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Washington Straight Talk

Patrick J. Buchanan

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Attached is a transcript of NPACT's weekly interview program, Washington Straight Talk, to be carried by the Public Broadcasting Service at 10 p.m. Eastern Time March 18, 1974, to 139 public television stations and will be seen in Washington on Channel 26/WETA at 8 p.m., with replay at 10:30 p.m. Tuesday March 19th. (Consult local listings in other areas.)

GUEST: Patrick J. Buchanan, Special Consultant to the President

INTERVIEWER: Bill Moyers

PRODUCER: Lincoln Furber

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ANNOUNCER: Patrick J. Buchanan, aide to President Nixon, critic of the national media, conservative ideologist. Tonight on "Washington Straight Talk," Patrick J. Buchanan, special consultant to the President, veteran Nixon speechwriter and loyal defender of the President and his policies answers questions put to him by Bill Moyers.

BILL MOYERS: Pat, are you spending most of your time on matters related to Watergate, impeachment, what's happening in Congress, in regard to questions about the President?

PATRICK J. BUCHANAN: I'm spending a good deal of time on that, Bill. But I would think in the last two weeks the bulk of my time has been spent on preparation of the briefing books for the several presidential press conferences that have been held, for the session with the executives in Chicago and for the one coming up with the NAB in Houston.

MOYERS: Is there an atmosphere in the White House of being besieged, of having to spend an excessive amount of time on this one issue?

BUCHANAN: I think that'd be a valid statement. I don't think "besiege" would be the proper verb. But I think it would be a valid statement that those of us who are not within, say, the Domestic Council or the National Security Council are spending an inordinate amount of time with the Watergate problem, as seems not unusual considering the circumstances.

But the other machinery within the White House, again referring to the Domestic Council, is going ahead, moving ahead with the domestic program, working with the Congress. And the National Security Council, of course, under Dr. Kissinger, is continuing with its work, which is unrelated to Watergate.

MOYERS: How is the President spending his time in regard to Watergate versus other issues?

BUCHANAN: Well, the President, when he's working on

substantive matters, which is most of the time, he spends, I think, the majority of it on foreign policy in the last several weeks. He does spend a considerable amount of time preparing for these press conferences, but they would deal with both Watergate and non-Watergate related matters.

MOYERS: Do I infer from that that you don't considerable Watergate a substantive matter?

BUCHANAN: Well, no. Programmatic and policy matter, I would say it is not. Certainly it's an issue, and it's a dominant issue in the national media, one of the critical issues right now. And he spends time with that...

MOYERS: What's his mood?

BUCHANAN: That's a semantic difference.

Pardon.

MOYERS: What's his mood?

BUCHANAN: I think the mood could be assessed as well by the average American who saw the President on the executive session during the last two press conferences or who will see him tomorrow night.

I think his mood is good. These are not the salad days of the Nixon administration, clearly. But I think the President is confident, and I think he's moving forward with what he's doing on foreign policy, and he's confident he'll see this thing through.

MOYERS: How often do you in person, as his oldest -- I think oldest surviving assistant...

BUCHANAN: Rose Mary Woods -- Rose Mary Woods has twenty-three, I believe, years of service, and I'm in my ninth year.

MOYERS: How often do you see him now?

BUCHANAN: I do not see him often, personally, I would say. I communicate with him almost daily, I would think, through memoranda. My staff provides him with his daily news summary, which he reads each day. I provide him with numerous memoranda, especially at a time like this when we're doing the briefing books for various press conferences. I would say in the last two weeks I've seen him personally probably twice for extended periods...

MOYERS: Is that a satisfactory access to him, from your standpoint?

BUCHANAN: I think so, because I'm a former journalist and a writer, and I prefer to communicate -- and I think it's a better and more effective communication with the President on paper where you can sort your ideas out beforehand, you can hone them

down, you can re-think them, and then you can send a communication to the President which will take him, say, ten minutes to read, whereas getting all these ideas through to him verbally could take -- I think could take an hour.

I know that President Johnson preferred to work with face-to-face contact, as I understand it, with congressmen and with staff aides. The President works with papers. He has that predilection of the lawyer, so to speak, to deal in his communications on paper. And so that's the way I prefer to deal with him.

MOYERS: Have you been advising him personally on his strategy toward the House Judiciary Committee?

BUCHANAN: I don't think that would be a fair statement, no. I think he's raised the matter with me, but I would not consider myself a principal adviser.

I think his congressional staff, Bryce Harlow, Mr. St. Clair, perhaps General Haig would be considered his primary advisers on handling matters connected with Judiciary.

MOYERS: In the book you wrote a couple of years ago, the pamphlet or the paper you wrote called "The New Majority," you were fairly critical of advocacy journalists for, quote, "acting on the belief that given the facts, the American people are too ignorant to reach the proper conclusion and must be led there by the hand."

BUCHANAN: I think that was a criticism of instant analysis following a presidential address, was it not?

MOYERS: Yes, it was.

Wouldn't it be, however, if I could translate that into the present situation -- wouldn't it be a good idea for the President? Wouldn't it help to get him back to substantive matters, as you say, if, once and for all, he simply did give the Judiciary Committee what they're asking for and 'let's get it over with one way or the other?'

BUCHANAN: Well, that has a certain appeal, I know, to say, well, why don't we just send up a U-Haul trailer and give them whatever they're requested and send it down there.

MOYERS: The Judiciary Committee has not hired a U-Haul trailer.

BUCHANAN: They haven't hired it yet. But they sent a letter I think which even the Judiciary Committee members themselves indicated they had not read, which came from the staff, which called

for a thorough index of all the files in the White House.

Now, our argument basically is, I think, this, that we feel the Judiciary Committee ought to define what is an impeachable offense and they would indicate the area of the charges, so that we can know precisely where they're going to target their requests.

Now, I've seen it discussed that three of the issues under consideration as impeachable offenses are the dismantling of OEO; the Cambodian bombing was the other. And the third does not -- the impoundment of funds. Now, of course, we don't consider these anything approaching an impeachable offense. To get all the background and data on these three items would, of course, mean rummaging through some national security files and other files which have no bearing on what we would consider to be impeachable offenses. So our argument is, first, let's define what the President is charged with; let's define what you think are the impeachable offenses and then proceed from there.

MOYERS: As I understand it, they're very concerned about the President's role, if he played any role, in the so-called hush money...

BUCHANAN: Right.

MOYERS: ...and that they've asked him specifically for forty-two tapes that would help clear up any doubts or ambiguity or holes in that particular aspect of the case. Now, why wouldn't it be to the country's benefit, to the benefit of the presidency as an institution, and even to Mr. Nixon's benefit to give them those forty-two tapes and let them, once and for all, decide if the President, in their judgment, was involved?

BUCHANAN: Well, I think that the first thing is that the forty-two tapes quite obviously are going to contain great volumes of material that have nothing to do with Watergate. Secondly, the Ervin Committee, I believe, indicated that it needed nine or ten tapes to prove or disprove the truth about Watergate. I think Mr. Jaworski indicated that he had the full story of Watergate with what he had.

Now, we've already committed that material that's been promised and pledged to Judiciary. I don't believe Judiciary has even gone through that material. Now our argument, our contention is that they ought to sit down and go through that material before they argue that they need more.

MOYERS: But you, in effect, are limiting their investigation. You're setting boundaries to an independent branch of government's own machinery.

BUCHANAN: That's very true. But I think you would agree with this. When the House Judiciary votes an impeachment resolution,

certainly they don't have the right to come down and get anything. I think at the same time when a House Judiciary votes impeachment, certainly they have a right to something.

Now, I think where the points of disagreement would be where precisely where the line should be drawn -- wherever it's drawn, some people on both sides are going to be dissatisfied. Our contention is we've provided everything that's gone to the Special Prosecution Force, or committed that. In addition to that, we've provided materials from seven agencies. Beyond that, we've agreed to written interrogatories. Beyond that, we've agreed to a verbal session between the President and Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Committee. I think that's indicative of the fact that we do want to cooperate; we do want to terminate the process as rapidly as possible. But that...

MOYERS: But you're not willing to cooperate on giving them what they say they need?

BUCHANAN: There're going to be disagreements. Let's take a hypothetical case, Bill. Suppose you had a hostile Congress, a Republican Congress and a Democratic President. And that Congress by a simple resolution voted an impeachment resolution to its Judiciary Committee. Should it then have the right to go through and demand what it wanted, on what areas it wanted in the presidential files? I think that would be a dangerous precedent to be set...

MOYERS: We're not dealing with a hypothetical condition. We're dealing with an actual investigation by the House Judiciary Committee of the possibility of presidential involvement in the obstruction of justice, which seems to me to go beyond hypothesis into the area of actual investigation.

BUCHANAN: Well, wouldn't it be then the proper thing for the House Judiciary to say that we believe that these are the following offenses which we believe are impeachable offenses. One of them is obstruction of justice. B), we believe there is reason from what we have received, what we have studied, and what the Special Prosecution Force has given us to subpoena "X," "Y," and "Z."

MOYERS: Are you not swayed by the fact of two leading Republicans, both of them conservatives, Mr. Hutchinson, who's the senior member on the Judiciary Committee, and John Anderson from Illinois saying "We've asked for what is relevant and reasonable. There wouldn't be an inquiry," quoting Mr. Hutchinson, "if there were no suspicion about the President's actions in connection with the so-called Watergate cover-up." Aren't you swayed by those conservative men saying we need this.

BUCHANAN: Well, I would, first, raise an argument as to whether I would consider John Anderson a conservative. Certainly he's a good Republican.

MOYERS: There you go defining positions...

BUCHANAN: Well, secondarily -- secondarily, what you have here, what's developing is something of an institutional struggle, an institutional clash. You have the House Judiciary, members of the House of Representatives, who are quite obviously going to stand up for the full rights and prerogatives of the House of Representatives. Likewise, the President of the United States is going to have to defend what he thinks are the rightful duties, responsibilities and powers of his office.

Now, I don't think it's altogether unexpected that congressmen, even conservative congressmen, in something like that, a clash over rights and duties, would stand up for their particular body.

MOYERS: Despite all that you say you have given to both the court and the Congress, the President himself is on the record with two contradictory statements about what he was told on March 21st.

Have you said to him, "Mr. President, would you explain the difference to me of those contradictions?"

BUCHANAN: Well, no, I didn't call him up and ask him to explain that. I think -- I don't know...

MOYERS: Have you talked to him about it?

BUCHANAN: I have not talked to him about it...

MOYERS: About the contradictions?

BUCHANAN: He'll be prepared to deal with that. If you look at the August 15th conversation, which you mention, where the President says that he was told on March 21, which was six months earlier, that he was told that the money was being used for defendants' legal fees and family...

MOYERS: And family and not, quote, "to procure silence."

BUCHANAN: Right. Right. And I think if you look at the situation, if you look at August 22nd, which was just a week later, he did discuss the whole question of hush money.

MOYERS: But you can't explain away the fact that on the record he said two different things about what he was told.

BUCHANAN: I think it was the President's recollection -- let me give you an example. John Dean, for example, said he had a tremendous memory and that he had remembered these things perfectly, and it was repeated that he knew exactly what he was talking about and that his recollections were precise. Just the other day, John Dean came forward, or they came forward to say, well, John Dean appears to have been terribly mistaken. The discussion he was certain took place on March 13, in reality did not take place on March 13th. It took place on March 21, as the President has stated.

Now, that was an error which John Dean said he recollected precisely. Now, I do not know the precise facts of that. My thinking is that this was a written statement on August 15th by the President. The President also delivered a speech that day, which he worked

on, while some of the other staff were working on the statement. And my guess is that it's because of the very fact that the President had not reviewed the March 21st tape and had not seen or recalled it for six months. This single error occurred in that paper; a single error which I think, taken with all the precision and accuracies that were in the other statement, seems to be hardly a really major point.

So I think the President's March 6th statement and his statement in Chicago that these really are not proof that hush money had been paid, but they were allegations on the part of John Dean, is the precise one.

MOYERS: Wouldn't the fortytwo tapes clear that up?

BUCHANAN: The forty-two tapes?

MOYERS: That the House Judiciary Committee has asked for.

BUCHANAN: Well, I think maybe that -- well, quite frankly, I don't know which are the precise forty-two that they've asked for.

MOYERS: But among those tapes, don't you think the answer would be found?

BUCHANAN: Well, there's a tape -- in the materials that are going to be provided to the Judiciary Committee, there's a tape of April 16th, a conversation between John Dean and the President when John Dean is -- after John Dean, I believe, has been to the Special Prosecution Force. I think from my own limited information that these things will help clear it up.

And what we're suggesting is...

MOYERS: But you're selecting out the things to give...

BUCHANAN: No, no, no.

MOYERS: You're making the selection, aren't you?

BUCHANAN: No, no. No. no, not a selection. The House Judiciary went into court and said we'd like to have these. And we said, fine, you can have everything that's been given to the Special Prosecution Force. In addition to that, you can have what the grand jury has turned over to Judge Sirica. In addition to that, you've made some requests with regard to the agencies. You can have that. In addition, you can have written interrogatories. In addition, we'll sit down with Mr. Rodino and Mr. Hutchinson and have a discussion.

I think -- I mean, I think what's being lost here is the degree of cooperation, the number of concessions that have been

made by the President of the United States already in the last several weeks. And I think our argument is, let's wait; let's define our terms here; let's find out what's an impeachable offense; and let's move forward from there. Before sending the U-Haul trailer down, let's review what we've given them.

MOYERS: I would still like to see the contrast between the Judiciary Committee and the Avis Rent-a-Car Company...

BUCHANAN: Well, what did Senator Scott say? If not a truck, then at least a station wagon.

MOYERS: But Senator Scott has also said he thinks that what the Judiciary Committee has asked for should be turned over by the White House.

What the White House is doing, in effect, is saying to the Congress, to the Judiciary Committee, some of its own Republican members on the Hill, "We will decide what you can investigate."

BUCHANAN: ...The White House is saying -- no, it's not saying we will decide what you investigate. It's saying "You decide what's an impeachable offense. You decide what are the charges that you're going to make against the President. Then come back to us. You look over the materials that have already been provided and then come back."

MOYERS: And you think obstruction of justice would be an impeachable offense?

BUCHANAN: I think yes. I think -- you know, right. A clear, deliberate intention to obstruct justice I think would constitute a high crime or misdemeanor and would be an impeachable offense. Now, that's a separate question about whether or not, in my personal judgment, a President of the United States should be impeached, even if something like that were demonstrated.

I've got great concerns about what would happen to the United States and what would happen to this country; the precedent would be set for the future; what would happen to the quality of American politics if even, say, a presidential error in something like that were demonstrated and if the Congress moved ahead with impeachment.

MOYERS: What about the precedent saying that in this country no man, whether he's a liberal Democrat or a conservative Republican, or whatever, can be beyond the reach of justice?

BUCHANAN: Well, let me give you an example. You served under President Lyndon Johnson. In my judgment, if you had a hostile Congress, Republicans, both houses, hostile to the President, if you had a Special Prosecution Force set up, which was, say, dominated by liberal Democrats who were hostile to President Johnson, and I think they took, say, the Bobby Baker case, they took...

MOYERS: John Anderson and Ed Hutchinson are not opposed to Richard Nixon.

BUCHANAN: Well, let me -- can I finish making this point?

MOYERS: Sure.

BUCHANAN: I think if you had that and you had a malevolent media, I think the three of them combined, if they took, say, the Bobby Baker case, if they took President Johnson's -- the financial empire that he built while on a government salary, if they took the Pentagon Papers that the New York Times had, and they handled those in the fashion Watergate has been handled, I think they could have really destroyed or crippled the presidency of Lyndon Johnson. And I think that would have been damaging to the country, even if what they regurgitated...

MOYERS: If Lyndon Johnson had been suspected of obstructing justice, my own opinion is the House should have investigated it. But you really can't play that game, because...

BUCHANAN: Yes, we can.

MOYERS: ...the same things are not being said...

BUCHANAN: We can play one game here...

MOYERS: I'm -- I'm not exonerating...

BUCHANAN: The Bobby Baker case...

MOYERS: ...our administration of anything that happened...

BUCHANAN: Okay. All right...

MOYERS: We made a hell of a lot of mistakes. But this is the first time I've heard that the House Judiciary Committee is investigating Richard Nixon for the sins of Lyndon Johnson.

BUCHANAN: No, I've not suggested that. What I do suggest is that Bobby Baker...

MOYERS: Well, what then (?)?

BUCHANAN: All right, here's what is. The Bobby Baker matter was brought up before the Senate. And on seven separate votes in 1964 in that campaign, the Senate voted not to make a thorough investigation of the Bobby Baker matter.

Now, I'm just saying this, that if there were a Republican Congress and the media was, say, as friendly to President Nixon as it was to, say, John F. Kennedy, I think that these things would have been placed in better perspective.

MOYERS: Are you happy with the example that this administration has set on law and order and justice?

BUCHANAN: You're asking me, in effect, do I approve of some of the allegations...

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MOYERS: No, no, I'm not...

BUCHANAN: ...do I approve of Watergate...?

MOYERS: I'm asking you one simple question. Do you approve of the example? You know, I believed your speeches back in '68 about law and order...

BUCHANAN: Did you vote for us, Bill?

MOYERS: No, I didn't. I didn't. I didn't vote for you in 1972 or in 1968. But a lot of people in the country did thinking that you were going to set an example of law and order, because that was an urgent appetite in the country...

BUCHANAN: I think, as I've stated, this administration, as yours, has made serious errors and grave mistakes. And apparently in this Watergate matter, there was serious wrongdoing. But that doesn't invalidate the point that I'm trying to make, which is that we ought to place this thing in perspective. As Americans, we ought to see what this impeachment process -- what it's going to do to American politics down the road. Would it be really wise to reverse the mandate of 1972, which millions of Americans voted for?

MOYERS: Not for obstruction of justice...

BUCHANAN: Through an impeachment -- through an impeachment process...

MOYERS: Not for perjury. Not for...

BUCHANAN: If there is an impeachment of this President, an awful lot of things go down the drain because of what you call an obstruction of justice. I don't know where the truth is on that issue. So I think we ought to consider the broader issue, and I don't know that it has been.

MOYERS: To me the broader issue is, if a sitting President of the United States is suspected of being involved in a cover-up of justice, then whether his name is Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon, or whatever his name is, whoever comes after Mr. Nixon, it seems to me that the precedent ought to be that this cannot go uninvestigated and a President cannot be held accountable if he is, in fact, involved. Now that's the big issue.

I would rather have a President impeached and establish that the President of the United States is not beyond the reach of justice than to establish a precedent that wrongdoing in a high place, the White House, will not be challenged.

BUCHANAN: But, Bill, I mean you act as though -- maybe I shouldn't say this -- but there is a valid precedent for withholding documents from congressional committees now. Remember when Dwight Eisenhower withheld those documents and papers and individuals from testifying before Senator McCarthy. The same individuals who are beating the drums for a determination of presidential confidentiality, they praised General Eisenhower for doing that.

MOYERS: But isn't the difference criminality? Isn't the difference suspected criminality? Because I want to repeat, Pat, I don't know if the President were involved. I do know that I am troubled enough and the country's troubled enough to believe that we ought to know. And the difference is one of criminality, isn't it? Suspected criminality.

BUCHANAN: The difference is that the House Judiciary Committee has voted -- or House has voted an impeachment resolution. It's gone to the Judiciary Committee. We're sort of in a free form. We're in untraveled territory, so far as defining what should be done and what should not be done. We've got a point of view. It can be defended by precedent. It can be defended by a variety of arguments. We have our constitutional scholars; the others have theirs. And I think it's a mistake to conclude automatically that simply because we don't provide what's been demanded that we're conducting a cover-up. I think that's unjustified.

MOYERS: No, I don't think you -- I haven't said that I think you're involved in a cover-up. I've only said there have been allegations, and serious ones, that the President possibly was involved in a cover-up. And...

BUCHANAN: You've got something on the wire.

MOYERS: Yes, the wire just reports that Judge Sirica has announced that he will send the information from the grand jury.

BUCHANAN: It follows my prediction...

MOYERS: Right.

BUCHANAN: It does not say whether or not Mr. Haldeman's attorney will appeal this to a higher court. But...

MOYERS: How do you feel about what the Judge has done?

BUCHANAN: Well, we don't feel anything one way or the other. It's been our argument that the Judiciary Committee should certainly have the conclusions of the grand jury investigation, if it desires them.

MOYERS: Do you think the President feels betrayed by those individuals who perpetrated Watergate?

BUCHANAN: I think that's a question you really should address to the President of the United States himself. I think...

MOYERS: Do you feel that they betrayed him?

BUCHANAN: I think the President's indicated they've done -- whoever was responsible for the break-in...

MOYERS: No, no. How do you feel? You know, you're a human being. I've worked there...

BUCHANAN: Right.

MOYERS: It's hard to separate your personal...

BUCHANAN: Well, you're asking me what the President felt?

MOYERS: No, I'm asking you now what you feel. Do you feel that those men who allegedly perpetrated Watergate have betrayed the President and conservative principles?

BUCHANAN: If -- if -- if individuals who are -- you're asking me, if the allegations were true, quite obviously the trust that had been placed in them...

MOYERS: Whether they're true or not, by your own admission, Watergate has blunted...

BUCHANAN: Right.

MOYERS: ...what you call the mandate of '72.

BUCHANAN: If they're innocent of these allegations, then who is responsible for the tremendous emphasis on Watergate throughout 1973?

MOYERS: I'd say the grand juries. I'd say the grand juries were.

BUCHANAN: The grand juries? Well, I would say others would be involved as well.

MOYERS: But the grand juries were the ones who issued the indictments.

BUCHANAN: I think in that case -- yes. If in fact these men are innocent of the allegations against them, I think we would have to name the national media as an unindicted co-conspirator in that one.

MOYERS: For reporting...

BUCHANAN: Not for reporting.

MOYERS: ...who the grand jury reported?

BUCHANAN: Not for reporting. I'm talking about the enormous emphasis. The media puts it on the front page day and night. The unprecedented television coverage.

MOYERS: When an Attorney General is indicted, should that go on page 78?

BUCHANAN: Certainly. [Laughs.]

MOYERS: When a Secretary of Commerce is indicted, should that go on page 29?

BUCHANAN: Well, when John Dean testifies...

MOYERS: The grand jury did not issue its reports, Pat, on the basis of newspaper accounts.

BUCHANAN: Right. Bill, when John Dean testifies...

MOYERS: We have one minute.

BUCHANAN: ...why is he on three networks, and when those rebut him, why are they only on one? That's a decision of the media. No one suggests that the media broke into Watergate. But I do suggest that history is going to hold them responsible for the manner in which they've handled this, just as it's going to hold the individuals responsible who were involved.

MOYERS: I think history -- journalism...

BUCHANAN: You think they will vindicate?

MOYERS: I don't know. I don't know. But I do know that -- aren't you concerned about saying somebody else did it, it's always somebody else's fault?

BUCHANAN: No. I think the individuals involved in Watergate, whoever was involved, are responsible for that. But the media answers for how it covered Watergate, whether it exaggerated it. I mean, the media wasn't responsible for the war in Vietnam. But they were responsible for the coverage which had an impact, I think, upon the consequences of it.

MOYERS: For bringing facts to bear on the official view of reality that, in time, proved to be accurate?

BUCHANAN: Selected facts, Bill.

MOYERS: It's always selected facts.

BUCHANAN: It certainly is. And for that selection, they're going to have to answer. If that selection resulted in undermining American confidence in American policy in Vietnam, they'll have to answer for that.

MOYERS: Are you saying that the press is guilty of criminal acts?

[Laughter.]

BUCHANAN: I don't think I've suggested they are.

MOYERS: Isn't there a difference?

BUCHANAN: There's a difference between irresponsibility and criminal acts, certainly. I think they're guilty of gross irresponsibility in the coverage of the war in Vietnam.

MOYERS: It seems to me if you're sitting there in the White House, you and I have every obligation that we can fulfill to help the country realize that the President we serve is not responsible for illegal activities. That's all, it seems to me, the House Judiciary Committee is after.

BUCHANAN: That went very rapidly. But I believe I would concur with that statement.

MOYERS: I suspect there're a lot of things we might agree on.

BUCHANAN: Perhaps.

MOYERS: What about Gerry Ford? Let's -- let's -- you're often raising hypothetical situations. If the President were to be impeached and acquitted [sic], what kind of President do you think Gerry Ford would make?

BUCHANAN: If he were to be impeached and acquitted?

MOYERS: I'm sorry, convicted. If the President were to be impeached and convicted, what kind of President do you think Ford would make?

BUCHANAN: I think that in that event, which I don't think is likely, I think Gerald Ford would make a conscientious effort to continue the policies of the President. I like the Vice President. I admire him. I think he's a man of competence, ability. But I do not think he has the knowledge or range or capacity that the President currently has to conduct American foreign policy. So that's one of the reasons that I feel impeachment would really be genuinely harmful to the interests of the United States. I think Gerald Ford...

MOYERS: Because what? Because what? Because the President...

BUCHANAN: I don't think -- I think Vice President Ford would concur that he does not have the knowledge or range or contacts or base of information that the President now has to manage American foreign policy.

MOYERS: But if the President is involved, if the President were to be involved in the obstruction of justice, for whatever purpose, is the fact that he's experienced in foreign policy justification for exempting him from...?

BUCHANAN: What are you saying? All right, now, let's take the alleged obstruction of justice. This is purely hypothetical. Suppose the President of the United States when he heard these -- someone came into him with this incredible story involving one aide after another after another and another -- allegations, all of them -- and suppose it can be demonstrated, in retrospect, that he did not move rapidly enough, that frankly, he -- suppose it can be hypothetically demonstrated he just sat on it too long: do I think he should be impeached for that? That might be a technical obstruction of justice not rushing over to the Attorney General and reporting it. But, no, I don't believe he should be impeached for that.

MOYERS: But we're not dealing with a hypothetical...

BUCHANAN: We're arguing it's a hypothetical situation.

MOYERS: If the White House would give the Judiciary Committee what it's asking for, then we wouldn't have to deal hypothetically; we'd know.

BUCHANAN: Listen, let's let the Judiciary read the great volumes of material that are on their way down there before they ask for more. That's our view.

MOYERS: Thank you, Pat Buchanan.

BUCHANAN: Thank you, Bill.

ANNOUNCER: "Washington Straight Talk." From Washington, NPACT has brought you Patrick J. Buchanan, special consultant to the President, with Bill Moyers. Next week on "Washington Straight Talk," Speaker of the House of Representatives Carl Albert with NPACT correspondent Paul Duke.

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