GERALD FORD ORAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

THE FORD WHITE HOUSE
A Miller Center Conference Chaired by Herbert J. Storing

FIRST SESSION

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James E. Connor—secretary to the Cabinet, 1975–77; staff secretary to the President, 1975–77.

Robert A. Goldwin—special consultant to the President, 1974–76; advisor to the secretary of defense, 1976.

Jerry H. Jones—deputy assistant to the President, 1976–77; special assistant to the President and director of the Scheduling and Advance Office, 1975–76.

James T. Lynn—director of the Office of Management and Budget, 1975–77; secretary of housing and urban development, 1973–75.

John O. Marsh Jr.—counselor to the President, 1974–77.

Paul H. O'Neill—deputy director of the Office Management and Budget, 1974–77.

Donald H. Rumsfeld—assistant to the President and member of his Cabinet, 1974–75; secretary of defense, 1975–77.

Brent Scowcroft—assistant to the President for national security affairs, 1975–77; deputy assistant to the President for national security affairs, 1973–75.

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Frederick E. Nolting Jr.: I want to welcome you on behalf of the University [of Virginia] before turning the meeting over to our chairman, Mr. Storing, and particularly to welcome you to the new arm of the University, as we call ourselves here at the Miller Center. The purpose of this meeting, as you know—the purpose of the Miller Center—is to do what we are doing here: trying to combine, in a mutually stimulating way, scholastic and practitioners' thoughts—and many of you are both—and to develop this as a major center for the study of the presidency. I would like to say that I should think it would be a great satisfaction to you gentlemen who served in the Ford administration in the White House to get together again because I imagine there was not too much time to do that sort of thing when you were on active duty. Certainly, in my opinion, I don't know of a group who did more to pull this country up by its bootstraps in a short time in terms of confidence and trust in the institutions of government and particularly in the Chief Executive's Office.

Herbert, the meeting is yours and please go right ahead.

Herbert J. Storing: Let me add my welcome, although I'm only quasi-entitled to do so since I'm not really a permanent member of this University or this community yet, although I will be in July. I won't take a lot of time, but I want to say a word about the program on the presidency of the Miller Center and about what I see our business here today being, and something about the ground rules, which are negligible. The program on the presidency is so new it hardly yet exists, and we are very much in the stage of thinking about what we want do, and ought to do, and how, and the rest of it.

There are a couple of premises or principles that we're going operate on. First of all, we're thinking of it in terms of a center for the scholarly study of the presidency. Our main business, we do not expect to give advice to presidents, although we'll do our share—every American citizen is entitled to think he knows what the President ought to do, and we certainly will exercise that prerogative. But in the main, we have it in mind to set up a center that will be a place for the serious scholarly study of the presidency. And our particular concern, although not our exclusive concern—which, as a matter of fact, also reflects, I understand, the wishes of the founder of the Miller Center—is the broad question of the place of the President in our constitutional order. We'll read that quite widely, and that will enable us to do just about anything we want to do. But it will mean that the sort of focus of our concern will be on that range of questions. The founder of the Miller Center, Burkett Miller, was, I understand, concerned with the sort of imperial presidency order of questions, and some of us will concern ourselves with that area. One of the early things I plan to do is a book on the creation of the

presidency, the original design and intention of the presidency, about which I think there's quite a bit misunderstanding, about which there is no really satisfactory scholarly work. We plan a study on the impoundment controversy during the Nixon administration as a way of looking at the dynamics of the American system of checks and balances. We have in early stages a plan to do a study of the legislative veto, which is also an area that, I think, has not been sufficiently studied. However, as I say, from that, we will range out to a wide variety of things including the topic of our meeting today: the operation, organization, and management of the White House.

This is for me a kind of target of opportunity. It seemed to me that it would be useful, before the Ford White House people settle completely into their private lives or into their other activities, to see if we could get together some of them to meet with some of us here at the University of Virginia to talk informally about the lessons, if any, of their experiences in the Ford White House. [Robert A.] Bob Goldwin warned me that if we were going to do this, we ought to do it fairly soon because many of the people from the White House would no doubt be talking formally and informally about their experience, and if we didn't catch them soon, they would soon be in a position where they couldn't distinguish between what they actually had done, and seen, and heard and what they said they had done, seen, and heard. [*laughter*] So we're trying to catch you before you've completely picked your position.

Now the conference here I see as a conversation among people of common interests for our mutual edification. The purpose is not to formulate rules for running the White House. The purpose is not to come up with a publication. The purpose is simply to try to help one another understand this topic of common interest. We are, as I have mentioned, and as you see, taping our conversation. And as I've also said, the purpose of that is strictly educational, so that we can listen to it again if we want to, so that perhaps our students can do so. There will be no use made of the tapes in the way of publication without explicit permission from the pertinent parties.

Now I haven't got an agenda. That was my own judgment, and it was also the universal judgment of all of you with whom I consulted. I don't think we could stick to it, and moreover one of the questions I think that we, that I, will find interesting is what the agenda should be, what questions we should be asking. I have, as you know, listed some questions that strike me as the kinds of questions that we want to, at some point, talk about. And if they don't come up naturally, I will raise those questions, but I do not intend to confine us to that. And I am happy to entertain, and I know that at least some of you will propose, criticisms of the questions that I suggested or alternatives. And that's all to the good. I provided you with the [Stephen] Hess book on *Organizing the Presidency* [1976], again, not for purposes of it providing us with an agenda but because, in the first place, it seemed to me to provide quite useful case study background of the kinds of things that we are going to be interested in; and in the second place, it strikes me as a pretty fair example of the sort of revisionist view of presidential management, and in that sense it's pertinent. The revisionist view may be described as a shift from the notion of the President as chief manager to the notion of a more collegial President or, more historically, a shift from the Jacksonian to the Whig view of the American presidency.

I do think we might keep in mind, as we move through these discussions, a broad scheme or direction which, it seems to me, might usefully run from the most particular things about the operation and management and organization of the Ford White House to more general questions. So that, broadly, it strikes me that those things that are most immediate and concrete and

particular that we might want to talk about, it would be useful to talk about relatively early in the day and with the aim of moving toward the end of the day to the broader-level, more general kinds of questions. Obviously, I don't expect that to be adhered to with any rigor, but I do think it might be useful if we kept that broad possibility in mind. And in the last hour I will try to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to deliver himself of whatever general reflections he might have as a result of our conversations. I think that we can proceed informally, without needing to be recognized by the chair and simply in the form of a conversation. I will try to guide the traffic and when it becomes necessary, if you give me a nod or something indicative that you have something you would like to say, I will keep a list and make it possible for the discussion to proceed in a moderately orderly fashion.

I would like to open the discussion by asking a question, directed, I suppose, in the first place to the people who were in the Ford White House but not meant in any sense to be confined to them. What do you think are the things that were especially well done in the Ford White House, and what things, if any, were not so well done? Don, would you be willing to start us off?

Donald H. Rumsfeld: Well, maybe the way to start is to just comment briefly on what I think it's probably accurate to say President Ford was *trying* to do. Then one can, I suppose, ask the question whether or not that's what he ought to have been trying to do and how well he did it. But the sense he had, and the sense that I think a number of the people in this room who were around him had, was that the problem he faced was one of trying to deal with basically two things at once. One was to provide a degree of continuity as the first President who wasn't elected and came in abruptly, and to see that the government ran, and that things worked this way. This was particularly important to foreign policy and national security affairs. And you can detect in the things he did a reflection of a concern that the United States be seen as a country where people had a reasonable idea which way they were going internationally and from the security standpoint.

At the same time, he recognized the need for change. There had *been* a change. There was a new President. There was a need in the country for something other than what had been, as a result of the resignation. There obviously was, he felt, a need for a sense of change because of the problems a President has leading and the fact that, for the preceding period, the preoccupation had been with Watergate as opposed to governing. As the ambassador [Nolting] indicated, the desire to do those things that might contribute, along with the most important ingredient of time, to restoring the Executive Office of the President to a position of sufficient respect and trust that a leader, who has to lead by persuasion and consent, is able to function. And, further, from a political standpoint, the elections that were associated with the Watergate period were not helpful to the Republican party. As a political leader, he had a desire to have sufficient change so that the prospects in the coming elections would hopefully be better. These are some of the things he was thinking about and the people around him were thinking about, trying to do during that period. And, of course, that period was an important part of his administration, given the fact that it was a rather short one.

Storing: How did those concerns manifest themselves in operations or organization, or behavior in the White House?

Rumsfeld: Just one example, one of the first things he did—in fact, I was not in the country, but it is my recollection—even before he was sworn in, he indicated his support for Henry Kissinger [National Security Advisor, 1969–75; Secretary of State, 1973–77], his desire to have the world understand that he knew they were in general agreement, that he was going to stay, and that the rest of the world could rely on a degree of continuity from the standpoint of foreign policy. I don't remember when he did it, but he had done it by the time I was back in the United States.

Brent Scowcroft: One of his very first acts on Inauguration Day was to call in the ambassadors of virtually every country with whom we had substantial relations and talk to them. He spent a good part of the first day doing that, in batches for some, singularly with others.

Robert A. Goldwin: And then when there was a lot of talk about separating the positions of secretary of state and national security advisor—both of which Kissinger held—the President inserted a paragraph in his speech to the [United Nations] UN General Assembly that Kissinger would continue both posts. That was little more than a month after President Ford assumed office. So a concern must have persisted about the continuity of our foreign policy, and President Ford was still talking about it, trying to give assurances in as public and formal a way as possible.

Rumsfeld: If you took the two things, continuity and the desire for a sense of some change, you could say the former weighed heavier on the earlier period of his administration and the latter weighed heavier on him during the latter portion of his administration.

Nolting: Could I ask, Mr. Chairman, when you spoke of calling the ambassadors—I suppose mostly the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] NATO ambassadors and people of that sort?

Scowcroft: It was NATO, Latin America, Africa, Asia—pretty much everybody.

Nolting: Everybody! Was there much malaise felt by them at the time? I was trying to get at the point of whether or not this transition was one that was particularly difficult from the point of view of foreign policy.

Rumsfeld: I couldn't answer it from the standpoint of the White House—I was in Brussels. From *that* standpoint, there's no question but that the people I was dealing with from those 14 other countries were pro-Nixon, admired him, were supportive of him, could not understand what in the world the United States was doing to itself, and didn't know Vice President Ford. Change is uncomfortable to begin with, but when you're losing someone you admire and feel a relationship with to an unknown, it is disturbing. And there is no question that, at least as far as NATO countries were concerned, there was a need for someone to reach out and communicate with them and touch them and let them know how they were going to get back in that place and link up.

Richard B. Cheney: Maybe the key point here in terms of the transition—I can't overemphasize strongly enough, in my own mind, how important it is to separate out that kind of transition from, even though it's within one party, Republican-Republican—it was unique respective to Kennedy to Johnson or someone else. Whereas [Lyndon Baines Johnson] LBJ was perfectly free when he took over, and indeed all of the external pressures, so to speak, on him were to stress continuity—that he'd ask everybody to continue and that, to some extent, his own political future

in 1964 depended upon the ability of him to identify with his predecessor—we had exactly the opposite situation. Although there was great pressure for continuity in foreign policy, there was much greater pressure—not relative to the pressure for continuity but greater pressure relative to what a new President ordinarily finds coming into office in that fashion—for *change*: to be able to persuade the American people that we had significantly modified and altered the way of doing business in the White House, who the key people were, made some changes in the cabinet and so forth, the kinds of pressures that LBJ, for example, never had to face. And I think it was a factor for two and one-half years, all the time we were there.

* * *

Scowcroft: There's another element to the 25th amendment and that is the character of events which led to it. In many respects, the transition was not that different in the fact of a new President assuming office in a very sudden manner to Kennedy-Johnson. Circumstances were very different. The assassination of Kennedy brought the country together. There was an enormous outwelling of support and national unity. Quite the converse was true when President Ford took over. He took over in circumstances of deep division within the country, and the circumstances of the resignation led him to take an act very shortly thereafter, the pardon, to deal with those circumstances which I think pretty nearly ended the traditional honeymoon of the new President, in giving him time because, you know, this mobilized the press and it focused attention on him and in a critical way, which didn't happen with Johnson.

Cheney: It makes a big difference whether you bury your predecessor or your partner. [*laughter*] That shouldn't be overlooked.

James W. Ceaser: I was wondering, the two elements that Mr. Rumsfeld mentioned of continuity and change, they're both objectives but they are also, I think, perceived by the American people as somewhat in tension. Because the element of continuity, while it was important for the allies, also involved the maintenance of Kissinger's power in the form which was, I think, associated with Nixon's type of White House. And I wondered in the early stages whether there was some balance made, a balance sought between the desire of the country to change the form of executive organization and the need of foreign powers to see continuity in our policy.

Jerry H. Jones: Let's spread that one a little more broadly. I was staff secretary of the Nixon White House and continued in the Ford White House, and the dynamic there was the struggle between the need to change and the need to keep what worked. Of course, those of us who were transitioning from the Nixon White House felt—in retrospect, correctly—that it wasn't the organization of the White House that caused all those problems. The problems came from the personality of Richard Nixon and the impact of that personality on his personnel selections, and then what those people did. At least, that's my view on it. The systems that we were using in the White House to manage the White House and the government had been, by and large, direct copies from the Dwight Eisenhower White House. Now, under Nixon, I think—as pointed out, correctly—they didn't work the same way as they worked under Eisenhower, but they did work, and they worked very effectively. Those of us who went through the whole Watergate period in the White House felt that even without Nixon being there, the place worked pretty damn well. In fact, it may have worked better. [*laughter*]

So you have the Ford people coming from the vice president's office, frankly, ignorant of how the White House really does work, and they put together a transition plan on, as I recall, it was called "spokes of the wheel." And the transition plan was based on certain assumptions about how the agency should work, which was almost the Hess book. What we need to do is have cabinet government, and we need to tear down the White House power, and we need to decentralize decision-making in the White House, and a whole series of things like that. Those of us who were there didn't feel that those were necessarily the correct decisions. The battles in at least the first six months and maybe longer—I think Dick [Cheney] said it lasted the whole two and a half years—the battles were how much of the apparatus to keep and how much to throw over the side. In the end, we kept almost entirely, without people really realizing it, the Eisenhower-Nixon structure, and that Eisenhower-Nixon structure was the base on which the President ran the country. We had some other window dressing there that we could never cure that, if anything, was destructive to an orderly process. At least, in my view it was destructive.

But the early dynamic was how much you change to give the people confidence that you've changed and how much can you afford to keep so we can run the place. In the early going, all of us who were transitioning into the Ford way of doing things were terribly worried that we were going to throw overboard the things that made the place work. In the end, they were rescued, thanks to Don Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, in my view.

The thing that's really interesting is what happens when you have an Eisenhower system or a Nixon system and you put a Ford in it. The system worked so much better for Ford than it did for Nixon—and we can discuss that later.

The system is a National Security Council, it's an OMB [Office of Management and Budget], it's a Domestic Council, and it's a staff secretariat, and it's a chief of staff that is responsible for trying to weave all of these elements together and make sure that all the President's options are thoroughly laid out and that we don't have political gamesmanship. It isn't a colleague thing where people meet head-on-head. It's a system that forces every idea to go through a terrific series of hurdles, and only if it can make the hurdles does it get there.

Most of the stuff that we did, particularly later on, went through this system, and it was really good public policy. In the areas where we didn't do it—for example, [inaudible], common situs picketing—we almost always ran into trouble. The staff system in running the White House is a major contribution. It does work. It does keep you from making Bay of Pigs, common situs picketing–type errors. As opposed to being a bureaucratic thing, it's really quite helpful for a President to have. The question was, could we save this way of doing business or do you have the good ol' boys around the table kicking around good ideas? Like, hell, let's go out to the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] and tell them we're going to pardon all the draft dodgers. The cost of that was high, and it was an around-the-table, good-ol'-boy discussion that arrived at that, and it didn't go through the grid. As things began to go through the grid, we began to make fewer and fewer errors, in my view.

Cheney: Maybe, for those who weren't part of the Ford White House, it would be helpful to be very basic in describing, answering Jim's question, the concept that we tried to pursue—Don helped design the system the President was interested in, we talked about the transition period—was the idea that the President ought to have multiple sources of information. But that when it

came time to make a decision, there was only one channel to proceed through. And that channel, basically, was for National Security Council, or Domestic Council, or OMB to do an options paper with everybody that ought to be consulted on it. It was seen to that they were consulted on it in terms of their views being presented; that the pros and cons be argued vigorously; that a fairly standard format be used in terms of presenting that information to the President; and that he never got blindsided by having a decision going to him around the system in such a way that he didn't have all those other sources of information when it came time for him to make the call. I think the key point is that in a case like common situs picketing, we got in trouble because we didn't adhere to that fundamental procedure.

Herbert Stein: I must explain, I only had 21 days in the Ford White House and I cannot speak very well about it, but I think there were certain similarities, and I think this description of the system that you have given is a rather formal one—that, really, the system operated quite differently in different areas. I think of it as being three systems. I think there's the foreign affairs system, which most of the time was a one-on-one, the President and one other, and there wasn't all this business, a lot of clearing around. I mean the Department of Agriculture never did [inaudible] and neither did hardly anybody else.

Rumsfeld: You're talking about the Nixon White House, aren't you?

Stein: Yes. I'm not sure that I'm not talking about the Ford White House, but I'm talking about the Nixon White House.

Scowcroft: Not to the same extent.

Stein: I think it's different in degree, that area is different in degree. I think that the economic area was an area kind of self-contained, say Treasury, OMB, CEA [Council of Economic Advisers], the Cost of Living Council. When we had that apparatus, the White House staff did not clear option papers. They never injected themselves very much. Even in what somebody called those "imperial" days, [H. R.] Haldeman [Nixon's chief of staff, 1969–73] never said a thing about that. Then there are all those outlying fellows, HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development] and HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare] and so on, and they are the people who are the main objects of this system of paper clearance and options preparation by, specifically, White House staff.

James T. Lynn: You asked initially the question what did we do well and what was the bad side of what we did. Let's get away from the political apparatus and so on because I'm not a politician. I'll let the politicians talk about that. [*laughter*] But on the actual running of the White House, I would say the good was, I think, on refinement or maybe a return to old systems because I don't have that sense of history, of policy formulation and the decision-making process. You can say that it was the same system. I would say to you, from the perspective of having been a cabinet member at HUD in the Nixon years and, before that, in the subcabinet, and what I saw in the Ford White House, there were *tremendous* differences. Let me explain them from the perspective of someone who saw both.

Yes, there was in both administrations a process for the paper to come in to the President, but there were two very great differences. One was, as Dick was saying, that in the Ford

administration, there was a concerted effort made to be sure that the views of competing missions—I might say, amongst departments, amongst staff people, and otherwise—were put together all in one place, in one paper. And everybody knew how the other person's position was stated. Now that might not seem very important, but I can tell you as secretary of HUD in the old days, one of the things that used to drive me nuts was that on an appeal, let's say on the budget, if I wanted to appeal a budget decision, I wrote up an appeal paper in my own form—they'd let me write it any way I wanted it and any length I wanted it—to the President. Then OMB would write a response. They saw my paper. I didn't see theirs. It was like an appeal court where one lawyer sees the other lawyer's brief and writes then his brief, which the first lawyer never sees. Then it went into the President with the OMB paper on top—no, excuse me, some staff member's paper went even on top of the OMB paper. And unless the President feels like a tiger and is totally absorbed by the subject matter—and, I can tell you, he wouldn't be on Section 235 Housing—he's going to read the top little paper, which the cabinet officer never saw; he might read the OMB paper, which the Cabinet officer never saw; and if he ever got to any part of the cabinet officer's paper, it was a miracle.

Jones: Let me give you news: we never sent your paper in. [*laughter*] We always attached the exhibits. Nixon wouldn't read them if it was beyond two pages.

Lynn: Let's get down to it; there were fundamental differences. Now these are not things that will impress the American people at large. They tend to create, however, an impression amongst the career people who are out in the agencies. It creates a somewhat different impression to the press, the media—I mean the media that works constantly with the White House and with the executive branch of the government. And to some extent, a lesser extent, it affects attitudes to accept things that come hard.

But I'm saying to you, as a way of doing business, when President Ford came in, we—for example, in OMB, for the first time when there was a budget appeal, a joint paper was written, which the department had worked on with OMB and knew exactly what was stated. If there was a disagreement on facts, as the background on the domestic side, or in defense, or whatever it was to be, the disagreement was stated right on the face of it, that there's a factual disagreement, and that we don't have the time or we don't know how to get an answer to that fact or semifact. The pros and cons were stated. If someone didn't believe it was a con, it was stated, "X doesn't really believe this is a con and here's why," as opposed to a pro.

Then, most important of all, there was almost always an opportunity for a follow-up—head-to-head discussion of the matter with the President. In fact, seeing the President's evolution on how he wanted to do business was one of the most intriguing things. Richard Nixon wanted the written word, that's well known. He didn't want the oral. Gerald Ford came in, and the first three days he was in office he said to many different people, "Now, I'm a person who likes to just get a bunch of people around a table and have it out head-to-head with them." If you heard him in the first few days, a paper would be meaningless. It wasn't three weeks later that I was in a meeting with him, and he was growling because he hadn't had the paper first. And what he evolved was the best of the systems, which is to get the combination of the well-prepared paper, which everyone has had an opportunity to see, comment, and refine, and then have the head-to-head discussion where the President can really get the feel for things that a person's not willing to put in a paper. Because, let's face it, in a political world and in a world of leaks, and in a world

where not everyone can get the exact nuance in writing of what their position really is, a head-to-head discussion gives the President an opportunity to verify various positions of the players, to sniff out the nuances and the tradeoffs. Now this was a fundamental difference between those White Houses.

Storing: I just want to say, why do you think that change occurred? You said—I know you want to pursue the question of whether there was a difference, but leaving that aside—from what you've said, I can see two possible reasons. One would be, one might have to do with your own experience under the Nixon administration, and I was interested in knowing whether it Ford's initiative that caused this new system, Jim? What was the reason for this, as you describe it, quite significant—

Lynn: Multiple reasons. First of all, there was the feeling that has already been expressed that the Nixon White House was a very tight, closed-in place where one or two people were running the whole thing, and one reason was to create a change. Remember, we were looking for different ways of doing things, and this was a very different way that would impact on public perception. So it was done from that perspective. It was done secondly because Gerald Ford, as a human being, had a sense of fairness. It was done thirdly, in my judgment, because I think President Ford, based on his Hill experience, had learned that you're very well advised to touch all the bases. Now, somebody once described politics as like baseball. All you've got to do is touch all the bases. But as one old-timer told me when I first came in the government, there are two fundamental differences: one is, there are a hell of a lot more bases than three or four, and secondly, their geographic location is constantly changing. And if you come at it with that viewpoint, you then want, if you're sitting in the White House, not to be blindsided. In the head-to-head you may get some nuance, either political or substantive, that you won't otherwise get. And from the standpoint also of good sound policymaking, you want multiple views. But it's all those elements combined and probably others.

Cheney: But in reference to Herb's [Storing] question, wouldn't everybody agree that the dominant factor was the President?

Lynn: Absolutely.

Jones: It was his personality. It seems to me that that's the lesson here. I disagree with Herb a little bit. I also disagree with you, Jim, a little bit because I read the Nixon papers, and I think those options were pretty well stated in there. The point is that the basic system was very similar. The difference was that under Nixon, he read a fairly sterile paper and made a decision, and that decision went bang. It didn't often have the nuance. It didn't often appreciate some stumbling blocks, and in the quest for brevity, it often left out the key ideas. Under President Ford, this system worked so much better for the simple reason that the papers were developed with a much greater spirit of interaction between the adversaries on a particular policy question, and, in fact, papers were submitted jointly. OMB did it more than other people, by the way, but they were at least worked on together.

They were much longer papers, in much more detail, but once they went to the President, he would read them, and then most of the time he would call every active partner into the cabinet room or his office, and they would sit there and take the time to bang heads and work it out.

President Ford could sit there and take arguments, anger in front of him, people disagreeing, a whole series of things. What often would happen—and the reason that I think the system worked better—is that option A wasn't picked, and option B wasn't picked, and option C wasn't picked, but out of the discussion would come option 1A-6 that melded those unseen factors that come up from having that kind of discussion. The same process had a very different personality—that process with the President Ford personality and his psychological ability to deal with that kind of meeting and desire to have it—and it worked out for really much more creative and better-tailored policy positions.

James E. Connor: Maybe for some of the people here it might make sense to put the description of the system in context—what it *wasn't*. And what it consciously wasn't was a Roosevelt system: finding different people, giving them responsibilities or charges which would overlap, letting them compete, letting them build their cases, and then letting the President make the decision.

And using the departments as well as White House staff and setting them off against each other—a very conscious effort was made to avoid that. An effort in a sense not to throw seeds out and see which ones grow but rather to sit on top of the process, order it, keep things from popping out that you don't know about, that you don't have an ability to understand all the implications of. It's a very conservative kind of a system. I am much more concerned about the things the government is going to pop up with than I am about the good idea that will pop here, there, and elsewhere if I put people in competition. The approach in the Ford White House, it seems to me, was one designed to slow down the process, to keep things from popping out, slow it down and order it, as much as you can in order to understand what the implications for a presidential decision are, rather than saying, "If I set enough interesting things in motion some interesting things will arise." I think this whole system designed under Eisenhower and carried through under Nixon and Ford, even given the differences of how each man did it, was really set for that purpose—to get a control over the government.

Paul H. O'Neill: I want to come to your point, but before I do I just want to make my own observation about how the policy development, the resolution process worked under both Nixon and Ford. It seems to me, first of all, with regard to the formal papers that were prepared, an interesting thing happened under the Ford presidency, at least in my perception, and that is, as there were more meetings and more opportunities for one-on-one contact with the President, the quality of the papers significantly diminished as compared to the Nixon papers.

In any event, I think there was a noticeable diminution in the quality of the papers that came through the White House process under Ford, as compared to Nixon, because people knew that they weren't writing everything down that was going to go into the presidential mind before a decision was made without regard to whether the papers actually went in or not. If you look at presidential papers one day, you will concur with that kind of a judgment.

The other thing that's interesting to me, listening to this conversation and thinking back on how these things work, it seems to me the paper process served Richard Nixon very well. He got lots of different judgments and advice because of the insistence that he made on the staffing process and all the people being consulted. The approach that he took to government probably didn't require him to talk to a whole lot of people on top of that because once he had seen a clear,

coherent statement of the issues, all the options, and the pros and cons, my judgment would be, he wasn't too interested in the nuances about compromise, and how difficult some department thought it might be to get his option accomplished, or how tough the Congress was going to be to bend to his final decision.

Ford's approach was more a compromising approach and wanting to understand where the Congress was coming far more precisely. For example, in the Nixon years you see it in the form of the impoundments. The impoundment issue probably would never have been joined, at least not in the magnitude that it was by President Nixon, by President Ford because he understood what the implications were of that. I think President Nixon understood them as well, but he said, *Damn the compromise and the Congress's feeling that I'm encroaching on their territory by impounding funds*.

I would say, in terms of process and how papers moved through the system, given where President Nixon was coming from—once he thought through all the logical options, he didn't need to hear about a whole bunch of dissenting views or reasons why it was going to be difficult to accomplish it. He just wanted to do it.

Ceaser: The staff people probably see things in terms of personality, whereas a political scientist on the outside can only see things in terms of institutions. And the feeling expressed here is that the change between Nixon and Ford was one of personality. But from our point of view, maybe it was more, to a greater extent, a change in institutions. Mr. Lynn mentioned, in addition to Ford's personality, he mentioned the fact that he felt the process was too tight-fisted under Nixon. I think, looking from the outside, you can see it building up within the country—and maybe in President Ford's mind—a feeling that the staff was too powerful vis-à-vis the cabinet and that this greater access of cabinet members was not simply a change in personality but represented a slight institutional change.

Lynn: Let me give you an anecdote on that that is kind of interesting. I remember when I first became OMB director, the press was very anxious to know whether I had read the transitional paper on OMB and what OMB was and what it ought to be, and why was I made OMB director. And on the last question, I say, it beats me. Maybe they wanted to punish me somehow—a strong form of purgatory—although it's probably the second most interesting job in the federal government. But on the first part, I would always say to the press, no, I haven't asked to see it. And the President really never gave me any directions in the sense of telling me what was in that paper or what I ought to do in that job. But I think he knew from my own style of doing things that he was going to get what he wanted, which was not only an impression of fairness but loosening up that system in the sense of being sure that those options were presented to him in the right way. He was going to find more consultation because he knew I was a Hill type, that I like the Hill, that I liked going up there and talking to people before we said no. And it makes a big difference as to whether you go up and talk to them and they understand why it is you are saying no, if you have to say no and so on. But my point in that regard is, he was very, I think, careful in how he went about these appointments in the sense of not giving a direction, not saying, "This is exactly what I want to have by way of an impression or a creation." But as he chose the people, he had that very much in mind, that he wasn't going to change their spots, but he was looking for people with the spots that he liked.

Cheney: Something Jim mentioned here, that the staff was too powerful, I don't think ought to be permitted.

Lynn: And I didn't say "tight-fisted," I don't remember using that word.

Cheney: Well, just aside from that, it's part of the revisionist history you mentioned at the outset, the revisionist view of the White House—

Storing: Not mine, I—

Cheney: The concept, I think, that we responded to a little bit, the Carter people have overreacted to some extent, and I think that it is sort of fashionable to talk about—to look at the Nixon White House and look at characteristics like, quote, "powerful staff members" or a tight structured organization and conclude that that was the cause of Watergate. And in going through that whole process, you then make judgments like the staff was too powerful and that that was a problem. I don't think we ought to fall into the trap—I would argue anyway, given my own views—of making the same kinds of mistakes that perhaps we made at the very outset of the Ford administration, and that I think, for example, [Jimmy] Carter has made and I think Hess makes in his book, in terms of letting the organization of the Nixon White House and Watergate lead you to some value judgments about how the White House should be organized.

Storing: Just let me just make a distinction that we ought to keep in mind as we go on. I think that's a good point, but I think it's also true that there is also an argument, which you see in Hess in a sometimes vague way, that there's a defect or a danger in this growth of staff, White House staff, that's independent of Watergate altogether. I mean, there is surely a respectable argument to the effect that there is something wrong with modern American government and that it is connected with the accumulation of lots of power in the White House office which has various bad consequences, one of which is—well, it may not be *true*. All I'm for the present arguing is that one doesn't have to associate this whole thing with Watergate in order to make an argument that needs to be taken up. That's my only point.

John O. Marsh Jr.: I think you have to make some empirical judgments about a presidency, and I think a President's duty is to give the country the leadership it needs in order to attain the goals or what the country needs at a particular point in time, which is driven by the environment of the times. At that point in time, I think what this country was seeking—may not have realized that it was seeking it, but it needed—was stability. I think the Ford presidency would address these questions of destabilizers, which was a post-Vietnam environment, the tinderbox situation in the Middle East and the impact of Cyprus—Cyprus was a very significant thing during force transition because it had just occurred, and we were very much afraid it was going to unhinge the Middle East. The economy issues were there, the oil embargo aftermath, with the increased cost of energy, which was making energy a national issue. And the question of Watergate. These were all very destabilizing influences.

You have to judge the presidency by how he addressed that in order to achieve, at that time, the goal of stability, which is not really very visionary and it's not new frontier and this sort of thing, but how well did the presidency achieve that? That will reflect on how well the staff and this organization did to enable him to achieve that. Empirically, you can make the judgment that Ford

did achieve that goal of bringing the country into an atmosphere or an environment of greater stability and get the economy moving in the direction in which it's moving now.

Scowcroft: I would like to address a point about that: personality versus structure. The structure was maintained thoroughly, thoroughly [inaudible], and the principal difference was personality. Both President Nixon and Bob Haldeman were more formidable people personally. They were not open and warm in the sense of accessibility. And one thought very seriously before you asked to go in and get a decision reversed because the cabinet officers and the staff members knew that if you went in there frivolously, there were going to be problems and penalties down the road. That was not true with President Ford. The result was that the process tended to not only open up but be treated a little more cavalierly because the people knew they would always have another word, that they would send the paper in, fine, and if they got their way, fine, and if they didn't, they would always have another shot at it.

Storing: Might that not lead—I'm thinking of Rumsfeld's rules, one of which is be precise, I think, or some such thing—might that not lead to looseness of thinking and carelessness? Could a substantial argument be made to the effect that the Ford system does in fact tend to blunt sharp thinking and loosen up understanding of alternatives and make the whole thing rather more amorphous?

Lynn: That depends, it seems to me, on the people that are in this structure, the Eisenhower structures; it depends on how much a President and those staff heads, whatever names they put on them, impose discipline in that regard. And let's bear in mind that this administration was two and one-half years. Let's bear in mind that during the first few months, it was being kicked off the end of the pier and somebody saying swim, darn you. Then comes an election, a congressional election fast upon that. Then there was a breather period of maybe eight months where you really had a relative freedom to govern—by that I mean, where the political pressures of the upcoming presidential election were not yet enormous. Now comes an election year for the whole last 6, 8, 10 months.

In a normal four-year term, you've got a span of 18 months in there where you are relatively free of that. But having been through two administrations and looking at the quality of papers and the numbers of papers and the degree of attention to them, that there is a direct correlation with the number of months that you are away from or getting close to November, whatever the Tuesday date is. And, therefore, for us to talk about how there may have been some disintegration of the paperwork, that perhaps there wasn't the care and discipline with regard to it, let's put that in a context that, at least during the last six to eight months, all of us had feelings both for running the government but also for getting Gerald Ford elected, because we felt very strongly about that. And that takes away time of those cabinet officers who would normally be spending more time looking at that paper. They say, "The heck with it. I'm going to do thus and such, which I consider is important to a continuance of four more years of good government, and I'll wait until I get into that meeting with the President to get my two bits in on an ad hoc basis." And you tell me which is the higher priority at that point. I might make a pretty good argument that what they did is of a higher priority.

O'Neill: I wouldn't accept your revision of my term. I said "diminution," and I wouldn't accept "disintegration." What I'm saying is that it came because people recognized that that wasn't the

only shot they were going to get on an issue. People just didn't have to be as careful, as precise in what the written word was, because they knew at the end of the line if they really felt strongly about something, Don or Dick or whoever was there was going to find time on the President's calendar to get them in there to see the President so they could make their oral case.

Lynn: But there is also another thing that you shouldn't ignore. There's a natural phenomenon with a cabinet officer. It's this: given the time constraints on a cabinet officer's time, the competing demands for his time, given his own areas or her own areas of interests, and so on, cabinet officers many times would read the paper and think it was good paper because they really hadn't participated themselves in their own department's preparation of the paper, and between the time of the preparation of the paper when they had seen the competing viewpoints put in that paper and the oral meeting, they get up to speed. And many times—it was a crash job of getting up to speed—they would come in with an entirely different idea than they had at the time of the paper because they took that opportunity *between* the paper and the meeting, because they didn't want to look stupid in front of the President and finally did their homework between the paper and the meeting. And that was part of it. I could name names, but there are a number of cases where that was true. The cabinet officer had been out on the road at the time when the paper was prepared, he wasn't there, so an assistant had helped prepare the paper, or a deputy to an assistant secretary really had done the paper. And then when the secretary got back and was going to have to go to the meeting where that was to be discussed, he would then suddenly assemble all of his troops out there and do the job.

And I'll use this opportunity—you said what was the *worst* part or what we didn't do well, and this is where you get over to the Hess type of problem, is on the follow-up. The decision-making process on the whole, the formulation of policy on the whole, I think, was reasonably well done, given all of the constraints and difficulties. But the follow-through, to see that the policies and programs were carried out, was not well done. Perhaps the system to do it was satisfactory, but the makeup of the cabinet officers and what they sensed as their sense of priorities was such that you didn't get, as Hess would call it, the second and third effort toward the carrying out of those policies and decisions. Now, again, part of our problem was in having only two and one-half years and with the constraints on cabinet selection. What no chief executive has done in 50 years is freely fire cabinet officers that don't keep to your sense of priorities. When you get to within the 8 to 10 months of an election, you have to do that extremely sparingly. Who's going to come in for 10 months? Who's going to learn the job in the 10 months? But if I were to point out the one single factor that I found we didn't do well, and I've got some good excuses as they say—the shorter period of time, coming election, and all of the aroma and environment that we came into—we did *not* do the follow-up to policy determination well. I'd have to say that in the Nixon first four years, that was not done well. One of the tragedies of Watergate from a public administration standpoint is, I think, Richard Nixon had learned a good deal about that in the first four years and had had some ideas with regard to what to do with the second four years, and he lost his power to do it as Watergate eroded that power.

Cheney: The difference between formulation and implementation [inaudible] is the function of the beast—that is to say, it's a lot more exciting to go to the Oval Office and [inaudible] about world affairs to make a decision than it is to go back and try to get the bureaucracy to respond.

Lynn: Or to go to the Hill for the umpteenth time for the next six months to have bourbon or brandy or Coca-Cola to convince them that what you're doing makes sense.

Cheney: There are no awards for that.

Nolting: A point has been touched on, maybe a little more elaboration would help on it. What puzzles me is two things: the time factor, and let's just talk about the President for the time being, and the energy quotient. I gather that President Nixon spent less time through his method of operating on these decisions—on each decision, we'll say—than President Ford did because he didn't want to give and take. Now how far can that go, and could you make any comparisons, we'll say, between the number of hours worked each day of the week by the two Presidents?

Rumsfeld: It seems to me your original premise might be wrong. I don't, didn't have the same perspective in the two administrations, but my impression is that Mr. Nixon made fewer decisions than Ford did—that is to say, Mr. Nixon delegated more. It's not clear to me that he spent less time on decisions—that is to say, if you're doing fewer, you may spend *more* time in terms of the numbers of hours worked, which is a separable issue. It seems to me that for both of them, it was pretty much their life. If motion is work, one would have to say that Mr. Ford worked harder, goodness knows, than a horse. I mean, he worked all the time, and read, and was physically around, available. Nixon was more remote, but whether that means he wasn't working as hard is not clear to me.

Nolting: Take the case of the person who is constantly available and works to 18 hours, or whatever it is, to get his desk cleared for that day.

Rumsfeld: Is that what you mean by work?

Nolting: Well, does he have the time to sit back?

Rumsfeld: Yes, President Ford had as much or more time than he wanted to sit back. He didn't. In other words, how much is enough? It varies with the human being.

Nolting: I see.

Cheney: But he changed over time, though. I think that would be, [inaudible]. Look on the scheduling experience of a two and one-half year period of time. At the outset, he would see virtually anybody. Later on, he was more discriminating in the use of his time perhaps. There were fewer meetings that went on endlessly, and we ended up scheduling meetings on an as-needed basis rather than guaranteeing that every day somebody was going to be in there. He was going to be in there if he needs to see him, but it's not on a guaranteed basis.

Stein: I think the question that was raised about time is very important—that is, there are going to be an awful lot of issues in the government that involve more than one agency. Those are the kinds of issues that come to the executive office, and you have to decide how many of those are the President's business. And if they're not the President's business, whose are they? And if they're not the President's business, then they're the business of some kind of machinery in the White House for either getting, either opposing a decision or reaching a collective decision. And I think, again, this is a matter in which Presidents operate differently in different fields. I think

that what Don (Rumsfeld) is saying, is that, at least in a lot of fields, probably excluding foreign affairs, President Nixon had the machinery for handling these decisions, which didn't involve them coming to him. And that may be what looks like the imposition of the power of the White House, but it's also a way of concentrating the attention of the President on what are key issues.

I think there's another thing to say about this written versus oral business. It's always perplexed me some. There is a general feeling that the decisions are better made if there are oral presentations. But I have a feeling, maybe from the brief life of John Connally [Nixon's Treasury Secretary, 1971–72], that it's better if everybody write a paper than if everybody gets in a room together with the President. [*laughter*] But if everybody writes a paper, he has a fighting chance. The point is that there is a power of personality over logic which you have to guard against or at least balance off by a certain amount of dry paper writing. Of course, paper writing can be more or less persuasive, but tricky also.

Jones: Let me follow up on the comment Don [Rumsfeld] made on decisions. There's no question that President Ford saw three, four times as many decision action papers as Nixon did. And I think that was a response to his being unwilling to delegate to the White House, the referee or command authority. And I think President Ford did not want to do that, and I think that's one of the reasons that you had a better feeling in the cabinet, and in the various offices of the White House, about him and about how the decisions were going, because he was involved with them. And we did have a better feeling. There's no question that morale was better. There's no question that people in the administration liked the guy better and wanted to work for him more. But I think we have to point out the cost of that.

I remember one time Dick and I, sitting in Dick's office, talking about, are we really de-aligning with the major questions that are facing the United States or are we dealing with the short-term questions that are being forced upon us, and why can't we get enough time to deal with the long-range questions? The cost to President Ford to ameliorate the White House imperialism, if you will, was to spend all of his time on these shorter-term questions at a cost of being able to get into some longer-term ones.

Now there were a whole bunch of other things that Jim [Lynn] pointed out. We had a recession, which, if we couldn't get the recession out of the way and the soaring inflation, then what was the long term? We had the election coming up, and [Ronald W.] Reagan sitting there, and we were having to deal with him, and the pressure from the Congress is always short term, it's almost never long term. In fact, when you look at the presidency and ask how come you can't get long term, its that every time you start trying to get long term, you're either dealing with a problem before its time has come or you're dealing with a problem and trying to suggest a solution that'll kill you politically, so the pressures are to be short term. If I had to criticize us in the Ford White House, we were excessively short-term out of our situation and out of the way we did things, but it sure made everybody feel good.

Lynn: We were apt to treat an issue as a decision package that's fairly small without starting with the overall concept and working down to that decision. We were too apt to have not framed a principle and then work our decisions within those principles.

Now, I say two things about that: (*a*) it was true. And I think Brent [Scowcroft] would agree with me that in national security, Brent and I had quite a struggle, and we got joined by Rummy [Rumsfeld] and others finally in getting an overall concept and working from concepts down to specifics in those areas toward the very end. But part of it was due to the time pressures of never having had that 18 months that I talked about, relatively in a four-year term, where there is almost a luxury period, you'd say.

Another reason I would say, to be frank about it, is that President Ford had spent 25 years in an atmosphere where your function and your performance in that function is a series of quick decision-making in small concrete areas—I mean small compared to an overall concept. There is going to be a vote, yes or no. There is a bill and it's got so many lines in it, and you're going to vote, yes or no. And where do you get the votes, either to pass it or defeat it. And what I saw—again, one of my own personal senses of tragedy in his not continuing for a second term, is that as he was in that office, at first it came hard to get him to conceptualize, to start with a broader principle and come down to considering a specific problem within the context of a principle. But toward the end of the term, he was taking to that much better than he had in the beginning. And he had learned the importance of doing it that way, that everything, to use [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan, is related to everything else—and why is it that we have matching programs in this area and we don't require a match in another, why on some welfare programs are they geographically variable to reflect cost of living in different parts of the country but on Social Security it's a uniform amount no matter where you live, and on and on.

In Defense, starting with research and what is going to be the state of technology in 1985 or 1990 when the ships are going to come out, and working back to your explicit decision-making in that mode, but as I say, I think that we didn't have as much of that conceptualizing as I would have liked at least, and I think there are good reasons for it. But there's got to be, in my judgment, the mechanism—well, let's back up. The mechanism, I think, afforded the opportunity for that. There isn't any doubt of it. There were mechanisms on the books—Senior Review Group mechanisms, the NSC review groups, and so on—but they had fallen into disuse, let's face it, over a period of time. I think there were a series of occupants in various jobs where "Who needed that?" was the attitude. It was in the Ford administration that the rust was starting to come off of them, and it gave rise to some good, *hoe-down*–type battles as more views were presented, but they were *starting* to come back. I have to say "starting" because they weren't fully working again, I think it's fair to say, by November 2 of last year [1976].

O'Neill: If I may interrupt for a minute, I wouldn't agree with your observations except with regard to Defense, where I think we really got to the conceptual issues toward the end of the President's term. But I remember very well you and I and Dick and Don sitting in the President's office with Alan Greenspan [CEA chairman, 1974–77] in July of 1975 and talking about the direction that we were going to take in the formulation of the legislative and budget program that we were embarking on then. I came away with a sense that we had a very solid, basic set of philosophies, that the President directed us to go forth not just in economics but in domestic policy as well.

Cheney: You obviously have to consider the time and the problems we had to work under. But I felt that most of the President's time ultimately was allocated to things that were external factors with a normal cycle in Washington—the budget cycle, the State of the Union address, et cetera.

And in terms of really being able to hold back resources and allocate them to something that you wanted to have considered that hadn't previously been considered, it was very, very difficult.

Scowcroft: I don't think, again, we ought to underemphasize the importance of personality in this whole thing. President Ford was action oriented. It was his whole career, that way. It was the way he was personally. He liked to get into things. He liked to look at papers. He liked to make decisions.

Rumsfeld: He really *did* like to make decisions.

Scowcroft: And one of the ways he arrived at decisions was meeting and having people bounce ideas back and forth. That's the way he got to his decisions. And President Nixon did it very differently. He liked to get the papers, and he liked to squirrel himself away and think about them, or however he did it, because he did it by himself. Now, you can say one is better or one is worse, but the purpose of this whole process that we're describing here is to help the President make the best possible decisions, and in doing that, you've got to direct yourself to the personality of the man.

Connor: Just to follow up on that, I think it's very clear that a President gets the decision-making system that he's comfortable with. And if he's not comfortable with it—Don [Rumsfeld] can give examples, and I think anybody that's ever been around any President can give examples—that a President can convey very clearly when he doesn't like somebody's nice suggestion for doing things. He has the power to do that.

Rumsfeld: For the reasons that have been mentioned and some others, there's some danger in this discussion that we are comparing Nixon at the end of his term to Ford at the beginning of his term.

Scowcroft: That's a good point.

Rumsfeld: Take them both. Ask yourself how Mr. Nixon interacted with his budget director in 1969. Compare it with how Gerald Ford interacted—compare it with how Gerald Ford interacted with Jim Lynn in 1974 and 1975. It's very different. President Ford had a long background in budget matters and was interested in it—

Lynn: He also knew that it was the one chance that you had every year to take a look at the whole scheme of things that have any kind of money implication—and what doesn't have such implication?

Rumsfeld: So he jumped in with both feet. He also, as we've said, was a congressman. He was used to reacting, to dealing with a lot of different subjects in a given hour's period on the floor of the House of Representatives, massaging people. He enjoyed it, was familiar with it, comfortable with it. Also, you've got to remember, he was getting good press for doing things the way he was doing them. In other words, there was a reward that was out there, the fact that he was doing things differently as an antidote to what was. Quite apart from whether it was effective, quite apart from whether it was sensible, quite apart from whether it was producing good policy, he was getting a daily reward—not an irrelevant consideration, it seems to me.

When I think about that big question you asked at the beginning, you know, what did you do well, what didn't you do so well—maybe it's a bias, but when you think he wasn't elected vice president, he wasn't elected President, blew a major fraction of the goodwill that existed with the pardon and with a major misstep as a result of the economic summit where everyone came in and it was agreed that something was right that was wrong in October of 1974—yet generally with the economy, pretty good; generally with foreign policy and national security, pretty good; generally with budget directions and domestic directions, not a bad record. And he came within a small margin of getting reelected, in terms of a public measurement, which is also not an irrelevancy.

James H. Cavanaugh: Well, I was kind of, Herb [Stein] just made the point that Don [Rumsfeld] then went ahead and made, that we were comparing the end of the Nixon presidency with two and one-half years of the Ford presidency perhaps more than we should be. And then getting back to a question that Jim [Ceaser] raised earlier about differences in personality versus the institution of the presidency, and I'd like to believe my observation on the Ford presidency that, yes, his personality was different, was much more open—he was a creature of the Congress, he was a congressman not an attorney—but that he brought to the presidency, I think, a different institutional view of the role of the President than we had seen during the Nixon years in terms of the role of the Congress in shaping policy and the role of the cabinet in shaping policy. And I think that was evidenced by the amount of time that he was willing to spend with congressmen, with chairmen of the committees, and with members of the cabinet that he had nominated on the business of the government. And so I think—although, sure, there were personality differences, and sure, he enjoyed meetings and enjoyed seeing people—I do think he brought a little different institutional perspective to the Oval Office about Congress and about the cabinet.

O'Neill: A way of doing things I'd suggest to you that would be really fascinating to do would be to take the Nixon papers and the decisions he made on them, and do the same thing with the Ford papers, and see in how many cases you can find that the decision recommended in the decision paper would change as a result of a Ford decision as compared to the number that came out differently than the recommendation that was offered in a Nixon administration.

My guess would be that you wouldn't find very much dissimilarity. But the point that you made, and several others have made, about the President's file becomes a very important point. I don't think that there were a significant number of decisions that came out of President Nixon and President Ford different from the recommendations ultimately made to them, but the way people perceived their role in the process—the President vis-à-vis the Congress, the President vis-à-vis the cabinet members—made a difference in the way the pound felt.

Connor: It is my recollection that in a great many cases, the paper that went up to the President finally didn't have a single recommended decision; they had different people recommending different kinds of decisions. And the whole purpose of the staffing exercise was to make very sure that everybody got a chance to say what it was they wanted to recommend. Now some of the different recommendations were predictable, and sometimes you could soften the differences, but not all papers went up to the President with everybody recommending option A.

O'Neill: All right, but just as a point of starting, you might look only at the recommendation of the senior White House staff.

Connor: I don't recollect that the senior White House staff usually agreed on a single recommendation. [*laughter*] One would come in one way and somebody else come in another, and then what you have are packages of opinions. The counsel's office would stress one thing and the people with congressional perspective would stress another. The whole purpose of the exercise, from my position, was to flesh it out, to show that there were different perspectives on decisions, and to ensure that the President knew what they were.

O'Neill: Well, maybe there's a different way to say it—attempt to see how many times a cabinet officer was successful as a result of meeting the President and changing the President's mind. Maybe that's the right path. All I'm saying to you is the style made a difference in the way people personally felt about things, and I suspect that there wasn't all that much difference in the decisions that were made coming up out of that paper process.

Rumsfeld: If you take the basic question we're talking about here, it may or may not be of interest, but it is interesting to me, the President personally addressed it, thought about it in the very first week, discussed it, discussed it, discussed it. The theory was, as I recall the discussion, it was that you gain something and you give up something. You gain it by seeing that something is tested in a small marketplace. You gain the advantage of getting other people's ideas, and you may improve the policy decision. You gain the fact that you will tend to have more people on board and supportive of what it is you're doing if they've been consulted. You gain the fact that those people who you have appointed will not be embarrassed by not knowing what it was you were doing, and therefore either resign or have bad morale or start feeling out of the action. You lose something also. You lost speed and you lost secrecy. You couldn't have done the China bit through the staff system. By doing it the way it was done, Secretary of State [William P.] Bill Rogers looked like he was out of action. Now the point that we talked about with President Ford was, know that there are those two different ways to do it. Know that you're going to gain something and lose something either way you go.

Storing: State what the two different ways are.

Rumsfeld: One way is to take a subject that you want to address and want to do something on and make a conscious decision that you are going to engage the people who have useful advice and counsel on that subject and/or who have a statutory responsibility in that area, or a political responsibility in that area, and see that they are part of that decision-making process because you feel that the things to be gained by using that approach are greater than what you give up in terms of losing speed and secrecy.

Nolting: Whether or not it becomes a part of public, whether or not it leaks.

Rumsfeld: Right. Or you make a conscious decision, as you would with the case on China, that you're not going to do that. Now all I ever said to the President was, know which one you're using in a given area and make sure you consider the risks before you do it. Now it happens, you know, from a personal standpoint, that I tended to feel as a human being a little more comfortable with a little more order and a little more discipline. He tended to believe that the spokes of the wheel would work, that he could be the integrator, the coordinator, as those threads come in from widely different places, and personally see that there was a proper meshing. But that's a matter of personal preference.

Storing: Yes, it is, although it's also a characteristic difference between number one and number two. Number one tends to think that he can do it, and number two tends to think that he needs [inaudible].

Rumsfeld: One last thought. The other thing that bothers me a bit about the discussion is that, if you take the opening comments on continuity and change, it reminds me a little bit of when I went over to take over OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity]. The goal there was on action and innovation. Now you can have action or innovation—something that's bold, new and innovative, that's stupid. At some point, you have to go to the measure of effectiveness. And continuity and change did not come out of the air as a goal. they were premised in his mind on his effectiveness as President. But the test ought to be effectiveness; the test ought *not* to be, is this change or is this continuity? It has to be effective. And there's always the danger that people end up chasing the wrong thing.

Goldwin: What I wanted to say before, Don [Rumsfeld], was really just a question for you. There is a part we've been passing over, and I think if you would discuss it at some length, it would put a lot of these tensions we've been talking about in a better perspective. You didn't come in to the White House in August, but when was it?

Rumsfeld: Early October, I believe, on a full-time basis.

Goldwin: And a lot had happened.

Rumsfeld: I was there for 11 days.

Goldwin: There was, one might say, a felt need to have Don in the White House because of certain things that began to develop that were themselves very much a part of Ford's way of operating, and his hopes for what the presidency would be like, that were then causing him a lot of trouble. And so there was a desire to have Rumsfeld in the White House because he was going to do things differently. And if you could talk about what had happened up to the time you came to the White House and what you then saw had to be done—directed, regularized, and institutionalized and so on—I think that would throw a lot of light on these other tensions we've been talking about: personality and institutions, openness and precision, written and oral alternatives for decisions, and all the other things you had to deal with.

Rumsfeld: Oh, golly, I don't know that I'm the best one to talk about it, but it seems to me that there were—I was there, as I recall, for about 10 or 12 days during the transition, and we made a judgment that that transition team ought to probably be different from any other transition team because every other transition team moves in takes over the government. And you had a choice: either you did that, or you developed a self-destruct on the transition team. We decided very early on that the President's tilt towards continuity made the idea of having the transition team continue to a position of assuming the government fundamentally unwise.

So the very afternoon I arrived in town, we suggested to the President that we would set an outside limit of three to four weeks on the existence of the transition team. We talked with the members, and the President agreed. It turned out we ended up only 12 days, I think, but hopefully with some ways that he could intervene to see that the transition continued because he also knew we had to have some change.

When I came back, I'd never seen such a change in an environment in my entire life, 80% as a result of the pardon. Everything was different. Furthermore, a lot of decisions had been made. And third, there was a pressure on the part of some elements in the government, particularly the press as part of that environment, to have more change faster. And Al Haig [Alexander Meigs Haig Jr.], who obviously was perfectly capable of doing the job that the President had asked him to do—that is to say, he in that principal post during the duration of his term, what I recall was the understanding, at least for the foreseeable future. Al felt and the President agreed that he was really falling prey to that pressure for immediate change that the press was putting on and some people in the government were putting on.

The other thing of note was a feeling that absent a change in that spot, there was a likelihood that the degree of disorder that had evolved during that period would probably continue and accentuate because of the strong feelings that there ought to be a change. That is to say, there may have been an unwillingness for some Ford people to place their ideas, their recommendations to the man, the President, they'd been working with intimately, through a system that was manned, operated, and run by people who had been in the, quote, "illegitimate White House," the one White House that had been rejected, the one that had resigned. And so there seemed to be a division in the place when I arrived. I came in and was dumbfounded by it and can remember visiting with the President and telling him I didn't think I was the guy to do that job for a couple of reasons. One was the environment being what it was. And second, that I wasn't comfortable with the spokes of the wheel idea. I had trouble believing that we would be able to sufficiently order the affairs, complex affairs of government, if he had all these different pieces reporting directly in to him.

And that was when he kind of focused on that issue of order versus disorder—in my mind, spokes of the wheel versus some more orderly pyramid arrangement. And he kind of mentally made some qualifications in his earlier preference and recognized a need for more order and at that point started moving towards it. I don't know if that answers your question.

Goldwin: Well, it begins to, Don. I think of some other things: the way the President's time was scheduled before you took over—the flow of paper in and out; decisions made that no one else or not enough people knew about; the preparation of speeches, the procedures that were used; and the decision procedures, the greatest example being the Nixon pardon—all of those things were connected not only as institutional problems but also as personality problems. Personality clashes were an aspect of institutional procedures, and if you omit those things, you omit a very important part of the description of the Ford White House. I have in mind Robert Hartmann [chief of staff to Vice President Ford, 1973–74; counselor to the President, 1974–77] especially but also other very senior people.

Storing: Another side of what you have suggested is that the White House organization isn't or wasn't simply an extension of Ford's disposition and intentions and inclinations because, as a matter of fact, according to your account his inclination was in one direction but in fact, I take it under the press of the real world and with some advice from various people, he really made a fairly significant shift.

Rumsfeld: Well, he was also getting that same advice from most elements in the White House. In other words, if you take Bob Hartmann, whose name has come up, Bob felt very strongly that

something should happen differently than was happening and, I am told, was supportive of my coming in. And my impression was that most people had a concern that what was happening wasn't serving the President, or the country, well. And they liked that man, and they respected that man, and they wanted things to go well for him, and they wanted to be a part of something that was going well.

Marsh: In that regard, if I could interrupt there for a moment, what Don has said, the personality of the man. Jim Lynn mentioned earlier the fact that Ford had served in the Congress for 25 years, and that had impacted on the manner in which he approached federal-type decisions. In a congressional office, there is a very minimum of formal staffing, and a member of Congress assumes that if a constituent or any individual with whom he has a reason to deal—that if they get in touch with his press secretary, his legislative assistant, his summer intern, regardless of who it is, or his driver, or if they happen to say something to one of his children—that that is of equal importance as if it came through his administrative assistant or came through the Speaker of the House. It all comes in to the congressman, who ultimately makes a decision because a congressional officer is one personality—there's one, Don—and there's a free and easy access to that one particular personality. That sort of congressional approach to dealing with issues was a part of his personality and I think carried over in the manner in which he first began his operation in the White House: the free and open and easy access of everybody being an equal from the standpoint of having an opportunity to gain his time and his attention. It was discussed; I think Bob Hartmann talked about that point.

Stein: Well, I think there's another option or maybe a suboption to Don's two ways of organizing things: one in which everybody has access and feels he's a participant, and the other is the President is closeted with a variety of papers submitted to him—that is, that there is a possibility of delegating the role of giving everybody access. And I think that has worked well at times in the period when George Shultz [Nixon's Treasury Secretary, 1972–74] was in charge of everything having to do with the economy. I think he was a master of getting everybody—cabinet members, the White House people, executive office people, and so on—to feel that they are participating and to either come to agreement or come to agreements about the options and the issues in a way which relieved the President of a tremendous burden but didn't leave everybody else mad. But that's also very much a matter of personality. The same power delegated to somebody else operated an entirely opposite way. But I think that there are possibilities of organizing—well, many people have the idea that [inaudible] sub-Presidents or assistants who can operate in big fields and do a lot of the things that we expect the President to do. I think *there* was a case where, for a couple of years, it worked pretty well.

John B. Keeley: It would seem to me that the contrast between this loose and more ordered system of making decisions would have a very strong influence in the interaction between the staff members in the White House among themselves and the executive branches of the government. And I wonder if you would comment on that, whether in fact it does have some difference in the way you interacted among each other and whether this is a bonus effect perhaps in the loose system.

Rumsfeld: It seems to me one of the parts of the answer may be that people do tend to have some bias for that which they've been doing. And what you had in this case of Mr. Ford coming in was situation where half to three-quarters of the people, four-fifths of people, had been doing

it a certain way, and we were used to it that way. And a new President comes in. He has a different way of doing it, somewhat. Everything we are talking about here is, as Herb [Stein] suggests, really a mix, a matter of degree. There aren't clean pigeonholes for these different approaches. But it is much harder for someone who had developed a mode of working with Mr. Nixon to have that mode changed, much harder than for a new person coming in.

Lynn: To the extent it's a spokes-of-the-wheel approach where somebody has, on a regular or irregular basis, the opportunity to come in and see the President with a more or less open agenda and discuss what's on his mind, you can sap away a tremendous amount of energy of the other players because the other players, as they get to know the personality of their counterparts, their peer group, are scared to death about what's going on in that one-hour meeting. And this is true no matter what the role is. And you wonder what kind of nefarious thing out of left field they're going to get into a casual discussion on and whether a President is going to succumb to even giving the slightest signal to that person that he agrees. Because it is a truism in government that when you walk in as a pleader, you will look—not in a Machiavellian way but because that's just the way we are as human beings—for any sign that the President agrees, and then some people will build on that and come out and say, "Well, the President's decided so and so." And this can range all the way from saying it's something he's going to meet on to he's decided it substantively.

Now when those things happened, the people that are department heads and agency heads feel that they're going to be measured by how many times they're going to get in to see the boss. You are measured on frequency of visitation, and we saw a fair amount of that in the Nixon years. And that wasn't limited to the Nixon years, don't get me wrong; it was true in prior administrations, too, and perhaps a little bit in the Ford administration. But I think far less because there were all these opportunities in the more structured method of the papers, the paper presentations, the task force discussions where the cabinet officers were brought in, and other agency heads, around a set of issues, who has a legitimate concern in this area. And to the extent that the President kept to his own system, I think he was pretty darn good at it. And one of the reasons would be that you, Rummy [Rumsfeld], would be in there, at many of those so-called one-on-one meetings, or Dick [Cheney] would be later and say, "Gee, that sounds interesting, Mr. President, but I would suggest what we do is put that into the system, and, George, will you spearhead getting a paper prepared on that?" And George, or Harry or Jane, or whoever it might be would feel at a loss at that point because, "Ye gods, who wants to see him use my view on his subject?

So what I'm saying to you is, I think that the spokes-of-the-wheel approach with the access and the looseness of that arrangement is a disturbing and time-wasting thing from the standpoint of *both* the people out in the departments and other people that are around the White House. There is more need, for example, if it's unstructured, to have an office on the first or second floor of the White House than being over in EOB [Executive Office Building]. If it's structured, you don't care about being in EOB, and it was a hell of an advantage because you're with your own troops if you're in OMB. And after all, they're the people who are developing your positions and so on. You can spend more time with them. By the way, if a secretary were really clever on this one-to-one thing, you come in on one thing on the agenda that's very innocent, something that Cheney or Rumsfeld is not going to be disturbed about and maybe the President isn't, but if you're clever what you do is you turn to get out of your chair and go to the door and say, "Oh, by the way, Mr.

President," and hope very much that he'll react with something that's ambiguous enough that you can call it a presidential decision.

Connor: That was the purpose of the system even before the President started to move that way. That is, if you came out with an unstaffed decision, you still had to wave the decision around trying to figure out how *do* you make it happen. And the system was not sympathetic if it didn't come through us.

Lynn: Or even when the decision *was*.

Rumsfeld: As Herb [Stein] said, the kinds of things that probably come to a President and probably ought to come to a President tend to be things that are significant and that don't lend themselves to ready delegation to a single statutory officer. Take a grain embargo, take any export issue. Any export issue is at the same time a matter for the Agriculture Department, the Labor Department, congressional relations, foreign policy, maybe DOD [Department of Defense]—and all of those people have legitimate statutory and a public responsibility. Or you take a decision like the Cost of Living Council would get into. Like milk prices. No, that's a bad one. [*laughter*]

But those problems, simply don't lend themselves to pigeonholing with one statutory officer. And to make a judgment on, say, an embargo of sales to Poland, to make that kind of a decision in consultation with the secretary of agriculture alone is risky. To make that kind of decision with the secretary of state alone is risky—for the President, for the country, for the political party.

Storing: That's one question. Although another question is, granting that, how do you get the broader consultation that you want? I mean, one of the things that struck me when Jim Lynn was talking was that the pre-revisionist view of the presidency would regard the situation you describe as wasteful, and unnecessarily time-consuming, and inefficient, and so forth, as precisely the best way for the President to keep in charge. I'm only saying though that what you did, I'm simply stating as an interesting point, that you gave a good account of the sort of [Richard] Neustadt [author of *Presidential Power*, 1960] kind of view of the presidency, which Neustadt thinks is *precisely* the way—just by keeping these subordinates off balance, by making them worry by what's happening, and so forth—that's exactly the way the President gets power and can use it.

Lynn: But Herb [Storing], what I'm saying is, that goes on anyway. And therefore all you get out of a given system is bias. By that I mean you get a regular way of doing things. There would be, if you listen very carefully to what Rummy [Rumsfeld] said—is that on most kinds of issues, we would go this way. And that's true because of the leak problem that he talked about, for example. That's why Abba Eban [Israel's permanent representative to the United Nations, 1949–59; ambassador to the United States, 1950–59; minister, 1959–74] said in a speech in Cleveland many years ago that he believed in open covenants privately arrived at. There can be issues of that kind. There is an opportunity for that kind of a thing on a private basis once the matter has been staffed out. It was still a typical technique during the Ford years—with people particularly that were in close and had his confidence—that after the formal meeting, on the way out, someone would follow him into his office and get a few other licks on something they didn't

want to say in public because they didn't want it to appear in a newspaper, especially with staff. I was intrigued by Hess's comment that maybe you ought to take out the chairs along the rear. Well, I disagree with taking the chairs out. You can impose discipline in a different way as to who's brought in and who isn't, but we should never give an impression that these things are one or the other. The question is the *emphasis* within the system.

Now the one other thing I was going to say is, what distorts all of these systems, in my judgment, is that for a variety of reasons—some good and some, in my judgment, although very human, there isn't a whole lot of justification for them in trying to run a system of government—a person does not fit the system in the sense that the President doesn't feel comfortable with that person's advice and yet the President will not make the changes in the people as you go along that are necessary to make either system work. And the reason Presidents are reluctant to do that is because the minute that person is fired, he can play it one of two ways. He can be very quiet, or what he tends to do is to say, "He didn't know what he was doing," or "He was blindsided by other people in the administration, and I am a hero, and I am now going to be a martyr now that I've left." And what President needs that, presswise? And there are a number of other reasons for it. But what happens is once a team is put together, there is not the flexibility in the changing of that team as time goes by. And one of the things I would think people studying the institution should think of is, (*a*) what are the ways, what are the conditions under which change ought to be made, and (*b*) how can that be made easier. And I don't know how it can be. The process of firing is, as a human matter, the most difficult thing anybody who cares about people ever goes through. And we see, Hess talks about moving people around, different chairs, creating roles for them, and so on, and all those tools are used.

But that, to me, is the real key aspect. The key aspect is, you never know in advance of appointing somebody how they're really going to work out. It's like what they say about marriage. You really don't know your spouse until you've been married to him or her a while. Sometimes you're lucky, and sometimes you're not. Now how do you gracefully, in the best way, make it easier for a President to make those adjustments in a team as you move along?

Rumsfeld: Everything you've said is true, but *the* most important time is the earliest time. Every day, every hour that goes by, you lose options. You lose flexibility—you nod when you should've shaken your head, you shake your head when you should have nodded. You hire a person who has a whole set of attributes and biases or preferences, and he goes out and makes thousands of decisions. And that early period is absolutely critical.

Storing: And it's the time when the President probably knows the least about the job and when he has to make quantitatively many more of those crucial decisions. Hess suggests that presidencies really depend on metabolism, and I'm about a two-hour man. [*laughter*] So I would suggest that we take a short five-minute break and stretch, and then come back with another hour before lunch.

O'Neill: May I pick up a point? It seems to me that the danger that exists in the early days of any presidency is a confusion that I think existed in the early days of the Ford administration between spokes of the wheel or a pyramid process, as you think about the different functions of the presidency, between consultation, consensus building, decision making, and presidential

pronouncements. I'm not sure that's the right way to break it up. But communication, consensus building, decision making, and presidential pronouncements.

I would hypothesize that the danger in the early days of any administration is a confusion of how one is organized to do those different kinds of things. You don't necessarily have to have a pyramidal communications process to avoid making bad decisions, but you need to keep clearly in your mind the difference between consultation and communication, decision making, and presidential pronouncements so that you don't allow yourself to be put in a corner in what you intended to be a communication with a cabinet officer, or a consultation, and leap to a decision.

As I've been inside the iron fence since 1967 and saw the Nixon transition from Johnson and then the Nixon transition to Ford, that in those early days there's a real confusion there. It was interesting to me—I think my observation is correct—even though President Ford had 25 years of experience in Washington, I'm not sure even he fully understood the importance of every word that he uttered.

I'll offer you as evidence and the experience that I had, before Don [Rumsfeld] came back, where the President went out to give a speech, and he had a major pronouncement in it which hadn't gone through any kind of a decision process, so I went banging around the system to find out where it had come from, and it had come from a speechwriter. I said, "Where's the substance behind this? How are we really going to do this?" The guy's really bottom-line response was, "Well, it's just a speech. Don't worry about it." That's a common kind of problem in the early days of an administration before those differences get sorted out.

What I'm suggesting to you is that it's possible to have kind of a spokes-of-the-wheel arrangement for some of those processes as long as you don't get confused about where you are and what you're trying to accomplish.

Marsh: Addressing the spokes of the wheel, we ought not to talk in terms that we invented this wheel because I think [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] FDR tried to have a spokes-of-the-wheel approach, and the President of the United States has indicated he wants to have one. In fact, the parting gift of the Ford administration that Dick Cheney gave to [Hamilton] Ham Jordan [advisor to Jimmy Carter, 1976–79] when he left his office—As we were outgoing, a number of members of the staff gave Dick a memento of his service in the White House. It was an old bicycle with 40 or 50 spokes gone and 30 of them bent, [*laughter*] and the wheel was bent. It was mounted on a big piece of board and was presented to Dick as a concept. It looked like a piece of modern art. He left that with Ham Jordan to get him to focus on what he was going to be doing.

It's interesting to note that the second thing that was left in that office, the chief of staff's office, which was completely cleaned out of everything related to the previous administration—In Ham Jordan's inbox there was about a 40- or 50-page, excellently prepared, well-staffed-out memo with a cover note from Dick to Ham Jordan saying, "Ham, attached is a staffing study which we've done in reference to energy crisis in order that you can address it." So when he came here at one o'clock on the 20th [of January 1977, Inauguration Day], he had before him the staffing paper to proceed to address that problem, which was very much on him.

Which brings me to this point: whatever staffing system you're going to have, there's going to have to be an element of discipline in it, and somebody has to know who goes in to see the President, who leaves paper in there. He has to know both the inflow of paper and the outflow of paper and of people. It's very vital that he do that because there are always people who are going to either intentionally or unintentionally outflank that system, and once there is an outflank of the system, even if it's inadvertent, even if it's well motivated, it can have devastating consequences in your whole decision-making process. You consequently will find impacts you had not thought of, that there are reasons that the President cannot either do what has been proposed, either not now or maybe some down-the-range situation.

You've got to have some point in that system that has a disciplinary role—that cannot monitor in the sense of seeking to exclude but simply for informational purposes—because the President will be encountered by many, many people. This was especially true of Mr. Ford because of his large number of contacts on the Hill and his access on the phone to members of Congress, who will bring up things to the President. Or he's at a reception somewhere and people will bring this up, which will always cause every President to raise a question as to the integrity of his own system: Are things being kept from me? It's got to be the type of disciplinary system that works on the staff, in which there is a feeling that there's integrity in it as far as the President and other members of the staff and cabinet are concerned, and that there are certain safeguards that people can, if they have to get to the President, will get information to him.

But I take the point made earlier, that every time you got into a real serious problem, you would generally find out that it was a situation in which the matter had not been properly staffed.

Jones: Let me make a couple of points. We've talked a lot of time this morning about the decision-making system. As I saw the Ford administration, it went from one where the decision-making system was not defined, to open discussions where all parties were involved, to a much, much tighter system. And I think our error rate went from high to almost nil.

I give that to our system and to the President's educational process. He went from not understanding the complexities of the problem to being fully aware that you couldn't make decisions in that informal way because you don't have to be kicked in the shins too many times with things that you didn't think of—and I've been in the Oval Office, and you sit around, and it's really easy to make a decision in there without all the facts, and you leave the office thinking, "Damn, well, we made some good decisions, didn't we?" And then you go back and start trying to implement them, and the guys start saying, "Hey, yeah, but what about—?" or "How come—?" or "Don't you think—?" And you suddenly find that the decision that you made there in that heady atmosphere has to be completely recycled because you missed a lot of stuff. We went from doing that poorly to doing it quite well.

A couple of points: For some reason, Hess feels that this kind of system and this kind of coordination—which the White House staff was doing, OMB was doing, it wasn't necessarily the cabinet officers—is somehow anti-American. And I think he misses—What astonishes you is that cabinet officers begin to have terrific biases on one subject or another, and people who aren't right there with them don't develop a presidential view. The presidential view is very difficult to achieve, and once you have it, people who are dealing with an isolated piece of a multifaceted problem can't see that view, so a staff is necessary to force the starting out of that. I

think Hess is probably wrong on his idea that you can do it like Roosevelt, get two or three guys in and come up with a bunch of creativity.

Now, on the question of creativity, the staff system is sort of designed to kill off bad ideas. How do you make this thing work? I said, "You know, Jim, the goal of the system, as I run it, is that every new idea that comes in here I suspect isn't any good and is a disaster, and only if the idea, having been tested through every enemy in the system, can stand on its own feet is it worth going in to the President. Because unless the enemies have a shot at it, you don't know the holes in the thing. You can look at that two ways: one is that it will kill every good idea before the thing is born, which isn't so bad if you're a conservative president. The other is that it can keep you from making errors. The question is, can you be creative in that decision-making process, where you have everybody involved taking shots at it.

I would make this conclusion: probably in the Ford presidency, particularly after the decision-making apparatus began to work effectively, which was, oh, nine months after he was in office, probably the decisions he was making and the topics he was addressing were well done. In fact, I'll never forget Vice President [Nelson A.] Rockefeller telling Dick and me that he had incredible political courage. But I think he was basing that on the thought that we submitted a Social Security tax increase, and he felt that the politics of that were incredibly stupid. But I think President Ford made good decisions, creative decisions, by and large, addressing the problems of the country. The system let him do that and part of it was the discussion.

The failure was not in our system, if there was a failure, to address decisions and take them. Our major failure of the whole administration was the President's inability to talk to the American people about the decisions as he was seeing them in a convincing manner. If we had a shortcoming, it's that we didn't communicate it well, as opposed to what we were actually doing. In fact, what we were actually doing was doing good. And we never resolved a system where policy and decision-making were wedded properly to help the President communicate.

I don't think that's follow-up. I think Roosevelt thought—and Carter, apparently—that maybe the most important thing is to communicate and screw what you communicate. President Ford thought the most important thing was to make good decisions and somehow they would communicate themselves, and they didn't.

[END FIRST SESSION]