energy, they all came by to see me. I had no problem in approving the sale. I think that the purposes of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act were better served by such approval than they would be by raising a lot of questions.

But during the course of his visit, which, as you will recall, was in November of 1978, the visit of the French Ambassador, I said to him, "Why in God's name is your government affording this hospitality to Khomeini when the ultimate effect will be dramatically to damage the position of the West in the Middle East?" And he said to me, "You are the first official of the government here in Washington to mention that." I was kind of astonished, and I expressed my personal opinion, that they really ought to shut him down. He said, "Well, the Shah himself has told us that he does not want us to restrain Khomeini in any way." And that, I think, is most revealing, was most revealing at the time, that the Shah had been so imbued with the need to get on with the American government, I believe, on the issue of human rights, that he bent over backward to urge the French not to restrain Khomeini's communications in any way.

Now that was in my mind clearly a mistake on the part of the Shah; he should have leaned very heavily on the French, and to the extent to which he was doing that, simply to keep the administration from criticizing his behavior on human rights, freedom of speech and the like, and then it was a serious mistake. It turned out that my conversation with the French Ambassador was more on what to do about Khomeini than what to do about the agreement with the Chinese—Framatome's agreement with the Chinese. Okay, the Bert Lance affair.

Thompson: Could you just answer one or two questions on that?

Schlesinger: Sure, fire away on foreign policy—

Thompson: Was there pressure, do you think, at that early stage, on all concerned from Pat Derian and her office, or was this a personal conviction on the President that got communicated to the Shah in some way?

Schlesinger: I think that it was a subliminal message from the President. The Shah, quite rightly, did not care about what occurred in the office of the Assistant Secretary of State, particularly when that Assistant Secretary had a highly specialized function, to be a gadfly, as others would put it—others who were criticized by that office—a gadfly on the question of human rights, and just disregard that. It's the subliminal message from Jimmy Carter that was very influential. The Shah, as I mentioned yesterday, did not want to rule by bloodshed of his countrymen. That may have been—that was, I think, genuine, but it was also a reflection of the preachments that he had been listening to for some years.

Next, what else should I say on the foreign policy issue? The President remained, oddly enough, most skeptical about the need for high military expenditures right through 1978. Indeed, I think that in his heart he was always skeptical about it, right until the day he left office, right down to today, even though his public position has changed. In the fall of 1978, he gave me a copy of *Scientific American* one day when I was visiting him, a copy of *Scientific American* in which there was a long article by Professor [Philip] Morrison of MIT, explaining how we could cut additional defense expenditures by fifty percent, sixty percent, I forget the exact number, reduce down to one Polaris submarine, cut the general purpose forces significantly, and so forth. The President asked me to read it, and give him my advice on the substance, which I proceeded to do. I went back and I said that it was basically nonsense, and he said, "I know Brzezinski has been saying the same thing,"—but the fact that he was intrigued by the article in itself was quite revealing.

I also made a mistake, perhaps an anachronistic mistake, but I pointed out to him—I did not know what Morrison's beliefs were at the time I read the article, and I hadn't bothered to go back and find it out, but apparently he had been a hard-core [Joseph] Stalinist. And the President was just a little stand-offish at that point. I went back to the Energy Department, I talked to my Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, and he said, "You made a terrible mistake." I said, "What was that?" He said, "You don't understand it, that you indulged in an *ad hominem* argument, saying that this man was a Communist." I said, "*Ad hominem* argument? You mean his intellectual commitments have nothing to do with the evaluation of what he has to say?" He says that—some of you may be in a better position to judge—he says that there has been a change of attitude on these things, that the younger generation, and in this respect, Carter's intellectual development came later on, has an entirely different attitude, that they regard this as *ad hominem* argument. Now I offer that for you for what it may be worth.

Thompson: Was it Elting Morrison, or—which Morrison was it?

Schlesinger: No, no, no, far, far from—it was a physicist up at MIT, I forget his name.

I started to say, and excuse me for interrupting, but I might as well finish this up: after I left the administration, I worked with Sam Nunn to use the President's expenditures from the

administration on national security. The President was sufficiently anxious in ’79 and ’80 about SALT II that he was prepared to submit a higher request for the national security establishment, which he proceeded to do in January of 1980. As was his wont, I think I indicated earlier, at base he was very skeptical about all of these matters involving military expenditures. Earlier in the administration he had held an NSC meeting in which he said at the meeting that, in his judgment, we didn’t need all of these nuclear weapons. He said a single Poseidon boat was enough retaliatory power, that it really can by itself destroy the Soviet Union, and we really don’t need anything more. Which left the Joint Chiefs gasping. But they didn’t say anything. The curious thing—of course in these circumstances—is that they don’t say anything.

Strong: They say things outside those meetings.

Schlesinger: Oh yes indeed, yes indeed. One of the real problems of the American government, and less so with Jimmy Carter, that’s an important point, generally a great problem with the American government is that people will not speak even reasonably candidly to the President of the United States. Most of his subordinates simply blow his own words back at him, or his own ideas, trivial as they may be. And I say “reasonably candidly”—I’m not saying “bluntly.” I myself have spoken bluntly to a few Presidents and they have not liked it very much, so it’s—I’m not urging that one speak bluntly to them, but reasonably candidly. They clearly go off the rails. I should have mentioned one other thing about China.

Young: Before you get off that, did you say that this was strangely not a major problem in the Carter—

Schlesinger: Oh, I did say that. I always thought—

Young: —that his people were willing to talk more to him than—

Schlesinger: Carter was more receptive to all sorts of views, open-minded, at least in the sense of listening to views that were not his own, and for the most part, unlike other Presidents, not being prepared to make a little black mark in the book and retaliate at some later point. Jimmy Carter was a fair-minded man, by and large, and he tolerated more disagreement than most Presidents. I think that that is very much to his credit. You have a pattern of a man here. It’s the other side of why he may not have been a great leader—a bright man, open-minded. The people who turn out to be great leaders don’t turn out to be very tolerant of different views. They tend to get annoyed by debate once they’ve committed themselves. Enough said, I guess.

Thompson: He never—the excuse that’s always made is that appropriations will be cut if you challenge the President or a Secretary openly in a meeting; that kind of thing never happened with Carter?

Schlesinger: No, I don’t think so. And that, of course—I don’t think that anyone should go out of his way directly to contradict the President in, let us say, a Cabinet meeting. There are all sorts of smaller groups that you can do that in, and should do that in. I remember when I told Ford that it was all over in Vietnam, there was no point in investing any more resources in the country, or wasting his domestic political capital, and he just couldn’t take it. And amusingly enough, after

that meeting of the NSC, Kissinger who had been suddenly and unusually quiet came over to me afterwards, he said, "Of course I agree with you, but I didn't think it was time that it was appropriate for me to say so."

It's very revealing. But by and large, one of the problems for Presidents is that they can just keep going off the rails, and unless they encourage or at least tolerate people saying, "Hey, we're going off the rails," the administration can continue to go further on down the track. I think that early on within this administration there was much too much of that on the budget issues, just to take one example. Now Jimmy Carter was more open-minded than many of the people that I've seen.

Young: I want to pursue this just a minute, because I'm trying to fit it in with other things. I think we—I at least—have been—

Schlesinger: Let me say—I'm going to make a footnote on this one, to discuss the Bert Lance issue.

Young: All right, but in general, the President did not react adversely to serious criticism, did he? I mean, he didn't go off the rails?

Schlesinger: He did not go off the rails. I'm not sure that I'd use the word criticism. He did not react adversely to different views being expressed; that's implicit criticism. I don't think that it should be couched in the terms of, "You sure made a blunder the way you're going," but as far as expressing contrary views, Jimmy Carter was as tolerant as any President I've seen.

Thompson: Somebody, the reporters, put so much stress on the fact—and we had a little of this on one or two things when we went down for our session at Plains—one or two things where he felt we had overstepped, or where somebody else had, in the reporter's story, overstepped. You could see the veins in his eyes flash—was he intimidating to you or anybody else who took contrary views on something, defense or—

Schlesinger: No, I did not find him a very intimidating President, perhaps regrettably. I think that he was always particularly courteous to me, and went out of his way to be not only courteous but to a kind Southern polite deference. So he was not particularly intimidating. But in general, he was not. And you read all this rubbish in the press about his cold eyes flashing and so on; I thought that that was basically hogwash. He did too little of that, as I mentioned yesterday, he should have brought Schmidt up short on the international scene. Instead of that anger that built in the administration over a three-year period with regard to Joe Califano, and to a lesser extent with regard to Mike Blumenthal. Blumenthal is a different case because there was poor chemistry, but Califano was viewed as defying the President, defying the White House, but no one said anything, no one called him up short, no one did a Califano on Califano. And you imagine when Califano was working for Lyndon Johnson, if a Cabinet Secretary kept working on his own agenda, that he wouldn't hear from Joe Califano for three years? But the anger built up, and there was a desire not to have a direct confrontation.

Young: Anger in the staff?

Schlesinger: Anger in the staff, yes, and I think probably irritation and ultimately anger—I mentioned to you yesterday about the meeting of the Cabinet in July—

Young: But you cited this as an exception to the usual deportment and behavior in relations with senior Cabinet officials.

Schlesinger: Yes. Absolutely.

Thompson: If Lance had told him, or you had told him, that Califano had his own agenda, do you think he would have acted more quickly than if Jordan or Powell, his children, told him?

Schlesinger: Well, certainly if Bert Lance had told him that. That's one of the reasons Bert's departure was such a tragedy.

Young: Why don't we go on to this Lance issue since it bears on—?

Jones: I have one more question on this matter of tolerating disagreement. One explanation might be that it represents lack of experience, or having a theme, even within the staff, and he was new to Washington. Is that part of the explanation, or is it something else?

Schlesinger: No, I don't think so. I think that once again it was terrible inexperience of the Washington environment, and that they could not have a Cabinet officer who was basically going to the Hill with his own agenda, quite distinct from that of the President. They should have called him up short, and it was not that the administration lacked a theme. Yes, I think there's some truth in the argument that the administration lacked a theme, but that was because the President was interested in general reform of everything, and that he was trying to do everything from civil service reform, tax reform, and so on. If you're going to try to do everything that's gone bad, then the only theme that you have is generalized reform, and to criticize the administration, even by administration insiders, for not having a theme is to say that Jimmy Carter should have had much more confined objectives.

Jones: Priorities?

Schlesinger: Yes.

Young: That's not the same thing as confined objectives. Fewer objectives and priorities, that's a very different problem, I think. He had a priorities problem, in not having a—

Schlesinger: Jimmy Carter would attempt to do everything, and he did a lot of it, for which as we discussed yesterday, he hasn't received credit.

Jones: Well, isn't that the atmosphere of tolerating disagreement, then, because if you're going to do everything you can hear all kinds of—or conversely, if you say, "This is the order in which we're going to take up these confined objectives," then there is less room for disagreement; those decisions have been made.

Schlesinger: Mm-hmm.

Thompson: One thing that some leaders do is allow a lot of opinions in public, or in meetings, and then they bear down in private. I've noticed that particularly true when you have a lot of strong people with whom a leader has to deal, some people who are always pressing him on their claims. But he can't resolve them in a group, so he does it privately. It was said Nixon, for instance, didn't want to put people down in public, but that he did set his goals privately.

Schlesinger: Well, since Lyndon Johnson you haven't had a President who was inclined to put people down in public. Sometimes they do, and Nixon in some ways did so more than Carter and even perhaps than Ford, but just because he was unconstrained when terribly provoked by what he regarded as inadequate performance by his subordinates. There's a difference between letting people proffer their own wares, although that's contradictory, and accepting direct criticism. Most Presidents are prepared to listen to different views when they are dealing with what should be done in the future. They are very reluctant to hear it stated bluntly that the administration has been mistaken or, more specifically, that the President has been mistaken.

Thompson: Was Carter more or less so inclined? We've heard some who've said he was thin-skinned; we've heard others who've said he was about like other Presidents.

Schlesinger: Do you mean listening to others?

Thompson: No, taking criticism.

Schlesinger: Well, as I've indicated, I think he took criticism better than most.

Young: I don't think there's quite any parallel for those scenes on Camp David, where he's inviting all these people from outside to criticize him; I mean it's really quite a strange event, and some of the criticism apparently quite devastating. And his reaction to that is to say he learned a lot from it, and in fact he then announced in public some of the criticisms that he had heard of himself and of his administration. It might be strange, but it certainly doesn't indicate the thin-skinned—

Schlesinger: I think he was thin-skinned, though; sometimes he would—

Young: Sometimes—but in terms of ability to—

Schlesinger: He was not generally thin-skinned, if this is your point, but sometimes you could just see that his feelings were hurt in one way or another.

McCleskey: I hate to get into a semantic discussion, but it seems to me that Presidents can be thin-skinned—anybody can be thin-skinned—and at the same time be willing to take criticism. I don't see anything inconsistent in that.

Schlesinger: And it was interesting, he went through a sort of sin-and-salvation cycle, you understand, and because of his failures a lot of that flagellation that he accepted at Camp David he felt somehow was justified, and it's partly because of that perspective that he would accept that flagellation when another President would not.

Young: Well, there are all sorts of psychological interpretations.

Schlesinger: You also should understand the relationship between Rosalynn and the President, because she was very critical of him, sometimes quite—sometimes semi-publicly, and he would just listen to an outburst, and he would just chuckle and say, "Now, Rosie," and so forth, but she told him that he was doing wrong, bluntly, in front of other people, so he had to—he had some experience in this. And I think that her very harsh statements to him on occasion prepared him to accept much milder comments from others.

Young: Doesn't that suggest a terribly ego-insecure person?

Schlesinger: That's right. I think Carter always had a capacity for serenity that was remarkable, and the fact that he recovered from a rather devastating electoral defeat much more rapidly than did Rosalynn and she is a reflection of that.

Now I promised you a footnote, and the footnote is this, that somehow there was this inner circle of Georgians who were cast in a different light, and Bert Lance was part of it, and there was a degree of anger and resentment at any criticism of the Georgian group, personal criticism of the Georgian group—not policy criticism, but personal criticism—that was quite different from anything else. And that was reflected in the Lance affair, in which the administration exhibited poor judgment, but it was also exhibited by such things as Jody Powell's weeping at the time that he announced Andy Young's departure. That was a degree of Georgia in-group sentimentality that did not extend beyond it.

Now this was clear—if you read Jody Powell's book you can see this bitterness about criticisms that were directed towards the family or towards the small circle of Georgians. And it was not entirely rational. If you read Jody's book, he is particularly bitter about criticisms of Amy [Carter], and he's half right on that, but he's half wrong, because the Carters should not have mixed Amy into public functions of the government. If you bring a child eleven or twelve, I forget now, to state dinners, if you inflict your child's violin playing on foreign heads of state and government, and so on, it is almost inevitable that you are going to elicit the kind of criticism that Jody bitterly, bitterly resents. And I think it's right that the children of high officials should be left alone, if they are left out of the process, but the Carters, in a sense—this is analyzing; I'm not criticizing, I'm analyzing—in a sense the Carters wanted it both ways. If they wanted to bring Amy in, it was almost inevitable that there would be criticism.

Now this is all by way of prelude to the Lance affair. The administration just reacted very poorly to that. The fact of the matter is that Bert had cut corners, to put it politely, and that the administration had dug its own hole by going back to the Congress and asking for a second waiver for Bert, a renewed waiver, which focused the light once again on his problems and asked for an exception. The first time he went through the Government Affairs Committee, nobody

paid any attention to these things. The administration elicited its problem. It is plain that Bert had done things as a country banker that would not pass the ethics committee of the American Bankers Association, even though country bankers do cut corners. But he cut a lot of corners, and it was plain that some of that was inconsistent with the spirit of the law, if not the letter of the law.

And that kind of comes through in the report that the Comptroller of the Currency wrote. And I mentioned yesterday that Lipshutz cannot have read the report with any degree of discernment, to lead the President back into his, "I'm proud of you, Bert"—it was a disaster. It was the thing that released all of these passions in the press. If he had merely stood aside as—if Carter had stood aside as Reagan has done with some of his supporters who've gotten into trouble, but he moved right out in front and said, "I'm proud of you, Bert."

Now this was a reflection of the peculiar relations between Carter and the press that I'll come back to later, but it was plain that Bert's tenure was limited, that he could not survive. I went to Hamilton somewhere around the 15th or 20th of August of '77, and said, "Look, I like Bert Lance. You're not doing Bert Lance any favor. He should be allowed to slip away quietly. One has got to understand the dynamics of Washington life, and Bert is dead. He may survive for a while." I think other people were telling the in-group of Georgians the same message.

Hamilton listened, but the fact of the matter is that they drew a very tight circle around themselves in this period, and began to suspect not only the hostile outside world, the Northerners who never gave a Southerner a break, the press, but also those within the administration who were not rallying around to Bert's support. The fact of the matter was that Bert's actions were very hard to defend, and they gave themselves at that point some three-and-a-half months of nothing else in the headlines but the Lance affair. It was a terrible mistake. Some years later that fellow who got involved with drugs, what was his name? [Peter] Bourne—I reminded Hamilton of that earlier conversation. Bourne was out of there in 48 hours.

Young: But there's no comparison between his importance to Carter—

Schlesinger: Oh no, absolutely not. But it is also—

Young: I think it's one of the factors that provoked the defensive reaction, at least on Carter's part; I think Lance was a critical person for him.

Schlesinger: An emotionally critical person. Nonetheless I think the administration would not have moved so quickly in the Bourne affair if they had not learned very painfully the—

Young: That's probable.

Schlesinger: —the costs of lingering. When these things occur, cut them off quickly. Just cut them off quickly, because you're not going to do yourself any good. And it is particularly the case with Jimmy Carter. The press, as we said yesterday, and will discuss again, was all over Jimmy Carter, but he, in a sense, had asked for it, and told the press, "I will not tell a lie to the American people—I want government as good as the American people" and all the rest of that.

His stock in trade then was integrity and candor. The press—most of the people in the press are rather skeptical about that, in regard to public officials, and particularly in the post Watergate era.

If Carter had come on like—Ronald Reagan has made no promises to the American people that his subordinates will be pure as the driven snow, and that he would never embroider in an artistic fashion. But Carter had said that he was coming on as clean as a hound's tooth, and therefore he was going to be held to the standards he himself had given to the press. And it was for that reason that that three-and-a-half month thing over Bert Lance was so devastating. There was nothing else in the headlines. Everything else was down, and the administration made the foolish mistake of investing the prestige of a Presidency, as well as the President, in a single individual, who was bound, given the circumstances, to drag down the overall chances for that Presidency. Bert should have gotten the hell out, early on. But the Georgians in the White House said, "Bert must be given his day in court." What did that tell you? At best it told you that it was more important that Bert be given a chance to defend himself than it was to sustain the buoyancy and prestige of the entire administration.

Jones: And at a very critical time.

Schlesinger: At a very critical time.

Young: If he had been let go at the first drop of criticism, when it became clear that there was going to be a real battle, I am sure that he wouldn't have gotten credit for that either in the press. The damage might have been far less.

Schlesinger: To the administration, absolutely.

Young: —but he would have come in for the same amount of criticism.

Schlesinger: I don't think to the same degree, as a matter of fact, although yours is an arguable point. I think that—

Young: I think that there was some thinking to that effect inside the administration as other people talked to us about his problems.

Schlesinger: Well, I think that that's just rationalization; that is direct rationalization. The important thing, and once again, it was a personalized approach to an issue that was fundamentally a political issue. If you take the chap who was deputy Secretary of Defense, who has been in some trouble with the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission]. He was out, and he had two more stories and it was gone. Now Bert would have had more than two more stories, because he was so close to the President, but the thing that you've got to understand about Washington is that as soon as a man leaves public office those stories start to die away and frequently they will build. And I don't think they understood that. A man who is no longer in public office, director of the OMB [Office of Management and Budget], he's not news. They failed to understand that simple point. And they did immense damage to Jimmy Carter. And, of course, Carter was doing it to himself, but—

Jones: You had an experience at that time with the energy bill where clearly what was happening had the potential of affecting what it was you were trying to do with getting the energy bill through Congress.

Schlesinger: —did affect it—

Jones: That was my question: did it affect it and if so, how, what options did you have? As the timing was—you're getting the House approval by August—

Schlesinger: We had the House approval, it was kind of in the bag by that time, and as I said yesterday, the pace of House approval misled me to the ease that we were going to have in the Senate. But the decline of Carter's prestige just meant that it was open season on him and all of his proposals in the Senate. If the Lance affair had not occurred, we would have gotten a bill out of the Senate in the first year, instead of having to fight desperately for eighteen months, I suspect. Who knows? No one knows, no one can really rerun history. But I suspect that we would have gotten a good bill out of the Senate that first year if that had not—

First of all, it chewed away two-and-a-half months. The administration itself thought of nothing else but the Bert Lance affair. All of the energies of the administration were directed to defending Bert. And it was a devastating blow for the administration. In my judgment they did Bert Lance no favor. He would have been far better off, and would be chairman of the Georgia Democratic Party, if he had just said, "I am proud of what I did at the Calhoun National Bank; I am proud of my family, but I am a good friend of Jimmy Carter and I will not stay in this office one day if anything that I have done in my life is going to damage Jimmy Carter." He would have gotten cheers from half the public. Hanging in there didn't do Bert any good, but it—

Young: The effect it had on the matters you had pending before Congress, was it a matter of negativism or antagonism on the part of the members of Congress, or was it the fact that the absorption—or both—the absorption in the White House with the Lance affair was preventing them from doing certain jobs on their end with respect to Congress that they should have been doing?

Schlesinger: Both.

Young: What was the job that they were falling down in terms of the Congressional work?

Schlesinger: Well, Frank Moore and his staff spent all of their time on the defense of Bert Lance up on the Hill. Now they were supposed to be working with us on the Senate side—

Young: A diversion of their resources—

Schlesinger: A total diversion of resources, but also a destruction of their own credibility. The questions that were raised about Bert's behavior were pretty pointed, and they were being raised in the press, and the defense of Bert and the administration basically was not to answer the questions, kind of talk about taking care of people in their own small town and I'm proud of it,

and so forth, but not answering the specific legal and financial questions. And up there on the Hill they notice things like that. So there was a loss of credibility of folks in the administration as a consequence.

Now, in addition to that, you had a diversion of senatorial effort into the re-hearings about Bert Lance. Scoop Jackson, for example, as chairman of Energy, was on the Government Affairs Committee, he sat through all that bloody testimony that went on, hearings and so forth. His attention was diverted from the legislation. You just can't have a two-and-a-half month hiatus at any time that so absorbs an administration. The emotional energies, the time, the focus, were all diverted to the Lance affair. You can't have that ever, but particularly in that critical first year. And the administration, partly through loyalty to Bert, partly through an utter failure to understand the dynamics of Washington—when [William] Safire got on the case, as I recall it, the *New York Times* got on the case, you just knew that Bert had had it.

Young: He's apologized now.

Schlesinger: Has he?

Young: In print.

Jones: Was this reflected in conversations you had with Senators and—or was it just—

Schlesinger: Yes, if "this" means—

Jones: —continuation of the Lance thing—

Schlesinger: First of all, that was all they would talk about. And secondly, their attitude was amusement if it was on the Republican side, *schadenfreude* if it was on the Republican side, and kind of a quizzical despair if they were on the Democratic side. "What in God's name is this administration investing all of its political capital in this for," and of course plain bewilderment—

Thompson: Was there any argument that would blow over—I wonder in the Reagan administration whether the argument isn't that these were little things with [Edwin] Meese, people needed money when they came to Washington, it'll blow over. Same with [Raymond] Donovan.

Schlesinger: Well, there are several differences. First the public mood is changed, and you can see it. The public is—don't lose that piece by Russell Baker—that's for you, but don't lose it. The public mood has changed, and you know that the public mood has changed. The public doesn't care about all this stuff any more. First of all, after you go through a recession of the sort that we went through in '81-'83, the general public doesn't give a damn about anything except employment, prices, and so on. They are focused on the economy. They don't change their usual cynicism about public affairs, they just become passive. Now the mood had changed. Secondly, Ronald Reagan had never come before the American people as an antidote to Watergate, which

Jimmy Carter had; he never said anything about, "We'll never tell the American people a lie," and so forth.

Not only had the public mood changed, but the position of the President was quite different. Jimmy Carter could never have hoped that such a thing would blow over, because his whole political stock in trade was the universe, as it were, of the defense of Bert Lance. It was hopelessly out of his political character, or the political image that he wanted to present to the American people. What Reagan is doing is certainly not outside of his political image: "All these things don't matter; don't bother me with that." It's quite consistent with his political style. So he is not held accountable for inconsistency.

The joy of the press in that occasion was catching Carter in inconsistency, except for Bill Safire, who wanted to show that everybody in all of human history did exactly what Dick Nixon had been accused of doing in the Watergate affair. That's why he was on it. But there was just too much there. Mike Blumenthal was not eager, and nor was his Comptroller of the Currency eager, to nail the President's best friend, it's just that the evidence was very, very, very hard to evade. Can you imagine the scandal, indeed, if the Comptroller of the Currency whitewashed the affair, had stonewalled after Watergate? No, the thing was just irretrievable.

Young: Well, there were several. The Lance affair, I think, is—what I'm hearing from you is that the administration in the way it went about it, in assuming that there could be a vindicating outcome, made a very serious miscalculation about the way the thing could drag on. But there were other things that came to nothing: the charge of laundering funds through the peanut warehouse and all of that kind of thing, so I don't see the Lance affair—I see it as a first, but not as an isolated incident in terms of the siccing of the dogs on the administration. I think the Lance affair—I'm not disputing anything you say or interpret, but I think that was the thing that Reagan was there to blow over, and he is not held to the same standards. I think the Carter people were thinking there would be a vindication, they would love to see it and maybe the wish was thoughtless, but—

Schlesinger: Well, you mentioned a miscalculation. I think that there was a miscalculation, but that implies a political miscalculation. There was also a clear legal error, and a misunderstanding of the Carter image. Carter had come on in 1976 as a fresh presence in American life, and that did more to dissipate Carter's image of freshness than anything could have done. It was a misunderstanding of the moral issues involved. There is no possibility of a vindication of Bert's activities.

Young: Politically, you mean—or legally.

Schlesinger: Those things were not pressed. It is possible to vindicate a man who says, "I'm going to take care of a couple of members of my family or my wife's family with the assets of the bank"—that is not a unique event in the history of country banking in America, even in modern times. But what was being done with the collateral that was being pledged to two and three and four loans at the same time, there is no way that you can have vindication on that. The only thing you could have is obfuscation. And that was the thing that was missed, of course, about the Comptroller's report, that you cannot have the same stock pledged as collateral for

several loans, and you cannot do this as a regular pattern. That is not taking care of a few members of a family by being lenient on the extension of credit and a little careful with regard to holding down the interest rates for members of your family. That ain't lawful.

Young: Can we get back to—you said earlier that the White House—

Schlesinger: And Jimmy Carter's people should understand that Jimmy Carter could not come forward to the American people and say, "Kiting collateral is okay for my friend." Reagan might get away with it—

Young: No, he wouldn't say that—

Schlesinger: —the inferential—

Young: He'd say, "He didn't do it." You said earlier, and I'd like to get some specifics on this, there are two points actually that I'd like to raise. One is in your conversation with Lance before his fate was on the fire, you had a conversation about governing coalitions in which you were telling him about governing coalitions and election coalitions, and the difference between the two and the need to think and do about a governing coalition. I'd like to hear more about the context in which this took place. Was this the advice that you were giving, the context of that, and what you yourself meant in terms of this advice, and why you thought the administration should be particularly alert to it?

Schlesinger: Well, what I meant—I didn't think it was anything particularly profound and I still don't. What I meant is that you put together an electoral coalition based upon different constituency groups and the power of voting blocks, but that in order to get legislation through the Congress, in order to have general support for your administration policies, that those constituency groups do not have much power in governing. And that you have to have people who have influence in the Congress or have the capacity to handle the great institutions of government, the departments and agencies, in positions of authority, and that there have to be close relationships, working relationships, between the people on Capitol Hill and the people in the executive branch.

I did not think about it at the time, because I did not think the subject was going to come up, but you don't go up to Capitol Hill and talk to them about the vote that you got from the environmentalists, or some damn thing. They don't care, or they don't care that much. They are interested, by and large, in substantive policy at that point, or in the politics of Washington, and how it's going to help them personally. They don't care whether or not the consumers groups feel this way, and what Ralph Nader says. First of all, the whole illusion that most of those people on Capitol Hill like Ralph Nader was a figment of the imagination of the administration.

Young: This occurred before the Inauguration?

Schlesinger: This occurred before the Inauguration.

Young: Did you think that they were not anticipating this problem, that during the transition you saw some behavior that suggested to you—

Schlesinger: No, no, I didn't, and if I had, I would have leaned in much more heavily than I did. I would have put it, "This is a different world. And the administration is rightly proud of Carter's electoral victory, but it should not be misled. You cannot base government upon an electoral victory, and you cannot talk continuously about a prior campaign; you must organize here in Washington." If I had anticipated that they would have that much difficulty in making the transition, I would have come on much stronger. Instead, I was speaking more in terms of, "We should understand, it's obvious, everyone understands that you have got to make this shift to governing coalition, to build—"

Young: I thought maybe you had detected a particular vulnerability in this new administration at that point that led you to think—

Schlesinger: It may have been so, but it was unconscious and subliminal at the start. I certainly was not consciously saying to myself, *Good God, these people have—* But unconsciously, perhaps more than consciously, I hadn't thought it through but the fact that everyone harked back to what we did in Pennsylvania, or all these references to the campaign. When you hear those continued references to the campaign, just as you are setting up a government, you should be worried. That would certainly sum it up, but it was more subliminal.

Strong: Would it have been hard to have set up a governing coalition for Democrats in 1976, whether it's Carter or anybody else? Could they have special problems?

Schlesinger: Yes. They had special problems, because Carter was a newcomer, and was not universally appreciated on Capitol Hill, even as a newcomer. He was an upstart. So he had a special problem. But the answer to that is, if you've got a special problem, and you're going into this business, governing, you'd better work at it. And he—his people didn't see—I say this retrospectively—people didn't see the need to work at it. Now, what I said to Bert that day, I think I mentioned it yesterday, "You build on Bob Byrd, build on Scoop Jackson, and so on, and you build on Sam Nunn, who comes from your home state and is widely respected on Capitol Hill." And their relations with Nunn remained somewhat distant and relations with Byrd were more or less erratically frigid throughout the four years; their relations with Jackson tended to be hostile. Sure they had special problems, but it is for that very reason that they had to work harder on cultivating the people on Capitol Hill, and they didn't cultivate them as they should have, and indeed they raised to public prominence some of their rivals, which further reduced their chances of building a governing coalition.

Now they had special problems, partly because Carter was an outsider and hadn't been through battles with these people, through battles in which they were shoulder to shoulder as opposed to the electoral battles; they had a special problem in that Democrats were still used to the post-Watergate period and beating the hell out of Presidents whom they assumed to be Republican. They were just habituated. They had this capacity for beating up Presidents and they were inclined to exercise it. They had a special problem, and this may be what you're getting at, that it wasn't in Carter's nature to court other power centers, and it wasn't in Carter's nature not to

hitch himself to those he regarded as the right and morally sound people, those who were expressing themselves on behalf of the general interest. Now I don't have to agree with his choice in these matters, but he felt that the consumers' movement was just wonderful; he was always worried about these people. One of our basic problems in the energy area was his natural affection for the consumerist movement that was at its most virulent in the energy area, and consequent antagonism to the industry, the producers.

Young: Do you think at the end when he talked in his final speech, and even in the crisis of confidence speech, he talked about special interests, he was getting jaded on these single-issue groups, these special groups?

Schlesinger: Yes—I think so he had gotten jaded, but for the first 18 months, or 24 months, he seemed to have an endless appetite, not only for these people, but for taking punishment from them. I mentioned yesterday, what would Lyndon Johnson have gotten out of the decontrol of oil? Carter kept apologizing for it. Remember? He kept apologizing for it, because he really felt that somehow or other the people he was helping were the wrong people and that the people that he was offending were the right people. You can't go around apologizing for the things you do—"This is the right thing to do, by God, we should have done it long ago," and so on. And that was because he felt as I've indicated.

McCleskey: I want to follow up on this—you talked about the need for a governing coalition, but entirely in terms of the President as a legislative leader, that is, his relationship with Congress. What about within the administration, in administrative policymaking and execution? Is there a problem there as well?

Schlesinger: Yes, because they didn't set priorities, kind of, "Let's do everything." Carter never really, until about the second year or third year of the administration never sat down and had a legislative calendar. There was just a certain amount he could squeeze out of the U.S. Congress; the amount that you can squeeze out of the U.S. Congress diminishes each year of the four-year cycle.

McCleskey: My question has to do with the need for governing coalition within the administration —

Schlesinger: Yes. I'd put it in a different way: that the administration, the members of the administration, and the President of the United States, did not understand governing. It's pretty direct. They were fixated on that election, in which—which is understandable; they came from nowhere. It was damned exciting. They had fooled the press, who thought he was nobody. They had beaten the powers of the Democratic Party. They had beaten not only their direct competitors, such as Scoop, but they had beaten the behind-the-scene powers such as the chairman, Bob Strauss.

Jones: They had beaten the existing governing coalition.

Schlesinger: Of the Democratic Party. Yes. And they were fixated, you see, on the inferences from that campaign. Now you have got to understand that in order to govern, you've got to seem

to be governing, you've got to take government seriously, you've got to be respectful of the rituals of government. The administration came into office and it was at best scornful of those rituals. You have the vulgarization of the Cabinet room, I find that phrase, people sitting around in dungarees or what-have-you, disturbing, ultimately disturbing, to the American public. The American public doesn't want the President over the long run to be carrying his own bags. Now they may want it as a short-term brief vignette—

Young: When it's fresh and before they get tired of it, yes—

Schlesinger: But as a brief vignette, as an antidote to Watergate, and the imperial Presidency, yes. But the notion of the President of the United States carrying over-the-shoulder bags just wasn't going to sell for very long, and they should have dropped all that stuff immediately. Now that's in reaching out and showing their public that they can govern, as well as attract votes. Within the administration, there was a lack of seriousness in putting together an agenda. You asked yesterday how energy got to the top of the agenda—if I think about it, one of the reasons was there was sort of a vacuum.

Young: I had thought that that was a thing pretty close to the President's heart.

Schlesinger: It was indeed.

Young: —and that's why—

Schlesinger: No, I'm not saying that it wasn't close to the President's heart, but in addition to that, it was a new set of people who were kind of in the Cabinet offices, in the agencies, who were waiting for a lead from the White House, and the lead that they got from the White House was basically stylistic. It wasn't about governing; it was, you know, "Don't let your assistant secretaries fly first class," and so on—it wasn't about a legislative program at the outset.

Young: This is interesting; you say that Cabinet people were waiting for a lead from the White House—

Schlesinger: I should say, some Cabinet people. Joe Califano was not waiting for a lead from the White House. Joe Califano was off and running, and then they discovered later on that his agenda was different from the President's. But once again, I said a while ago about Joe that they should have taken note of that early on and cut him off at the pass early on, not slowly stew for three years.

Young: But wasn't the general signal to Cabinet members at the beginning that you sort of have a free hand, you know, "Don't let them fly first class" and all that, but "You choose your own people," wasn't that—

Schlesinger: Yes, absolutely.

Young: —sort of on your own, the signal was to go off on your own, wasn't it?

Schlesinger: That's right, but you've got a Bob Bergland, who's not familiar with the executive branch; you've got Cecil Andrus, who is a slow-paced man. He's very good at capturing the Carter style; he doesn't want rape and ruin of the—and the right words about the environment. But he is also not aggressively pushing a program, as opposed to an impression. And you can't criticize people who've just come in. By contrast, Joe Califano, who knew the ropes in Washington, is off running immediately. I can't think of another example of that sort of thing. Mike Blumenthal was not off running—Mike Blumenthal was a pretty good Secretary of the Treasury, but he was very much of a scholar, almost analytical in what was going on, absorbing errors, making judgments, making comments—some of which were injudicious, such as talking the dollar down and so forth. I think he was perfectly right, but injudicious.

Young: I think, and I was just trying to see if my impression was correct, that later—and perhaps too late and in the wrong way—that the whip is cracked. As you said, the anger built up and they can't take it anymore. It did not work out according to the premises on which they started out, it seems to me, the Cabinet government, but that's just code for saying, it seems to me, "We've chosen competent people, they are on their own," and so forth. The Georgians on the political side and the President's own issues are in the White House, but my impression is there is little interference from the White House staff at the beginning, and then later on, the White House staff begins to take a much more central role in the lives of the Cabinet and there's a lot of problems to develop on that account. Is that a general—?

Schlesinger: That's right.

Strong: Well, when I was asking earlier whether there were special problems in 1976, I had in mind something different from what you were talking about. Would it have been hard to bring together the liberal and conservative wings of the Democratic party, and wasn't what Carter did in the 1976 campaign to sort of reconcile those irreconcilables by the personal anti-Watergate campaign that avoided a lot of the substantive differences, and if you then go about trying to bring those people together, you're going to—Was there a Democratic agenda on either foreign policy or domestic policy that you could hold all those people together on?

Schlesinger: Hold that question a moment—Well, I thought I took a crack that that question when I said that Jimmy Carter may not be the kind of man who could turn against those who had supported him, look to the power sources because the power sources are basically the moderate conservatives up there. I think McClellan was still alive that the outset of the administration, wasn't he, and he was chairman of appropriations. That, I will tell you, is not the left wing of the Democratic Party. [John Bennett, jr.] Johnston and Scoop, the old bulls are not the liberal wing of the party by and large, and particularly at that period were not the liberal wing of the party. The liberal wing of the party is interested more in posturing and less interested in policy. Posturing about policy, but less interested in putting together legislation, all of the painful compromises that go on in the real world of governing. They gave "contaminated"—that's one of the things whenever Carter made a compromise the press was all over him, because somehow or other he was contaminating his principles.

So I think I sort of took a stab at the concept that you're laying down. Whether or not Carter was capable, really capable, of doing so. I said emotionally and you said politically, but it comes, I

think, to a large extent, to the same thing. Secondly, your question is very profound in that it raises a basic question, whether the Carter administration could govern at all. If they couldn't pull together the elements of the party to form a governing coalition, they couldn't govern, and it may well be true that that is correct. Third point is this, that if you don't know the question, you'll never find the answer. It wasn't clear that the administration knew what the question was. There's no alternative, once you get into those offices, than to be serious, or seem to be serious, about governing, and I wasn't clear that the administration had focused on the difference between actually formulating policy, on the one hand, and preening before these constituency groups.

McCleskey: I'm still interested in this electoral coalition, governing coalition dichotomy. At some point, in some way, it would seem to be desirable, perhaps necessary, to have some connection between those two. Now I take it from what you say, and what others have said, about the Wexler operation, that that was one form of connection. Were there others, or can there be others?

Schlesinger: Well, you've got to work with the people you have. That's one of the problems one has in dealing with classroom groups of students—they have decided what's right and what's wrong. And the fact that the chairman of the House subcommittee or the chairman of a full Senate committee happens to be from Utah or Nevada and has certain distinct views of his own that are idiosyncratic and certain pressures on him from his constituency, these are things that they are inclined to wave away. Now the thing about governing is that certain people are in certain positions, either to do things or to block things being done. You may wish that you had a whole set of different people in there, but they are there. It's not purely fortuitous, as it may seem when one looks at this thing from the outside. If you are going to get anything done you have to work with those people.

I referred yesterday to Bryce Harlow. Here in the state of Virginia, I will refer to the great father of the state, the late Harry F. Byrd, Sr. When Lyndon Johnson and Harry Byrd were in the Senate they used to take a little bourbon together. And you remember that tax bill that Lyndon wanted to move—I forget which one it was—early on in his Presidency, which Byrd was opposed to, and what Lyndon did was to have Harry Byrd up to the White House. They went upstairs in the residence, and as soon as Harry Byrd arrived, Lyndon shouted to his wife, "Bird, Harry's here, come see him." She came running out and hugged old Harry and so forth, and they sat down, a little drink or two and then they had dinner, and the damn conversation went on until one AM in the morning.

Around twelve o'clock Harry Byrd was getting a little tired, bleary, Lyndon pressed his suit, and all of a sudden he reached out his hand and said, "Harry, thank you for your support on this tax bill..." and that that point they began to move the chairman toward the door, you see. Now Byrd was fundamentally opposed. There was the President of the United States using a combination of courtship, some element of deception, bloody pressure—all of a sudden he's got Harry Byrd moving a tax bill to which Harry Byrd was fundamentally opposed. That's a partial answer to your question, I think. You don't get to deal with the people that you would prefer to deal with, but you've got to make it work.

Now, you're right. It was more difficult in '76, or '77, for Carter, that they had to start saying, "My working people, you're beating on all working people," and he would go on and abuse [Robert] Wagner, who would just sit there and listen to him; and then, as they approached that midnight hour, [Michael J.] Quill would finally say, "That's your last offer?" and Wagner would nod his head and say, "You're a scoundrel, but I have to take it." And you never had a strike.

And in comes John Lindsay, and he isn't going to put up with this kind of crap from the special interests, so they go through the same scenario, and Quill is sitting there denouncing Lindsay across the table. Instead of the usual routine being followed, the ritual, in which he ultimately accepts the offer, Lindsay turns around and says, "Now just you understand, I'm the Mayor of New York City, and I represent the public interest, and I resent this criticism of one who represents the public interest, when you come forward with the selfish claims of your workers..." and they tore up the ritual right there. The consequence was that they had the first transportation strike in New York City in 35 years, because of that understandable, and in some ways admirable, disinclination of the liberal in politics to compromise and to accept the indignity of compromise.

Young: And a footnote is that Quill got bigger raises out of John Lindsay than he ever got from anybody else.

Jones: A satisfying ritual—In talking about this matter of governing, we've talked frequently about dealing with Congress. What was the President's view of the bureaucracy? Did he see it as a possible support in building policy or—how did he—clearly he was a reformer, but how did he—

Schlesinger: He was not as antagonistic as some. He made mistakes, and of course, when he first came to town he said all sorts of indiscreet things that he would have been wiser not to say. He went around to the agencies, you'll remember, and he would suddenly burst out in a public diatribe about the CIA. I remember one meeting that he had, the shameful things that the agency had done, and so forth. It was not the way of cementing the loyalty of the CIA troops to the new director, Admiral [Stansfield] Turner. The CIA was an extreme example, but he would, as he did at HUD that day, imply that government workers were inclined to live in sin, living high. It may be true, by the way, but there's a difference between the truth and what is best desired to elicit support from the civil service. But nonetheless he was not antagonistic and suspicious of it the way, say, Nixon had been. He didn't regard it as a great source of wisdom—that came much later.

At the outset, you've got to recognize, they had a set of moral objectives, but they were very thin on understanding the institutional support that was necessary to achieve any of those moral objectives. The civil service, by and large, fell outside of their purview in that respect, and to some extent was cast in the shadows of the generalized suspicion of Washington and the feeling that the government of the United States had not been as good as the American people.

McCleskey: In staffing the Department of Energy, can you tell us a little bit—I'm still thinking about this question of the governing coalition and again, not so much with an eye to members of Congress, but rather with an eye to building support for policies and programs. Can you tell us

anything about how you went about that, and the extent to which the administration gave assistance or guidance or direction?

Schlesinger: I initially received a list of people that had been put together to fill senior positions in the energy area, and I was simply appalled.

Young: Where did this come from, was it from the political—?

Schlesinger: Yes, I think—it was given to me by Hamilton, I think. Simply appalled, because the list had been put together not by anyone who was serious about governing, or by anyone who had the least bit of experience. It was put together essentially by people who had been critics of the government over the course of the prior decade—this goes back to your point. A major contributor to the list had been Ralph Nader, and whatever the strength and integrity of his criticism on the art of governing, he was something of a novice. I was distressed, and my immediate objective was to minimize the need to refer to that list, and to pick the people who were tolerable and to head off, of course, to head off those whom I regarded as the potentially most pernicious.

I was already, because of my background in defense, and the Atomic Energy Commission, I was an instant object of suspicion to the environmental community, quite unjustly, by the way, but that doesn't really matter. During the early days of the Nixon administration I was probably one of the best friends of the environment that ever came along, but I hadn't done anything for them lately. And they did not like my nuclear weapons policy nor my support of nuclear power, so I had some troubles in that quarter at the outset. But there was the list, and the list consisted of people who had been outspoken in their criticism of the system. I am by instinct moderate if not conservative, and outspokenness in the criticism of the system did not seem to me to be the ideal criterion for choosing people to administer policy.

So I did various things. I start with the hardest case, and the easiest solution: [redacted] I looked at that and I expressed some considerable alarm—I expressed it to myself as it were—and the first thing to do was to keep him the hell out of a position of power. And the way I proceeded was to go to Jimmy Carter and say, "You know, we are going to draw the Federal Power Commission into the Department of Energy in three months time, six months time, and it is not—the thing to do now is to keep the existing commissioners in place"—there was a vacancy on the commission, we could have put in a new chairman—and keep Dick Dunham, who was one of Rockefeller's people, and fairly sensible, a very sensible fellow, in the job. Since we also had a natural gas shortage, I said that he will get the blame for this and you don't want your own appointees in there getting the blame and so forth, but the basic objective was to head off early on any changes in that quarter until such time as the administration's initial passions and sources of advice had been slaked, as it were. Well, that's the way I started.

Young: Could I just interject—when you were given this list, what directions came with it, if any? You were just handed it, or it was said, "These are the people we would like you to put in," or—

Schlesinger: No, no—I was basically handed this list, and it was said, "We'd like you to put some of these people in." But it wasn't very clear, it was quite ambiguous, I think. It was somewhere between, "We'd like you to put some of these people in," or "Give very careful consideration to all of the people on this list." Now on the list, amongst other things, was Jack O'Leary. Jack O'Leary had worked for me at the Atomic Energy Commission, he had been the director of regulation out there, and he was one of the few names on the list that did not come from the wilder fringes. Since I had decided that I had to do at least some genuflection to the list, I picked Jack to be head of the Federal Energy Administration.

By and large, I was attempting to pick people of technical qualifications. For example, ultimately when the Department of Energy was set up, I had John Deutch come down from MIT to be Director of Research and he ultimately became the undersecretary of the department. These were men of technical qualifications. But their qualifications should not be primarily political. If they had political support and they were otherwise qualified, well and good, but we weren't going to start filling the place up with a bunch of hacks, and most particularly we were not going to fill the place up with a bunch of people who had earned their appeal to some inside the Carter administration and some outside advisors by railing against the system over the course of a decade.

Young: Do you think Carter, if push had come to shove, maybe it did at some point in all these appointments, don't you think Carter would have been very much in sympathy with your way of staffing, and as for something that came at you from the political side, not with a Presidential imprimatur on it, the President would back you?

Schlesinger: Absolutely, absolutely. When I tested it—I tested it later on, by which time I had established, or re-established, considerable rapport with Carter, by that time I was in the clear. But in the early days of the administration, I was concerned with the degree of potential "nuttiness" that such a list represented. And Carter's judgment on these things was, in my judgment, less than ideal; he did listen to the Ralph Naders of this world, who had gotten, I think, unduly excited, and wasted a lot of his political capital on things like the breeder reactor. Breeder reactors should have been an issue that was a subordinate issue of the administration, and if you won on it or you lost on it, you did not invest all of the President's prestige on getting beaten up annually on the Hill. It's those kinds of things that give the impression that Carter had poor success on the Hill—even though he got a hell of a lot of his legislation he wanted, he got beaten on a lot of things that he shouldn't have gone after, or allowed the departments to go after.

Jones: And seemed not to think about future political consequences, as with the breeder reactor. Eventually he was going to have to use Howard Baker on the Panama Canal. Those political coalition-building connections didn't seem always to be managed—

Schlesinger: Speaking of Howard Baker, and you asked about building these governing coalitions, I handled connections all throughout Capitol Hill, and I agreed early on with

Howard—he called me up—that we would shut down Clinch River, which would have been stretching the authority of the department once appropriations were made, until such time as we had had a congressional vote on the issue; that we would curtail certain operations but we would not shut it down. And I was building some of my support on the other side of the aisle, which was in a sense my side of the aisle as well.

I pause to give you an amusing anecdote. I flew out to Scoop Jackson's funeral eight or nine months ago, and Howard was on the plane—it was the Vice President's plane—and I said to him, "You remember that time you called me up, Howard, and asked me not to turn off Clinch River? I've often wondered about that in subsequent years, whether you regret that I agreed to do then what you wanted me to do." He laughed and said, "God, I'm tired of Clinch River—Here I've just announced my retirement, and the press goes around and visits with various of my Republican colleagues, who are asked for their reaction to the announcement of my retirement, and the first thing they say is, 'Thank God I'll never have to vote for Clinch River again!'" And Howard said, "You know, if only that had been their second reaction, but when it was their first reaction—" But anyway, I agreed with Howard that we would handle this without attempting to violate the intended procedures of the Budget Act of 1974 or whatever it was that struck down the powers of the administration to withhold funding that had been appropriated by the Congress.

And you had to reach out, you see, to various elements. I worked with Jim McClure on some of these issues. The only way we put together a natural gas bill was by a congressional strategy that was quite different in the two chambers—because the two chambers are quite different. The House is an immensely, immensely partisan body; it's much larger; it partly reflects the style of the Speaker, who is an old-fashioned partisan Democrat. The Speaker's general attitude towards the world was, "Don't give the Republicans the time of day," and he more or less drove off any of the Republicans who wanted to work with us on the energy problem. He said, in effect, "My Democrats will put this thing through on their own." I didn't like that style of operation, by the way. You have John Anderson, for example, who is willing and able to cooperate on energy problems, and he not only was taking abuse from the Republican side for working with the enemy, he was taking abuse and the back of the hand from Democrats for working with them, so after a while he just dropped out, and we had to put together a coalition, a simple majority vote based purely on the Democratic side of the aisle.

In the Senate we worked something that was entirely different. We couldn't work with the nutty left, we couldn't work with the ingrained right, and we had to forge a coalition right in the middle, and we did that by drawing in three moderate, at least on these issues, Republicans. It was Pete Domenici, Mark Hatfield, and Jim McClure, who broke off from the leadership of the Republicans to support that legislation. Otherwise, we would have had the same problems that we had had on the House side even more dramatically, because Howard Metzenbaum and those people were not prepared to support any legislation in the natural gas area that was not punitive for the companies, which had no chance of passing.

In order to get some legislation that we desperately needed, we had to forge a coalition in the middle. On the House side, though, we had had to reach out further and further to the left. In particular we had to get the Congressman from Houston, who was, oddly enough, one of the great consumer advocates—Bob Eckhardt—and we finally brought him into the coalition. But

that meant that we had had to, as you do on the Hill, satisfy some of his needs. One of the reasons the natural gas bill is as complicated as it is, is that we had to buy in support from enough people—economists, academic economists—and they would point out certain deficiencies in the bill from the standpoint of the free market. You've got some of that tendency down here at UVa.

Young: You should know....

Schlesinger: —and I would look over at them and I would say, "You know, the fact that in order to get legislation through the Congress of the United States you not only need a majority in both houses of Congress, you need a majority in both houses as represented in the conference committee—that simple fact, which may seem to you to be adventitious, but to me, in getting legislation through, it is the whole game." And the bill turned out to be a splendid example of coalition building on an issue. But remember that natural gas, in many ways, was legislatively the center of that program.

Young: Did you have another question about the setting up of the department? The end of the story on the appointments was that you ended up getting the people you wanted, and you were not subjected to any particular pressure—

Schlesinger: Absolutely. I was not subjected to any pressure. I went to Carter, I said, "This is a national program, I want to feel free to put Republicans in there in addition to myself, but I do not want to do that without informing you in advance." And he said, in effect, "If the man's qualified, appoint him." And if you notice, we turned out to be one of the few departments, if not the only department, in the Carter administration that did not have a heavy representation from the flaky left.

Now, before we go further—I maintained that capacity, by and large, to fill appointments, except in one area. I picked the first two nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and there was some suspicion in the administration about my views on nuclear power. They were not wholly consistent with Carter's pledge in the election that it would be the last resort, and I was very clear that I didn't believe that that was a sensible policy for him to take. I'm not sure that he thought it was a sensible policy, but he agreed after a while to drop that cliché about the last resort, and I didn't hear any words on that subject again until after Three Mile Island. Many of the people who put together that policy believed very strongly in it and they were wary of my influence with Carter. When we came a cropper on that second initial appointment to the NRC, I lost much of my influence in that area, and that area was taken away from me for future appointments. I could throw a name in, but my influence on NRC appointments after that was quite marginal.

Young: But then it was done reactively, that the White House sort of took it over after something didn't go—It wasn't asserting a prerequisite at the outset—

Schlesinger: No, it was asserting a prerequisite at the outset, but it was an area in which they were more concerned about clipping my wings than any other area. And what happened was that

I had chosen a professor of nuclear engineering at MIT, perfectly qualified, who was not a barnburner—he was a solid professor of nuclear engineering, good academic credentials—

Young: His name was not Morrison.

Schlesinger: As you will see, it was very much not that way. He was a man named [Kent] Hansen, and I left it, I made two mistakes. One was a mistake of omission—I did not take this fellow through the paces of what he should—I just gave him a brief once-over about the way he should comport himself during the confirmation hearing, and I did not think of warning him of all the dos and the don'ts, relying on (mistakenly relying on) his general intelligence to carry him through. And the other mistake was to leave the problem of congressional clearances to the congressional liaison staff, and they had gone up and they had extracted, they informed me, a commitment from Gary Hart, who was chairman of the committee, that he would ask some questions, that he would let the appointment go through even though he was a skeptic about nuclear power. They said that they had this ironclad agreement with Hart.

It's not clear to me in retrospect whether they were overstating the agreement with Hart or Hart subsequently turned out to have indulged in some retrospective deception, which is to say, a lie. He did not ask a few questions; he made it a cause célèbre, and he had been led into this by the indiscreet responses of Mr. Hansen, who was asked whether or not he believed in breeder reactors. And instead of responding as he should have responded—if I'd dreamed the question was going to be mishandled, I would have given him a script—but instead of saying what he should have, which is, "That is a very good question, Mr. Chairman. As you know, over the years I have been a supporter of breeder reactors, but situations change, and I know that the President has reservations on the subject, and I'll have an open mind when I join the Commission." You can't do anything with an answer like that, see.

Instead, he says, "Yes, I'm a believer in the breeder reactor and I would like to see the breeder development continued," and so on. Not quite that bluntly, but he just got himself tangled up, instead of slipping and sidestepping the question. Well, Hart was all over him, and Hart then proceeded to make this an issue for the left wing of the Democratic Party, and the President was engaged in one of these embarrassing situations in which to get the man through he was going to have to rely on a solid Republican vote. Carter didn't like that much, so they pulled the nomination.

And incidentally, Carter should not have pulled the nominations that he did. I mean, Reagan doesn't pull nominations. If somebody only gets 45 votes against him, they just shrug it off. But Carter pulled the nomination of Ted Sorensen; once he named him, he sent that to the Hill, and he got a little flack and he pulled the nomination, the consequence was that the people on the Hill decided they could stampede Jimmy Carter. Once they get that taste of blood they're going to find some more. That's a digression.

But in any event, I got into trouble with regard to Hansen because he answered these questions indiscreetly; he did not sidestep the question on the breeder reactor and Gary Hart, instead of fulfilling his alleged commitment to be supportive, turned to organizing the resistance. I was then informed by the congressional liaison staff that Hart had said, "Well, this fellow's made a few

mistakes, but all I'm going to do is to vote against him myself; I will make no effort to organize resistance." That's what they told me. The answer was that from that day forward, he spent all of his time lobbying with his colleagues to make as big a hullabaloo on the issue as possible. In any event, at that time I lost my influence on NRC appointments, but within the Department of Energy I retained almost full authority to the end.

McCleskey: Just following up on that. Within the department you had a reasonably free hand; to what extent were you able to structure the department and to develop those appointments in ways that would build support where you thought you needed it most? For example, we mentioned Eckhardt long ago; was someone like Lynn Coleman supposed to be a bridge to Eckhardt, or did he represent some other interests?

Schlesinger: Dick Coleman could deal well with the industry; he was a bridge to the industry. They would chat with him. He had general support throughout Texas, because they knew him, they didn't care that he was at least a moderate liberal by Texas standards. If a man's a Texan, he gets the support of other Texans just by birthright. And in addition to Eckhardt, he had support elsewhere in the Texas delegation, so it was a way of building support over on that side. It was, I think, once again, as you may recall, an example of the feistiness of this Democratic Congress that had been used just to butcher Presidents of the United States, mostly Republican but the havoc continued when a Democrat came into the White House. It took me, as I recall, seven months to get Coleman through the confirmation process. And I may either be more firm in these things, or more rash, depending on your point of view, or more stubborn than Jimmy Carter, but I was not going to pull down an appointment of a man who was perfectly qualified in order to make Howard Metzenbaum happy, or to give Howard Metzenbaum a scalp that he could wave around. So we did without the General Counsel for something on the order of seven months, which I think is an indication of badly functioning government.

There was only one question about Dick Coleman, and that was that he had been a partner in Vinson & Elkins and he had been a partner of John Connally, and that presumably disqualified him for the office of General Counsel. I regarded that as frivolous if not scandalous on the part of the Senate, and I was disappointed that the other Senators didn't run over Metzenbaum, but that's not done any more. One of the things that we have done, it's one of Jimmy Carter's problems, particularly on the Democratic side, is this tendency to defer to the administration or the President. The Republicans, in this administration, have turned right around, and that's why they are governing better—amongst other reasons—than they were in that earlier period.

Young: We're getting close to the end of our time now.

Strong: We've been talking this morning about a lot of the problems the Carter administration had, the White House had in understanding Washington, and yesterday we talked about the other side of that, the problems the press and the foreign leaders, and Washington figures had understanding Carter. You were one of the few people who was sort of in between those two worlds. Could you explain Carter to people when you were lobbying on the Hill, or when you were making contacts with important people in Washington?

Schlesinger: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. If they were initially sympathetic, there would be willingness to listen and to re-clarify. I'm always amazed at this degree of antagonism that you see to Carter today, and I have frequently observed that I seem to be the only member of the Washington establishment who positively likes Jimmy Carter. Sometimes it was pointless.

Young: Excuse me, you are probably one of the few who really knows him, aren't you?

Schlesinger: Maybe. Maybe. Good point. I think that that's an excellent point, because there are a lot of people who superficially knew—who think they know him, but they don't. It depended on the individual. For example, there was a good deal of skepticism about Carter. You had to take somebody like Dale Bumpers, amongst other things a pretty amiable man, who had been Governor of Arkansas as I recall it, at the same time that Carter was Governor of Georgia, and none of those Governors had liked Jimmy Carter very much. They had always thought that he was upstaging them at Southern Governors' conventions, and all of those things that politicians most resent, so there was residual resentment there, skepticism, on the part of Bumpers that never went away, never went entirely away. But he was, as I say, an amiable man, and he was prepared to look and listen to Carter in this different role as President of the United States, but he never quite forgot that he didn't like Jimmy Carter much. With somebody like Scoop Jackson you were better off just not discussing the subject. It wasn't that he was that hostile, but it was just not a subject that was profitable to discuss.

By and large, I found that the thing that was most puzzling was the antagonism of the press. I really don't, to this day, understand that at all. They had decided that Jimmy Carter was a mean little expletive, and it was in most cases impossible, almost impossible to get them to even reconsider their judgments about Carter. The press spends a great deal of time talking about candor and honesty, as you know, but the way for a politician not to get along with the press is to be too candid about his feelings. That's a kind of candid that is not admired, it is simply resented. Carter had been pretty blunt about his feelings, he never recovered from that. And of course once it became a cliché within the press corps what Carter was like, what his difficulties were, it became very hard to challenge—with save a minority of the press people—an established cliché.

Strong: You said yesterday what attracted you to Carter and what attracted a lot of the voters in 1976 was the idea of freshness, someone willing to do new things, comprehensive things, someone genuinely thinking about the public interest, those kinds of qualities—

Schlesinger: I'm not sure about that third one, say it again?

Strong: I'm not sure—

Schlesinger: Well, the other three were good, the first, second, and fourth were true.

Strong: Did other people in Washington, were they attracted to that freshness, or were you unusual in being attracted to the things that made Jimmy Carter different?

Schlesinger: I think that I was unusual and there were good reasons for that. Carter's personal attractiveness tended to be in very small groups, tended to be revealed within his family or

administration. That facet of his personality, or his true personality, didn't get through. Somehow or other, when he came on in public, he came on as preachy, and to some, insincere, if not hypocritical. The press is always looking for insincerity, even where it does not exist, mind you, and if they are looking hard for it in a particular individual like Carter, they will confirm, at least in their own minds, that they have found a great deal of evidence of it. Now Carter's public persona tended to be very preachy. I mentioned yesterday that general denunciation of people living in sin, at HUD, and I said, jokingly, that Washington never forgave him for it, but it's not only said jokingly. It's said seriously, they thought that that was Carter at his most preachy, and they didn't like it.

Mrs. Schlesinger: Well, I think you are right alongside of something very important, like a corollary to the thing that makes reporters as a group uncomfortable, and that's Carter's very direct religious wellspring. And you see it in his personality, and that is not something that reporters are real comfortable with. Therefore his hypocrisies are a nice way to get at him, and that bit of living in sin and all that stuff was not congenial to them.

Schlesinger: It sure as hell wasn't.

Thompson: If he had been a little bit more sophisticated would it have helped?

Schlesinger: It would have helped a lot.

Thompson: The *Playboy* interview and all these things—he seemed to be not quite in command—the Niebuhrians, for example, got after him.

Schlesinger: The which?

Thompson: The followers of Reinhold Niebuhr.

Schlesinger: They quite rightly did, as he was shooting off his mouth without realizing how little he knew about the subject. Somebody had come in and handed him, in effect, a list of quotations from Niebuhr, and he threw them in without grasping the fact that his view of the world was poles apart from that of Reinhold Niebuhr. Carter, as I say, was very bright, but he was remarkably un-intellectual in some respects. He did not have a feel for history; his religious views were much more based upon a personal emotional commitment than they were on reflections on the writing of theologians, whether ancient or modern American. And when he said that he admired Reinhold Niebuhr, it was a reflection of somebody telling him that was a good thing to say, but he really didn't understand. He was much more of a man out of the Christian social gospel of eighty years earlier than he was a follower of Niebuhr's.

McCleskey: I'm still circling around this question that Bob was getting at, that we talked about yesterday, the difference between the image—

Schlesinger: Excuse me one moment. The ignorance of history was very costly, to some extent domestically, but most clearly overseas. He just didn't grasp what was going on in these countries, and he'd come up with these pious—in some ways appealing—statements that were

just wrong. When he announced that he had solved the problems between the Arabs and the Jews that had gone on for three thousand years, well, the Arabs, of course, did not arrive in the area of Palestine until what, 750, 790 AD, and these whole long complex histories suddenly get put into a vignette that was plumb wrong.

I mentioned yesterday I had this—one occasion with Jimmy Carter in which we got testy or cold with each other was about the time that the Shah fell. I went to see him and I made my pitch in terms of a high-level envoy, Brzezinski or myself. I said that the institution that had to be the source and salvation of the monarchy was the military, and I got a reading from Carter, who had been working the problem for some time by then—not for a year, not for three months, but sort of in the last three weeks—and he said to me something on the order of, "You realize, Jim, that the Majlis will be summoned to meet under the constitution of 1906 and that for the first time in the reign of the Shah the constitutional precepts will be observed through the summoning of the parliament."

I said, "Mr. President, the constitution of 1906 is almost irrelevant to what is going on in-country. You cannot capture the forces at work in this country by reference to a constitutional document. There are only three authorities in the country: Khomeini, the military, and the throne. Now unless the military work to support the throne, they're going to lose." Well, he said to me—at that point, who was it, [Mehdi] Bazargan has come in, and he will be supported under the constitution of 1906. I said, "Bazargan will be out in three months time," rather angrily. And this is why the conversation was testy and chilly, because I was not responding to his very idealistic view that we had now seen the restoration of a constitution of 1906. I was saying you'd better get that military to rally around the throne, or you are not going to have anything left there in six months time. Well, he then told me that he was going to send Dutch Huyser out and that was the end of my—of any hopes that we were going to achieve anything in the country, and I was pretty appalled at that time. As I say, it was the one period and the one event in which my patience, forbearance, or admiration—whatever it was—for Jimmy Carter, wore quite thin.

But it is illustrative, you see, of this lack of experience with history, and the reading of history as a set of miracle plays, as it were. The Panama Canal Treaty, the United States had done something wrong, it had done something sinful, and we were going to expunge this evil page from our history. In the case of the Shah, he had done something wrong: he had failed to govern in accordance with the constitution, he had not observed the strictures of human rights, and so forth, all of this was going to be changed, and we were now getting a George Ball solution through Bazargan. And the crude and rough forces that determine all of history, but particularly in these underdeveloped countries, are something that was beyond his ken. I kept telling him, early on, "Mr. President, you've had experience in domestic politics; you know how ruthless politicians and political forces can be domestically. Do not think of the international stage as better in some respects than the domestic scene; it is far, far worse, because there are no constraints legally on the intercourse between nations, and within these nations the norms that restrain people in the United States or in the advanced democracies simply are not much of a restraint."

But that absence of historical view was very costly to him on the international scene. I'll give you another example. You'll remember all of this fuss over Mexican gas. John White, who was a

Texan and was fairly close to Carter—he was chairman of the DNC [Democratic National Committee]—would drop by with Jimmy Carter. He told me once that during the troubles with [Jose] Lopez-Portillo he had said to Carter, he said, "You've got to understand, Mr. President, that Mexico is a very corrupt society." And he said that Carter just was shocked at his statement that—how could he say this about people that he had met, like Lopez-Portillo and his principal aides, to accuse them of corruption. John White says, "Now, Mr. President, I'm not accusing them of anything; I'm simply saying that the ways things are done in Mexico are different." But Carter was simply shocked by this. He couldn't believe it. Now this is a reflection of a kind of innocence and in some respects a refreshing innocence, but not necessarily in the office of the President of the United States.

Young: I don't think Zbig could be accused of that innocence, though—

Schlesinger: No, but Zbig is in many ways innocent about the third world. He tended to fuel the third world idealism of the Carters. See, Zbig is a nationalist, a Polish nationalist, and somewhere deep down in his viscera Zbig Brzezinski thinks that the great powers are always wrong.

I didn't understand this until he came back from one of his trips in 1979, I sat down with him, and he was just ecstatic about his visit to Algeria. He said that he had gone to these sites where they had prepared the explosives to kill the French, and he was just wrapped up in this wonderful national movement. And my reaction was quite simple, "Hey, Zbig, that's the other side. We're the West; they were killing our people." But he was so much on the side of any national revolution—drawing off his Polish background. Now I say that with some care, because I have always thought that we overstate in this country this rubbish about ethnicity, and I've always been inclined to downplay and it was something of a shock on that occasion to discover indeed that Zbig Brzezinski had these deep emotions on a problem that should have been the other way around, because of his feelings as a Polish national.

Young: So we have two white ethnics in the White House. One is the President and one is his National Security Advisor?

Schlesinger: Mm hmm.

Young: Cliff, do you want to finish up this question, and then we'll wind up, I think.

Schlesinger: I'd point out that one foreign policy issue that I never got around to was the whole interplay with the Saudis, which is one of the most interesting developments of all. We'll have to leave that, I suppose, to another time. Very interesting, dealing with the Saudis is, of course, a remarkable thing—

Young: What would the story illustrate?

Schlesinger: Well, it illustrates, amongst other things, just how Carter did not understand how to deal with the Saudis, for example, he sent Secretary of Commerce—

Thompson: Phil Klutznick?

Schlesinger: No, no, Dean of Duke University—

Young: Kreps—

Schlesinger: He sent Juanita Kreps over there. Now the Saudis were trying to be polite, but do not impose our notion of the equality of sexes on that society. They will go out of their way—the Saudis are naturally courteous, but that was not the ideal—

Young: I don't think I want to hear any more—I think you've given the whole story right there—

Schlesinger: He sent his son, Chip [Jack Carter], over to Saudi Arabia, to my frustration, because he thought that the Saudis were kind of family minded, which is indeed true, but in Saudi Arabia things go by the generations. And even King Faisal's son, who holds a very high position, and Prince Saud is likely to be King some day, that's still the younger generation. He may be in his late forties now but that's the younger generation. And Chip Carter was in Saudi as a kid.

Young: What was he sent over there for?

Schlesinger: Kind of glad-handing.

Young: Not a mission?

Schlesinger: I don't remember precisely what it was, it was something or other, there was a mission and I can't remember what it was—

Mrs. Schlesinger: Just made a lot of news—

Schlesinger: Well, it made a lot or news but that didn't mean that that was the only purpose behind it.

Young: How do you think Carter will go down in history?

Schlesinger: Well, I'm going to come to that in one moment, but the Saudi thing is, I think, very interesting. The Saudis are a different culture, and you had to deal with the Saudis for a long time in order to understand them. I had dealings with the then crown prince when I was Secretary of Defense. There are two things to understand: first, that Saudis work on the basis of personal relationships—indeed, as most peoples do, other than these bureaucratized Western countries, and it doesn't matter that much that you happen to be, let's say, the Secretary of the Treasury. They'll talk to you if they know you, and they won't talk to you if they don't know you, and those relationships build only very slowly. You find messages delivered from the oddest quarters by the Saudis simply because of this element of personal trust. You have to understand that about the Saudis and you have to understand the immense politeness, that they'll never say no to you.

They will use all sorts of circumlocutions that if you are listening carefully you hear the circumlocutions and you know the answer is "Surely not." But they won't say no to you because they regard that as being inhospitable and impolite. So you have to know all these things.

Carter at one point sent Mike Blumenthal. Well, Mike Blumenthal wandered through the country and he had a talk with high level Saudis on holding down the price of oil. I had said the price of oil was going up five or ten percent—this was before the problem with the Shah—and that the Saudis could do nothing else in light of their relations to the other Arabs, and to go to the Saudis and say to them, "Don't raise prices," was merely an exercise in attempting to achieve some degree of restraint or a waste of our political capital. Well, Mike came back from Saudi Arabia and said, "[Hashim] Yamani assured me that there would be no increase in prices." And I knew that was wrong. I knew that was wrong.

And it turns out that what would happen with an American, and particularly an American businessman who likes to get things on the table and likes to get things done, Mike had kept saying, "Will you raise prices?" and Yamani had indulged in circumlocutions, saying that "we will do our best to avoid a price increase" which meant he felt that they were going to have to go along with one. Mike didn't pick up that intonation. So he came back and there was the administration, as a result of those conversations, getting hooked publicly upon a position that I thought was simply going to be defeated at the next OPEC meeting. Which it was. The Saudis raised prices, I think, ten percent that time, and Mike was flabbergasted and went around saying that he had been deceived. He hadn't been deceived, he just hadn't understood.

Jones: Deceived himself?

Schlesinger: Yes, the way the Saudis responded. Now I went to Saudi Arabia and I was not seeking to hold down prices, primarily. My principal objective was to get the Saudis to increase production capacity, so that you had an inherent restraint on the run-up in prices, and I extracted from them the intelligence with regard to what they were going to do. That, in brief, is the Saudi story. By the way, I never asked them whether or not the United States should create a Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That mistake was made by Charles Duncan in 1979 when he asked them permission to start refilling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

You don't ask the Saudis a question to which they must say no. Just do it. Shortly thereafter, incidentally, we had a visit from a high-level Saudi who said to me, "Can't you get your government never to ask us permission in the kingdom? We are a little country, we are weak, we are dependent on you for our survival, the great power of the free world, and when you come as the great power of the free world to our little kingdom and ask us permission to do something that you can do anyhow, we get alarmed about our security." A quite sensible attitude, I thought.

Thompson: Before you sum up, can I just ask two fairly yes-or-no questions? I don't want to delay the process Jim has in mind, but— One: on the relation with the press, Carter, it seems to me, didn't have what Kennedy, what Reagan, what a number of others have had, lead horses who—in Kennedy's case, it was Ben Bradlee and Charlie Bartlett; Reagan has had George Will and others. Even when the rest of the press starts to go bad, these people always throw in the better vision. And maybe Carter had somebody like that, but I can't—

Schlesinger: He did not. And it was rhetoric. It was using a somewhat dishonest tool to curry favor. I don't understand why he took such a firm view on that. The press should have been honest and true and fair, and if they weren't they condemned themselves—true, but in the course of condemning themselves morally, they were doing a hell of a lot of political damage to the administration.

Thompson: The other question was, which of these two views is right? It seems to me you have in a way refuted your own statement that you are a public servant, not a political—you said politician, maybe I'm stretching to say political animal—because all that you have said about the politics of government shows that you are a political figure in that regard. The Carter administration apparently had no sense of what politics was in that area, and did they have a sense of politics that never got transferred to governance in terms of compromise, horse-trading, putting coalitions together, and getting elected. Hamilton Jordan kept saying even in the last days before the election, that "at the last minute Carter always overcame." And he said, "He's going to do that with Reagan—" on [Robert] McNeil-[James] Lehrer and all the programs— "because he has great political sense of rallying at the last moment." But was that a sense of politics or was it just righteousness that—

Schlesinger: No, no—I'll be back in a moment.

[Dr. Schlesinger leaves the room.]

Thompson: Has anybody said that there were particular press people who were favorable?

Young: No, and I can't—

Jones: He had individual friends—I remember.

Young: Yes, but they didn't do much for him. They didn't explicate the administration the way George Will does. He will be a soft critic but mainly an explicator of the best of Reagan, I think. But then I don't think Ford had anybody like that. I don't think Nixon had anybody like that, I don't think—after a while I don't think LBJ did either. Tom Wicker sort of came on, after the assassination, as the Johnson columnist, in a way. I remember at the first it was a favorable analysis of this sort of figure in the White House, but he turned very much against him.

Thompson: Bill Moyers when he left picked it up a little—

Jones: Yes, he picked it up some too.

Young: Roosevelt didn't have many columnists, he had a lot of reporters, but there were some columnists he liked to beat and they were mostly hostile to him. He did have a few.

Thompson: When you think that week after week the matter of what is going wrong George Will and several other conservative columns can always be depended on to put a better face on what Reagan does—I can't imagine that doesn't have a great effect on—

Young: Oh, I'm sure it does.

Thompson: [John] McLaughlin and the group, there are at least two—there are at least two, [Rowland] Evans and [Robert] Novak, people who are always kind of watching over the scene to put a better construction on it.

Jones: The personal feeling is very alive. You remember that session we had with the White House press corps people, and the thing that surprised me was how much hate they expressed for both Johnson and Nixon, but even that was different. They all had Johnson stories, personal stories, and they were anxious to tell them, but none of them had Nixon stories, personal stories. And with Carter, I don't think they hated them in the same way, it was different—

Young: It was dismissive.

Jones: Dismissive, yes, and they questioned his competence and that sort of thing. Nobody disliked him.

Young: There was a lot of that originally with LBJ.

[Dr. Schlesinger returns to the room.]

Schlesinger: In response to the prior question—

Thompson: Well, we've almost answered it in your absence, except the politics one, Jim.

Schlesinger: On the autobiographical note, I like to get things done, which means that you have to have, very much have to have, political calculations. It's the only way you get votes on Capitol Hill that are favorable. You can't beat Mike Mansfield's amendment on the floor of the Senate without indulging in very careful political calculations. However, I do not want to disport myself before the American electorate for votes, and I don't. I find partisanship a little hard to take. My general view of the world is that when you get anything done in Washington, it's by getting the sensible people of both parties together and pushing the nuttier elements to the outside. With regard to Carter, well, Jimmy Carter was Jimmy Carter. Which meant that he wanted very much to do the right thing, and the right thing wasn't indulging in a lot of logrolling and compromising, particularly if he had to give up something that he believed in. That came very hard to the President. I think that it just is a part of the man. I suspect this was true in Georgia too, wasn't it?

Young: I was just going to say that that was a winning strategy there, and to have dealt with the establishment in the old line way, he would have never gotten anywhere in politics. He built his whole career out of a different way of doing that, and then he sort of depended on being judged on his merits, so to speak, his accomplishments would stand for themselves. He would lecture the legislature, he wouldn't lobby it.

Schlesinger: Well, and the other indignity of having Cabinet officers actually horse-trading with these people was offensive to him in the abstract, and most offensive to him in the concrete. Now some of you may remember we only had a bare majority in the Senate for reporting out the natural gas bill. And that majority was put together not through the simple dedication to the public interest in the review of the natural gas problem; it was put together by some horse-trading. It included, in the majority, Jim McClure from the state of Idaho, who has out there at the nuclear test facility and was a strong advocate of nuclear power, and Jim McClure was interested primarily in the breeder program. You could see Carter regarded the whole thing as unclean.

I went and I traded with Jim McClure, and I agreed to a continuing program in breeder technology, and a design program for a breeder reactor that might or might not be built somewhere down the road, but that we would put some tens of millions of dollars into the design of a better breeder, which incidentally was good policy—we never wanted to build that damn Clinch River thing when it got to be 20 years old. Well, Carter was quite uneasy with this whole process. Then as these things developed, Jim McClure held a press conference in which he announced that he had agreed with the President and he indicated that we were going to have more breeder technology, and the press just had a field day. You remember this? And the thing that they made of it was that Jimmy Carter is engaging in horse-trading. The answer is, "You damn well have to engage in horse-trading."

But the press, because of Carter's general stance, held it against Carter that he had engaged in horse-trading, just as previously and indeed in an intellectual sense simultaneously they disapproved of him because he didn't engage in horse-trading. They held him—partly because of his prior comments that, you know, he was only going to do the right thing, what he believed in. Well, as these things turn out, the White House people, including the President, were quite miffed with me because they were getting this unfavorable publicity. The answer is, there was no way were going to get a favorable natural gas vote.

Young: So you can't win three ways—can't keep it quiet even when you do it.

Schlesinger: But you know, this kind of horse-trading goes on all the time. McClure didn't exactly abide by the normal, unwritten rules of the game, he was more open about this than he should have been, but you've got to expect that from the other side of the aisle, by the way. He had his problems, because he was violating the policies laid down by his chairman, by his leader, Cliff Hansen of Wyoming, so he had to justify his deviation to his Republican colleagues, and that was part of it. That's the name of the game, if you're going to put together legislation, you've got to get a majority.

Jones: But Carter's position on process ended up preventing himself from even being able to take credit because of the process, the way it was done. So he gets criticized.

Schlesinger: Yes, and go back to Lyndon Johnson once again. Lyndon Johnson would buy in votes left and right, it's a normal part of that process up there, and everyone would talk about Super Lyndon. Jimmy Carter occasionally indulges in the same thing and they are all over him for selling out, and the like.

Jones: The main difference is he would have held a press conference before McClure.

Schlesinger: That's right. In fact, using the Harry Byrd analogy, he would have had Jim McClure up there to the White House and he would have clasped Jim McClure's hand and he would have taken everything away from McClure. McClure would have been happy to have saved the nuclear test site in the state of Idaho before it was all through.

Young: It's interesting, this connection which I think all students of the Presidency should pay a little bit more attention to, and probably will in the future, and that is, what does the mastery of process have to do with the historical importance or identity of an administration? Among the modern Presidents, Roosevelt is sort of the grandmaster of process and he is also a great President. But think of the ones since who have been masters of process and their place in history seems to diminish—Lyndon Johnson wouldn't face a second election....

Schlesinger: But not because of that. He became a pariah because of the Vietnam War.

Young: But was a master of process.

Schlesinger: Yes, but if it had not been for Vietnam he would have stayed Super Lyndon to the close at least of sixty-eight.

Young: It's hard to—

Schlesinger: It's complicated—

Young: —a complicated question.

Schlesinger: Right. The process—we want a President—and this was so clear in Carter's case—we want a President who shows his skills in this art just as we like Presidents who play poker well.

Young: That's right.

Schlesinger: But we also want that President to be not only the head of government who can deal this, but he's got to be head of state, and well above this niggling and so forth, and we once again have this quite ambivalent view towards the Presidency, where if he is an effective head of government he's got to do things that detract from his ceremonial and idealistic role as head of state.

Young: I also think when you're looking close up at a President in office or very shortly out of it, the process questions, the methodology, how he goes about the job, take a prior consideration. I'm trying to think about what happens to the reputation of Presidents after they leave office. Carter got very poor grades, more on his political methodology when that was the essential test. Somehow the test changes when it recedes into the distance. A lot of people just then forget about the process, historians don't even care about that. When they come to assess a President,

they look at who he was and what he did and what he got done. One of the reasons we are thinking of this as an oral history contribution is that it puts into the historical pot all these questions about process. But still we like to end up saying will that really matter in the long run? What will stand out, what do you think will come down in history? Do you think that the low grades that the Carter administration got will stay, and more importantly, what do you think as the Reagan administration drama plays itself out, how will it come down?

Schlesinger: Okay. Let me say that I hadn't thought about the process issue, I'll use something analogous. Harry Truman today gets rave reviews. Now a lot of us lived through that period and that was not the way we felt about Harry Truman at the time. He had five percenters all over the place; he pardoned [Thomas] Pendergast; he had the worst attorney generals in history—[James H.] McGrath, [James P.] McGranery, all of these clowns. On a day-to-day basis, he was always engaged in something that was detracting from his reputation. Yet here you have this public impression of Harry Truman, and as one of my colleagues back at Rand when this started observed, "To be sure Harry Truman at certain moments rose to great heights, frequently with regard to problems that he brought on himself, but as a normal day-to-day President he was simply lousy."

And that's pretty much true. And yet today what do we have? It is all of the small details, not so much success or failure in process as the grubby details of the administration have receded from the public mind, and all you see in the case of Truman are the monuments: the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] decision, the Marshall Plan, the intervention in Korea, Greek-Turkish aid program. All of these monuments—indeed even the British loan, which is something that he brought upon himself by mistakenly canceling Lend-Lease to Britain the day the war ended—he should have just kept the Lend-Lease program going—but he recovered. So you see these monuments above the horizon, and that's all you see of Harry Truman.

Young: And that's what you don't see and get in the reporting of the time, because you just don't have the perspective to see it.

Schlesinger: That's—you get some of that, but it's kind of obscured by the clouds—and the Marshall Plan was then recognized to be a monument. NATO becomes more of a monument in retrospect. And that's going to happen to Carter, curiously enough, despite all the weaknesses, he will recover in history and he might recover substantially. Partly because all of the inadequacies at the higgling and piggling of the political market will have been forgotten. And what will they see? They will see those monuments: Camp David agreement, the Panama Canal Treaty, which is likely to grow in importance the worse the problems are in Central America. A normalization of relations with China. They will stand above the horizon.

With regard to the domestic programs, he's going to look far better. Part of his problem is this asymmetric treatment by the press. It is an irony to me that Jimmy Carter was bashed around for three or four years because he adapted to a change in the economic climate and withdrew his proposal of the fifty-dollar rebate in the tax bill of 1977, I believe, and that withdrawal of that simple, simple minor element was discussed endlessly in the press for what it revealed about Carter's flip-flops and lack of character and so forth. It was a very minor thing.

By contrast, in this administration, you've had a President of the United States who has basically destroyed the fiscal structure of the United States. We are running deficits that are immense because of a fundamental miscalculation both about the effect of reduction of tax rates and the ability to balance government expenditures outside of defense interest payments and entitlements area. Just an illusion. And we've destroyed the fiscal system of the United States, for which we will pay an irreparable price, as opposed to that fifty-dollar rebate issue, which was an incident in history—this is a monument in history, and yet the press criticism of Carter for that small thing is probably greater than all of the flack that Reagan has received with regard to his own fiscal disaster. Now that shows the asymmetry of the press.

Now, in the light of history, when people come back 20 years from now or 30 years from now, they're going to look at this press that Carter got and they're going to say, "Why in God's name when we can look back at this turning point in the subsequent administration that the press basically supported, did Carter get all of this flack over a lousy thing like a fifty-dollar rebate?" And the asymmetry of press criticism in retrospect will be the thing that has to be explained, rather than Carter—

Young: I think that's the sort of the sixty-four dollar question.

Schlesinger: Well, I have not finished on the press, if I might—

Young: Figuring out why these changes take place—

Schlesinger: Well, there is a kind of a yin and a yang that goes on in the world of politics. Now there is something else I was going to say about the press. You asked yesterday why the press was so harsh and why it's been, to say the least, more mellow towards the successor. Riding down on the plane one day from New York with one of the editors of *Time*, I asked him basically that question. I said, "Given the savagery with which you tore into—you at *Time* in particular—tore into Carter, why does Reagan have a free ride?" He said, "In part because we went back and we reviewed what we had done to Carter, and we decided that that was inappropriate and that we were not going to do that again." Now, he didn't use words like savagery, but the point was very clear. Now there's another point here—

Young: Let me just pose a hypothetical question. Suppose Carter had been re-elected, would he have reviewed it?

Schlesinger: Yes—but—

Young: Amazing—that would have been a terrible confession of—

Schlesinger: Oh, no, they wouldn't have reviewed it in the sense that they would admit error. No one in the press ever admits error, they just change the line. If Carter had been re-elected, he would have gotten a softer line from the press. But you point to another important element, which is that the press goes where the power is, and one of the reasons why *Time* and others felt free to savage Carter was that they thought he was going to lose, they thought he was a loser, and therefore they were much more—

Young: They wouldn't acknowledge that, though, either, would they?

Schlesinger: Oh, I think, after two or—

Young: Not the ones we've had out here.

Schlesinger: Yes, but you've got to recognize that they are fighting for their place in history too, and words like "savagery" and the proclivity of the press, whatever we may say, is to go where the power is. Reagan—if Reagan looked like a loser this year, instead of winner, he would not be getting the press that he is. They just instinctively feel in their bones, and their bones are pretty good on these instincts, that Reagan's going to be re-elected, and there's no reason to make any enemies for the next four years. At the end of his term we'll have an opportunity to say a few things—

Young: But they have also involved themselves as actors in the process of making these outcomes.

Schlesinger: Absolutely.

Young: So it's not entirely a matter of swinging with the wind; they're part of the wind.

Schlesinger: They sometimes pretend to detach, but they know that they are not detached from that process. Now in any event, I think that Carter's role in history, certainly on the international scene, will be substantial, because you have these monuments. To this date, Ronald Reagan has no monuments. You can argue about the Reagan foreign policy that there are fewer errors, but there are certainly fewer accomplishments. And what does history look at? It looks at those monuments, those hills with or without shining cities on them, rising above the plain. And as you get further and further from the grubby details, Carter will look better. There will also be a tendency, I think, as I suggested, to think that he was unfairly treated in his time by the media.

Now, what about the domestic scene? I think that that depends much more on the success of the Reagan revolution or what passes to be the Reagan revolution. For example, if we go down very rapidly, there will be a tendency to look back nostalgically on the Carter period, but it's much harder to make an unvarnished prediction on the domestic scene than on the international scene, because on the international scene you know there are those monuments. Camp David will always be a dramatic example, and all his critics will always say, "Of course, I can't understand why this man who was so incompetent could do so well there." Right now that's something to be explained away—20 years from now it's something to be pointed to. You have a subsequent administration that keeps referring to the Camp David process, that it must keep going. You have an administration that rests its case on the Persian Gulf on the Carter Doctrine. So you've got some accomplishments there that no one can ignore.

The evolution of domestic attitudes is less predictable. But my own view is that the public really does not buy Reagan policies; they like the Reagan personality; and that as time passes and that

personality is removed from the scene, they will find that they sided on many issues much more with Carter.

You also have an oscillation in public attitudes, periods of quiescence and periods of reform-mindedness. Right now we are in a period of quiescence: "Just don't bother me, I want to be free to take care of myself and my family," is the basic public attitude. Of course there's a little flag waving, but that's part of the entertainment of self; it's not much a serious dedication to an American mission in the world, which is the heart of patriotism, it seems to me. The return of a period of reform-mindedness will mean that Carter's instincts, which in some ways look quixotic today, will be more and more highly regarded, and his accomplishments, say, civil service reform, may look better. This fellow came along and saw certain problems and tried to fix them.

There's also the energy problem. That is a potential Carter monument depending on the evolution of the energy problem. I have my own views as to how the energy problem is likely to evolve. And he is being immensely helped in the eyes of history by Ronald Reagan, just as Reagan is being helped at the present time by Carter's prior energy problems that have provided him with solutions that he can point to and at the same time hold down the cost of living. Reagan is providing Carter, through his policies, with redemption, I think, in history, because you know the oil problem is coming back, probably in the 1990s, and in the course of this decade what will we do? We wil1 tear down much of the Carter structure in energy.

The Synfuels Corporation will disappear or be crippled, crippled either financially or by a set of appointments who are not up to fulfilling the responsibilities of the corporation. Is Synfuels all that good in this perspective of today? Probably not. From the perspective of fifteen years out, when we have another oil shortage and when we are in this country importing eight-and-a-half or nine billion barrels a day. At that point, they'll go back and say, "We had this program started by this idealistic fellow Jimmy Carter, who didn't have that much carry-through, but by God he saw a future problem, and then it was wrecked in a subsequent administration."

You have the element. You have all of these little things in the energy area such as the introduction of diesel engines. Diesel engines are disappearing. They're going to come back, you know, in the future, and they'll say, "Why were they allowed to die in the middle 1980s? Why are we using all these wasteful devices?" and so on. When we have an energy problem in the future, and this assumes that we will get back into either a national security problem or a concrete shortage, because of supply interruption, Carter's going to look good again, and that can be a potential monument to him. It depends on the future, once again. And the more effective—oddly enough, the more effective Ronald Reagan is today in dismantling the Carter structure, the better that Carter structure will appear to a future historian, because all that he will then see will be—

Young: Because the structure was related to problems that will recur? Is that basically—

Schlesinger: Right, and the more that structure is removed, the more the man who removes it will appear to be blind to the forces of history, and by the process of removal of that structure, Carter does not have to stand the test of whether or not those things would actually have contributed very much. He only stands the test of prophecy and he will look pretty good at that.

Jones: Does that include the creation of a Department of Energy? On reflection, was that the best way to do that?

Schlesinger: As I told you yesterday, I would have preferred a Department of Energy and Natural Resources. The creation of the Department of Energy was a bipartisan decision. It was passed by the Congress, by the Senate by a vote 92 to 8 or some such thing and in the House 480 to 20, roughly those numbers. Ford had put together a plan for a Department of Energy, so the Department was something that had a natural role to play. One of the reasons I took that job was that when I was at the AEC I had been urging Nixon to move in this direction and have a broader compass of energy than atomic energy matters per se. You don't play around with individual inputs like natural gas in the FPC and atomic energy in the Atomic Energy Commission and oil that wound up in the FEO. You bring it all together so you can survey the problem.

Now, I think that that rationale will stand. It is in the process of being understood, but—I had a talk with Bill Clark the other day, and I said to him, "I see that the administration is no longer engaged in the task of attempting to dismantle the Department of Energy in the current platform and that you gave up two years ago, as a practical matter, doing so." Bill just shook his head and said, "I don't understand where that notion of dismantling the Department of Energy ever came from." Now, I mention this because that is very close to the center of the Reaganite counter-argument.

Yes, I think the Department of Energy will stand simply because all bureaucracies stand. They will contribute something when that energy crisis comes back; you have an instrumentality to help deal with it. In the interim you have something to provide some kinds of incentive programs through subsidy or taxation and you have an instrument to carry on energy research and development. I myself did not want to establish the Synfuels Corporation. I thought that we should have a much more modest goal, which was to do some substantial R & D activities within the Department of Energy. Carter, when he got religion after the Iranian crisis and the gas lines embraced the synfuels to a degree that was unwarranted. I myself had to talk him down from five million barrels a day of synfuels capacity by 1990 to, what did we wind up with, just over two million barrels a day. But he was all set to go five million barrels a day.

Jones: It was perking along in Congress too, wasn't it?

Schlesinger: Oh, yes, there was great energy, great drive in Congress that Carter had resisted for the first three years of the administration, and that required some orchestration between the two branches of government as well. But yes, the Department of Energy will stand. It will be probably a better department than some of the other economics-oriented departments like Commerce and Agriculture, Labor, simply because it had, on the R & D side, a better corps of people initially, and has some major activities to carry out. They are not going to sell off Bonneville Power, they're not going to sell off the power distribution systems other than Bonneville. It's just poppycock. They are going to continue to produce nuclear fuel, and only the government can do that. They are going to produce a hell of a lot of nuclear weapons and do the research and development on nuclear weapons and the national labs are going to stay within the Department of Energy.

The Department of Energy has been unduly colored by a fight that was irrelevant, in a sense, to the Department of Energy, as such, and that is the old fight that led to the creation of the Federal Energy Office and the Federal Energy Administration. That was a fight over price controls—on oil primarily, but natural gas price controls to a lesser degree. And Ronald Reagan's rantings about the Energy Department and the budget of fourteen billion dollars or whatever it was that he was going to reduce to zero, he was fighting about a hundred million dollars or two hundred million dollars of appropriations that were used in this price control area. As you have noticed, the budget of the Energy Department is going up, not down.

So, I think the answer to that is that is part of the monument which, unlike the Synfuels Corporation, will survive and if you have that energy problem at that later date, Carter will appear to have had the foresight—and once again Reagan will come in for some retrospective criticism. But Reagan's interested primarily in the immediate audience, and he is less interested in how history views him than most Presidents. Carter was much more interested and will be even more interested, because history will be his redeeming angel.

Carter reflects something in the American character that from time to time becomes dominant and then recedes, and that is that note of idealism, reform-mindedness, that in periods of skepticism or cynicism seems so naïve and so innocent, and indeed in some respects is. But it is an irrepressible element of the American character, and it will come back. Just as Woodrow Wilson had this great revival in the wartime and post-war period because of his high idealism, and we all felt that we broke the heart of Wilson and we broke the heart of Europe by not joining the League of Nations. Attitudes toward Presidents, particularly idealistic Presidents, tell you more about the degree of idealism in the American public at a particular juncture of history than they tell you about the Presidents themselves.

But you do know this, that there will be a general cycle in public attitudes, and the kind of indifference and cynicism that seems so acceptable if not desirable today will be repudiated at some future date, and the kinds of idealism and innocence and desire to reform things that Carter represented will be embraced. That's the domestic side. On the international side, you will still have those monuments that are akin in the structural sense to the Truman monuments.

Young: That raises a very interesting question about the relationship of efficiency and process to accomplishment in the policy sense. I don't know what the answer to that is, but the assumption that proficiency in one leads to accomplishment on the other side is not always the case.

Schlesinger: It depends on the time frame, depends on the public mood.

Young: You have been very generous with your time, which we appreciate very much, and it's been a very interesting and instructive session for us. I hope it's been enjoyable for you.

Schlesinger: Well, from my standpoint, it's a significant investment in time—

Young: It is indeed.

Schlesinger: —but one likes to review these things. I even got into Saudi policy here.

Young: I hope you're not going to repudiate too much in your transcript, but you can add, too, if you want.

Schlesinger: Oh, I'm not going to start writing. You've got it, you can use it.

Young: I'll send you a copy of it, so you can review—

Schlesinger: I'm not very good at rewriting these things, reviewing them, crossing things out and so forth. I'm not sure what I'll do when you want to go public in the sense of sending them to the Carter Library. I like Jimmy Carter; I think he's an admirable man, an admirable man in so many respects. In some ways he was miscast. He would have been a great executive officer, which he was on board a submarine. Mind for details. He had a way of discerning things that needed to be done, and yet he was a poor leader in that he did not know the arts of keeping the public with him. I think that I liked the admirable qualities of Jimmy Carter and I would hesitate to want to have him read the fact that he had great limitations as a leader—as opposed to a manager, as he put it in that malaise speech.

Young: No. We're not going to give it to anyone without your permission. Thanks very much.